



he little brown lizard cried out an alarm into the darkness. It was a little sound and did not echo from the black cliffs over Hā'ena's hula school. But Kilioe heard.

She awoke at once, smelling the heavy overpowering scent of laua'e fern. Her sentinel would not have woken her for that. Laua'e belonged to Laka, goddess of the hula, and very soon

another group of students would be gathering this fern as part of their graduation ceremonies. Kilioe wondered why the laua'e scent was so unusually strong. Were there specially favored students that she, head of the hula school, knew nothing about?

The sentinel called its warning again.

Kilioe sat up, shoved aside her tapa blankets and went to the door of her house. She listened to the night, the steady roar of the waves surging onto the reef, the faint rustle of hala leaves brushed by the timid pre-dawn breeze. From the direction of Limahuli valley she heard a splashing, someone fording the stream. Then footsteps, receding. No one should be abroad this hour of the morning; there was mischief brewing. Arming herself with her staff of kauila wood Kilioe followed. She could hear the footsteps ahead but she herself made no sound as she strode along. She was tall, taller than most chiefly men and a giant as far as the common people were concerned. Her rigid insistence on the rules and regulations, untempered by any softening to reason or excuse, made her feared. People knew she had tamed the brown lizard to come at her call and, they whispered, she herself was a mo'o, the dreaded giant lizard that could change in the wink of an eye from human to lizard and back again. Kilioe knew this; it was a source of her power. She moved quickly down the path, silent as an owl.

She crossed Limahuli stream, passed the spring of Waialoa, and Maninihola cave. The first faint streaks of light bloomed in the sky before her. She saw, hand in hand, two figures hurrying across the sand flats of Naue, disappearing within the shadows of the hala trees, reappearing on the white sandy path. Kilioe wondered and followed.

As the mysterious couple rounded the point of Lulu'u-pali, a puff of wind tore the black tapa cloak from one of them. Kilioe realized with a surge of anger that these were students in front of her, students who, by her command these nights before the

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graduating ceremony, had to cover themselves from the view of all and so were wearing the polo'u cloak. These were students who had no business being where they were. She following more eagerly, anger flashing from her eyes, her entire body elongated to discover who these two were.

Kilioe was crossing the Wai-niha river as the two went up the path that leads from Ka-lau-he'e to Lumaha'i. Now both were visible to her. She shouted their names.

"Nanau! Kapaka!"

The fugitives heard. "Run!" cried Nanau. "We can still escape."

They ran up the hill, down the next hill, swam across the river and onto the green-flecked beach of Lumaha'i. But no matter how fast they ran, whenever they looked back, Kilioe had gained on them.

Nanau had been planning a way to save his lover and as they came to the cliff in the middle of the beach, he told Kapaka, "Just ahead is the cave of Ho'ohila. Hide there. I will climb to the ridge above and go into the mountains and as soon as I can, I will return. Kilioe will follow me and you will be safe."

He hugged her for a moment and whispered, "May Laka be with you!" Then he turned and clambered up the ridge, making as much noise as he could.

Kapaka, too, had been planning a way to save her lover. She ran for the cave. She stood for a moment looking after Nanau, tears in her eyes. "May Laka be with you!" she whispered. She ducked into the cave of Ho'ohila and waited.

Kilioe swam the Lumaha'i river and followed the footprints in the sand. She heard rocks falling and saw a figure climbing the ridge above her. With a snarl of rage, she turned to climb after the fugitive.

Kapaka ran from the cave and confronted the enraged mo'o chiefess. "Stop!" she commanded. "Here I am."

Kapaka stood, arms outstretched, blocking the path, hoping to have Kilioe's rage fall on her and give Nanau time to escape.

"Kapu breaker!" hissed Kilioe and swung her staff at the head of the girl. As she fell, Kapaka turned, called "Nanau!" and slumped to the sand. She stretched out her hands in a gesture of farewell as Kilioe struck again. The blood and life of Kapaka sank

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into the sands of Lumaha'i.

Kilioe clambered up the cliff, intent on punishing the other breaker of her laws. Above her, Nanau had heard the last cry of Kapaka and had turned to rejoin his beloved. If they could not be together in life, then let them be together in death!

Kilioe and Nanau met far up the ridge. She struck with her staff and on Pu'u-o-manu, the hill of the birds, the blood and life of Nanau sank into the soil.

Satisfied with her punishment of the law breakers, Kilioe returned to the temple at Ke'e. Yet that very day news came that disturbed her. The fisherman of Lumaha'i reported that a strange plant, never seen before, was growing on the beach. Birdcatchers reported seeing an unknown plant growing on Pu'u-o-manu. Kilioe went to see these wonders for herself.

Excitedly the fisherman showed her the plant they'd discovered, a shrub with fleshy leaves and small white fruit like congealed tears. And unlike all other plants they knew, it bore only half a flower, neatly divided down the middle, incomplete. Kilioe felt fear brush her like the feathers of an owl brush a rat before it strikes. The plant grew on the spot where Kapaka had died.

The birdcatchers showed her the plant on Pu'u-o-manu. There, where Nanau had died, was a shrub and it too bore only half a flower. Kilioe picked one of these half flowers and went down to the beach to pick one of the flowers there. She placed the two blossoms together and they formed one perfect flower.

Kilioe returned to Ke'e and, kneeling before the altar of Laka, placed the two half flowers before the goddess. The smell of laua'e welled up from a dried fern wreath at the foot of the goddess. The wreath encircled the body of a small brown lizard. Kilioe understood that the goddess had transformed the lovers into these plant forms. Separately they had died, separately now they must live, the naupaka-kahakai, the beach plant, and naupaka-kuahiwi, the mountain plant, their incomplete flowers a symbol of love and of the forgiveness of Laka.