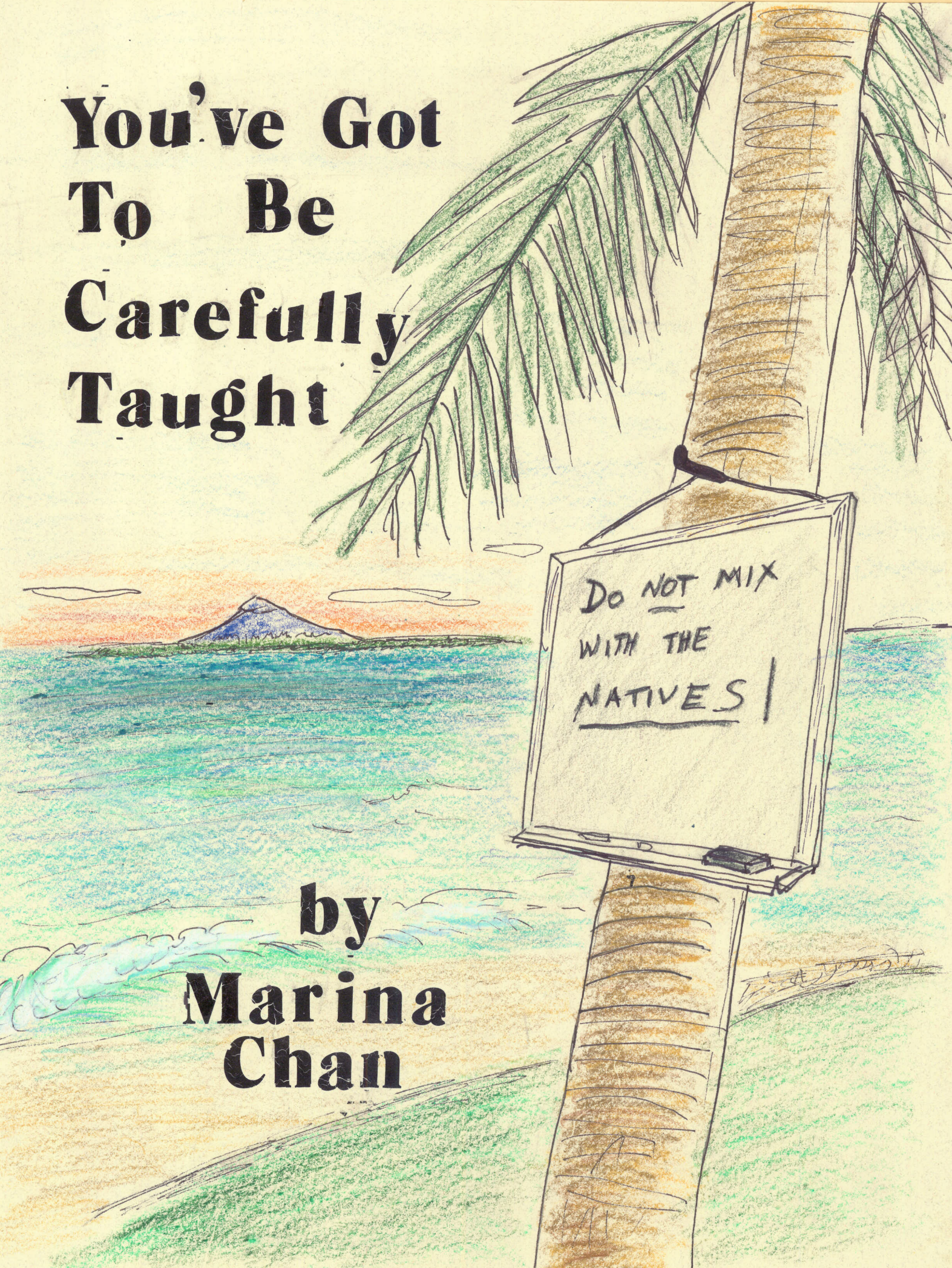


You've Got To Be Carefully Taught



DO NOT MIX
WITH THE
NATIVES

by
**Marina
Chan**



**You've Got
To Be Carefully Taught**

Marina Chan

2009 Little Rock Trade Paperback Edition

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All quotations are from South Pacific, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II

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*To the wonderful Kelli O'Hara,
My inspiration*

“Come away, come away.” “Any night, any day,” the whispers of the island may call to your heart, and if you try, someday you might see the island when you are “lost in the middle of a foggy sea.” It will sing to you, sweet and clear, “Here I am, your special island! Come to me!” These words will travel on the wind. A low-flying cloud covers the head of the island. Waterfalls plunge into green pools that reach to the center of the earth. Betel nuts fall and make ripples. Streams run through coconut palms and banyan trees. Mangoes and bananas hang above coral sands. Lime, cinnamon and salt fill the air. Day comes and night goes, night comes and day goes, as regular as the tide on the beach. There is sunlight on the sand and moonlight on the sea. “Bali H’ai, Bali H’ai, Bali H’ai.”

I clutched my books and tried not to trip as gravity forced me to run downhill, dodging the trunks of banyans. Arriving at the bottom, I looked wistfully at the Polynesian and Tonkinese children swimming under the waterfall. *They have so much fun*, I thought to myself. *And me? Who am I? I am just a schoolteacher living a dull life on a lonely island. Lieutenant Cable is my only hope. He will get me to the naval base, and there, maybe, I can find a part time job and maybe even a girl.*

Arriving home, I ducked my head and entered my family’s thatched cottage. Mother was sitting on the floor combing Liat’s long, black hair, and Liat was stringing a shell necklace. Mother’s hands looked more and more wrinkled every day. She was middle aged and heavy, but she still had the energy of a young girl. Then my eyes shifted to Liat. What a pretty girl my sister was, with hair like soft silk. Cable had taken a liking to her the first minute he had laid

eyes on her, and she adored him. When Mother arrived with Cable a week ago, I was slightly suspicious because I knew that she had something in mind; Mother is so easily able to lure strangers into doing things that will help her fulfill her own wishes. But indeed, her wishes were good ones.

Only a couple of days before, I had become quite frustrated with Mother for not allowing me to go to the naval base. Now, however, I felt ashamed of my feelings because I knew she worked very hard. She supported our family by working as a merchant, who visited the naval base almost every day.

“Mother, I—I want to go to the naval base.”

Mother stared into space, as she often did when I spoke to her about the naval base, and then looked straight at me. “No, Li, no. Please understand me. I must protect you from the Americans.”

“Mother, I need adventure in my life. When a man is twenty-five, it’s about time he does something worthwhile.”

“But you are a teacher who has the joy of working with children. You are smart and know how to speak English, unlike your sister, and you are paid well. I know what decisions are good and what decisions are bad. You mustn’t be with the Americans because—”

“Because of their skin color?”

“They have moved into our land.”

“But Mother, we are Tonkinese, not Polynesian. We ourselves moved here from Indochine.”

“Yes, but it is different. We blend into the natives. And we do not make fun of the Polynesians as the Americans make fun of our people. The sailors and everyone else call me ‘Bloody Mary.’ They mean it as a joke, and I play along at being the girl they love – I pretend

not to care. But think, Li. They are mocking me. I do not like the name 'Bloody Mary.' Do the sailors ever think of calling me by my real name? And yet it is true that when I first saw Cable I knew he was the man to choose for Liat, but this doesn't make me stop thinking that Americans are Americans and we are who we are." I didn't understand why Mother had to think this way. And our neighbors, too – why did they think this way? I knew that Americans were different from us, but only in their background. Why must we stay away from them? Had they not come to help us fight the Japanese? I admired their bravery. And Mother kept selling goods to the Americans and had brought Lieutenant Cable to Bali H'ai for Liat to marry.

Suddenly Mother looked upward and spoke to my dead father. "Husband, hear me. Help me, I plead. I am confused. I like the Americans, and yet I do not like them. What does this mean, husband? They are of a completely different race, but still... I want our daughter to marry an American because it will give her opportunity. I know this is what you would have wanted." Liat smiled shyly. "But our son? I know he must not marry an American girl because a white girl and an Asian boy, this is not right. He is the head of our family. Should our son not represent the true Tonkinese family? And if he marries a white girl, he may move away from the island. I am afraid for him. Oh, if only you were here, husband! Tell me if I am right. I love you! Did I just hear a clap of thunder? But there is sunshine and a clear blue sky." A tear trickled down Mother's cheek. But at that moment, Cable was knocking on our door.

As Liat fell into his muscular arms, he kissed her. "You are 'younger than springtime.'"

I liked Lieutenant Cable, particularly because he made my sister happy. I was somewhat conscious that his skin was white, but, in truth, this didn't really bother me. In fact, I thought of Cable as a gift to our family because he would be Liat's future. And he was a gift to me because he would be able to bring me to the naval base. Seeing him every day only made me more anxious to



experience something new, for I had never once gone over to another island. So I decided to have a final discussion with Mother.

“Mother, I love my family, and I know you love me, but it’s hard being kept away from a whole world out there.” Mother stared into space, but I knew she was listening. “I mustn’t be the quiet boy anymore who allows people to make choices for him. Mother, listen to your son: I need to develop more self-respect. For my whole life you have told me what to do in every situation.” I paused, but when Mother didn’t say anything, I continued. “Mother, all I want is another job, to help win the war. Such a job would be exciting! Real life! Not like the job I have now.” Then Mother began to argue, as I knew she would. She told me that not only did she not want me to be around Americans, but she did not want me to be involved with the war. It was dangerous, and she even feared for Cable’s life as he was a U.S. Marine Corps Officer. But I noticed she was different. She seemed more empathetic and open. It became clear to me that this change in Mother was because she had spoken with my father. At last, she gave in. But I did not know she was planning to follow me.

That very day, I asked Cable to take me to the naval base to look for a part-time job. At that moment, the fine features of Cable’s face seemed more tense than usual. But I did not know that this was because he was thinking, *Why is there always a pain in the pit of my stomach? Why is there racial prejudice buried deep within my soul? Liat is ‘angel and lover, heaven and earth’ to me. Li is a good man. Then why must I be afraid of what my family back home might think? Why must my family’s prejudices live in me?* Cable rubbed his hand over his curly brown hair, gave me a friendly smile and said, “Of course I can take you.” At midday, Cable and I made our way to the seashore.

Kids were swimming in the sea, and some ran up to me. “Where you goin’, Mr. Li?”

“I’m going to the naval base, my little ones, but I’ll be back in the afternoon.”

“You goin’ there?” They pointed to the nearby land. “Holy cabooses, Mr. Li. Well, have fun!”

As my students ran back into the sea, Cable and I walked to his motorboat. Sailing on the blue and green sea and listening to the calm waters, Cable told me about the base and the people who worked there. We laughed and chatted like old friends. Meanwhile, I was unaware of Mother, following far behind.

* * * *

Having never seen the naval base up close, I was interested in its appearance. There were brick and steel buildings and big antennas, all of which seemed to have been set up quickly. Grey was the dominant color. Yet for me it was thrilling, like another world. A beach ran along the edge of the base, and Cable told me that it was there that the sailors longed for “dames” and the nurses jogged and laughed and danced. *All these exciting lives!* I thought. *Busy, busy lives!* But Cable told me that they often just sat around.

“There,” Cable said, pointing to a low brick building just outside the gate, “is where you can ask about a job. I have to go now because I have been called for an assignment and I should see what it is all about. Good luck!” And with a quick pat on my back, Cable hurried off.

As I made my way, I found a group of young women all dressed in uniforms. I knew these must be the U.S. Navy Nurses. I had never seen so many white American women at once. *This is what Mother is afraid of,* I thought. They were crowded together in a circle like a flock of birds, and there were quite a few of them. All of them were talking at once. I didn’t think any of them saw me.

“Nellie Forbush,” one of them said, “why you mustn’t! You know you can’t be with a man who was once married to a Polynesian—”

“Yes, I know. I can’t shake the feeling of shock from yesterday when those two kids ran in. They were his! I’m on your side, really I am. But—”

“No ‘buts.’ Listen to us.”

“I’m so confused. And everything was going so well...”

“What would your family think? Little Rock, Arkansas, Nellie. Think about it.”

“I know. But...”

“Yes, you love him. But doesn’t every girl go through something like this? Fall in love with a man she can’t marry!”

“But we had so much in common, Emile and I. We were ‘the same kind of people fundamentally... You know what I mean?’”

“But he is much older. Nellie, you’ve always been ‘a cockeyed optimist’! You’re not seeing straight. Americans with Americans and natives with natives.”

“You’re right. ‘I’m gonna wash that man right outa my hair.’”

After the group of nurses broke up, I slipped away. But soon I heard someone calling, “Hello there!” Right in front of me stood one of the nurses from the conversation. I remembered her as being the only one who had not said anything but rather had stood silently and thoughtfully. She looked younger than the others. She had blonde hair and blue eyes, and her hair was long and curly. She wore a red bandana, and her collar was up. A beautiful, dainty woman, as pretty as a picture. I was nervous. “Can you speak English?” Her voice was very gentle.

“Yes, I can.” I couldn’t believe I was speaking to a U.S. Navy Nurse. She was American, and she was white as snow, but that did not matter to me, at least I didn’t think so at



that time, because this is what I had been longing for secretly, to finally meet a girl. I noticed that her eyes seemed dreamy and hopeful.

“Yes! I mean, good! Anyway, you don’t look familiar. You know, once you’re on this base for more than a couple of days, you get to recognize everyone, and when a stranger comes along, you’re interested. Anyway, nice to meet you. I’m Claire.” She held out her hand.

“Oh! My name is Li.” But before I could tell her I was from Bali H’ai, she continued.

“Well, Li, I noticed you listening in on our, um, rather large discussion. I just wanted to explain that I’m very sorry you had to listen to such terrible words. Believe me, I do not know why the rest of the girls believe in, well...you know. Do you know what I’m talking about? I mean, here we were convincing Nellie that she shouldn’t marry this Frenchman of hers just because of his former marriage to a Polynesian woman. I’m so sorry. Do you understand?” She spoke quickly, but I did understand. Yet I wasn’t surprised or angry. All I felt at that moment was that I liked this nurse, so eager to apologize.

“You don’t have to be sorry. But I’m not Polynesian, I’m actually Tonkinese.”

“Oh, I beg your pardon! We know the difference between Polynesians and Tonkinese!”

“Well, don’t feel bad about your conversation because, believe it or not, I experience similar problems at home on Bali H’ai.”

“Bali H’ai? Oh, my!”

“You see, I’ve lived there for twenty-five years and have never visited another place. For years, I dreamed of something new, and finally, today, my friend Lieutenant Cable brought me here. But it is only now, meeting you, that I feel I have begun my true adventure!”

“Wow, that sounded so poetic! You know, I have a similar situation,” she continued.

“You see, I’ve lived in Kansas City, Missouri for my whole life, all nineteen years. I never once...well, to tell you the truth, I’m just ‘a little hick.’”

“No you’re not. Why, you seem very cultured.”

“I do? Well, maybe it’s because I’m terribly curious. I love to learn!”

“I love learning, too. I’m a school teacher—”

“My, oh my!”

“But please go on.”

“Ah, yes. I never once set foot out of the Midwest until I came up with the idea of enlisting, and so here I am, a U.S. Navy Nurse.” Then she did a little dance, and I joined in.

“This was my idea, too! I thought getting a job here would bring me out of my shell.”

“Wow, we have a lot in common!” We continued to talk for what seemed a short time to me but was in reality quite a while. I learned a lot about Claire and became fond of her. I think she took a liking to me as well because she kept pulling at a golden curl that was falling in front of her face. She seemed to be everything I wanted: elegant, witty and thoughtful. I felt understood when I talked to her; she seemed really interested in what I had to say. I noticed, however, that some of the other nurses had come back and were watching us. I saw them give Claire disapproving looks. I thought I saw Claire frown, glowering, at one of them. It was during this time that my colorblindness dissipated, and I became more conscious of the fact that Claire was white. I remember a feeling; a pressure within my stomach overcame me as I stood there talking to Claire. I looked at my skin and then looked at hers, like day and night, like night and day. It was then that it became clear to me that Claire and I were opposites and that human nature was a force that would continuously try to keep us apart. *Because Claire is white, I remember thinking to myself, she is not a person who I should be talking to, let alone admiring.* Never before had I thought this way. *My God! Was I thinking like Mother?* It seemed that something within me had suddenly changed, but I have since come to understand that this prejudice had always been within me. Only at that moment did I become aware of it.

“Li! Li! Is that you, Li? Are you there? Come, come!” called Mother, making her way up to us. Oh, dear!

“This is my mother...” I started to say.

“Mary!” said Claire.

But Mother did not answer her. “Come talk to me, Li. Come, come.” Mother’s voice was clear, but her body seemed stiff and nervous. She pulled me away. “Li, what did I tell you?” she said. I noticed that the nurses had yanked Claire aside. I could not hear all they said, but I tried to listen to them as well as to Mother.

“How could you speak like that to a Polynesian, a native? After all we went through with Nellie...” I thought I heard one of the nurses say.

But now their words were drowned out. “Look!” Suddenly Mother lowered her voice. “Look at that girl. Light skin, blonde hair, blue eyes. She is not one of us! If you marry her, you will be betraying our family.”

“But he’s not Polynesian,” I heard Claire say fearlessly.

“No?” all the nurses said at once.

“No! He’s Tonkinese, and his mother is Bloody Mary!”

Then my ears shifted back to Mother. “You are a decent, fine-looking man, Li. You cannot go off with one of these...they are not worthy of you.”

I listened to Claire. “But he’s smart and good, and I like him.”

Then Mother’s voice filled my ears again. “Be with a girl back home, Li.”

“Yes, yes, I know. You’ve told me before. But, but Mother, I like her...”

“Think of me! I’ve been working to raise you ever since your father died. Couldn’t you take this old woman’s advice?” But I was listening to the nurses again.

“Why do you hate the thought of me being with Li?”

“Because...because...his skin is so dark.”

Then Mother began to cry. “Li, please, don’t do this to me! You know it’s not right of you to marry a white girl.” Mother was right. It wouldn’t be right for me to marry a white girl because we were different. *They aren’t who we are*, I thought to myself. Then, immediately afterward, I thought something quite the opposite: *We aren’t who they are*. There was a pain within my heart, and when I looked at the group of nurses again, the pain increased. I put my arms around Mother. Then I spoke silently to father. “Please forgive me, Father, for thinking of being with an American. I know it’s not what you want, and you are right. When I argued with Mother, I was wrong. I now realize my fault. It’s hard seeing Liat with Cable, but I realize now that it’s different for me. It does not make sense for me to be with a white girl, and, furthermore, I must continue our family’s culture.” I thought I saw a bright comet fly across the daylight sky, like a pearl in the sea, and a shiver went down my spine. I took this as a sign of Father’s forgiveness. Again I listened to the nurses.

“Don’t be so open-hearted all the time, like Nellie. Didn’t your parents teach you?”

“You know, you’re right. You’ve been right all along. I’ve been twisted inside out, maybe because of the war. War can do this to you, you know? I didn’t notice Li’s color before, not distinctly, but now...thank you for helping me. I know now that starting a relationship with Li is not a good idea.”

I began to speak to Mother. “Mother, I feel that you have been right all along. Looking at these people now, I realize that we are different. I’ve been thoughtless and careless. I think I’ve been too much in love with adventure to realize the truth, but now, believe me, I understand you more than ever before.” In Mother’s eyes were tears of happiness. I continued, “Mother, we are not who they are—”



Photo of Bloody Mary, played by Loretta Ablesayve, in the 2008 production of South Pacific.



Photo of Nellie Forbush, played by Kelli O'Hara, in the 2008 production of South Pacific.

Suddenly, Mother's face turned grim, and I wondered what might have upset her. In a low, almost disgusted voice, she whispered to me, "Never let me hear you say those words again, Li. Listen to me. They are inferior to us. We are not inferior to them." Before I could respond, Mother turned her back to me and walked toward the dock. I knew she would wait for me there.

I understood that Mother felt superior to the Americans, but I, in a sense, thought that Claire was too good for me, that America was an immense hero and that my island was a tiny bird that had lost its wing. It wasn't that I had lost my dignity. It was just that I couldn't help thinking that Claire and me together would be unconventional and wrong. I couldn't allow myself to like her. And still, there was a pain within me that became a burning flame when I looked at the nurses once more. *I don't belong here.* It was then that I decided to not find a job at the base. No, I was a schoolteacher on Bali H'ai. That's who I was.

Before Mother brought me home in her little boat filled with strung flowers, shells and other goods, I tried to find Claire. I was glad I couldn't because every time I thought about her, I felt upset. I was afraid of her. And I was afraid of my feelings.

As I walked down to the dock, I turned to look at the naval base one more time. Many sailors were relaxing, and I saw a couple of officers, but I didn't see any nurses. Then, all of a sudden, Claire was there. She did a double take and halted. I stopped and tried to find words. Claire seemed afraid, like me.

"Hi, Li." Then she ran back to the base.

The sea was tranquil. The naval base slipped into the fog, but I knew Claire was there, somewhere. When we arrived at Bali H'ai, streaks of gold, majestic red and purple covered the sky.

Several kids ran up to me and asked, "How was it over there? Were there hundreds of Americans?" They said the word "Americans" with wide eyes. I knew I was home.

* * * *

A week went by, but I could not get Claire out of my mind. I regarded her warmly and even loved her, but I thought I could never be with her. I had developed a love-hate relationship with her. One part of me would say, *Love Claire, for it does not matter that she is white*, while another part of me would say, *You cannot love Claire, she is white*. In truth, my feelings of prejudice were confused and tangled. Sometimes I felt superior and sometimes I felt inferior. I would love Claire but at the same time hate her for making me yearn for something I felt I could never have. I couldn't remember a time when the Americans seemed as different from us as they seemed now. *If only I could get rid of my prejudice!*

For the first time I was distracted during class as I was teaching up front at the blackboard. One of my students came over and pulled on my shirt. "Hey, Mr. Li! Mr. Li! Are you dead?"

"Nah, I think he's just sleepstanding." At that moment it became clear to me that somehow I must teach my students how not to be prejudiced.

There was much nervousness at home. Cable had agreed to carry out a secret mission on one of the nearby Japanese-held islands to gather intelligence about enemy troop movements. How he had the courage to do this was beyond my understanding. I heard that another man had agreed to go with him. Emile De Becque was his name. I realized that this Emile was the man that Claire's fellow nurse, Nellie, had been in love with.

Cable visited us the day before he left. He comforted Liat and told her that everything would be fine. By saying this, he comforted me as well. He told her that he would be back in no

more than a couple of days. But seeing the two of them together, I couldn't stop myself from thinking that my sister was with a white man.

I walked Cable to his boat. The sun was setting, and the air was warm. "Cable, why do prejudices exist? When you took me to the naval base, I met a wonderful girl. Our relationship was ruined because of prejudice. I don't know what is wrong with me. I've changed and found within me feelings I shouldn't have. Why are we prejudiced? Why is everyone prejudiced?"

"'You've got to be carefully taught.' 'You've got to be taught to be afraid of people whose eyes are oddly made, and people whose skin is a different shade – You've got to be carefully taught.'" Cable began to walk more quickly, with his head thrust forward. "Prejudices are not something you're born with. It all depends on the way you're brought up. Back home my family taught me to be afraid of people who are different from us. They drummed these lessons into my ears and made sure I was 'carefully taught.' And now, now I have to push all of this down, deep down where it can't reach me."

"Cable, how do you do it? I've tried to do the same thing, but I can't, I can't. 'One dream in my heart, one love to be living for...this nearly was mine... Close to my heart she came, only to fly away...'" It was hard to keep up with Cable. Our walk had become a raging current. "Cable, I beg of you, tell me!" My voice rose. "How can you push your prejudice down?"

"I haven't Li, I haven't." Suddenly, Cable stopped and turned to face me. His voice also rose. His eyes filled with sorrow and anger. "I was taught to be afraid. I was taught before I was 'six or seven or eight' to hate all the people my relatives hate!" Cable hit his fist against his open hand. "And I haven't escaped yet. I love Liat, and I love you like a brother. And yet, yet....Li! Join me, Li! Fight with me! And help me! God, help me!" His arms reached towards the heavens as if he were addressing God.



photo of Lieutenant Cable, played by Matthew Morrison, in the 2008 production of South Pacific.

“Cable!” I shouted. “You must help me, too! I must get rid of my mixed-up feelings. After your mission, Cable, let’s work together! And maybe we’ll even make Mother understand.”

That night, Mother, Liat and I sat around the table and prayed. We prayed to God to let Cable and Emile be safe. We thanked God, and we also thanked dear Father, who would have comforted us at this time. There was a sudden smell of incense in the air. We prayed that night, we prayed.

* * * *

Claire told me later what happened on the naval base a couple of days after Cable and Emile had gone on their mission. Claire was walking along the beach when she found Nellie sitting with her hands in a gesture of prayer. Nellie’s eyes were closed, Claire told me. Her face was wet with tears. Claire rushed to Nellie’s side and put her arm around her.

“Nellie! What’s wrong?”

“Claire, oh Claire! It’s Emile! He’s out there, and Cable, dear Cable...he’s dead, Claire!”

“Is it certain?”

“Yes. It came over the radio.”

“Oh, my goodness! Cable was such a good man! He was Li’s friend!”

“Of course, your Li. This is terrible! But Claire, did you know that Cable was planning to marry Li’s sister Liat?”

“Oh, my goodness!” Claire was devastated. “Cable was planning to marry Liat, so why can’t I be with Li?”

“A couple of days ago,” said Nellie, “Emile confronted me about breaking off our engagement, and I insisted that I couldn’t help my feelings of intolerance. Why did I do that? And then I ran off. Then Emile, he went on the same mission as Cable. And if Cable died, then Emile must have... Why did he go? Because of me, because he felt he had nothing more to lose. It’s all my fault! I realize now how little my bigotry means in light of my love for Emile. Listen to me loud and clear, Claire. Prejudice is not worth it! It is not worth it at all! Emile could be dead.”

“Oh, Nellie! Li and his family must be told that Cable is dead!”

“Go to him, Claire! Go!”

“But only officers can go to Bali H’ai.”

“Yes, but listen: ‘Some enchanted evening, when you find your true love, when you feel him call you across a crowded room — Then fly to his side and make him your own, or all through your life you may dream all alone... Don’t die, Emile. Once you have found him, never let him go...’”

“Oh, Li! Oh, Emile! Oh, Cable! The three of them! Never let him go! But one is gone already and can never be brought back! And one we must wait for news of! Nellie, go to Emile’s home and take care of his children.”

“Yes, Claire, of course. Oh, Ngana and Jerome!”

“Go now, Nellie! Emile’s children need you!”

“And you go, Claire! The family needs you! Li needs you! Take a boat. You know how. The island is not very far, and the sea is calm.”

Nellie went to Emile’s plantation, and there she found Emile, alive, back from the mission. Meanwhile, Claire, as she told me, somehow managed to get a row boat and row to

Bali H'ai. She told me that it felt as though she were being led here by the island itself. "Come away," it called, "Come away."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Marina Chan is an eighth grader at the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, struggling with endless schoolwork. She would rather focus on her passions: dance, singing, piano, violin, theater, art -- and heating and air conditioning (her father's joke!). She will keep up the fight. Marina acquired her love for the musical South Pacific almost a year ago when her parents brought her to the **2008** Broadway revival for her thirteenth birthday. She adores the musical not only for its remarkable music, but for its story, which is romantic and funny, but which also portrays the hardships and realities of life and war. Sometimes thinking about the plot of the musical makes Marina feel stressed. At times like these, she likes to wipe everything from her mind and only think of the "trite," "gay," and "corny" parts. Marina sings the songs from these parts over and over again. She acts as her own voice teacher by carefully listening to Ensign Nellie Forbush (played by the wonderful Kelli O'Hara) in the new cast recording and trying to learn from Nellie's singing style. At other times, Marina questions the story and its characters, noticing that the plot does not reflect the natives' point of view. "What does Bloody Mary really think of the Americans?" Marina often asks herself. The treatment of racism in the musical only includes the American feeling toward the Polynesians and Tonkinese. What is the Asian feeling toward the Americans? Marina is particularly interested in the racial aspects of the story because she, herself, is Chinese. (However, oftentimes, she likes to wear a flower in her hair and pretend to be Tonkinese!) Like Nellie, Marina has a positive, open-hearted attitude and is optimistic that you will enjoy her story, which is from the natives' point of view. If you're wondering, Marina does not consider herself a "cockeyed optimist." She believes her simple hopes are pretty reasonable. Yet she is optimistic that someday, she might find that mysterious island in the South Pacific, Bali H'ai. Personally, I believe that here Marina is a cockeyed optimist, no matter what she says.



Come away, come away...

Kids were swimming in the sea, and some ran up to me. "Where you goin', Mr. Li?"

"I'm going to the naval base, my little ones, but I'll be back in the afternoon."

"You goin' there?" They pointed to the nearby land. "Holy cabooses, Mr. Li. Well, have fun!"

But Li's experiences will be far from "fun." Li, the twenty-five-year-old Tonkinese son of Bloody Mary, does not know what he is getting himself into when he goes to the American naval base just across the water from his island. He will face one of the biggest problems of his life and find something buried within himself that he never knew existed, racial prejudice, when he falls in love with an American nurse. Inspired by South Pacific, this is the captivating story of two young lovers trying to look beyond their prejudice to find the answer that will lead them to their destiny.

"Marina Chan's revolutionary work completely inverts the interracial relationships in South Pacific by telling the story from the point of view of Liat's brother, Bloody Mary's son. The original musical was unique among musicals for the power of its message, but the message here is even more powerful."

---- New York Times

"This is a truly remarkable story that should be turned into a musical as quickly as possible. I hope it is staged in time for me to play Claire. Although it is set in the South Pacific during World War II, its message is universal and timeless. I am already thinking of lyrics..."

---- Kelli O'Hara

"One might think that this story is merely political, but the spirit of the work is also emotional. The author seems to be passionately connected to her characters and setting. Beautifully written, with music in every line."

---- Paulo Szot

"Although I went through hundreds of performances, it never once occurred to me that Bloody Mary was a living breathing human being. Thank you, Marina Chan, for bringing me to my senses."

---- Danny Burnstein

"Thank you for expressing the point of view of the 'other.' Your rich depiction of Bloody Mary and her family will help provide a new dimension to my character onstage."

---- Loretta Ables Sayre