

Art of Preservation
by
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Art of Preservation was developed at the Yale School of Drama.

This play received a workshop production at Yale School of Drama, Hughes Festival, dir Jen Wineman, Yale New Haven, CT 2008, and a workshop production at Kumu Kahua, dir Troy Apostole, sold-out run 2008 & remounted in 2009, Honolulu, HI

Winner of “Best of Honolulu” Award and “Pick of the Week”, Honolulu Weekly, Honolulu, HI 2009

Awards: Hawaii Prize, Kumu Kahua, Honolulu, HI 2009,
Breaking the Bow Asian Pacific Islander Playwriting Contest , Los Angeles, CA, 2009

Place

A public library basement in a small neighbor island town in Kauai, Hawaii

Time

present day

Cast

one man, one woman

DESIREE, twenty-seven

DADO, [*Dah*-do] twenty-seven

Published by Broadway Play Publishing

SCENE 1

A Hawaiian song plays. The song fades into the patter of rain, growing steadily more persistent. DESIREE-27, sits at an old table in the basement of a small public library, surrounded by dusty boxes. She wears gloves and is thoroughly engrossed in the contents of a yellowed letter.

DADO-27, enters quietly through the window with a bouquet of flowers. He examines his surroundings then spots Desiree in the chair. He smiles widely, hides the flowers behind his back and slowly approaches. Just before he taps her on the shoulder, Desiree suddenly turns around and screams. Dado screams and drops the flowers.

DADO

Man alive! You scared me. You know, you two look kinda da same from da back--

DESIREE

Did you just *break* in here?

DADO

Course not. Window was unlocked--

DESIREE

Its never unlocked.

DADO

Dat Tammy's sweater?

DESIREE

It's cold down here, she lent it to me.

DADO

Dat's nice of her. She upstairs?

DESIREE

Library's closed.

DADO

Dis is *personal* business.

Dado scrambles to pick up the flowers. He looks at Desiree, she folds her arms.

DESIREE
 She expecting you?

DADO
 Wanted to surprise her.

DESIREE
 We open at nine.

DADO
 Desiree...you treating me like one criminal.

DESIREE
 You broke into a public building. I should call the police.

DADO
 Oh please. Look, her car's out front. I'm gonna wait till she comes back.

DESIREE
 I'll tell her you stopped by.

DADO
 Gonna wait in my truck.

DESIREE
 Hope you don't mind sleeping in your truck.

DADO
 Wat?

DESIREE
 She's not here.

DADO
 But she left her car behind?

DESIREE
 Can't expect a girl to stay home on a Saturday night, can you?

DADO
 Kay...it's Kauai so dere's only so many places she can go, right? Could swing by Duke's or--

DESIREE
 You aren't seriously trying to crash her date?

DADO
 So it *is* one date.

DESIREE
 Dado...

DADO

If I don't talk to her tonight, I going burst.

DESIREE

Well, don't do it in here.

DADO

Ouch. You know, I'm sensing plenty friction ova here.

DESIREE

No offence, it's just...you guys haven't been together for how long?

DADO

Don't gotta explain myself to you.

DESIREE

And I don't gotta tell you where Tammy is.

Dado starts to leave.

You won't find her, you know.

DADO

Saturday night, Desiree. Where are you?

DESIREE

Finishing my work.

DADO

And den? Seriously. Wat happens after you tuck in all your books for da night? Do you go home? Straight home? Is dere anyone dere to meet you? You get cats, don't you?

DESIREE

What does that prove?

DADO

Everyting. Whole town knows why dey hired Tammy. So no act like you hot shit.

DESIREE

I hired Tammy to take over the children's section. She's my friend, she needed a job.

DADO

No need get all self-righteous. You hired her cause you couldn't handle um.

DESIREE

The kids were outta control!

DADO

Tammy's got um under control.

DESIREE

She...does a good job.

DADO

So why's it different when she's around?

DESIREE

If you're trying to get me to say I'm bad with kids, fine.
It's no secret.

DADO

Cause you think you bettah.

DESIREE

I think I'm better than a bunch of kids?

DADO

Bettah than just bout everybody in town.

DESIREE

Just better than you. That what you wanted to hear?

DADO

Sure.

DESIREE

Happy to oblige.

Dado exits. Desiree returns to her work. Dado reenters.

DADO

Hey...uh--

DESIREE

No.

DADO

Tell me where she is and I'll go.

Desiree returns to work. Dado fidgets.

It's raining hard out dere. Been raining all week, only now,
its getting real heavy.

DESIREE

(Without looking up)

Persistent.

DADO

Yeah, real *persistent*. Like it's neva going stop.

Desiree does not respond.

Bet you think I tracked in mud. No ways. Was careful. Some of dis stuff down here looks real old. Hate to get mud down here, you know?

Dado taps a box with his foot.

DESIREE

What are you doing?

DADO

Wat?

DESIREE

You break in--

DADO

Technically--

DESIREE

To stalk my friend, harass me, and now you like talk about the weather?

DADO

If you can't think of anyting nice to say...

Desiree returns to her work.

'Member Mrs. Oshiro trying for teach us da seasons? She'd turn red in da face trying for explain why da leaves fall off da trees, why snow falls in winter. Why'd we have to learn bout haole weather? Our workbooks always bout mainland stuff. Eh, you seen snow?

Desiree pauses.

DESIREE

Once.

DADO

Lucky. I going put dat on my list. Important stuffs to do before I croak. You know? I like take my boy someplace where dere's so much snow, dey don't know wat for do with um. Maybe Lake Tahoe. Get skiing dere, right? Den I can play poker too. Eh, you play?

DESIREE

No.

Dado looks over Desiree's shoulder.

DADO

Watchu you doing dere?

Desiree looks up from her work and gives Dado a look.

You like me leave? Or I could--

DESIREE

That'd be great.

DADO

Right. Kay. Have a nice night. Sure you don't wanna tell me where--

DESIREE

Bye.

Dado exits. Desiree carefully picks up the same letter, she reads the letter to herself.

Dado returns. He approaches Desiree tentatively and clears his throat. She jumps.

DESIREE

Jesus!

DADO

Sorry.

DESIREE

I told you. You can't wait for her here.

DADO

It's pouring outside! Cannot drive in dat.

DESIREE

Sure you could manage.

DADO

If I crash and die...my blood going be on your hands.

DESIREE

Why don't you wait it out in your truck?

DADO

Roof's rusty. Leaks like hell. If you like, could sit in your car.

DESIREE

No.

DADO

Have a heart. For once.

Desiree goes back to her work.

Desiree, please, it's been a shitty day. And I tink I just reached an all-time low with you.

DESIREE

I don't believe you.

DADO

Wat?

DESIREE

Can't be raining that hard.

Desiree stands up and goes outside. A moment. Dado looks around and sits at the desk. He peeks in the desk drawers. He puts on Desiree's glasses and imitates her. He picks up the letter and begins to read. Desiree returns.

So you're right about that rain--

Desiree sees Dado at the desk. Dado scrambles up.

What are you doing?

DADO

Nuhting.

Desiree puts on her gloves and delicately takes the letter out of Dado's hands.

DESIREE

What the hell you were you thinking? That letter's over a hundred years old. You were touching it with your *hands*? The oils from your fingers...are your hands *dirty*??? A finger print, right there--

DADO

Where? Dat's a smudge.

DESIREE

You smudged it. This might look like a big pile of dusty nothing to you but they're priceless.

DADO

Priceless, eh? So da library's rich? Tell um buy some new computahs.

DESIREE

These are mine, or well...someone just gave them to me.

DADO

So you're rich!

DESIREE

Not...exactly. They were left to rot in an attic. Miracle they're in such good shape. I've been sorting them here. The air is dry...good for this kind of work.

DADO

So is it worth something or not?

DESIREE

Depends on who you ask. Letters, maps, the history of this town. Stuff no one remembers anymore. I'm the first person to read this in over a hundred years. I'm donating it to the town when I'm done. I just...want to understand what's here. Be the first person to discover this lost history.

DADO

Wow.

DESIREE

So, it'd be nice if you didn't destroy it before I had a chance to go through it.

DADO

Didn't smudge it, you know. Dat's...an old smudge. Ancient ketchup or something. Like me fix um?

DESIREE

No! I'd just like to get back to work. I can only do this when no one is here.

DADO

Cause it's one secret?

DESIREE

A surprise, I hope.

DADO

I won't tell.

Desiree returns to work.

Who's Lono?

DESIREE

You read that?

DADO

Why's he writing his wife bout leaving?

DESIREE

Are you making fun of me? Or do you actually care?

DADO

God, you really paranoid, yeah? I'm stuck here till da rain lets up. Dere's nuhting else to do.

Desiree gives Dado a look.

Desiree...I'm asking you cause I'm interested, kay?

DESIREE

A big flood wiped out most of the town--

DADO

When?

DESIREE

1881.

DADO

Chee, nobody ever told me bout dat.

DESIREE

No one talks about it anymore. Lono was the man who kept all the town's important papers. When he realized the town was gonna flood, he packed up all the papers and ran. Didn't even have time to go back for his family.

DADO

Wat? Dat's...really stupid.

DESIREE

He had to get these papers to safety. They were the only records. His house was destroyed but his family survived.

DADO

Doesn't make it okay.

DESIREE

He did what he had to do.

DADO

For some stupid papah?

DESIREE

When he got back, he was a disgrace. His family kicked him out. He left on a whaling ship. Asked his family to take care of the documents. Apparently, they did.

DADO

You get dis stuff from Clarice?

DESIREE

Maybe.

DADO

Small world, eh? I'm related to dis guy! Auntie Clarice always talking story bout wat a smart guy her grandpa supposed to be. But you know...his family wouldn't kick him out. Dey wouldn't have to say a ting. It was shame dat get him, from da whole community. Lost his priorities. Gotta take care of you ohana first. You blood.

DESIREE

He risked his life for something greater than himself. He saved the history of the town.

DADO

Wat histry? How can it matter when it's been sitting in da attic of my ninety-year-old auntie who steals croutons from salad bars?

DESIREE

This means something--

DADO

She shovels them into her purse--

DESIREE

I'm gonna make everyone understand.

DADO

You don't get it, Des. You neighbors, you family's in dangah...and first ting you do is...save a stack of papah? It's not right. It's not natural.

DESIREE

He understood the greater good. How to really help people.

DADO

You know why da ancient Hawaiians didn't have one written language? Dey put their trust in people. We wipe our ass with papah every day.

DESIREE

Paper protects the integrity of ideas.

DADO

Who's ideas?

DESIREE

Ever play a game of Telephone, Dado? You can't count on people, they get things all turned around.

DADO

Everyting I eva need know was passed down to me by my faddah.

DESIREE

People die and nothing's left behind. That's why we write things down. So there's something left after we go. When I'm gone, these papers will still be here because of me. I'm giving knowledge back to the town. It's my legacy. Dado, what are you leaving behind?

Dado looks at Desiree.

DADO

My son.

DESIREE

And what do you think people will remember you for? If anything.

DADO

You're like one of dose fancy journalists who sees someone getting beat up but instead of helping um, you take one picture for da newspapah, pretend like you doing good. You don't know da first ting bout helping people. Gotta put people first.

DESIREE

How are we going to learn from our mistakes if we can't remember what they are? That flood?

Desiree holds up the letter.

Your ancestor writes that it was caused by plantation owners trying to reroute the stream to water their crops.

DADO

So? Get da same ting now. Da reservoir?

DESIREE

They didn't do it properly back then. It rained, a lot, and the water backed up till the dam burst. People died for someone else's mistake. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

DADO

Should it?

DESIREE

Rich old man carving into the mountain. Same little town down below.

DADO

Judson tinks he owns dis whole town. I don't get nuhting to do with him.

DESIREE

Thought he hired you.

DADO

You behind your gossip, Desiree. Biggest job I coulda had all year was from Judson. Turned it down flat.

DESIREE

You did?

DADO

Told all of my friends, other contractors, not to take it. Dey didn't.

DESIREE

What for?

DADO

Some fancy fish pond for his new girlfriend.

Desiree looks away.

HA! When he heard no one going work for him, crazy old bugger bought his own tractor. Let him build his own stupid pond if he like.

DESIREE

Don't you need a permit for all that stuff?

DADO

For Judson? Yeah, right. [Beat] But when you talked bout dose plantation owners, I stay worried, you know? Sometimes its more bettah to do one job yourself, even if you don't want to, just to make sure it gets done right, you know?

Dado pounds the table.

Man, I get angry. These rich old futs, buying up property, doing construction. Putting up *No Trespassing* signs all ova da place.

DESIREE

The mountain belongs to the locals too!

DADO

Damn straight.

DESIREE

Take back the view!

DADO

YEAH!

DESIREE

Malama Ka 'Aina! Save da mountain!

Dado stops and turns to Desiree.

DADO

Since when you go up dere?

DESIREE

Oh...you know. I like the option.

DADO

Oh man. 'Member camp? When da counselors found dose books hidden in da bottom of your bag, dragged you out of da cabin and made you take up archery? You got so pissed. Man alive, I thought you were gonna to shoot Becky in da head with dat arrow. Even back den you were so pasty. You totally hate nature, don't you?

DESIREE

Forgot what they found in your room?

DADO

Not books, dat's for sure.

DESIREE

One of the other boys grabbed your pillow and showed it to the girls--

DADO

Yeah, okay--

DESIREE

The pillow had a little, round puka.

DADO

Kay, I 'member, you can stop.

DESIREE

And everybody started teasing you, saying you were humping your pillow--

DADO

DAT'S ENOUGH! Jesus, Desiree. I was more embarrassed to explain da truth. We were poor, you know? Everyting had pukas in it.

DESIREE

Lot of kids were poor.

DADO

Not like us. Da tuna sandwiches? No act like you neva noticed. Every day, one paper bag--just one tuna sandwich, no lettuce, no mayonnaise, just watery tuna. I was so shame.

DESIREE

I got teased about everything. Constantly. Home lunch was the least of my problems.

Dado does not respond.

Camp. Camp was the worst. There was no escape. They confiscated my books for Christ's sake.

Dado does not respond.

They made us hike. For hours! I hiked as fast as I could, my legs were aching, I needed to be first, I needed to get back to the cabin so I could be alone. But you were in front and you wouldn't let me pass. You kept getting in my way, teasing me. I couldn't stand it, I needed to get out of there....so...

DADO

So you pushed me.

DESIREE

Didn't think you'd trip and go off the edge. Thought I killed you--

DADO

Coulda killed me--

DESIREE

But you caught onto that branch. I pulled you up. You were fine.

DADO

Great story, Desiree.

DESIREE

Thought I hurt you. You wouldn't stop crying...

DADO

I neva cry--

DESIREE

About your slipper that fell in the stream.

DADO

Couldn't afford new ones. Knew my dad was gonna be pissed.

DESIREE

I gave you one of mine. Fit perfectly.

DADO

Cause you had big feet.

DESIREE

Because we were small. You made me a slipper out of a ti leaf, didn't do any good, but. We hiked the rest of the way together.

DADO

Yeah...

DESIREE

Thought we were gonna be good friends, I just did.

DADO

Hardly saw you after intermediate.

DESIREE

I'd be studying in the library and watch you guys peel out in your cars after third period. Where'd you go? I used to wonder.

DADO

You didn't know? Man, you were a loser in high school. We'd surf or when da surf was down, we'd park on da ridge. Drink. Some of da boys would play their ukes. If it'd rained and I had a girl, I'd take her sliding.

DESIREE

Sliding?

DADO

Ti leaf sliding? You neva went?

Desiree shakes her head.

Wat? Wat kine childhood you had?

DESIREE

(without sarcasm)

Tell me about it.

DADO

Yeah, seriously. I feel bad for you.

DESIREE

No, *describe* it.

DADO

Eh, it's stupid kid stuff.

DESIREE

I wanna picture it. Lono writes about doing it with his kids. Tell me about it...like I was really there.

DADO

Well...sure, I guess. So...um...yeah, we hike to da top.

DESIREE

Where?

DADO

Da ridge, where da grass get slick from da rain.
And...um...below dere's a path of mud where people went
sliding before. Dere's strawberry guava trees all around but
ahead, it's clear.

DESIREE

Then what?

DADO

Kay... 'magine you sitting on one big bunch of ti leaves. You
holding da stems between your legs to keep you in place, act
like one rudder. You control da speed, lean forward for go
fast. Lean back for go slow. We push off. Pick up speed.

DESIREE

What do we see?

DADO

A blur of trees...guava and mountain apples.

DESIREE

More...

DADO

Um...da air. Air smells like wild ginger...fresh dirt. Da
birds are squawking at us like we just charged through their
living room. At dis speed, everyting is liquid, streaming
past us. Up ahead, da stream is at da bottom near da
boulders. Dis is da dangerous part.

DESIREE

How do we stop?

DADO

Slow down.

DESIREE

How?

DADO

Lean back. You driving, woman!

DESIREE

Ha.

DADO

We crash-land at da bottom, covaed in mud and follow da
stream to da falls. We stand on da ledge while da water
flows past, till our toes get wrinkly and white. Our bodies
get hot from da sun, from da ride. We look at each other.

Dado and Desiree look at each other.

Count to three. Jump off into da water below, icy cold, every time. One real ball shrinker.

DESIREE
This Pohaku Falls?

DADO
Course.

DESIREE
I wouldn't jump.

DADO
No?

DESIREE
That girl who visited, jumped off and broke her back.

DADO
No can worry bout dat kine stuff.

DESIREE
I'd go swimming but I wouldn't jump from that ledge.

DADO
Tammy did.

DESIREE
Tammy?

DADO
She stood on da ledge with me, back in high school, her heavy, shiny Japanese hair flowed all da way down her back, god, I love dat hair. She looked at me, I looked at her, and we jumped. In da water, her hair spread around her like it was one sea creature. I lifted her up on dis cold rock ledge and...

Desiree stops him.

Sorry. We made our son. Seven years ago, today. Best day of my life. I wanted to tell her dat, remind her. Guess I'm sorta telling you instead.

DESIREE
Guess you are. It's a shame.

DADO
Wat? Wat do you mean?

DESIREE
You're a good guy, Dado. Better than most people realize.

DADO

Dat guy she's out with tonight...is he rich?

DESIREE

I don't know anything, just don't believe everything you hear.

DADO

It's not...

Dado realizes. Desiree winces.

DESIREE

You weren't supposed to find out.

DADO

I drive thirty minutes out of my way just so I don't even shop at one of his god damn stores and she's SLEEPING with Judson?

DESIREE

We don't know that. She's *seeing* him.

DADO

He's an old man. An old horrible man with liver spots and pink eyes like one rabbit. He's wrinkly and shriveled up and...she's with him.

DESIREE

I'm sure it's not serious.

DADO

Dat fish pond. Dat Japanee fish pond he asked me to make. It's for her, isn't it? You knew. Everybody knew. Dis whole time I've been here you been laughing at me, waiting for her while she's out with him.

DESIREE

Hasn't been easy for her, single mom trying to raise a kid...

DADO

I know I haven't been da greatest. But...I've been taking finance classes at da community college and working more...and...I made one five year plan, one ten year plan... None of dose plans work without her.

DESIREE

You have a kid, you guys will always be linked. By blood, right? Even if you're not together?

DADO

It's been years since she looked at me like I was a man. Like I get someting to offer.

DESIREE

You have your plans.

DADO

Why didn't you tell me she was with him?

DESIREE

It's none of your business.

DADO

But even afta I was waiting here, all dis time.

DESIREE

I told you not to wait here.

DADO

Dat's da ting with you, isn't it? I manage to *talk* to you, like actually talk to you, den you do it again.

DESIREE

Do what?

DADO

Shit all over me with your *superior attitude*.

DESIREE

You weren't really talking to me. You were hanging around hoping Tammy'll come back.

DADO

Not anymore.

DESIREE

Good.

Dado begins to leave. He turns around.

DADO

Why'd you spend all dat time studying anyway? We all thought you'd go away to some fancy mainland college and neva come back.

DESIREE

That was the idea.

DADO

So wat happened? Couldn't cut it, could you? Didn't even make it through da first year.

DESIREE

My mom got sick./ My dad told me to come back.

DADO

Yeah, yeah.

DESIREE
I didn't have a choice.

DADO
But after--

DESIREE
Thought it would be best to stay. So I transferred.

DADO
Couldn't handle?

DESIREE
You never left.

DADO
I don't walk around like I'm bettah than everybody else.

DESIREE
I could live anywhere in the world. I have options.

DADO
You no act dat way.

DESIREE
What way?

DADO
Like you happy with wat you got.

DESIREE
You don't know anything.

DADO
I know you. I've known you for a long time.

DESIREE
You don't know me at all.

DADO
First day of school, your mom dropped you off, called you *Dezzy*.

DESIREE
Oh please.

DADO
But even when we were kids, da name didn't stick. Everybody called you Desiree right away. Like dey knew bettah than to call you one silly name. [Beat] You even know my real name?

Desiree hesitates.

See? Everybody still tink I'm da class clown. Not a man. Dey won't let me grow up.

DESIREE

Better to be called a clown than "that librarian bitch." At least people like clowns.

DADO

But bitches are smart and sexy. Bitches are okay.

Desiree laughs, Dado joins in.

Know how people are always talking about how librarians are really sexy and stuff?

DESIREE

That whole glasses, buttoned up blouse thing?

DADO

Yeah. Neva thought-a you dat way.

DESIREE

Oh.

DADO

Cause I respected you...in your profession. But tonight, I sort of see dat...*repressed* sexiness. It's in dere, somewhere, I tink.

DESIREE

Thanks...I guess. You know, I always wanted to be more like you in high school.

DADO

Stop lying.

DESIREE

My father told me, "brains no mean nuhting. Confidence is all dat matter." He told me this because I'm shy and he wanted to punish me for it. I embarrassed him. You always had the answer...it was never the right one. You could talk your way out of anything. You knew who you were. I believed you could of been anything you wanted to be. Thought you'd leave town, hit it big.

DADO

Sure showed you. Des, I was a joke in high school. How could you tink dat--

DESIREE

After school I had to wait for the bus in the blistering sun. You and your friends would cruise by in that damn busted-up convertible. You'd crack some jokes at me and drive off.

DADO

Always felt bad about dat but didn't say nuhting.

DESIREE

Doesn't matter now, but back then, I would've given anything to get in that car with you.

DADO

Well shit, I would have given you a ride in a second if I knew you wanted one.

DESIREE

Easy to say now.

Dado kisses Desiree. It lasts for a moment then Desiree pulls away.

DESIREE

You got the wrong idea.

DADO

Did I?

DESIREE

Five minutes ago you were crying about Tammy. I was just trying to cheer you up. Then you attack me.

DADO

You wanted it.

DESIREE

Sure. That's what every guy thinks.

DADO

Just trying to loosen you up. You need it.

DESIREE

Where are you going?

DADO

Need air.

DESIREE

You can't drive in this rain. It's not safe.

DADO

Tell Tammy I came by.

Dado exits. Desiree calls out to him from the doorway.

DESIREE

You forgot your stupid flowers! You're just gonna SIT in that leaky truck in the parking lot? Fine! See what I care.

Desiree throws the flowers outside and slams the door. She picks up the letter and sits down. She looks up for a moment, looking for Dado. Nothing. She returns to reading. Sounds of rain.

Scene 2: Desiree's Dream

** The dream sequence can be performed in a number of ways. It seems to work best with parts of it being "heightened" in a dream state and parts of it being more realistic/serious.

The sounds of rain are much louder. The opening strains of an Elvis song plays. There is the wail of air raid sirens and a pounding on the door. Desiree lies on the floor, asleep. She wakes up with a start. She gets up and opens the door.

Dado enters. He is shirtless, with a large black trash bag tied around his shoulders like a cape. He wears muddy boots and carries an axe and a shovel. Desiree stares at him. Dado resembles an ancient Hawaiian warrior.

DESIREE

Dado, what in the world?

DADO

Dam gave way. All dose big mansions full of mud.

DESIREE

Tammy okay?

DADO

You da one I stay worried about. Why are you still here?

DESIREE

Fell asleep.

DADO

In da library? Do dis often?

DESIREE

Not...very often.

Dado produces another trash bag and ties it around Desiree's shoulders. He hands her a shovel, like a scepter.

DADO

Let's move.

DESIREE

Where?

DADO

Your house. Make sure your cats are okay.

DESIREE

I don't have any cats.

DADO

Seriously?

DESIREE

I know it's hard to believe but...

DADO

I brought you some boots. We gotta wade.

DESIREE

Pull around your truck. I'll load the boxes in the back.

DADO

Kuhio Street's waist-deep in mud. My truck nearly floated away. Everything's impassible. We gotta get to higher ground, quick.

DESIREE

We can't drive?

DADO

Not less you got a monster truck out back.

DESIREE

Took my bike.

DADO

So we're wading. Let's go.

DESIREE

No.

DADO

You gotta be kidding.

DESIREE

I can't go.

DADO

Dat mud's gonna slide down eventually, and dat reservoir, honey, if dat overflows, that's it.

DESIREE

Dam already broke, what else could happen?

DADO

Dis is suicide. I'll carry you out of here if I have to.

DESIREE
Stay, just for a little while.

DADO
Why should I?

DESIREE
I could use your help, Dado. Strong man like you.

Desiree cues "Blue Hawaii" by Elvis.

In time with the music, Desiree pulls out a large plastic sheet. Dado and Desiree unfold the sheet, each holding the ends of the sheet, lift it up and down so it billows in the air.

Together, Dado and Desiree stack the boxes on the table and cover them tightly with the plastic sheet over the following dialogue. Their movements should be fluid and graceful, like a dance.

DADO
You aren't listening.

DESIREE
Water damage is devastating for books.

DADO
How about boulders? Mud makes da rocks slide...nobody expects a giant boulder until...BAM!

Desiree jumps.

Pancake time. No act like you not scared. I see you goose pimples.

DESIREE
Course I'm scared.

DADO
You even know wat you risking our lives for?

DESIREE
I've...seen enough.

DADO
Wat if only one little box was important, and da rest is just Auntie Clarice's coupon collection from 1957?

Desiree hesitates.

I'm just saying. Now wat?

DESIREE

Don't know. We wait?

DADO

Not for long.

DESIREE

You don't have to stay.

DADO

You want me to?

DESIREE

Your boy, he okay?

DADO

Visiting grandma on Oahu.

DESIREE

That's nice.

DADO

Yeah...worked out really well.

The song fades. Dado and Desiree finish their task and survey their work.

DADO

Wat would happen to dis place, if it floods?

Sound of rumbling, flowing water. They climb sit on top of the plastic-wrapped boxes.

DESIREE

The mud will be so thick, you can't see the checkout line.

DADO

Not da checkout line! Since I put my life on da line for you, try wipe out my late fees from ova due videos? Is high but can explain, yeah?

Desiree closes her eyes.

DESIREE

The book cases will topple over and fall on the ground. The books will lie face down in heaps. The computers will be ruined, the microfiche, periodicals, those are givens. Mold will settle onto everything. The book covers will turn soft and fuzzy, as if dusted in snow.

Except on the Encyclopedias, the spores will be bigger, the reference center will be in full bloom. The smell of putrid decay will be overwhelming.

A big toad will sit under a battered card catalogue. Mushrooms will sprout from the carpet. Birds will use the pulp from the books to build nests. The library will return to nature and sink deep into the mud. A few books might be saved, if we work quick. But not much. There won't be much left.

DADO

You need to get real, Des.

DESIREE

I've seen the pictures of Hamilton. I know what's going happen.

DADO

How you going stop da flood by staying? You can get up right now and walk away. Take wat you can carry, dat's it--

DESIREE

I can't leave. Everything Lono saved, it'd be like it never existed.

Dado looks at Desiree. They sit a moment in silence.

DADO

Eh, can I hear da rest of Lono's letter? I didn't get to finish um. Or frick, did we wrap it up already?

DESIREE

I don't know why, it felt safer for me to carry it. Do...you want to read it?

Dado takes the letter carefully and reads it out loud.

DADO

I was taught to follow nana i ke kumu, the belief that a community without knowledge of itself dies. The young are expected to go to their kapuna for answers. When I was a boy, the meaning felt didactic. "Be quiet and listen to your elders." But I have come to realize that the philosophy instructs us to go to the source of life itself, to observe lessons in nature. Kumu is the trunk of a tree, the base of a mountain. Nana is the source of waves, a beginning, a creation. Nana i ke kumu, the source of going. But going where, doing what? I never found out.

I met a man from New York. He asks me if the Hawaiians have as many words for the sea as the Eskimos do for snow.

I teach him some phrases, he repeats after me in a sing-song voice. With every word, I am reminded of you.

Desiree translates the Hawaiian for
Dado.

Ka po'ina nalu--
DADO

The shore.
DESIREE

Ke kai kohala--
DADO

The shallow sea.
DESIREE

Ke kai 'ele--
DADO

The dark sea.
DESIREE

Ke kua mauna--
DADO

The mountain top.
DESIREE

Ka wao akua--
DADO

The land of the gods.
DESIREE

Ka wao kanaka--
DADO

The land of the people below.
DESIREE

Kauhale--
DADO

Home.
DESIREE

DADO
Dat Lono guy was one sad dude.

DESIREE
Now don't you see why he had to do it?

DADO

If he had to do it all ova again, when da flood hit, I bet he'd find his wife.

DESIREE

If you kept on reading, you'd understand.

DADO

No. [Beat] Okay, be honest. If you was one firefighter in one burning building and da only copy of da world's most *important* book was in one corner and me in da other, who'd you save, me or da book?

DESIREE

The *only* copy? What book?

DADO

Dis is like one hypothetical question, yah? Choose one.

DESIREE

Honestly?

DADO

Sure, why not.

Desiree considers.

DESIREE

I would save you.

DADO

Dat's really nice, Desiree, but not sure I believe you.

DESIREE

Why'd you ask?

Water and destruction sounds. Dado and Desiree hold on to each other. Dado sighs and buries his head in Desiree's sweater.

Smells good?

Dado sniffs the sweater and nuzzles deeper.

Like Tammy, huh?

DADO

Not like Tammy.

DESIREE

What are we gonna do?

Dado examines the boxes.

DADO

We wrapped up these boxes so good and tight, we could use um to escape.

DESIREE

What?

DADO

Could surf these boxes like da Big Kahuna, ride um all da way to da shore. By den da sun'll come up and you can finally get one decent tan. Sound good?

DESIREE

I don't like getting sandy.

DADO

(Disappointed)

Lame.

Desiree jumps up on the boxes as if she's riding a surf board. Surf rock plays.

DESIREE

Okay, then...Plan B! We're still surfing but instead we ride the wave right down Kuhio Street, right through the center of town, past da fruit market and Hamura's. I've got big Annette Funicello beach movie hair and a killer pink bikini.

DADO

Righteous.

DESIREE

We wave goodbye as we leave town. We pick up speed as we coast down the mountain, through the bamboo forest. I navigate deftly past boulders that fly at us in all directions. I grab a mountain apple as we whiz through the trees, the fruit is cold and hard.

Desiree feeds Dado a piece of "apple."

The board slows to a gentle stop, right where we want it to. The boxes are safe in their thick plastic, away from the flood, the town, and anything that can harm them.

We balance on the edge of the falls, the water falls twenty feet below. Our bodies are hot from the sun, from the excitement of the ride. We are covered in mud. We are eager to celebrate our success, our survival. We look at each other.

Dado and Desiree look at each other.

Hold hands.

DADO

Dado and Desiree hold hands. Dado
gently touches Desiree's face.

I like you. I always liked you.

DESIREE

I know.

DADO

And jump.

DADO & DESIREE

Lights out. Deafening sounds of water,
cracking, and destruction.

SCENE 3

Desiree is asleep, alone in the library. There is a knocking on the door. She wakes up, disoriented and opens the door. Dado enters.

DADO

I've been knocking out dere foreva. Thought bout going through da window, but I know how you feel about dat.

Desiree stares at Dado.

Were you asleep?

DESIREE

I think...yes.

DADO

In da library? Do dis often?

DESIREE

Not very often.

Dado sees the boxes wrapped with plastic.

DADO

Wat's all dis?

DESIREE

Afraid water would get in.

DADO

Chee, you are paranoid. Just stopped raining.

Desiree listens. It has.

DESIREE

What are you doing here?

DADO

Wanted to apologize.

Desiree looks blank.

For...*you know*.

DESIREE

I overreacted. I didn't really mind.

DADO

'Preciate it if you don't tell Tammy bout da kiss.

DESIREE
 Tammy...right

DADO
 Gonna head out. Just...tell her I came by, kay?

DESIREE
 Sure.

DADO
 How much longer you going be down here?

DESIREE
 I'm locking up.

Dado hesitates.

DADO
 Walk you to your car.

DESIREE
 Brought my bike.

DADO
 Too muddy to bike. Want a ride?

Desiree pauses.

DADO
 Forget/ about--

DESIREE
 Sure.

DADO
 Shoots...

Desiree looks at Dado. He looks away.

Cats must be starving by now.

DESIREE
 Actually...I don't have any.

DADO
 Huh.

DESIREE
 Meet you outside.

DADO
 Be in my truck.

Dado exits.

Desiree surveys the room. She takes off Tammy's sweater, folds it carefully and sets it on the boxes. She lets down her hair.

She takes the letter out of the pocket. She is about to take the letter with her, but changes her mind, and sets it gently on the table.

She turns off the lights and exits.

END OF PLAY