

# HANA-LANI

CHRISTINE SUNDERLAND

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\$16.95, 6 x 9 Paperback, 188 pp., 978-1-60290-260-2  
F1C019000 **FICTION** / Literary

Published in the U.S. by: **OakTara Publishers**  
P.O. Box 8, Waterford, VA 20197

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## Prologue

Old Nani-lei dusted the books lining the shelves as high as she could reach, singing to herself. The top rows were left to gather a thin white film rarely noticed in the room dimmed by draperies blocking the Hawaiian sun. Beyond the heavy panels, beyond the grassy bluff, even beyond the black cliffs, the sea crashed beneath the wide dome of sky, but Nani was content to keep the windows covered, for the books were precious to her grandson-in-law Henry, now in his middle age, and the sun was harsh. Some day she would open them for good, and the sea and the sky would flood the front room with their joy. But not yet.

No one in Hana town knew Nani's birth year exactly, and neither did Nani, nor did she care. She had seen generations come into this world and generations pass on to the better one, children grow to be adults, parents, grandparents. She had lived to 2004 much against her better judgment, but she was there for a reason, she knew, and she accepted this, not knowing what the reason was. Only last month Nani had buried her brother, over a hundred years on this good earth, and now she was the last of her generation. There had been nine of them, two older brothers and six younger sisters, and she had buried them all, the last being Willie. She buried many of the next generation too, a son and a daughter, nieces and nephews. Now Willie rested in the church graveyard with other Browns, Kaelanis, and Fitzhughs. He rested alongside her granddaughter Maria, drowned nearly two years ago.

Nani wore loose flowered cotton over her ample body, and her fleshy arms emerged from cap sleeves woven with ribbons. Her feet were bare most of the time, but for outdoors she liked her rubber sandals from Hasegawa's General Store. She moved slowly, gliding about the house, her wide hips swaying to music only she could hear, as she cared for Maria's husband, Henry, and his little Lucy, her fifth great-grandchild. She was mighty proud of it, too, proud to be a *tutu*, a

grandmother of many.

She finished the shelves and tables in the living room, and moved to the banister that led to the upper bedrooms. She polished the wood with lemon oil, rubbing a thick cotton towel along its grain as her mother had taught. The wood gleamed, the grains both dark and light moving up and down, rather like people, she thought. She loved Hanalani, the old house that was her birth-home, a clapboard assortment of rooms and extensions that had grown with her own years, and as she worked, she prayed, her cross and her medal of Saint Christopher, patron of sailors, damp against her heart. Sometimes the silver chains entwined, and she had to untangle them with her fingers.

Nani finished the banister and moved to the kitchen to check on Lucy, busy coloring at the table. The child's dark curls brushed the newsprint tablet as she bent close to her work, her tiny fingers grasping a red crayon. She looked up and grinned, and Nani could see with satisfaction two teeth breaking through the upper gum to replace those taken by the tooth fairy. The child, seeing her tutu pause, returned to the page to fill in the petals of a hibiscus flower. A sweet girl, Nani thought, but she should be in school. Nani adjusted Lucy's hearing aid, attached to a band worn over her head. The child had been born with the impediment, as they called it, but this little gadget helped. They were a good fit, Nani thought, the old grandmother and the grieving grandson-in-law and the partially deaf child. And Lucy had grown, fed by Nani's love and listening, from four to five to six and nearly seven now, running over the lawns that lapped the house, collecting yellow plumeria to string into fragrant leis, as the sea pounded the cliffs far below.

She checked her taro chunks boiling in a pot on the black iron stove and stabbed them with a fork. These should make enough *poi* for the rest of the week, and she would mash them to a fine pulp to work between her gums. She searched for her masher, looking through assorted appliances, gifts she refused to exchange, each one holding the heart of the giver. She would portion the *poi* into small plastic tubs with snap-on lids to freeze, as she did with her vegetable stew, pureed, so she would never go hungry. She loved the story of the Little Red Hen who worked so hard on that loaf of bread. She tried to do the

same.

Tutu Nani found the masher and set it out, ready. She filled the kettle. Summertime she brewed pineapple tea on the stoop, but this was February and she preferred Noni tea, the herbal remedy against colds and flu. They did have winter in Maui, contrary to what some folks thought. Winter was the rainy season, and the temperatures dropped a bit too. She pulled a bamboo tray from a lower cupboard, set a mug on a cracked saucer, and waited for the water to heat. Henry wanted his tea in his study today, and she would oblige, in hopes he would forgo the rum. She often wondered what he wrote in the makeshift office, but she could not read and was content to help him however she could.

Nani poked the taro again and glanced through the kitchen window. The sun had disappeared suddenly, as it often did, and the afternoon sky was dark with black clouds pushed by the wind. Farther out, the sea churned, sending white caps in a mad dance over the surface. Nani knew of the sea and its lore, how outriggers with their boat gardens followed the stars to Hawaii, how they crossed the oceans from Tahiti so long ago, an ancient line of adventurers going back even to India. She knew the tales of Hana and the sugar fields, and the time when white cattle grazed on the grassy slopes of Haleakala. She recalled the building of Fagan's cross, planted high on the ridge under Pele's volcano, reflecting a new way of worship, a more peaceful way, she thought. She knew of the mountain's stormy past and quiet present, sure that both would form the future, and she sensed she bridged the mountain and the sea with her huge soul, a soul holding time before, time now, and time to come.

The kettle boiled and steamed, whistling its vapor into the still air. Nani poured the hot water over bark shavings in a clay pot, brewing the mulberry tea her family had made ever since she could remember, a family that carried the blood of many cultures in its veins. Indeed, she believed she was related to every soul in Hana—Samoans, Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, even the *haoles*—and her stories wove these threads together into a patchwork quilt she wore over her heart, warming the broken places.

Over the years she had waited tables and made beds. She taught music and dance to the *keikis* in school and played her ukulele in the

Congregational church, sitting cross-legged and humming, as her eyes roamed to the rose window over the front door and the people sang “Fairest Lord Jesus.” At family gatherings, she danced the soft sway of the island hula to “Aloha Oe” and tried to move her hands like a ballerina, her mottled fingers painting the air with stories of love and war. Pieces of those years cluttered the rooms of the house, for she could not give things up easily—dried flowers in a school yearbook, photos of her children and their children, faded and smudged with fingerprints. Most dear were Lucy’s pictures, swathes of vivid greens and pinks and deep sea-blues, tacked wherever a bit of blank wall could be found.

Nani poured the tea through a strainer into a mug, stirred in honey, and carried the tray to Henry’s study. Lucy padded close behind. The old woman paused outside Henry’s door, grief hitting her heart. She breathed deeply.

When Maria had drowned in the cold waters of San Francisco Bay, Henry left his teaching job at the university and came home to Hanalani with Lucy, as was right, for Nani had seen to his raising since he was twelve. Nani gave him the living room for his books and didn’t mind the shelves that covered the walls and the draperies that covered the windows. Henry was happy to sleep on a cot in the adjoining den and Lucy slept in his old room, the sun porch in the back. He asked for quiet, for solitude. He seemed relieved when Nani took over the routine of living—the cooking, cleaning, mending, washing, and above all, the care of Lucy Maria.

The dark-haired child with the soulful eyes was a painful reminder, Nani saw, of his beloved Maria, and the grandmother prayed her grandson would be healed of the grief demons, for she saw him plunge farther and farther into the abyss. If he fell too far, she feared she could not reach him. So in her grief, she watched over them, weaving them together as best she could, allowing the spirits of past, present, and future to work through her, under the mountain on the edge of the sea, in the wild grass surrounded by the rich rain forest.

Lucy knocked on the door and reached to open it with her small brown hand.

# One

**S***an Francisco* magazine said she was one of the most eligible women in town, and Meredith Campbell agreed. It was nice to be appreciated since moving from New York, nice to be admired in the party circuit. She had arrived at the City by the Bay in early 2002, so it had taken her only two years to get her name in print.

The workout room was packed with slim bodies, pushing and pulling, engaging steel levers and weights, grinding rubber soles onto moving belts. Above the whirring of the machines and the beeping digital read-outs, a rock band wailed as the February rain fell silently outside the double-paned windows of the tenth-floor club.

She flipped her cell shut, thought better of it, flipped it open, and tapped another number. She had finished twenty minutes on the Stairmaster and read her results: 178 calories. Not bad. Unlike some women who let themselves go, she worked hard, two hours daily, to meet her standards, but it seemed she could never *quite* meet them; she could never be *quite* like those models in the magazines. Still, her legs were long with muscular calves, her thighs toned, her tummy *almost* flat, her hips just wide enough to be alluring, her waist sweet and narrow. Her breasts tilted up nicely, impressive in her stretch camisole. She couldn't complain about her facial features, either, with the high cheekbones, wide-set blue eyes, star smile, and thick blond hair falling to her shoulders. She had come to expect men to melt at first glance.

Holding the phone to her ear, Meredith waited, counting the rings, not wanting to leave a message. "Pick up, Parker, pick up." She wiped her brow and climbed off the Stairmaster.

"Parker Kirby, Accounts," Parker said in her clipped voice, sounding rushed as usual.

"They fired me," Meredith hissed as she slipped her magazine, folded back on "How to Find Love," into her Gucci tote alongside the

*Chronicle's* horoscope page. The astrologer had predicted today would not be good.

"No! From your nice cushy job?"

"Yes, from my nice cushy job—the one you got for me, remember?" Meredith reached for her towel and headed for the locker room.

"The one Daddy got for you. You *do* interview well. Did he really fire you?"

Meredith's job had been good, really—six months of meeting and greeting clients, including her current roommate, Nick, but she *had* missed a few days.

"He may as well have, but no, it was that Mapleton lady, the old witch. She said my attire wasn't appropriate and my attendance irregular. I couldn't pass up that ski trip with Nick—I'd be a fool. And *my attire* is what everyone wears these days. She's a real Victorian, if you ask me."

"I told you your skirt was too short and your cami too tight. Too much leg and too much cleavage. You can't dress like that at the office of Kirby and Calhoun, not with your body." Parker laughed. "And I found the doc for that, don't forget."

"But *I* paid for it." It was worth every penny—the silicone enhancements, the nose job, and she was considering a tummy tuck, but maybe not right away, considering her bank balance. At thirty-six, she needn't worry about Botox. She moved her hand over her thigh, adjusted the black Lycra, and smiled at a well-built young man staring from the weight room.

"Parker, maybe you could talk to your father." Meredith paused and stretched out a sculpted hamstring.

"No can do, my beauty, no can do. Daddy left for London this morning."



Meredith climbed the stairs to her third floor apartment on Taylor, halfway between her Nob Hill sports club and the Union Square shops,

a convenient location. Nick wouldn't be home for hours. She could enjoy a hot bath, maybe call her masseuse, and be ready with champagne, wearing the black negligee he bought her. Being unemployed did have its advantages. Bubbles and hot water were nearly as soothing as sex and kept the dragon at bay, that uneasy feeling she might topple into the void, into nothingness.

Had she always felt that emptiness? That dizzying fear of being on the edge of the world, alone? Did everyone feel it? Newness helped banish the fear, smother it. Shopping gave her a nice rush as she carried her bags through a boutique door, planning how the pieces would fit into her ever-changing wardrobe. New was good. New was fresh and raw and untouched. New had edge and the surprise of the unknown, the unexplored. But better than new was sex, and best of all was new sex. In the early stages of a relationship, sex satisfied that need for—how could she define it—something intimate yet infinite. But even with sex, she hadn't been able to retain the feeling for long. Nick had been the longest, nearly three months, but *he* was a doctor with good hands.

One more floor. She tightened and released her abdominals as she climbed. Fitness could fill the void, and the right body would surely help, as well as the right job and the right man. That man *could be* Nick. Nick was *so* right in *so* many ways. He was easy on the eyes for starters, and he had a significant income as a surgeon. It was merely a matter of watching her diet and working out, exploring all aspects of seduction and achievement. Multi-talented women possessed power. They owned their lives, controlled their world, fulfilled their dreams. She was nearly there, by anyone's standard, or had been, until this job thing. Well, it was their loss. Her expertise would save someone else's company. And in the meantime Nick would console her, help with the rent, and keep her dragons at bay.

Meredith opened the door and threw her jacket on the white leather couch. In the weak light dimmed by high-rises and dark skies, she again appreciated the clean lines and muted tones of the condo's decor—the chrome chairs, the cream walls, the vanilla carpet so thick under her feet. The new rug had been Nick's idea when he moved in, and she smiled as she recalled their first tumble to test it out. The

plasma TV with surround sound was his contribution as well, covering most of one wall, and the screen greeted her like a friend, inviting her to pause, relax, unwind, absorb another's thoughts, experience another's feelings, a kind of vicarious pleasure and pain. They watched the news, and old movies too, or tried to, often finding the flashing images and voices arousing, like having sex in public.

She turned toward the long kitchen off the dining nook. The charcoal granite counter was bare except for a few artistically placed whisks, ladles, and spatulas in stainless steel holders. She checked on the goldfish a neighbor had left with her to feed. She frowned. The orange body floated on the water's surface, scales glistening.

Meredith ran her fingers along the smooth sides of the glass bowl as though she could bring the fish back to life. The boy in 2B had shoved it into her hands, and his mother had looked at her imploringly, offering a small canister of flakes. It was a moment of weakness, she thought now, as the floating fish accused her. She would find another one. Didn't they all look alike? The kid wouldn't know the difference.

She opened the refrigerator. Not much there. They rarely cooked, and Nick was as punctilious as she. No leftovers or old produce waited to be thrown out, no cheese molded in plastic drawers, and no eggs or butter or milk were getting past pull date. Several mineral waters, some vermouth, a lemon, and a jar of olives sat on the top shelf. Next to the olives was a bottle of champagne. At first relieved there was a chilled one waiting, she looked closer. Only half-full. She didn't recall opening it.

She reached for a mineral water and twisted the cap. As she put it to her lips, she heard someone laughing from down the hall. A woman. Nick's deep voice. What was going on?

She stepped slowly toward the bedroom. A pair of women's penny loafers lay on the carpet. Meredith stared at the shoes, then at the closed door.

She opened it slowly, her heart racing.

A woman's head slipped under the sheet. Nick looked up, raising himself on an elbow, his brown eyes wide with surprise, his face flushed, his thick hair sweaty.

"It's not what you think," he said as if reading lines.

“Yeah, sure.” She grabbed his hospital ID and trousers and slammed the door behind her. Had she really seen that?

She gripped the pants in her fingers. She had never doubted Nick’s adoration. After all, she had saved him from his boring marriage. What a fool she was, she thought as she tossed her neat bundle out the kitchen window into the back alley, where it landed squarely in the dumpster. *Yes*. A small satisfaction, but appropriate.

She found her jacket and tote, slammed the door, and walked down the stairs, numb. It wasn’t until she reached the street that she realized the woman was *Ashley*, his *wife*. She was ten years older than Meredith, at least ten pounds heavier, and her hair was a mousy brown.

Meredith paused in front of her building and stared at the traffic. *How could he?* Her chest throbbed and her throat was dry. She swayed and sat on the porch steps. What had happened? She and Nick had been close. She was *sure* they had been close. She was *sure* he loved her. Even though they never said the words, she knew it. How could he do this? The bedroom scene flashed through her mind like TV news, again and again. There was Nick, replayed and replayed, his sweaty face so surprised.

She clutched her knees. Wasn’t she good enough? And with his wife!

She shook her head, gripped her bag, and headed for Parker’s office. Parker would know what to do. Meredith pulled out her cell and tapped her friend’s number with the nail of her index finger.

“He was with Ashley,” she said, raising her voice above the traffic. She cut through Union Square, passing a new café and street musicians. Nick with Ashley did not make a pretty picture. Maybe her therapist could exorcise it.

“That can’t be.” Parker sounded interested but distracted.

“Meet me somewhere, Parker. This is serious. I’m falling apart.”

“I’ve got things going on here. Just a sec.”

Meredith maneuvered through the crowds, past an animal rights demonstration at Neiman Marcus, and on toward Grant Avenue.

“Okay,” Parker returned, sounding out of breath. “He’s gone. Meet me at Buzz’s. I want to hear all about it. Geez, Meredith, I’m so sorry.”

Meredith flipped her phone shut and inhaled deeply, tightening

her abs, working that tummy. By the time she approached the steel-and-glass skyscraper that leased the top floor to Buzz's Bar, she had resolved to get Nick back. He was so right for her; he didn't want children since he had three already, and she could *not* tolerate children.

Parker would have ideas how to remedy this temporary setback, and bring him to his senses. After all, Meredith was gorgeous. Everyone said so; they had always said so. She accepted her svelte curves and classic bone structure as her just due. This job thing and Nick's slight error in judgment were simply blips on the screen. She slipped through the revolving doors as the guards in the lobby stared. Men *do* like leather and tights, she thought, especially when a red camisole shows a little cleavage.

As she rode up the elevator, the image returned, Nick looking up at her, guilty. How could he? This was *not* a good day.



It was early to be at Buzz's, only four, but locals were beginning to arrive. They lingered around the chrome bar, dangled legs from retro stools, and partnered at Formica tables with potted ferns. A female vocalist wailed above the clatter of glasses and ice-crushing blenders.

"Play hard to get." Parker stirred a martini with her baby finger. She pulled out the olive and sucked on it. Her strawberry curls fell to her shoulders, and she raised a knowing brow over pink-shadowed lids that matched her lip-gloss. "That's what *I* usually do. Men generally want what they can't have. They're simple souls, really."

Meredith had never played hard to get. How many had there been? Did it matter? It was a liberating time to be alive, a time when a woman, just like a man, could have what she wanted or *who* she wanted, when she wanted. No commitment, no baby complications. Her morning-after pills had come in handy, and the one pregnancy she had blundered into had been neatly erased by Parker's sister, a fertility specialist. The stinging metal, the twinges of regret, and lingering guilt had been successfully buried, deep in her memory. Why should she even think about the abortion? After all, it was her choice, and the law

of the land backed her up. If the law said it was okay, well then, *duh*.

“Hard to get?” Meredith motioned to the waiter for a martini like Parker’s. “I don’t think so.”

“Yeah, like Scarlett and Rhett.”

“In *Gone with the Wind*?”

“Yeah.” Parker’s eyes roamed.

“What if he doesn’t fall for it? What if he believes I’m seriously leaving him?”

“No chance.”

Meredith followed her friend’s gaze to a cowboy at the far end of the room. He wore a three-piece suit and a broad-brimmed hat.

Parker whistled through her teeth. “Whoa baby, look at that guy. Matching pocket scarf.”

“He’s unavailable, remember? That’s the newsman from the magazine show.”

“You’re right. I thought I recognized him. He’s gay, another man lost to grazing women. This town gets worse every year. I don’t know why I don’t go to Texas or something, where there are real men. The number here is dwindling fast.” She shook her head and sighed.

“Parker, you’re not helping.” Meredith slipped a strand of hair behind her ear and pulled her camisole down farther.

“Okay, go to Maui.”

“Maui?”

“Go anywhere warm and tropical and romantic, so when Nick finds you, you’re in the right place, tanned, wearing appropriate clothing, or not wearing, as the case may be.” Parker waved her fingers through the air, her rings flashing, her bracelets jangling, as though she were pitching a Hollywood scene. “Remember the Bahamas, our junior year?” she said, giggling.

Meredith grinned. They had hooked up with two Yalies. It *had* been good. Was it Roy and Carter? No, it had to be Billy and Calum... “Maybe you’re right. I’ve got a little leeway on my plastic.” Suddenly she regretted spending her paycheck as soon as she received it, sometimes sooner, and wished she had opened a savings account as her father had advised. But she had some room on her cards, and a few of them had never been used. It might be time to break them in.

“No maybes. Book the flight now.” Parker eyed Meredith’s cell in the side pocket of her bag.

“Maui? I haven’t been to Maui since college.” She had been careless on that trip, a lesson she wouldn’t forget. He was a sweet boy, too, a local, with incredible biceps. They parasailed. He sucked her toes. They had sex on the beach.

“Stay at the Hotel Hana. I honeymooned there with number one.”

“Number one? You mean Terry?”

“Yeah, Terry.” Parker sighed, drifting away. “He had some bod, that Terry, and the place is a real sweet hideaway. I wonder what he’s doing these days.”

Meredith recalled the moist heat of the islands, the trade winds ruffling silk pareos, the aromas of jasmine and plumeria. She drank fruity rum cocktails with tiny parasols and wore clinging string bikinis. Her tan showed off her white teeth and blue eyes. She could use a little sun, aroma therapy, and yoga on a daily basis. Waiters would stare; porters would compete to carry her bags. Nick would be putty when he arrived.

“Tell me about it,” Meredith said as she reached for her second martini.

“They say it’s the top-rated getaway for the year. Posh. Very romantic. Private cabins and hot tubs. Crashing surf. Black sand beach. And it’s at the foot of Haleakala.”

“Haleakala?”

“The volcano.”

“You’re kidding.”

“An inactive volcano, not to worry, but, like, it’s different, right? Something new? Ever made love at the foot of a volcano?”

“Can’t say I have.”

“The hotel has a fabulous spa with all the latest treatments, a huge pool, even horses. Now that’s sexy.”

Meredith saw herself riding with Nick through frothy waves crashing on the beach. She straddled a palomino in high-cut shorts, galloping, up and down, up and down, her hair flying, the sea air fresh against her cheeks, Nick in pursuit. He would dismount, pull her off, and they would make love on the sand like Deborah Kerr and Burt

Lancaster in *From Here to Eternity*.

“I’ll need a new wardrobe,” Meredith said. She saw flowered bikinis and bronzed skin, wet and glistening, as she rose from the surf, like an updated Bo Derek in *Ten*.

“Then go shopping. Something new always lifts my spirits. Start over with everything.”

“I’ll do it.” Meredith smiled as she recalled a sale at Saks. “I’ll do it.” She flipped open her cell and tapped a number with a crimson nail. “Thanks, Parker.”

## Two

Meredith slipped into the back seat of the taxi, cursing the torn vinyl. She set her large Kelly bag alongside and hoped her luggage wouldn't be soiled in the trunk.

"The airport, domestic terminal," she said.

The driver nodded and headed across town to the freeway, beating time on the steering wheel to blaring reggae. A photo of three children hung under his permit, and a plastic Virgin Mary dangled from the mirror.

Meredith had returned to her apartment to find Nick had moved out. Just like that! The note read, *Sorry, babe, it's over*. Surely, she thought, he would call. But he didn't. Nor did he return her calls. Undeterred, she shopped and packed and ordered the taxi. Plan B. Parker was right.

The driver turned onto Gough, and Meredith pulled out her phone. No message. She rescheduled her personal trainer, her masseuse, her therapist, her hairdresser. Should she let her mother know?

She thought not. Her mother wouldn't care where she was or what she was doing. Marketing for Chanel filled her life, along with her numerous girlfriends. Meredith winced as she recalled visiting her mother in Paris. It was fun, the men intriguing, the champagne and *foie gras* delicious. The eighth arrondissement flat placed them near the designer houses—Gucci, Christian Dior, Louis Feraud, Celine, Prada. Her mother got her into the shows, where the great shoppers of the world watched slinky models slide down the runway, turning on their heels, their eyes steely and cool. Meredith had practiced the look—raised brow, lowered lid, scowl—and found it effective.

But her mother grew impatient with her daughter staying on, and staying on, and finally kicked her out. There was no other way to say it. She kicked out Meredith, her only daughter.

As the driver took the on-ramp to 101 South, Meredith folded her phone and examined her nails, noting that the extra coat was holding up well. After Paris, she had come to San Francisco, thanks to Parker who was from SF and knew people, the right sort of people. Parker had welcomed her with open arms, as did many of Parker's male friends. San Francisco didn't have the pace of hometown New York, but it served nicely at this point in time.

She wouldn't call her mother in Paris. And her father was beyond caring. His heart attack *in the act*—appropriate, Meredith thought—had left wives one, two, and three, as well as Meredith, her brother, and scattered half-siblings, with only debts and his ghostly presence in a Florida rest home. But he had enjoyed life. She gave him credit for that. He worked hard on Wall Street, evaded the SEC sweeps, made a bundle, played hard, and spent the bundle and then some.

The taxi followed the freeway along the bay, past Candlestick Park, through South San Francisco, Brisbane.

Meredith had visited her father at Christmas. He lay in a gray-green room that smelled of urine. The tubes of life wound around him like snakes. His watery eyes darted about and briefly rested on her. She took his hand, and his fingers moved slightly. This was not the father she had known growing up, the man who taught her to ski, to play touch football, to follow the Yankees on the sports page. This was not the man who had taken his princess shopping at Bergdorf's and waited in Queen Anne chairs as she modeled a dress for Christmas, Easter, or the symphony. Could this man, lying so helpless and gray, be the father she had visited when she was ten, every other Saturday, climbing six floors to his brownstone flat, and later counted the days to the next visit, marking them off on her Barbie calendar?

He was not, could not, be the same man. In the sour green room, she had gazed at the creature in the tilted bed, and as his eyes held hers, full of hope and love, and possibly regret, her heart choked. She knew tears were coming. She kissed him lightly on his forehead and walked out. There was no point in wasting her time. Life was for the young. You had to look out for yourself in this world, *numero uno*, treat yourself right. Why, she recently read a magazine article on the virtues of "healthy selfishness," written by two psychologists. Her father would

have agreed with them.

As the taxi headed down the off ramp Meredith wondered if her father's physical therapy was doing any good, and shoved the image of his broken body to the back of her mind. He may as well be dead, she thought. What kind of life did he have? She almost wished he would fade quietly away.

They pulled up to curbside check-in, and Meredith shivered. She sensed this trip would change her, and she had no desire to be changed. But she had come this far, with new matched luggage crammed with silk panties and bright bikinis. She buried her unease with images of giant Mai Tais and coral sunsets, paid the driver, and turned toward the porter.

"Kahului, Maui." She handed him the e-ticket as she set down her bags.

Her phone jangled. It was Parker, sounding amused. "I asked Daddy about the job."

"And?" Meredith tipped the attendant and stepped into the terminal, looking for a route through the crowds to the security checkpoint and gate.

"He was as surprised as you were. I think he liked your company uniform, but he can't upset Mapleton. He said she's the brains behind the business, and the partners would have his head. Sorry, did my best."

"That's okay, Parker. Thanks for trying. Gotta go. Heading for the gate."

"Sure. Aloha, kid. Think of me when you're on the beach with that parasol drink."

"Hope I don't have to."

"Ha, ha."



A little after two in the afternoon, Meredith loaded her bags onto a cart and pushed it to the opposite end of the Kahului terminal. As she moved through the thick humid air, she guessed her makeup must be running.

She found Island Air in a low-rise building, roofed but open on one side, and approached the counter.

Where were the trade winds? Her silk pantsuit clung to her skin. Her feet were swollen from the five-hour flight from SF and sticking to her stilettos. She fished in her red handbag for a tissue to blot her cheeks and forehead, and another to clean her oversized dark glasses. Where was the aroma of flowers she remembered? The air reeked of gasoline.

“Hana?” the clerk asked. Shuffling papers, she reached for Meredith’s ticket.

“Please.” Meredith lifted her bags onto the scale.

“We can’t guarantee arrival. Storms are sudden.”

“But it’s clear,” Meredith said, looking at the sky. “You can’t guarantee arrival?” Perhaps she should rent a car and tackle the two-hour drive down the coast.

“The Hana airport has no radar. If cloud cover comes in, it’s a no-go.”

“What happens then?”

“When?”

“When cloud cover comes in,” Meredith said, her tone edged with anger. She tapped her foot, cursing the humidity.

The clerk eyed her as though she were a blithering idiot. “If Hana is covered with cloud, the pilot turns around.”

“And when is the next flight?”

“In the morning. Are you canceling, Ms. Campbell?”

Meredith dabbed her forehead with the tissue. “No, I’m not canceling.”

Within the hour, she climbed a rope ladder and lowered her head as she stepped into a six-seater propjet. Two couples waited as Meredith found 1A and worked to buckle the shoulder strap into the lap belt. The pilot, her long dark hair pulled into a band, took her place in the cockpit and ran her fingers over the controls, checking and speaking into her headset. Meredith could see beyond her, past the computer screens and blinking panels, and out the high, curved windshield.

They taxied into position on the short runway, and Meredith braced herself for takeoff, wondering with some nervousness how

puddle-jumpers like this ever managed to fly. She peered out her window, under the wing, a thrill shooting through her as she felt the momentum of the plane build, the engine roar and vibrate up her spine. She had never flown in one of these. A new experience. Something sexy about it too.

The plane lifted off, and Meredith watched the ground disappear beneath her. She watched the world below become small like a child's play village: the airport with its buildings and runways arranged at straight angles, the rooftops and green yards, the shops and parking lots, the schools and churches, the broad embracing farmlands. The motor leveled to a smooth hum, and they banked in an arc to the east, turned south, and flew low along a coastline of forested cliffs eroded by the sea. White foam crashed against black rock and red earth. Clouds hung over Haleakala to the west, and as the sun dropped behind them, silver rays shot through dark canyons and over green fields, fingers playing on the mountain birthed by the waters.

The plane flew smooth and low over the sea along the coast. Meredith watched for a minute, briefly entranced, drank from her water bottle, and checked her face in her slim compact. Her creamy skin glistened in the humidity, and there was a slight flush along her cheekbones. She examined her shadow and liner, and closed her compact with a satisfied sigh. She ran a brush through her hair so that it fell in silky waves, teasing her bare shoulders, and pulled out *Vogue* and a nail file. She hoped the hotel's spa was everything they said it was. She wanted a manicure and a facial for starters, and a full-body mud treatment wouldn't be a bad idea.

"That's where that fellow drowned," the woman behind her said to her companion.

Meredith looked out the window and saw a broad plateau jutting from the coast. High surf crashed against black rock.

"They never found the body," the man replied.

"Washed over the cliff?"

"Must have been some storm."

"Seems so peaceful now."

"That's the islands for you."

Meredith shivered and returned to her magazine, catching up on

the Paris shows. Soon she felt the plane descend. As they approached a short runway, she looked through her window to dense forest sloping to the sea, the plane flying low, nearing the earth. Suddenly they dropped onto the pavement, rocked gently, and taxied toward a single-story building.

Bending, she climbed out of the cabin, down the rope ladder, onto the tarmac, and into the blazing sun. She approached the terminal, her handbag in one hand and her tote in the other. She glanced at her watch. Five o'clock. Seven, SF time. She hoped the hotel wasn't far. She was dying for a martini.

She retrieved her luggage and inquired at the desk about a taxi to the hotel. The deeply tanned clerk, smiling and nodding an enthusiastic welcome, pointed outside to a bright red trolley. Other passengers were loading their mismatched bags and climbing aboard. She raised her brows at the friendly clerk. He nodded and pointed again.

*This is not an auspicious beginning*, she thought as she walked toward the vehicle, her heels clicking. The driver set her luggage in the back. Was this an old fire engine? A cattle car? She climbed aboard and pulled a tissue from her bag to wipe the vinyl bench. Sitting down gingerly, she frowned at her wrinkled silk jacket. The truck jerked up the road, and she grabbed a chrome handrail. A moist wind blew through the open windows, sending her hair flying. *It's a bloody rain forest*. She peered at the lush growth on either side of the highway. *Parker didn't say anything about the Amazon*.

The engine whirred, chomped, and emitted strange guttural sounds. The driver tried to speak above the racket and the creaking of the side panels.

"This was built as a fire truck," he was saying. "It's a '39 Packard. I'd say it's in pretty good condition, all things considered."

Some of the passengers giggled and sighed with appreciation.

"Before 1850," he continued, "Hana Ranch was Hana Plantation. There was a grass shack and a mill run by oxen. Then it became part of the Ka'eleku Sugar Company. In 1944, the San Francisco businessman Paul Fagan bought all fourteen thousand acres of the plantation and founded Hana Ranch, replacing the sugar fields with white Herefords. Today you can see the cattle grazing all over the property."

*Who cares?*

But the driver's broad shoulders reminded her of Nick, and with renewed determination, she pictured him on a horse, riding through the waves, maybe wearing a Stetson.

She pulled out her cell and checked her messages. Nothing. It was still early, only forty-eight hours since she found him with *that woman* in *their* bed. She had been fortunate to get a flight out so quickly, to find a cancellation so soon.

How long would it take Nick to find her? Maybe a week, tops? She needed a tan, more workouts, and some spa time. A week, and Nick would be begging. He would find her, all right, and the sex would be better than ever. She smiled. Parker would let him know her location.

"In 1946," the driver explained, "Mr. Fagan created the first Hotel Hana-Maui—six rooms called the Ka'uiki Inn. It grew to become the wonderful hotel you will enjoy today, but first I'll make a loop through Hana town."

*Hana town* was no more than an intersection, Meredith thought, as they spluttered and bounced along. The driver pointed out the post office, the general store, and the local grill. He rattled up a circular drive and squeaked to a stop in front of a modest ranch-style building.

He jumped out and offered his thick hand to Meredith. She ignored him and stepped on the running board, then down to the pavement, her eyes scanning the open-air lobby. Parker said *posh*. It didn't look very posh to her.

A dark-skinned woman in a long floral dress approached the truck. She carried a tray of juice and napkins in a bed of flowers. "Welcome to Hotel Hana-Maui," she said with a wide white smile....

For more of the story, read on...

# HANA-LANI

CHRISTINE SUNDERLAND

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Don't Miss

# PILGRIMAGE



Christine Sunderland

It was a day  
when nothing should have gone wrong...  
but everything did.

Madeleine Seymour will never forget what happened twenty-two years ago in her own backyard. She's still riddled with guilt. Hoping to banish the nightmares that haunt her and steal her peace, she travels to Italy with her husband, Jack, on a pilgrimage. As a history professor, Madeleine is fascinated by the churches they visit...and what they live about the lives of the martyrs. But can anything bring her the peace that her soul longs for?

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# OFFERINGS



Christine Sunderland

Jack's haunted by fears of the past.  
Madeleine holds a powerful secret.  
And Rachelle is running away.

For the last seventeen years, her husband, Jack, and son, Justin, have been Madeleine Seymour's world. Then, during Justin's wedding reception, Jack collapses. Jack needs surgery, and he insists it be performed by the doctor who perfected the procedure. But the doctor isn't reachable, and time is running out.

Dr. Rachelle DuPres, plagued by memories of a deadly failure, flees America to search out her roots in her ancestral village in Provence, France. But as she tries to locate the graves of her Catholic uncles and her Jewish parents, will their roles in the Holocaust bring more angst—or the answers she so desperately seeks?

*A poignant story about choices made along the way...  
and the miracles of the heart.  
Set in the breathtaking beauty of France.*

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# INHERITANCE



Christine Sunderland

She risked everything to save a life...  
But who would save hers?

Vietnamese-American Victoria Nguyen, seventeen, flees to England with a powerful secret...and a determined senator on her trail.

Madeleine Seymour, a history professor, and her husband, Jack, a retired wine broker, travel from San Francisco to London to purchase property for a children's home—and find much more than land at stake.

Brother Cristoforo, a black Franciscan from the Seymours' Quattro Coronati orphanage in Rome, wrestles with demons of his past and present.

Woven through the mists of Lent to new life on Easter Day, *Inheritance* draws the lives of these four characters together to a stunning, unforgettable conclusion.

*A poignant story about choices made along the way...  
and the miracles of the heart.  
Set in the breathtaking beauty of England.*

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## About the Author



**CHRISTINE SUNDERLAND**, author of the trilogy, *Pilgrimage*, *Offerings*, and *Inheritance*, has long been interested in the formation of cultural ideals in American society, and the role of history and tradition in the public square. In her visits to Hawaii she has appreciated the respect for faith and family she has found there, as well as the stunning natural world, both beautiful and dangerous.

She is currently Church Schools Director for the Anglican Province of Christ the King and Vice-President of the American Church Union (*Anglicanpck.org*). She has edited *The American Church Union Church School Series*, *The Anglican Confirmation Manual*, and *Summer Lessons*. She has authored *Teaching the Church's Children* and seven children's novellas, the *Jeanette Series*, published by the American Church Union.

Christine holds a B.A. in English Literature *cum laude*. She is an alumna of the Squaw Valley Writers Workshop and the Maui Writers Retreat.

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