

"TABU"

Screenplay by John Collee

Based on an original drama created by
the Yakel tribe with Bentley Dean and
Martin Butler

EXT. THE VOLCANO. NIGHT.

An abstract title sequence - glowing embers thrown into the night sky.

We hear: a low female voice murmuring in dialect. The words are incomprehensible to us. They are the words the "Spirit Mother" - Yakul the volcano.

CUT TO:

INT. HUT. DAWN

A tousle-haired tomboy aged 9: This is Selin.

BCU on her face pressed against a raffia mat, sleeping peacefully.

Over this, FADE IN the sounds of the village wakening: pigs grunting, dogs barking, piglets squealing, cockerels crowing.

The sound rises to a dreadful cacophony.

Selin opens her eyes.

Her POV: Her sister WAWA, a pretty girl aged 16, is crouched in the middle of the hut, feeding sticks into the hearth, blowing on the embers.

Smoke filters up through the palm-thatched roof. Motes of dust dance in the sunlight.

Wawa looks up from the fire. Their relationship is teasing and playful.

WAWA

Come here and turn the Taros,
sleepy-head. I have to get ready
to make my skirt and everything.

SELIN

Ha. You're not grown up yet,
you're not my boss.

WAWA

I will be, so be nice.

Selin sits up.

SELIN

I don't know why you're looking forward to it. You know they whip you, and throw you in freezing water. Then you have to work in the gardens forever ...

(A beat)

I'm never going to be a woman

WAWA

Then don't be, but come and give me a hand here.

Selin sticks her tongue out and goes outside.

WAWA (CONT'D)

Selin!

EXT. THE VILLAGE. DAWN

Selin emerges into a scene of strange beauty: The ragged eaves are still dripping with last night's rain.

Mist rises from the black volcanic earth, mingling with wood-smoke. The foliage at this early hour seems impossibly green. Sunlight touches the top of the orange trees.

He father LINGAI is already up, feeding the pigs.

Selin can hear other children playing.

Chickens and piglets are running underfoot. She runs off to join her playmates.

WAWA

Selin!!

EXT. VILLAGE COMPOUND. VARIOUS ANGLES

The sun is higher. Everyone is at work, chopping wood, drying coffee beans.

Selin's grandfather, a wiry, athletic 50-something called ALBI is making a bow for hunting. He's also the tribe's Shaman - or wise man. There's a lively intelligence in his dark brown eyes.

The women and girls wear long raffia skirts. The men and boys wear woven penis-sheaths, with a long raffia tail which tucks under them when they sit.

Some kids are in the mandarin tree, picking fruit. Others are playing a game "capturing" each other and tickling them with a cockerel feather.

KIDS

Mary is "It". Hold her down
Tickle her.

MARY

I give up! That's enough.

KIDS

Selin is "It"! Selin is "It!"

Selin springs up and the gang race after her, getting in everyone's way.

The adults yell at them to go play somewhere else.

EXT. WATERFALL. DAY

Later, at the waterfall, men roll leaves with which to make their penis sheaths, while women wash their grass skirts on rocks.

The older women are talking and joking with Wawa.

AUNT SARA

It's going to be a big day for you.
You'll be wearing this and everyone will be celebrating.

GRANDMA

(Re the fibre)

You have to rub it between your hands before you rub it on the rock, see?

AUNT NAHLO

What's she talking about? Your grandmother's got a one-track mind

Laughter.

GRANDMA

Oh Wawa, with your new skirt and your lovely big nose, everyone's going to love you.

AUNT SARA

You'll be just like your grandma.
Weee! All the boys were chasing her.

GRANDMA

....With your hair all done up

and your lovely figure. Just as well you're a good fast runner

NAHLO

Grandma was too slow. Now she's got twenty-four grand-children to show for it.

GRANDMA

Yes, and who's fault is that?

More laughter from the aunties

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

(To Wawa)

Don't let those boys hang onto your hair. Run as fast as you can. You can dance and show off as much as you like but then RUN! You'll drive them all crazy. They'll be falling over themselves to catch you. Just run around and around till they're all worn out.

NAHLO

(Laughing hard)

Stop. I'm going to pee myself

GRANDMA

(To Wawa)

I'm serious. You'll be like a lovely plump chicken and the boys will be like hungry hawks, ...and I'll be like an eagle flying up and down in all directions. If any boys grabs you I'll kick him off. I'm not joking.

She shows off her kicking style and the naughty Aunties whoop with laughter.

Wawa looks away -

She sees, a figure through the trees.

It's the chief's grandson DAIN, his hair adorned with a crown of bright green ferns.

He's staring directly at her. How did he get there?

He meets her eyes and she looks down.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Pay attention. This is your
grandmother telling you this.

Wawa then sneaks another look at Dain. He's still there,
smiling.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Why do you keep looking up the
river? What are you looking for?

Grandma follows Wawa's line-of-sight but Dain has
vanished as if by magic.

Wawa smiles to herself and returns to her washing.

There's a sudden hue and cry at the other end off the
pool.

Wawa's younger sister Selin has stolen a penis sheath
which the boys were making. She runs off with it, chased
by a group of children.

SELIN
Nah Nah, can't catch me!

The children run across the log over the river. Adults
jump up and shout at them to stop.

ADULTS
Hey, not that way!

The other kids obey, but Selin keeps running.

Her father, LINGAI shouts angrily and chases after her.

LINGAI
Hey! Selin

INT. FOREST. DAY.

Lingai sprints, flat out, through the forest after Selin.

It's uncanny the speed at which these forest-dwellers can
travel among trees - the dark trunks flashing past.

LINGAI
Selin!

Finally he catches her and shakes her.

LINGAI (CONT'D)
What are you thinking? You know
this side is Imetin territory.

SELIN
(Obstinate)
Not all of it.

LINGAI
Well, according to them it is.
So take the long way round. You
want another big war like
before? You want us all hiding
in the forest again - too scared
to go back to our houses? Just
watch what you're doing.

He starts heading back, Selin following moodily.

SELIN
That war's over anyway.

LINGAI
It's never over. They kill one
of ours then we kill one of
theirs... and so it goes on
forever.

SELIN
So who's turn is it now... to
kill someone?

LINGAI
That depends. Actually its none
of your business. And don't talk
back so much. You're getting a
bit out of control you know.

They walk off, and we reveal an Imetin warrior
KAPTAN COOK, hidden in the undergrowth,
watching.

EXT. NAKAMAL. NIGHT

In the meeting place, at night, the men squat round the
fire, under the banyan trees, smoking and discussing the
day's events while the teenage boys prepare kava for
them.

LINGAI
She's not a bad person, just
unruly - doesn't listen to any
of us. I don't know what to do
with the girl.

CHARLIE
Maybe your father should take
her to the volcano.

They both look to ALBI - shaman of the tribe. He's Lingai's father and Selin and Wawa's grandfather.

ALBI

Well. If you don't think it's too far for her...

LINGAI

There's no hurry. Maybe after Wawa's ceremony.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Wawa is covered in oil. Village women massage her bare breasts and shoulders - the start of her passage-to-womanhood ceremony.

AUNT NAHLO

Just turn around. Rub your face. Come closer.

(To the others)

Everyone come closer and rub some of Wawa's coconut oil on her body. Then we can all go swimming together.

The women are all excited about the prospect of swimming. Wawa is nervous about what lies in store...

GRANDMA

Can I have some? Put it on my belly and on my bum.

The aunties dutifully oblige.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

...And on my back while you're at it, 'cos I'm a hard working woman and I carry heavy things. Ah, that's good. I'm happy now.

They finish rubbing oil onto Grandma and then they all head off to the river together.

EXT. RIVER. DAY

The women approach the river with Wawa in their midst.

WAWA

This isn't going to be good, is it? I'm afraid of what's going to happen.

YOWAYIN

Nothing will happen, don't be
such a baby. On you go now. Lets
go to the water. Come, come.

Other woman are taking whippy branches from the
surrounding foliage.

WAWA

Do I really have to be whipped?

AUNT SARA

Yes, but the water is so bloody
cold you won't feel a thing
afterwards.

Everyone laughs.

Then someone starts the play-fight and the laughing women
start whipping each other with branches and screaming.

In a big melee they all plunge into the freezing
waterfall together.

EXT VILLAGE. DAY

Washed now, outside her hut, Wawa receives gifts from her
friends - a new grass skirt, seed necklaces and chicken
feathers.

AUNT NAHLO

We are putting this necklace
around your neck. Then you can
go and see your father. You must
always wear that on your neck.

GRANDMA

Now we are putting this makeup
on your face to show you are a
woman. Now you must follow
Kastom. No more playing with
boys. Chief Charlie will decide
who you're to marry, when the
time comes - OK?

Wawa has her own views on that but she makes no reply.

YOWAYIN

When we've painted your face we
are going to the dance.

WAWA.

Oh really? Do we have to?

YOWAYIN

Of course, everyone will be dancing.

AUNT SARA

Give me a bush knife. Cut the top skirt shorter than the other one.

EXT. VILLAGE TRACK. DAY

Several Yakel men, led by Chief Charlie head down to the village for the culmination of Wawa's ceremony.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Wawa's mother Yowawin, hands Wawa the slices of "lap-lap" - pancake made of taro-root - which they have prepared together.

YOWAWIN

Take this food and share it with the men.

Wawa cuts and serves the ceremonial lap-lap as the men of the tribe file past.

Out of respect for her new status as a woman, the handsome chief's grandson Dain, is careful not to look her in the eye, but as he takes the lap-lap from her he murmurs under his breath.

DAIN

(Whispers)

Congratulations. You're looking very beautiful.

WAWA

(Whispers)

Shut up!

EXT. NAKAMAL. EVENING.

In the tribal meeting place, in evening light, the men sit around smoking at chatting, as is their custom.

CHIEF CHARLIE

So the Imetin are getting dangerous again.

LINGAI

What do you men - "dangerous"?

CHIEF CHARLIE

Trespassing on our territory -
clearing gardens on the disputed
land. They're short of taro so
it's our fault somehow.

DAIN

Those idiots. It's us who should
be threatening them. We still
owe them back for killing my
parents.

LINGAI

Well they'll always invent some
grievance. It's the same as last
hot season, but worse. So just
be careful.

DAIN

We should just smash them.

ALBI

No-one's smashing anyone, Dain.
Learn to ignore them. There's
plenty of forest for everyone.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Another day.

Deep in the shady forest there is only the sound of bird-
song.

Wawa walks through the trees, head tilted up looking for
bees nests in the high branches.

The sun is a spotlight on her face.

CUT TO a POV SHOT of Wawa observed through trees.

Dain is silently stalking her, stopping when she stops,
then continuing on when she moves.

CU on Dain's feet. He steps on a twig. Wawa stops and
looks round.

Her POV: Nothing there. She continues, apparently
oblivious.

Dain has lost sight of her. He moves to where she was
standing and she jumps out and challenges him.

WAWA

Hey!

DAIN
Oh, Hello, beautiful.

WAWA
I wish you'd stop calling me
that. I'm not beautiful.

They smile and flirt, exchanging shy smiles across the
buttressed roots of a giant banyan tree.

DAIN
Yes, you are - more beautiful
than the other girls round here
anyway.

WAWA
Then maybe you should look
further afield...

She gives him a poke

WAWA (CONT'D)
...visit the Christians on the
coast maybe? Eh?

DAIN
Christians wear too many
clothes. It's you I'm interested
in. You know that.

She smiles at this, flattered.

Dain produces a set of pan-pipes and begins to play. The
music filters through the forest.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Wawa's younger sister, Selin, has left her playmates and
is walking alone

She hears the bamboo pan-pipes - trills and arpeggios,
like running water, like children's laughter.

She follows the sound and sees Dain secretly flirting
with her sister Wawa.

Wawa turns and sees Selin watching them. She scowls.

WAWA
(shouts)
What are you doing - get out of
here !!

SELIN
Ha ha. Saw you with a boy! I'm
telling!

Dain stops playing. Wawa, angry, chases off at top speed after Selin.

EXT. HOLLOW TREE. DAY.

Selin runs barefoot through the forest, nimble as a faun.

She runs towards us, then takes a sharp right-hand turn and ducks inside a hollow banyan tree.

INT. THE TREE. DAY.

The tree trunk is a lattice of twisted roots.

Selin stands there, breathless in the dappled light, excited by the chase and a little nervous, listening for her sister's footsteps.

Silence. The coast seems to be clear. Selin steps out.

Wawa pounces and grabs her.

SELIN

Ow! How did you know where I was?

WAWA

We're sisters. I know all your hiding places. Tell me what you saw?

SELIN

Nothing. You were poking him. Then he started playing the flute again.

WAWA

Just don't tell mum and dad, OK? It's against the rules for me to see him now.

SELIN

So... You want me to lie to them?

WAWA

Just don't tell them, and don't you dare follow me again!

EXT. SELIN AND WAWA'S HUT. DAY.

Selin sits outside the hut, tapping a stick on the ground, bored.

Her grandfather Albi walks up.

ALBI
So, you all ready to go, then?

SELIN
I'm always
ready.

She heads off with him, calling over her shoulder to her family and friends.

SELIN (CONT'D)
'Bye everyone!

INT. FOREST. DAY

Albi heads through the forest with Selin. They trek on at a steady pace.

SELIN
Where exactly are we going,
grandfather?

ALBI
I'm taking you to see Yahul, the
giver-of-life.

SELIN
I know who Yahul is.

ALBI
Well as you know so much you'll
know she has two opposite ways
of doing things - if you do good
things then she'll be on your
side. If you do bad she'll kill
you.

Selin is hearing this but not really listening attentively - distracted by a butterfly, looking for things she can eat.

They walk on, seen from above.

ALBI (CONT'D)
After we return home you must
respect your Mum and your Dad.
You know what respect means? -
it means
do what they say - no messing
around. If they ask you to work
in the garden, then just do it
that's the best way to learn
things.

Selin has seen something - a mushroom.

She darts off and grabs it but as she goes to put it in her mouth, Albi catches her hand just in time.

ALBI (CONT'D)

Not those! Those are poisonous.
See, that's exactly what I'm
talking about!

Selin drops them, chastened.

Hold on the discarded mushrooms as they walk away.

CUT TO:

SAME. A HIGH SHOT LOOKING DOWN.

Kaptan Cook and his brother, looking down on them from the branches of a tree.

Kaptan Cook is a warrior of the Imetin tribe, a powerful lad aged about 17. He wears a distinctive pig's-tusk necklace.

As Selin and Albi pass below them, unaware. Kaptan Cook whispers to his brother.

KAPTAN COOK

Bloody Yakel. They still think
they own the place.

(Re: Albi))

You know who that guy is -
that's their shaman. He's the
guy who casts spells on us to
destroy our crops and ruin our
land. I'm going to teach them
once and for all.

With Selin and Albi out of sight Kaptan Cook and his brother drop lightly from the branches of the tree and follow at a distance.

They are carrying heavy clubs.

**EXT. SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO/ FOREST'S EDGE. LATE
AFTERNOON.**

Albi and Selin, seen from behind, walk up the flank of the volcano away from us.

A while later, Kaptan Cook and his brother emerge from the tree line and jog after them.

EXT. SUMMIT OF THE VOLCANO. EVENING.

Albi and Selin continue to the rim of the volcano. They stand and take in the view.

Even Selin is impressed. They can see the whole island from here: one of the last unspoilt places on earth.

Tanna island is fifty kilometres by twenty kilometres, rising to this volcanic peak, clad in dense rainforest with a fringe of palms.

Albi encompasses the vista with a sweep of his arm:

ALBI

See that bay? That's where the
white men landed, years and
years ago. Christians are all
down that coast now - taking
people away from the old laws.
Kastom law is what keeps us
alive in the forest.
If we lose our laws, we got
nothing to protectus.

A giant plume of ash rises from the mouth of the volcano, as though in agreement.

Albi starts to sing a song of praise to the volcano, and gradually the rumbling volcano seems to calm.

ALBI (CONT'D)

(To Selin)

Give me your hand. She won't
hurt you.

Gently he coaxes Selin to the very lip of the crater - bare feet slipping on the loose, sloping gravel.

From here they can look down the vertiginous slope into the earth's red throat - exploding fountains of lava at its base.

Selin is terrified. Her feet slip on the loose rocks

SELIN

It's too hot ...I'm slipping!!

ALBI

You're not slipping.
I've got you.

He holds her tight.

ALBI (CONT'D)

You have to understand her
power.

Once you've felt her warmth
and seen her anger then you'll
understand who makes the laws
here.

Selin makes a conscious effort to calm herself.

She stares at the volcano, breathing hard, then Albi
guides her back from the edge.

ALBI (CONT'D)

There. Safe. You understand now?

She's not listening. Albi thinks she has finally been
shocked into silence ... or maybe overcome by fumes.

Then he realises she's wide-eyed with fear, looking
behind them.

Albi whirls and sees two men, approaching through the
smoke like spectral demons.

Albi is unarmed. He pushes Selin away from him.

ALBI (CONT'D)

Run. Run!!

The men don't care about her are focused exclusively on
Albi.

Selin, shocked, runs off a little way and looks back.

CU: Her face illuminated by the flames of the volcano as
the men shout at each other in dialect.

KAPTAN COOK

What are you doing here,
sorcerer, cooking up some new
spell against our tribe?

ALBI

I'm showing my grand-daughter
the volcano.

KAPTAN COOK

We don't believe you. You're a
sorcerer! Maybe you brought her
here to sacrifice her. Is that
it?

Selin sees, in dreadful SLO MO, one of the men push Albi
to the ground and hit him with his club.

The other - Kaptan Cook - stands over her grandfather and
delivers the brutal *coup de grace*.

WARRIOR
OK, leave him, he's dead now!

Albi lies still.

Selin is rooted to the ground in panic.

The men turn their baleful gazes on Selin.

IMETIN MAN
And you get our of here!

Selin takes to her heels and flees.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST. PRE-DAWN.

A frantic POV shot.

Selin is running through the forest. Her heart is
pounding,

she's panting for breath, bloodied, muddy and terrified.

The uneven track is booby-trapped with roots and stones.

Leaves and branches whip in front of her. She trips on a
root and falls hard - her POV spinning wildly.

PUSH IN on Selin, grazed, dazed and winded. She gets up
and starts running again, downhill and out of sight.

EXT. PANORAMIC HIGH SHOT. DAWN.

Dawn rises over the vast forest. The angry volcano is
rumbling in the background.

EXT. VILLAGE. VARIOUS.

The village is waking. Through the open doors of huts we
see women in their kitchen areas cooking.

Dawn is gilding the topmost branches of the trees.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

As light spills over the treetops, Selin bursts onto the
meeting square - the "nakamal".

She sees a group of adults and runs towards them, falling
into her father's arms.

SELIN
Daddy, Daddy!! Grandfather has
been
killed!

Lingai can't believe he heard her correctly.

LINGAI
What's that? What did you say?

SELIN
Grandfather has been killed.
Men killed him. I saw it.

Others are crowding round, bombarding Selin with
questions:

ALL
How? What happened? Tell me
where?

SELIN
At Yahul. An Imetin man
hit him on the head.

LINGAI
Who? What man? Who killed him?

SELIN
(Panting, breathless)
On the volcano. On top of Yahul.
He told me to run away but I saw
the blood when they clubbed the
back of his head.

LINGAI
How did you get away? Where is
he now?

SELIN
He is still up there.

Lingai strides off to the banyan tree. As the news
spreads Women are swirling around Selin, crying and
wailing ...

WOMEN
(Ad lib)
- We've lost our Shaman!!
- Oh, my beloved! It's so
terrible -- Albi has been killed
in the east!!
- Selin saw it all and escaped!
She says he is still lying
there!!

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

BCU on a war-club hitting wood as LINGAI bangs the Banyan tree to summon everyone.

The whole village - men woman and children - have assembled to discuss the crisis.

CHIEF CHARLIE

Everyone be quiet. Our Shaman has been struck down at the top of the the volcano. I need six men to bring back the body.

Every man wants to volunteer. Many are intent on revenge. Dain especially.

DAIN

...And kill the Imetin! If they kill one of ours we kill one of theirs!

NEW ARRIVALS

Wait. Why was he killed? How do we know he's dead? (Etc)

Chief Charlie claps his hands for silence.

CHIEF CHARLIE

The first thing is to go there and find out what happened. Lingai will lead with my grandson, Dain. Who else wants to go?

Men are crowding round Lingai asking to be picked.

MEN

Me. Me! Let's go, then!

CHIEF CHARLIE

OK, Stop. I'll chose: Johnny, Woha, Kaweran, Nematow, Dain and Lingai. That's all. Selin will go with you to show you where it happened.

YOWAWIN, Selin's heavily pregnant mother, clutches her daughter in fear.

YOWAWIN

Not Selin - she's my baby!!

CHARLIE

(To Yowawin)
They'll need to be shown the exact

place. If they took him away
we'll need to track him.

YOWAWIN
She's too young!!

WAWA
I'll go instead of my sister.

But Selin dries her eyes and breaks away from her mother,
anxious not to be treated like an infant.

SELIN
It's alright. I'm not scared.

A warrior called Sam has not been included in the war
party. In his view its a serious omission.

SAM
Why am I not going? Don't you
respect me? I should go!

He's all fired up, making a big show of aggression,
appealing to the others for support.

SAM (CONT'D)
If they kill one of ours we kill
one of theirs. And one extra.
Right?

CHARLIE
It's not a revenge mission, Sam.
Sit down.

SAM
Well it should be. If Albi has
been killed we have to kill two
of their chiefs.

To the other warriors:

SAM (CONT'D)
I'm going East with you. I'm
going to smash them.

Yowawin is holding on to Selin. Last thing she wants is
her daughter going off on a war party.

CHIEF CHARLIE
Sam. You're going nowhere. Stop
shouting and sit down. Some of
us need to stay and look after
the women. The aim is to bring
back Albi. Selin will go with
the men. Enough of this. It's
decided.

Sam grudgingly accepts this. The others start to disperse. Wawa hugs her sister, then turns to see the warrior Dain.

DAIN

Don't worry. We'll look after her.

Then Yowawin cuffs Wawa on the back of the head and pulls her away.

YOWAWIN

Hey? You're an unmarried woman!
No talking to men now. How often
do I have to say it?

Selin winks at her sister and scampers off, pleased not to be the one who's in trouble, for once.

EXT. FOREST. DAY

Selin jogs with the men through the jungle, their feet pounding on the hard earth like the drums of war.

The men are on a mission - a great sense of power and intent in their faces.

Selin is filled with a sense of her own importance.

PULL BACK to a WIDE SHOT as they jog onwards and the great smoking summit of Yakul rises above the tree tops ahead of them.

EXT. VOLCANO SUMMIT. DAY.

On the high slopes of the volcano, Selin leads the men to the spot where Albi was felled.

SELIN

He's just up here.

KAWERAN

(Panting)
Where?

SELIN

Right there.

JOHNNY

Oh God, that's him.

The men gather round Albi shaking him violently to try and revive him. Their anxious faces crowding over him.

LINGAI

Albi. Albi.

WOHA

Albi. My brother. What have they done to you?

DAIN

Is he alive or dead?

JOHNNY

Shit. If we'd been here we could have defended him.

Selin embraces her grandfather her ear to his chest

SELIN

He's alive. I can feel his chest still beating.

She pleads with her unconscious grandfather:

SELIN (CONT'D)

Grandfather. Get up. Don't sleep here.

The men pull her away and examine Albi for themselves. He is limp and unresponsive - unconscious but still alive.

KAWERAN

His legs are very cold but his body is warm. If we hurry we might be able to save him.

DAIN

Bloody Imetin. This is how they killed my parents. I'm going after them right now.

LINGAI

Dain. We all know how you feel but Albi is injured. Lets take him home and look after him before we start talking about revenge. Lift him up but carefully. Who's got his feet?

They lift him between them, like coffin bearers and head off down the hill.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Albi is being carried feet-first, raised high on the men's shoulders.

LINGAI is at the back of the rescue party supporting Albi's head.

They have to be careful with him and Woha is worried about the slow progress.

WOHA

This is taking too long. He's not going to make it.

DAIN

If he dies someone's going to pay for it.

Lingai talks to his father's unconscious face.

LINGAI

(To Albi)

Keep breathing, father. Everyone is waiting for you at the village.

He calls forwards to Selin.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

Dain and Selin, run ahead to the nakamal and tell Toata to get some herbs ready. Tell him Albi's head has been smashed in and he's not breathing well, but he's still alive. Hurry! Run!

EXT. NAKAMAL. DAY.

As the WARRIORS carrying Albi enter the village, women run to meet them, wailing and lamenting.

Albi's limp body is laid under a banyan tree.

TOATA, the medicine-man, crouches next to him, feeling slightly out of his depth here.

Lingai, anxious for his grandfather, is micro-managing Albi's care.

LINGAI

(To Toata)

Did you prepare the medicine?

(Re Albi)

Have a look, how serious is it?

TOATA

This is very serious. Has he drunk anything?

LINGAI

There's blood coming out of his head and his pulse is weak. Can

you give him something to make his heart stronger?

TOATA

Why didn't you put a bandage on here?

LINGAI

We didn't have bandages, just give him something.

SAM

I think his brains are coming out.

He removes some blood clot.

SAM (CONT'D)

...Is this a piece of brain?

Toata slaps him away.

TOATA

Don't touch! Everyone just do what I say! Lift him up. We'll take him inside.

SAM

Fuck. He's swelling up already. He feels heavier.

Shocked by the gravity of the situation, the women have paused in their lamenting.

Woha - a stickler for protocol - rounds on them angrily.

WOHA

There should be more crying. Why are you women not crying!

The women dutifully start wailing and lamenting again.

INT. HUT. AFTERNOON.

Albi's head has been bandaged.

His breathing is still horribly laboured. He has the sound and look of a man at death's door.

Toata squeezes liquid through leaves into Albi's mouth and then onto his other wounds as Chief Charlie watches anxiously.

CHIEF CHARLIE

Don't let him die, Toata. He's our magic man. We need his powers.

TOATA

Albi, Albi. You have to try and drink.

Most of the fluid just dribbles out. Things are looking bad.

SAM

He's been like this since we found him yesterday.

TOATA

Hmm. In these cases yesterday is a long time ago.

(To Albi)

Brother. Wake up and drink the medicine.

Woha is helping rub medicine on Albi's body.

TOATA.

You feel how cold his legs are?

(Beat)

If you ask me it's more than just a blow with a club that did this.

The men murmur in agreement.

CHIEF CHARLIE

Yeah. That's the Imetin for you. They're weak so they use black magic to fight us. Do you think he'll make it?

TOATA

Well, like I said, it's not just a physical injury: it's caused by evil spirits. We've used the last of the medicine and I can't see him getting any better.

EXT. THE NAKAMAL. NIGHT.

Chief Charlie sits alone by his fire in an alcove in the great tree, worried about Albi's chances and pondering the dire political consequences of his death.

If he dies it will be impossible to avert more bloodshed.

INT. HUT. NIGHT.

Sixteen-year-old Wawa keeps vigil by Albi's bedside, stroking her grandfather, and holding his hand.

It looks like he doesn't have long to live.

Her sister, Selin comes in, untypically subdued.

SELIN

You want me to take over?

WAWA

No, sit with me. We'll both stay.

Selin sits with Wawa at grandfather's bedside

SELIN

Grandfather, wake up. It's me, Selin.

EXT. THE NAKAMAL. NIGHT.

WIDE SHOT, then closer, then EXTREME CLOSE UP on Chief Charlie's face.

He's staring into the fire, unfocused, meditating.

MIXING TO:

EXT. THE VOLCANO. NIGHT.

The fiery crater of Yahul the volcano, her low voice "singing" to the chief.

INT. THE HUT. NIGHT.

Selin and Wawa are asleep by Albi's ailing body.

They wake as Chief Charlie enters and talks to the unconscious shaman.

CHARLIE

I had a dream, Albi. The volcano spoke to me. She told me a song, so I'm going to sing it to you

In a faint halting voice he begins to sing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

*"Life is always changing
New songs are learned and sung
We fight and beat eat other,*

Bringing sorrow to the young"

As Charlie is singing, Albi's lips are starting to move along with the words of the song.

ALBI

(murmurs)
...sorrow to the young"

CHARLIE

Albi?

No response. He's lapsed back into unconsciousness. Charlie starts to sing again

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

*"Nature's gifts surround us
We lose our way through vice
The path of peace is obvious.
The path to paradise"*

ALBI

"...to paradise."

...then he drifts back into unconsciousness again.

Selin wakes.

SELIN

Is he getting better? Is he waking?

CHARLIE

I don't know

CUT TO:

EXT. NAMAKAL. MORNING.

CHARLIE is with the men in the nakamal under the banyan tree.

He sings in a clear tuneless voice, teaching them the new song.

CHARLIE

(Sings)
*"Life is always changing,
New songs are learned and sung
We fight and beat each other
Bringing sorrow to the young."*

LINGAI

It's not bad. What is the title of the song?

CHARLIE

I don't know. We can call it
"No-one's perfect"... Then
there's another verse that goes:

(He sings)

*"Nature's gifts surround us
We lose our way through vice
The path of peace is obvious.
The path to paradise."*

The men nod.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I think we should all learn it.
I think it might help Albi

LINGAI

Yes but What is the meaning of
this song? What does it mean?

SAM

I reckon it's a message for
peace but first we must kill the
people who have killed our grand
father.

TOATA

No! No killing. The song says we
must have peace.

SAM

(Mutters)

Then it's a dumb song.

CHARLIE

(Impatient)

Just Listen to the message of
the song, alright? *"We fight and
beat each other, bringing sorrow
to the young."* Now is that a
message that we should fight?...
or not fight?

TOUS

Clearly the message is for
peace, I think that's pretty
obvious.

SAM

I still want to kill one of
them.

YOWAY

I agree.

CHARLIE

Yes, well that destroys the point. It's a song about peace and forgiveness. Forgiving has to start somewhere.

SAM

It's not starting with me, that's for sure.

CHIEF CHARLIE

So you want Albi to die? Is that what you want? Because if we don't take heed of Yakul that's what's going to happen.

Grudgingly they all agree and start singing together. One by one, even the reluctant men join in.

ALL

*"Life is always changing
New songs are learned and sung,
We fight and beat each other
Bringing sorrow to the young."*

EXT. NAKAMAL. MORNING.

The entire village move together in a circle, singing and dancing the "Peace" song.

ALL

*"Nature's gifts surround us
We lose our way through vice
The path of peace is obvious.
The path to paradise."*

INT. HUT. DAY.

As the song reverberates through the village, Albi, lying semi conscious in darkness, mouths the words.

Selin is in the hut beside him. She hears him and moves closer. His lips are moving.

Albi's eyes open and come to focus on her.

He smiles.

ALBI

Hello. What happened?

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Selin bursts from the hut and goes racing from house to house spreading the good news

SELIN

Albi woke up He woke up.
Everyone come and see. The song
worked!!

EXT. NAKAMAL. EVENING.

It's "Kava time" at the end of the day, when the older men traditionally gather and talk, while the young men prepare kava for them to drink.

Dogs lounge around between the seated men. Fruit bats flap slowly across the evening sky, returning to their roosting places in the great banyan trees

CHIEF CHARLIE

So Albi is recovering. That means we have to keep our part of the bargain and have peace.

SAM

Bargain? I don't get it, what "bargain"?

CHIEF CHARLIE

My agreement with the Spirit-Mother, to make the peace with the Imetin.

SAM

Those bastards. No way.

CHIEF CHARLIE

(Explains patiently)

Sam, That's why Albi got better. That's what the song was about. We sang of the peace now we make the peace. Who's coming to see the peace-making chief?

LINGAI

Yes I'll come.

CHIEF CHARLIE

Dain...?

DAIN

Don't look at me. They killed my parents. You can't expect me to make peace with the Imetin.

CHIEF CHARLIE
Dain, your father was my son.
This isn't about you. There are
bigger issues here.

Dain is clearly not buying this.

CHIEF CHARLIE (CONT'D)
...We'll talk about it.

EXT. GARDEN. DAY.

Charlie and Dain push through foliage to one of the overgrown tribal "Gardens" - cleared areas of forest where Taro or sacred kava roots are planted.

CHIEF CHARLIE
This is the exact place, yeah.
This is where your mum and dad
where killed. Right here.

Dain doesn't want to be here. The old overgrown garden spooks him.

Chief Charlie starts to dig.

CHIEF CHARLIE (CONT'D)
So now we'll begin a new life
for you - build a future. Use
your digging stick, we'll do
this together.

Reluctantly, Dain starts to work with him.

CHIEF CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Don't be afraid of the spirits.
You summon them with an open
heart and they'll give you what
you want - marriage or whatever
you have in mind. They'll make
it possible. I know it's hard
when you're young but you'll see
how it works.

He bends to plant a Kava tuber, carefully bedding it down in the hole they've dug.

CHIEF CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You do things respectfully and
carefully, according to the old
ways, looking after the delicate
roots; then it grows and there's
enough for everybody. That's how
we build the future.

He tamps down the earth on top of the new plant. Dain understands the message but he's still clearly troubled by the notion of making peace with the Imetin.

CHIEF CHARLIE (CONT'D)

If you've going to be chief one day you're going to have to learn to forgive. Solemnly preparing and drinking this Kava is how we connect with the dead. We both miss your father. I loved him like I love you, but what's past is past. Lets dig some more holes now.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Returning from her own garden, Wawa encounters Dain on the forest track

WAWA

Are you alright? You look a bit unhappy.

DAIN

No, I'm fine.
(Re: being together)
Should we be doing this?

WAWA

No, but you look like you've got something on your mind.

DAIN

Honestly, I'm feeling great.

She knows him better than that.

WAWA

No you're not. You want to go and talk somewhere?

They both know this is forbidden but what the hell.

Checking that no-one is watching they sneak off into the foliage together.

EXT. SECRET GROVE. DAY.

They're seated together in a leafy nook, hidden from prying eyes.

DAIN

The truth is, I still have nightmares about mum and dad being killed in the garden. I was only small but I still remember it really clearly. They hacked down my dad and speared mum with a spear.

(Beat)

I tried to pick her up but I couldn't lift her and she died in my arms.

(Beat)

I know grandfather's right about forgiving and everything but how can you forgive if you can't forget.

(Beat)

Sometimes I'm so angry I could just go to the volcano and chuck myself in it.

WAWA

Please don't do that.

She lays a hand on his arm, then remembers its taboo and withdraws it.

WAWA (CONT'D)

The elders are saying that bad feelings must be left behind and I think that's right.

DAIN

Well, it's easy enough to say that. When I was holding her she was still breathing, but blood was bubbling out of her mouth. Those guys are still part of the Imetin. It's the same people. How can they suddenly be my friends?

WAWA

No-one's saying you have to embrace them. They're just saying no-one's perfect so forget about an-eye-for-an-eye. Or otherwise the killings will never stop. You want your kids to grow up under constant threat, not able to even visit the gardens, or go to the waterfall without protection?

DAID
(Moodily)
Kids. Ha. When am I ever going
to have children?

WAWA
It's not impossible. I guess
anything might happen as we go
along together.

He looks at her and she smiles. Its the first indication
she's given him that one day they might be a couple.

DAIN
OK. That helps. Now I'm feeling
much better. Maybe I'll talk to
chief Charlie...

WAWA
(Smiling)
Yeah? About what?

DAIN
(Smiling)
Oh... You know... Stuff.

EXT. NAKAMAL OF THE PEACE-MAKING CHIEF. DAY.

Dain and the men of the Yakel tribe enter a forest
clearing in single file.

They're here to meet with an older man whom we haven't
seen before. This is the Peace-making Chief.

He stands up, flanked by the men of his tribe as the men
of the Yakel tribe.

Chief Charlie places a large kava root in the centre of
the clearing and delivers a formal speech.

CHIEF CHARLIE
Supreme chief, we bring you this
gift as a token of our respect.
We wish to end hostilities with
the Imetin Tribe. This war has
been going on since the time we
were cannibals. It is time to
bury the club.

PEACE-MAKING CHIEF
We accept your gift. We will
summon all the parties to a
gathering, at the nakamal of the
Yakel. There will be no weapons.
Let no-one attend who does not
have peace in his heart.

EXT. FOREST, VARIOUS. DAY.

Now all the tribes converge on the meeting place of the Yakel, jogging through the forest along known tracks "The Kastom roads" converging from all four points of the compass.

Seen from above The Yakel Tribe, The Imetin Tribe, The Peacemaking Tribe and The Witness Tribe jog towards the nakamal of the Yakel.

EXT. NAKAMAL OF THE YAKEL TRIBE. DAY.

The four tribes occupy their respective corners of the nakamal.

Hostile looks are exchanged between Dain, in the Yakel Corner, and Kaptan Cook of the Imetin.

A group of women and children sit behind Dain commenting sotto voce on Kaptan Cook and his father MIKUM, Chief of the Imetin.

SARA

That guy standing, he's the one who tried to tried to kill Albi.

GRANDMA

Everyone look at him, to make him embarrassed.

ROFET

I hate looking at him.

They all laugh. He glances in their direction.

YOWAYIN

He seems full of hatred.

GRANDMA

kind of cute though

SARA

Definitely a killer.

YOWAYIN

He's got balls, I'll give him that. He's not ashamed of standing there.

GRANDMA

Lets laugh at him. He looks as if he has just come out of a cave, look at him, he is so black. Can you even see his eyebrows?

Kaptan Cook is aware they are talking about him (Though he can't hear the words.) He scowls at them, then looks away.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
We hate you still you stand
there, why don't you run away to
your hollow tree?

Kaptan Cook scowls at them again.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Oh-oh he's about to eat us.

NAWANIAN
Why is he still staring at us,
even though he knows we hate
him?

SARA
He's sexy but he's definitely a
devil.

Meanwhile, sacrificial piglets have been carried into the nakamal to be slaughtered.

EXT. NAKAMAL. DAY.

Selin is watching these adult proceedings.

Her POV: Kaptan Cook clubs a pig with a jarring blow which - to Selin - is horribly reminiscent of the blow which almost killed her grandfather.

LATER

The Peace making chief has made his opening statement and Chief Mikum is speaking:

MIKUM
Personally I hate long speeches,
but the offer made to us by
Chief Charlie, and passed on to
me by the peacemaking chief is
generally acceptable....

Sitting among the Yakel men Dain leans towards the man next to him and whispers

DAIN
What offer?

SAM
(Whispers)
Some gift. A bride I think.

MIKUM

I will discuss the timing and the details with my elders. But I can say that in principle we agree.

Chief Charlie is next to speak

CHARLIE

I agree. We understand each other and we should just keep this short. I'm glad that you, the Imetin, and especially Chief Mikum have come to us to make the tamafa. I can confirm that the garden is ready. The bride's father will speak for her himself.

To Dain's utter horror, it is Lingai who now gets to his feet

LINGAI

I agree to the exchange. My eldest daughter has had her ceremony

A warning glance towards Dain.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

She will honour our commitment to peace.

He keeps talking to the Imetin, disregarding Dain's stunned reaction.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

...but I want to tell you that there are lots of myna birds and the banana is ripe so you have to get the banana before it gets spoiled.

Albi takes the floor.

ALBI

(To the Imetin)

That's right. The fruit is ready so, don't waste our time - If you're serious about this then come and get it. We both will drink kava and then you must take care of our fruit and tell us which tree she will be found under.

Chief Mikum speaks last

MIKUM

I have seen the fruit and I know
that it is ripe. The tree will
be my eldest son Kaptan Cook.

With a snort of outrage, Dain gets up abruptly and
leaves the assembly

Chief Charlie turns and shouts after him angrily.

CHARLIE

Dain! Come back, where are you
going? Come back here!

Dain ignores him, striding out of the Nakamal, his face
like thunder.

Selin, sitting on the edge of the Nakamal, runs after
him.

EXT. VILLAGE TRACK. CONTINUOUS.

Dain is storming along the path in a fury, Selin
trotting to keep pace.

SELIN

Dain, What happened there?

DAIN

You shouldn't have been
listening.

SELIN

But what just happened? I didn't
understand. It's a peace treaty,
what's all that stuff about ripe
fruit?

DAIN

The Imetin asked for an exchange
of brides. Wawa is the fruit.
Chief Charlie says Wawa is
ready. They already inspected
her. They want her to marry
Kaptan Cook.

Selin is shocked. She stands rooted to the spot as Dain
continues down the track in a fury.

A howl of despair from Wawa is carried over from....

INT. HUT. NIGHT.

WAWA is beside herself, in tears, pacing around her
parents small hut like a caged animal.

WAWA

How can they do that? It's not possible! I never agreed to anything!

YOWAWIN

It's not your fault. It's just the timing. You're the one who's ready.

WAWA

(Outraged)

Ready? I'm not a pig who's been fattened! I'm not some chicken! Am I a mango, do I look like a mango you can just pull off and give to someone?!

Selin finds the metaphor amusing, Yowawin can't meet Wawa's eye.

Lingai speaks gravely, his back to the door, barring Wawa's exit.

LINGAI

Well it's decided. I'm sorry. The elders make the decisions and its what's going to happen.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Wawa sits, head bowed, between her parents and grandparents.

She's wearing make-up as a mark of her impending marriage but she's wiping away tears while Chief Charlie spells out exactly what's going to happen now:

CHIEF CHARLIE

So, the Imetin have formally accepted. Next week we'll be going to Imetin with Wawa and Wawa will go to live there.

Wawa can only shake her head in silent despair but Selin speaks up angrily on her sister's behalf.

SELIN

I don't want my big sister to go to the Imetin. She can't marry Kaptan Cook. He was the one who tried to kill grandfather.

ALBI

Come here Selin.

SELIN

And he killed my pig!

ALBI

We have to forget about the past now, and live in the present.

SELIN

It's not the past! The pig was alive yesterday!

Albi takes her aside and starts drawing a diagram in the dirt.

ALBI

Now look, this is the village. This is the ground, the soil, these are the villagers. This is the island. These are the villages on this island.

Selin is looking at the ground, biting her lip and scowling. Her expression says: "yeah yeah, get to the point."

ALBI (CONT'D)

Each village has 4 roads, all the villages on the island have these 4 roads. The roads are the system of our life. If they're broken by war they must be re-connected by marriage. That's how it works.

SELIN

Well that's not fair on Wawa

ALBI

This is how it's been for many, many years. So everyone's connected. If you run out of anything in this village you can go to the other village where your sister lives.

SELIN

I'm never going to the Imetin. They stink and their gardens are rubbish.

ALBI

(Irritated)

Well, you're young and you don't know very much. Life is hard and if we don't have alliances we die - it's as simple as that.

He puts down the stick and walks away.

EXT. WATERFALL. DAY.

With her face still painted, Wawa goes alone to the waterfall to grieve.

A figure appears behind her.

DAIN
I'm sorry Wawa. It's not right.
We're not going to let them do
this.

She makes no reply, still standing with her back to him as Dain approaches.

DAIN (CONT'D)
I want to be with you, and you
want to be with me. That's more
important than anything.

She answers without turning, still with her back to him:

WAWA
They say the tribe's more
important.

DAIN
Well they're wrong.

WAWA
There's nothing we can do about
it.

DAIN
Yes there is.....

He comes to stand facing her, very close now.

DAIN (CONT'D)
Come and lie with me. No-one can
undo that.

She looks at him, terrified, then takes his hand.

The waterfall continues to crash down in the background as they walk off down the river together.

When they're almost out of sight, round the bend in the river, a figure steps into shot.

Selin.

As Dain and Wawa disappear together, she follows after them, hopping from rock to rock.

EXT. A BEND IN THE RIVER. DAY.

She comes to a bend in the river. There's no sign of the two lovers.

But she can hear something now, above the trickling of the water - the sound Dain and Wawa making love.

CU on Selin as she goes to a cleft in the rocks and looks through the gap.

The sounds get louder - two people panting and moaning.

As she peers into the gloom her eyes widen. We don't see what she sees, but the sounds of lovemaking fill her ears.

Selin watches as long as she dares then turns and hurries back to the village, knowing things are getting really out of hand.

EXT. THE REEF. DAY.

Another day. On a shelly beach, the women and children of the tribe are collecting cowrie shells for Wawa's bridal necklace.

Selin sits apart, untypically quiet, pondering her dreadful secret.

Her mother, Yowawin calls to her:

YOWAYIN

Selin, come pick some shells we have to make it into a necklace,

GRANDMA

Ach. There's so many broken ones That's a good one.

YOWAYIN

This one is really shiny.

SARA

I'm happy about what we're doing - marrying Wawa to the Imetin. It's going to make a big difference.

YOWAYIN

She should be here? Selin, where did Wawa get to?

SELIN

(Shrugs)
She's with friends.

YOWAYIN

What friends? She's not a child
playing games now.

(Re the shell-
collecting)

She should be here with us to
help find some good ones.

Selin makes a half hearted attempt to look for Cowries,
abstractedly sifting the tiny shells through her fingers.

SELIN

Why do we want to give her to
that creepy Imetin guy?

YOWAYIN

We've been through that. Just
mind your own business - the men
have decided she will go there.

SELIN

I don't want her to.

YOWAYIN

It makes no difference what you
want. It's all agreed.

SELIN

Wawa doesn't want to go either.

Yowawin looks up angrily.

YOWAYIN

Enough, Selin. You're really
getting on my nerves with all
this. You don't get to question
the men's decisions. Do you
understand?

GRANDMA

Yeah, be careful we don't give
you to the Imetin as well. Two
for the price of one!

Selin falls silent.

Grandma has a sudden thought, looks directly at Selin.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

She's not hanging around with
Dain is she?

SELIN

I don't know.

GRANDMA

I've heard someone say she is.

YOWAYIN
(Alarmed)
Really? Who.

GRANDMA
Just someone. You should get her
to stay close.

SARA
(Gets up)
I'm bored here. Let's go and
find some mussels.

Selin jumps up, glad for a break from the line of questioning.

EXT. REEF. DAY.

The women look for shellfish on the reef - grass skirted figures, silhouetted against the sparkling sea, picking their way barefoot over the sharp coral and scuttling out of reach of the breaking waves.

GRANDMA
(Laughing)
Aiee! I'm afraid of getting
close to the sea. I don't want
to drown and leave my
grandchildren.

YOWAYIN
All hold hands then one of us
dive to the sea to get some
shellfish.

SARA
I think we should start going
home. I'm hungry now.

GRANDMA
I wish there was a man here so
we can make fun of him.
(Then)
I'm hungry too, we should go
home.

EXT. FOREST PATH. DAY.

They are heading up the path, talking and laughing as they head back through the forest when YOWAYIN sees a figure scurrying through the trees.

YOWAWIN
Who's that?
(She calls)
...Wawa?!

Wawa knows she's been caught.

She stops trying to hide from them and comes out into the open.

YOWAYIN
What are you doing?

WAWA
Nothing, just

YOWAYIN
...What?! You can't come to this place by yourself. It's really far away from the village.

WAWA
I was sort of coming to meet you
...

Yowawin is just about to accept this explanation when, out of the corner of her eye she sees a male figure, Dain, sneaking out from behind a tree.

YOWAYIN
(Shouts angrily)
Hey, stop, who's that?!!

Dain runs off disappearing into the forest.

Yowawin rounds angrily on her daughter.

YOWAYIN (CONT'D)
Who was that? Who have you been with?!

WAWA
We were just talking. What's wrong with that?

YOWAYIN
Come here, I'll give you "talking"

She grabs Wawa by the ear and drags her off to somewhere they can sit.

EXT. BY THE FOREST PATH. DAY.

Selin sits off to one side unable to intervene and protect her sister.

The older women sit in a circle around Wawa, bombarding her with advice and instructions.

SARA

Be reasonable Wawa - your mum is pregnant and you shouldn't make her worry like this.

WAWA

Other girls make their own decision I just want to be like them.

GRANDMA

Like who? It was the same for all of us! You think I chose to come to Yakel? I did it to obey my parents. Now I'm used to the place and its no problem. You go there, you work in the garden, you have his babies, same as we did. You make the best of it. If you try to go it alone you wont have much of a life.

Wawa won't meet their eyes. She's staring at the ground.
YOWAYIN loses patience

YOWAYIN

It's all arranged anyway. You're getting married, just accept what we're telling you.

GRANDMA

And say "Yes" quickly so we can all go back to the house.

(Beat)

Come on, stop shaking your head. Just answer "Yes" and we'll stop now. If you refuse there's going to be another war and we're all going to suffer.

Wawa keeps shaking her head. Grandma turns to YOWAYIN.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

I told you this would happen but you let those girls run wild. Same with Selin, you should have kept more control of them.

YOWAYIN tugs at Wawa.

YOWAYIN

Wawa - listen to your grandmother. If you do your own thing and there'll be war again.

We're all just trying to help you.

WAWA
(Muffled, head down)
No you're not.

GRANDMA
Why do you keep saying "No" I'm going to hit your head if you keep shaking it.

SARA
You remember what it was like Wawa, back in the old days when you were small, running away and sleeping in the bush, every time we thought the Imetin would attack.

GRANDMA
Just agree with what we're saying. Enough is enough. Say "Yes" quickly and we can all be friends again.

YOWAYIN
I'm gonna give you a pig if you agree now.

Reaction from Aunt Sara - really - you've got a pig to give her?

GRANDMA
I will give you a goat if you agree.

Reaction from Sara. She knows Grandma doesn't have a goat.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
If you agree you'll have a pig, a cow and goat.

Sara rolls her eyes. This is getting ridiculous.

Wawa sees Sara's reaction and laughs.

Grandma takes this as a sign of Wawa's agreement. She reaches to pull Wawa on her knee.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
She agrees. That's better
(To Wawa)
My granddaughter, I'm very glad now, you make me very lad.

SARA
(Gets up)
I'm happy too. Now we can all go
home and eat.

EXT. FOREST PATH. LATE AFTERNOON.

The women carry on homewards towards the village, with Wawa looking dejected in their midst, like a prisoner under escort, the older woman having convinced themselves that everything is now resolved.

SARA
The men will be happy when they
hear that you've agreed.

GRANDMA
Your father will be happy too.
It's taken a while but finally
we've got it sorted.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Yes, but wait till I catch Daid.
That young man's in so much
trouble.

WAWA
It wasn't his fault.

GRANDMA
Don't say that. It's always the
man's fault in these cases.
That's the only good thing about
being a woman.

They carry on away from us, talking and laughing as the sun drops lower over the forest

EXT. NAKAMAL. DAY.

At the Nakamal, or meeting place, Dain stands surrounded by a circle of elders.

Lingai, Wawa's father, is furious with him, needing to be physically restrained as he yells at the younger man.

LINGAI
Honestly, I can hardly believe
it! You sat here and listened to
the speeches! Right here!! After
all these years we finally make
peace with the Imetin, the deal
is done and now you decide to
screw everything up!

DAIN
I didn't "decide" that.

LINGAI
So, what, it just happened?

DAIN
Yeah, it happened. People have feelings. That's what people are.

LINGAI
No. People control their feelings. That's why people are people. Animals just do what they like! I should knock your head off.

DAIN
Oh, Really? I'd like to see you try!

Lingai breaks free of the men who are holding him and starts hitting Dain.

Dain can't defend himself because Woha is still holding his arms.

DAIN (CONT'D)
(To Woha)
Let go of me! Let go of me!

Lingai keeps raining blows until others drag him off Dain.

Dain's lip is bleeding. He remains defiant.

DAIN (CONT'D)
(To Lingai)
Ha! That's a great example. That's why we're better than animals?

LINGAI
You cheeky pup. Did you lie down with my daughter?! Yes or no?

TOUS
He said "Yes". He already admitted it.

DAIN
Alright, then! Yes!! Yes, I love her! What's so wrong about that?

CHARLIE

Dain, I don't think you realise how serious this is. You've not just taken a girl without permission. You've not just defied your chief and shamed your family. You've broken a treaty. That's a serious thing. I agreed to give Wawa as a virgin to the Imetin. You broke my agreement.

TOUS

He accepts that. He broke your word.

LINGAI

He accepts nothing. He doesn't care! Look at him! Is that a man who cares? He doesn't care about anyone.

ALBI

Quiet, Lingai, let the old men settle this.

CHARLIE

The thing is, we're talking about lives here. We're talking about preventing a war.

DAIN

Then give them another girl.

CHARLIE

They don't want another girl. The deal was for Wawa. Wawa is who they want.

DAIN

Well, she's who I want.

CHARLIE

You can't have her. And if you won't give up that idea once and for all then you can't be part of this tribe. I mean it. You were going to be my successor but what good is a chief if he can't enforce his own rules. You can go to the volcano and live there. If you want to do your own thing then do it. Go.

DAIN

Alright. I will.

He pulls free of the men who are holding them.

DAIN (CONT'D)
You want your fucked-up system,
then you're welcome to it.

Albi looks kind of shocked by the suddenness of the decision

ALBI
You're really sending him away?

CHARLIE
His decision.

Dain won't back down he collects his few possessions - his bow and his arrows.

ALBI
We'll talk again.

CHARLIE
(Angry now)
No we won't. My word is final.
(To Dain)
If you're leaving then
understand this: You're gone for
good.

So be it.

Dain turns his back on them and strides off into the gathering dusk.

INT. ALBI'S LEAF HOUSE. NIGHT.

Albi in the hut with Wawa, his favourite grand-daughter.
She's exhausted from crying, now, she just feels numb.
Albi's voice is low and soothing.

ALBI
The thing is, when you're young
I know everything seems like a
huge drama. But really it's not
so bad going to live with
another tribe. You're
grandmother did it, lots of
people have done it.

WAWA
Yeah but with someone they hate?
I hate that guy.

ALBI

You don't know that for sure.
You never spent time with him.

WAWA

You did. On the volcano. He
tried to kill you!

ALBI

Yes, well, people probably told
him things about me that weren't
true. You know how people get
all fired up. You can't judge
him on that one action. Your
grandmother thought I was a
monster when she first came to
live here then, little by
little, she discovered I wasn't
so bad.

Grandmother, sitting in the corner, raises an eyebrow at
this.

ALBI (CONT'D)

You want to look at the old
trophy box?

WAWA

No.

Albi pulls it out anyway - a box of their tribe's prized
possessions from the outside world: service medals from
World War Two, black and white photos of Tribesmen in
army uniforms....

ALBI

These are the warrior medals for
all your great-grand uncles. And
that's what they made them dress
up in. Stupid eh? Everyone got
fleas in those silly outfits,
and they made your balls itch.

Grandma tut-tuts. Wawa smiles despite herself.

ALBI (CONT'D)

...Ah, Here's your favourite.

A photo of Prince Philip being married to Queen
Elizabeth, the pair of them splendidly attired.

ALBI (CONT'D)

You know she probably didn't
want to marry him. But their
people said she had to. That
worked out alright. If you make
sacrifices for others, the

spirits will always smile on
you.

Wawa takes a deep breath and wipes away a tear.

WAWA
Can I still come home sometimes?

ALBI
Of course.

WAWA
...and visit Dain as a friend?

ALBI
...If he's here.

WAWA
Well why wouldn't he be?

ALBI
Dain and Charlie had a big
argument. The chief said he was
banished and Dain went off in a
fury.

WAWA
(Horrorified)
Banished forever?

ALBI
That's what Chief Charlie said.

WAWA
Well where did he go?

ALBI
I have no idea.

EXT. VOLCANO. DAY.

A lone figure, Dain, walks across the ash plain towards
Yahul the volcano.

INT. LEAF HOUSE. NIGHT.

Wawa lies in bed awake, tears in her eyes, unable to
sleep for worrying.

She's looking at the fire, remembering Dain's words.

DAIN (V/O)
"Sometimes I get so angry I
could go to the volcano and
chuck myself in it."

Somehow she knows for certain that's where he's heading.

The family - including Selin are finally all sleeping.

Wawa finally comes to a decision.

She gets up, grabs a few things, and steals silently out of the house.

EXT. VILLAGE. NIGHT.

Her shadowy form flits across the village by moonlight and disappears into the trees.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT.

Wawa runs through the forest at night, terrified she's going to be too late. She sees Dain's footprint in the mud and keeps running

EXT. SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO. NIGHT.

We're with Wawa as she bursts from the tree-line.

Her POV. A distant figure approaching the volcano's summit.

 WAWA
 (shouts)
 Dain!

He can't hear her. She starts running uphill

EXT. EDGE OF THE VOLCANO. NIGHT.

Dain can hear nothing except the whistling wind and the noise of the volcano.

The crater is very active. He stands there, silhouetted against the boiling lava.

 DAIN
 Alright Spirit Mother. So what
 happens now..?

The volcano grumbles as though beckoning him. His feet move forward.

Then a voice speaks behind him.

 WAWA
 Dain!

Dain turns, sees Wawa, glistening with sweat from running, the red of the volcano reflecting off her skin.

DAIN
What are you doing here?

WAWA
I came to find you.

He puts his arms around her and she melts into his embrace.

WAWA (CONT'D)
I'm not marrying Kaptan Cook.
It's ridiculous. You're the one
I love.

DAIN
I love you too.

They come together, kiss and hold each other close - two dark silhouettes, one male and one female, against the flying red sparks of lava.

EXT. HUT. MORNING.

CU on a cockerel crowing loudly.

Widen to the village: pigs grunting and rootling, dawn gilding the tree-tops.

INT. HUT. MORNING.

LINGAI wakes to find every-one asleep
...except Wawa, who's mat is empty.

LINGAI
Shit.

In a panic he wakes his wife.

LINGAI (CONT'D)
Yowawin, where's Wawa?

Her bag is not there. Yowawin fears the worst.

She calls outside:

YOWAWIN
Wawa!! Wawa!!

EXT. NAMAKAL. DAY.

Lingai is with Chief Charlie. Albi is sweeping the Nakamal with a branch, angry at this latest turn of events.

CHIEF CHARLIE

This is terrible. When do you think she left?

LINGAI

No idea. We didn't know she was missing till we woke up.

CHIEF CHARLIE

Well, God, why wasn't someone watching her?

LINGAI

We were all exhausted. Albi had spent a long time talking to her. We all thought she'd accepted the situation.

CHIEF CHARLIE

(Pissed off)

Yeah, well I bet the Imetin won't accept it. Those guys are just itching for an excuse to go to war again.

LINGAI

We'll try and find her.

CHIEF CHARLIE

We'll have to tell the Imetin first or they're going to say we set the whole thing up.

Albi keeps sweeping furiously, taking out his frustration on the task of cleaning the nakamal.

The sound of his sweeping mixes to....

EXT. PARADISE BEACH. DAY.

Surf breaking on a white sand beach.

From the dense forest which fringes the bay, two figures emerge, Wawa and Dain.

WAWA

So beautiful. It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen.

DAIN
That's where my canoe is. Hidden
in those trees over there.

WAWA
(On impulse)
Lets go swimming!

She runs off down the beach and into the surf. Dain runs
with her.

EXT. IN THE SEA. DAY.

They frolic in the surf together. Wawa is feeling
reckless and free.

WAWA
It's so great not to have anyone
watching us. We're free! This is
the best place we've ever been
together.

DAIN
Yeah, well, we've not been many
places yet.

WAWA
(Embracing him)
We'll have a family together.
How many kids shall we have?

Dain smiles, her appealing innocent euphoria overcoming
his concerns.

DAIN
Eleven.

WAWA
...But then we'd need lots of
garden.

She looks around the pristine bay - so perfect.

WAWA (CONT'D)
I wish this was our place. We
could make a garden over
there.... Shit, I touched
something.

DAIN
(Teasing)
Dugong!

It's not a Dugong of course.

WAWA

Lets get out, I'm getting cold
now.

DAIN

You make a fire. I'll shoot some
fish.

EXT. SHALLOWS. DAY.

A shot above and below the water: a sort of split screen
effect with the lens half submerged.

Dain with his bow and arrow, is stalking among the coral
heads like a hunter.

He sees a parrot fish and shoots it - through the surface
of the water.

EXT. BEACH. DAY.

Wawa is cooking bananas on a driftwood fire.

Dain comes up the beach with a couple of fish.

She smiles at him, he's such a capable guy, he will
always be able to look after her.

Life is good here.

THE SAME. LATER.

The fish are cooking on the hot coals.

Dain and Wawa lie together on the sand, her head on his
shoulder, dreamily interlacing fingers and planning their
future together.

WAWA

So how many pigs shall we have?

DAIN

(Playing along)

Lots of pigs. More than a
hundred.

WAWA

Then how would we buy them?

DAIN

Don't worry about that. You
won't even have to work. I'll do
everything.

WAWA

I want to work. Except when I'm
having babies

DAIN

The babies can work for us.

WAWA

Good plan: "You babies, pick
some bananas then go and feed
all those pigs."

They're laughing at this nonsense when a figure emerges
from the forest's edge and walks towards them.

Dain sits, then stands

WAWA (CONT'D)

Who's that?

DAIN

(Cautious)

I don't know, just someone.

Dain dusts sand off his body as the stranger approaches.

He's a coastal islander, wearing bleached Western
clothes.

JOHNSTON

Hi.

DAIN

Hello.

JOHNSTON

Did you sleep here?

DAIN

No but we were planning to.

(Beat)

We're from Yakel. I've got a
boat I keep under those bushes.

JOHNSTON

Yeah I know, that's not a
problem, but I have to tell the
village that you're here.

DAIN

Sorry, we should have asked.
Who's the chief?

JOHNSTON

I am.

DAIN

Oh.

(Embarrassed)

You want something to eat? It's
your fish anyway I guess.

JOHNSTON

Sure.

They squat down together and start eating the fish with
their fingers, hot off the coals. Johnston gets the bit
with the arrow-hole.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

Good shooting - right through
the middle. You're from Yakel?

WAWA

Yes.

DAIN

(Simultaneously)

No.

DAIN

(Explains)

We ran away. My grandfather
didn't want us to marry. So now
we need someone to stay.

JOHNSTON

Ah....

Clearly, that makes things difficult.

JOHNSTON (CONT'D)

You see, that could be a
problem. Your people might make
war with us.

WAWA

They wouldn't do that ...well...

She looks to Dain.

DAIN

....the Imetin would.

JOHNSTON

(This is awkward)

Maybe you'd be better with the
Christians on the other side of
the bay. They love new converts
and its harder to make war

there. They have government laws, police and everything.

DAIN

Maybe we should go there then.

Neither he nor Wawa really relishes the idea. It's so much nicer here in their private paradise.

JOHNSTON

To be honest, you'd be safer there. ...That's what I would do.

In other words, that's what he wants, ideally.

EXT. IMETIN TRIBAL NAKAMAL. DAY

Chief Charlie, along with all the Yakel men have come before the chief of the Imetin tribe.

Charlie is clearly not looking forward to breaking the bad news - shuffling from foot to foot and looking at the ground.

CHARLIE

So the thing is
(How to put this?)
Remember you came over and we drink kava together and our girl was promised to your guy

MIKUM

(Impatiently)
Yes, yes. So....?

Mikum knows something bad is coming

CHARLIE

She didn't agree and she's run off

MIKUM

What!!

CHARLIE

Yeah, with my grandson.

MIKUM

You've got to be kidding me! We already agreed this We sealed it over at your nakamal!

CHARLIE
That's right. I'm not
disagreeing. I told you that the
garden is ready for harvest

MIKUM
(Overlapping)
... And then you gave her to
your grandson! We can't trust
you guys with anything.

LINGAI
Ha, well that's pretty rich
coming from you.

The two tribes have never been best buddies. Now the
meeting disintegrates into swirling madness, men on both
sides posturing and shoving each other, wanting to fight.

IMETIN MAN
She's ours and you should have
kept her safe for us!

LINGAI
Maybe you should have collected
her earlier!

IMETIN MAN #2
We were getting things ready for
her!

SAM
Call this "ready". This place is
a fucking dump!

More yelling, punches being are thrown, Charlie is in the
middle of it trying to restore order

CHARLIE
Hey! Hey! Quiet down! Everybody
calm down and lets settle this!

IMETIN MAN
(Re Sam)
That mad dog insulted us. We're
going to kill you for this.

CHIEF CHARLIE
You're always so keen to go
killing people. We're trying to
make peace here and you guys
just want to fight.

LINGAI
You were told she was ready. You
could have collected her right
there and then!

MIKUM

Oh, so its our fault?

The fight breaks out again.

CHARLIE

Everyone sit down. Sit down and let's just discuss this sensibly.

MIKUM

There's nothing to discuss. Your grandson ran off with our property so now we'll go after him and kill him. We'll kill them both! Simple!

(Shouting)

Now get lost the lot of you. Go!

EXT. FOREST PATH. DAY.

CHARLIE and his men march back from the meeting with the Imetin.

ALBI

(Disconsolate)

Well, that went brilliantly.

LINGAI

They're all insane. We have to get to Dain and Wawa before them.

WOHA

You think they'd really kill them?

LINGAI

Of course they would. She was their property and Dain ruined her for them.

CHARLIE

(To Sam)

You shouldn't have insulted them.

SAM

They deserved it. They're fucking wankers.

CHARLIE

Albi, I want you to take some men and find the runaways.

ALBI

Yes, but where do we even start looking?

CHIEF CHARLIE

Dain's mother was from the coast. I'd start with the coastal villages.

(Beat)

When you find them knock some sense into them and bring them home.

ALBI

Then what?

CHIEF CHARLIE

Then we deliver Wawa to the Imetin like we promised, on condition the war is over.

ALBI

...and provided they don't beat her up

CHIEF CHARLIE

Well, they might do that anyway but we can ask.

LINGAI

I'll go with Albi. Hopefully she'll listen to me.

SAM

I'll come too.

Sam is a wild man. Albi doesn't want him anywhere near this delicate operation

ALBI

No, better just the two of us. We can travel faster and people won't feel so threatened.

CHIEF CHARLIE

(To Sam)

I agree with Albi.

EXT. FORK IN THE ROAD. DAY.

At a fork in the road, Lingai and Albi part from the others, heading off downhill towards the coast.

The main party carry on homewards through the forest

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Selin sees the Yakel men returning home, without Lingai and Albi. She runs up to Chief Charlie.

SELIN
Where are Grandpa and Dad?

CHIEF CHARLIE
They've gone to search for your sister.

SELIN
Can I go too?

CHIEF CHARLIE
Absolutely not. You're a child. People from Imetin are still out there. If you go they might kill you.

SELIN
I've already been to the volcano. I can go on my own.

CHIEF CHARLIE
(Sternly, losing patience)
Hey, listen to what I'm saying, Selin. If you go in the jungle, the Imetin will kill you and eat you.

Selin doesn't move.

CHARLIE
(Becoming furious)
What are you still standing there for?! Go home to your mother! Go!!

EXT. BEACH. DAY.

Dain and Wawa are launching their outrigger canoe.

DAIN
OK... Push!

They push the canoe through the breakers and jump in.

DAIN (CONT'D)
Move up to the other end and grab that paddle.

They start paddling through the waves, out to sea.

WAWA

Which way are we going?

DAIN

Round that headland. As far away
from Yakel as possible.

Back on the beach, Johnston watches them paddle off - clearly feeling a little bit guilty and concerned for their safety.

INT. CANOE. DAY.

Dain and Wawa are paddling. They've slipped into an easy rhythm together, out beyond the breakers, heading along the palm fringed coast.

WAWA

So what do you think it will be like, living with the Christians?

DAIN

I don't know. A lot of singing and praying. And they'll make us wear clothes. I guess we'll find out when we get there.

WAWA

And what if they wont have us?

DAIN

Then we'll try and get by alone on the other side of the island.

WAWA

You think people can do that? Live all alone, far away from anyone.

DAIN

I don't know. I guess we'll find out. We managed OK so far.

They keep paddling.

EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Yowawin, Wawa's mother is looking for her younger daughter Selin now.

She's going from leaf-house to leaf-house in the Yakel village calling anxiously.

YOWAWIN
Selin! Selin!

No reply. She puts her head in to the kitchen shack where grandmother is cooking.

YOWAWIN (CONT'D)
Have you seen Selin? She's gone
off somewhere.

GRANDMA
No. I thought she was with you.

EXT. FOREST/ HOLLOW TREE. DAY.

Selin walks through the forest, calling for her sister.

SELIN
Wawa! Wawa!

She pokes her head into the hollow tree. No-one there.

Selin speaks out loud to the spirit of her sister

SELIN (CONT'D)
Idiot, you might have left a
message or something!

She heads off towards the waterfall.

EXT. WATERFALL. DAY.

High shot of Selin alone at the waterfall, surrounded by the wet rocks and the big gloomy trees, still calling

SELIN
Wawa!!

The rocks echo. The trees are silent. There is no other response.

INT. CAVE. LATE AFTERNOON.

She pokes her head into the cave where she saw Wawa and Dain making love.

No-one there and the place freaks her out a bit.

Selin comes out again and heads on down the river - stubbornly determined to find her sister, a search party of one, dwarfed by the overhanging branches of giant trees.

EXT. CHURCH. SULPHUR BAY

In the Village of Port Resolution, worshippers of the Unity religious sect are in full swing. The men play gospel tunes on guitars while the women spin, like dervishes, working themselves into a giddy trance.

Dain and Wawa walk up from the beach.

The Unity CHURCHGOERS are all clothed. Dain and Wawa wear penis sheath and grass skirt respectively - creatures from another planet

DAIN

Wow. I'm not sure about this.
You still think this is a good
idea.

WAWA

I guess they won't eat us.

Some of the churchgoers have spotted them. They break from their church service and come over, smiling, friendly.

DAIN

They're coming over, look
normal.

WAWA

I always look normal.

Its a strange think to say - she glances at Dain, normally so cool in the jungle.

WAWA (CONT'D)

You alright?

DAIN

No. They're freaking me out.

The Unity church folk beckon them towards the church, welcoming.

CHURCH LADY # 1

Hi, Welcome, good to see you

CHURCH LADY # 2

Don't be scared. We're family.
You and me same-same.

UNITY CHIEF

Come. Come Whatever brought you
to us then Welcome. We are all
one under the cross.

Dain and Wawa move forwards. The noise and movement and colour all around them feels like an assault on the senses.

Moving towards the church, they are jostled by spinning women who reach out and touch their naked skin.

DAIN
What are they saying?

WAWA
No idea.

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

They enter the great portal of the church.

CHURCH LADY # 2
You'll be safe here. Join us.
The Man who hangs on the cross
will cleanse you both.

Dain's eyes fix on the crucifix above the alter, on which hangs a life-like and life-sized figure of the crucified Jesus.

DAIN
(sotto)
Holy shit.

CHURCH LADY # 1
I sense you are fugitives. Think
of us as your aunts and uncles.

UNITY CHIEF
Come brother and sister, let us
guide you to the light of the
cross.

DAIN
I don't like this guy's teeth.

WAWA
Just relax and smile.

UNITY LADY #!
Jesus wants you to be happy to
us.

UNITY CHIEF
Kneel. Kneel. Give yourself to
Him. Don't be scared.

UNITY LADY #!
We will feed and clothe you.

Dain doesn't want to kneel. He turns to the UNITY CHIEF, trying to make himself understood.

DAIN

We just want somewhere to stay
OK. That's all we want.

UNITY CHIEF

Yes yes. I understand. Are you
married?

Clearly not. He switches into Yakel dialect

UNITY CHIEF (CONT'D)

I'll send to your chief and tell
him you are with us.

DAIN

No, we don't want the chiefs to
know anything.

UNITY CHIEF

(In Yakel)

The Lord sees everything, my
son.

DASIN

Yeah, well, as long as he
doesn't share it with my
grandfather.

UNITY CHIEF

(In Yakel)

Here's what I'll do. I'll get a
big kava root and a big pig then
I'll call all the chiefs and
families to my nakamal and I
will personally marry you.

DAIN

That's not going to work. The
Imetin want Wawa. They probably
want to kill us.

UNITY CHIEF

(In Yakel)

Everything will be fine. I'll
seal your marriage right here.

DAIN

Let me talk to Wawa about it.
Excuse us.

EXT. THE CHURCH. DAY.

Outside the Church, Dain takes Wawa aside.

She's more amused than disturbed by the religious carry-on, but Dain is feeling totally spooked by it all.

WAWA

So what do you reckon?

DAIN

I think they're off their heads.
I think we're better off in the
jungle.

WAWA

I agree. Lets just run for it.

DAIN

OK, Go.

They take to their heels, jump the fence and flee, off across the fields towards the safety of the trees.

The Unity Chief, emerging from the church full of god's benevolence sees them legging it and shouts after them

UNITY CHIEF

Hey! Come back!! Jesus loves
you!!

They're gone, hand in hand, scampering back into the forest's soothing embrace.

EXT. JUNGLE. DAY.

Cut to Dain stalking something with bow and arrow.

A flying fox.

He shoots, hits his target. The body falls with a soft thump.

Wawa collects it and they keep moving.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE GARDEN. DAY.

Dain and Wawa come across someone's garden in the jungle - Adam and Eve in the garden of plenty.

WAWA

Someone's garden. Who do you
think this belongs to?

DAIN

No idea. They won't miss a
couple.

He grabs some bananas. Wawa finds some cucumber.

An angry voice shouts from the trees.

GARDEN OWNER
Who's that. Hey! Hey!

Dain and Wawa run off.

EXT. JUNGLE. DAY.

Dain and Wawa are looking upwards into the treetops. We hear a buzzing sound.

They've seen a bees nest up there.

WAWA
Honey. Wow. So long since I've had some.

DAIN
I'll get it.

WAWA
Just careful you don't get stung.

DAIN
We'll need smoke first. Hand me the machete. I'll see if we can get a fire going.

EXT. BASE OF THE TREE. DAY.

He's rubbing a stick between his hands, making fire.

She's delicately feeding coconut husk, blowing on the hot embers till it catches.

EXT. BASE AND HIGH BRANCHES OF THE TREE. LATER.

Dain is climbing high up the tree with some smoking grass in his hand. Wawa watches anxiously from below.

Slowly and methodically, Dain blows smoke into the hive, anaesthetising the bees, then, with his machete he starts to detach the hive from the tree.

EXT. BY THE FIRE. EVENING.

They've got a good fire going. They've got flying fox on a skewer, stolen cucumbers, slices of honeycomb.

Life is sweet, but somehow this cosy domesticity reminds Wawa of home.

DAIN
You alright?

WAWA
Yeah. I'm missing my sister

DAIN
Eat some honey and you'll feel better.

WAWA
Don't you miss your grandfather, Chief Charlie?

DAIN
Huh. That old bugger. He banished me!

WAWA
I think he'd be missing right now

DAIN
His fault. I'm not missing any of them.

Although he is of course, a little.

EXT. FOREST. NIGHT.

Somewhere in the forest, Young Selin keeps pushing forward, tired and footsore but still utterly determined, angry with her sister.

SELIN
Wawa! Wawa!

It's getting cold and dark.

SELIN (CONT'D)
You dumb stupid idiots, what are you running from?!

It's too dark to keep going. She finds a spot in the fern-beds, flattens herself a comfortable spot and lies down to try and sleep.

Lying there, she hears voices - armed Imetin warriors.

IMETIN VOICE #1
You see anything?

IMETIN VOICE #2
Too bloody dark. Sounded like a
girl's voice ... over here
somewhere.

Selin's POV through foliage.

A foot. The tip of a spear. A boars tusk necklace.

She's too terrified to breathe.

IMETIN VOICE #1
...Maybe this way.

They move off again.

Selin lies in her nest of ferns, petrified, as their
voices and footsteps recede.

EXT. RIVER GULLY/ASH PLAIN. DAY

Next day, Dain and Wawa walk into an eroded river gully
under the volcano.

They're beginning to climb up towards the ash plain when
Dain whispers a warning and pulls Wawa behind an outcrop

DAIN
Careful.

WAWA
What?

DAIN
Hunting party

Unobserved, they watch as Chief Mikum, Kaptan Cook and
the Imetin warriors race across the ash plain.

WAWA
Hunting what? There's no game
here. And this isn't their
territory.

DAIN
They're hunting us.
We need to get away from here.

Dain and Wawa double back and head in the opposite
direction.

EXT. FOREST. PANORAMA. DAY.

Now a storm front sweeps over the island. The sky darkens
and it starts to rain.

EXT. JUNGLE. DAY.

The rain is torrential, slapping off the broad leaves, running in great rivulets off the rocks, forming muddy channels on the forest floor.

EXT. CAVE. DAY.

On the tree-clad flanks of the volcano, Dain and Wawa struggle through trees to the mouth of a cave.

DAIN

How do you know about this place?

WAWA

Found it when I was a kid.

INT. CAVE. DAY.

They're muddy, wet and shivering, but the cave is dry inside, with a flat sandy floor.

DAIN

This is good. We could probably have a fire here. Hand me that stick.

She passes him a big dry branch and he starts whittling it into shavings.

EXT. FOREST. DAY.

ALBI and LINGAI are sheltering from the storm.

The trees afford poor shelter. They're getting wet.

They hear a shout and turn. A figure emerges from the drenching rain.

LINGAI

Selin?!

SELIN

You're heading the wrong way.

ALBI

Selin! What are you doing here?

SELIN

Same as you - looking to find Wawa.

LINGAI

(Angry, concerned)
Are you crazy? What have I
always told you about running
off alone? Does your mother know
you're out?

SELIN

Of course not.

LINGAI

Well how could you do that to
her! She'll be worried sick.

SELIN

She knows I always come back.

(Beat)

Anyway, you need me.

(Beat)

They would have gone this way.

She heads off confidently. Lingai and Albi follow.

LINGAI

How do you know?

No reply.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

...Did you see them?

Selin keeps going, not looking back

LINGAI (CONT'D)

(Mutters)

...Bloody girl.

(Shouts)

...Wait for us!

INT. CAVE. DAY.

The rain falls in sheets outside.

Wawa is feeding branches into the fire when Dain comes
into the cave, wet from scouting outside. He looks
anxious.

DAIN

Put out the fire!

WAWA

Why?

DAIN

There's someone coming!

They stamp out the fire and extinguish it with sand, then wait in darkness, listening.

WAWA

There's a way out the back.

DAIN

That's the direction they're coming from.

Now she can hear them now - male voices, behind and above them. Sounds a lot like the party Selin heard.

WAWA

(Whispers)

Imetin ...or our lot?

DAIN

I don't know. Stay here.

He steers her back into the dark recesses of the cave, then takes his machete for protection and moves to the cave's mouth.

Out of nowhere, a figure drops down from the rocks above the roof of the cave.

Dain leaps on top of him and they struggle. Dain raises the machete - ready to strike

LINGAI

Get off, get off. It's me!

He throws Dain off him.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

And put the knife away, you're going to cut someone!

Selin scrambles down from the rocks over the cave, followed by Albi. She's looking very pleased with herself.

SELIN

(To Lingai and Albi)

See! Told you they'd be here.

Wawa emerges from the shadows.

WAWA

Selin? How did you find us?

SELIN

We're sisters. I know all your hiding places.

DAIN

You'd better not be thinking of taking us back.

LINGAI

You've no idea how serious this is. There's an Imetin hunting party out there, determined to kill you both.

Wawa looks at Dain. This is serious.

LINGAI (CONT'D)

Dunno how long you think you can avoid them for. You wouldn't last a week on your own.

DAIN

(Stubbornly)

Well, that's our problem.

ALBI

There's no such thing as "Your problem", Dain. We're a tribe, don't you understand? What you do affects everyone.

WAWA

Then we'll leave and go somewhere else.

LINGAI

You know how much ocean there is out there. You could paddle till you die and still not hit land.

(Beat)

Or you're going to pay for an aeroplane - with what?!

WAWA

(Tearful, defensive)

We just want to be together.

ALBI

(Gently)

We know you do. But it's not possible. You should have thought it through beforehand.

SELIN

Can I make a suggestion...?

LINGAI

No. I'll deal with you later.

SELIN

(Persists)

...Just tell everyone they're dead. Say we buried them and everyone will stop looking.

LINGAI

You can't disappear on an island. If you belong to a place you obey its rules. That's all there is to it.

Wawa is holding onto Dain, but in her heart she knows her father is right.

ALBI

(To Wawa)

Lets get that fire going and everyone go to sleep - men on that side of the cave, girls over there.

Clearly there's no question of Dain and Wawa sleeping together.

ALBI (CONT'D)

In the morning we'll take you to the Imetin. Just hope they'll be satisfied with an apology.

(To Dain)

As for you. I don't know what will happen. I'll see what I can do but in the end its for you and Chief Charlie to sort things out.

EXT. CAVE. NIGHT.

Night falls over the forest, the fruit bats flit between the trees.

The cave's mouth is illuminated by the fading glow of a campfire.

INT. CAVE. NIGHT.

The fire has burned low.

The lovers lie at separate sides of the cave.

Albi is guarding the entrance. LINGAI sleeps in the middle of the cave.

Selin is snuggled next to Wawa.

An owl hoots outside.

Wawa opens her eyes and sees, by the red glow of the campfire, Dain creeping to the back of the cave.

He disappears into darkness and doesn't come back.

Gingerly, Wawa detaches herself from Selin and follows Dain out the back of the cave.

At the back of the cave she finds the secret passage out.

EXT. FOREST BEHIND THE CAVE. NIGHT.

Squeezing through the narrow passageway, Wawa emerges into the forest.

The cave backs onto the forest's edge, where the trees give way to the ash-covered slopes of the volcano.

She sees Dain heading off uphill. Wawa chases after him.

EXT. SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO, NIGHT.

Half way to the summit, Wawa calls to Dain.

WAWA

Dain, where are you going.

He stops, not happy to see her following, but he waits while she catches up.

DAIN

I don't want you to come with me.

WAWA

Too bad. Where you go I go.

DAIN

Not this time.

He heads off again. She ignores the rebuff and follows.

EXT. SUMMIT OF THE VOLCANO. PRE-DAWN.

Dain reaches the summit of the volcano and sits. Wawa comes behind.

WAWA

This isn't fair, you've got to tell me what we're doing?

Dain sits and takes something from the bag which he carries over his shoulder.

DAIN

You know what these are?

A whole lot of poisonous mushrooms. The ones Albi warned Selin not to eat.

WAWA

Yes... You're not planning to eat them?

DAIN

It's the only way. You still have a life, Wawa. You're a happy person and you'll be happy even with the Imetin. They just want me dead. I slept with "their bride", so they'll never let me live. And when they kill me the war starts again. ...Unless I kill myself.

WAWA

You can't do that.

DAIN

It's like Albi says. There's nowhere else to go.

He strokes her face with his hand.

DAIN (CONT'D)

I'll miss you, but I want you to be happy.

She shakes her head, tears springing to her eyes. She can't let him do this.

DAIN (CONT'D)

Go now. Go back to the cave. I'll be fine here. It's a good place to die, warm beside the spirit mother.

Wawa won't let it happen.

With a sudden movement of her hand, she snatches up three of the mushrooms and pops them in her mouth.

Dain jumps on her horrified.

DAIN (CONT'D)

What are you doing? What did you just do?! Spit them out, spit them out now!!

Wawa chews and swallows.

WAWA

"Where you go I go"

DAIN

(Aghast, furious)

You're mad! You're a mad woman!

Wawa just smiles. Having done the deed she feels surprisingly calm.

WAWA

You wanted me to be happy. I'm happy now.

She swallows and opens her mouth, showing him the purple dye on her tongue from eating the mushrooms.

Dain shakes his head in love and admiration - what's to be done.

Then he takes a handful of mushrooms and eats them too.

They lie down together, like children, on the warm soft ashes of Yakul the Spirit Mother, waiting for the deadly poison to take effect.

WAWA (CONT'D)

Look. The stars are out, which one will you be.

DAIN

(Points)

That one there.

WAWA

Then I'll be the one next to it.

INT. CAVE. PRE-DAWN.

Lingai wakes. No Dain, No Wawa.

LINGAI

Oh, for God's sake!

His exclamation wakes Albi.

ALBI

What?

LINGAI

They've gone. Where are they?
You said you'd guard the entrance.

ALBI
I was guarding it.

LINGAI
(To Selin)
And what about you?! You were
right next to her.

Selin wakes to find her sister is not beside her.

Albi is inspecting the mud at the front of the cave.

ALBI
There's no footprints here. They
didn't come this way.

Selin is following footsteps to the back of the cave. She
shouts from the darkness.

SELIN
They went this way!

EXT. REAR OF THE CAVE. PRE-DAWN.

Selin, Lingai then Albi squeeze out from the tunnel at
the back of the cave.

There are footprints in the soft earth, clearly leading
to the volcano.

SELIN
They went up the volcano

LINGAI
They're mad, why would they go
there?

He looks to Albi. They both fear the worst.

The three of them set off in pursuit of the runaways.

EXT. SLOPES OF THE VOLCANO. DAWN.

Dawn breaks over the slopes of the volcano. Peering
uphill, Lingai can see a distant shape on the lip of the
crater above them.

ALBI
Is that them?

LINGAI
I dunno.
(Shouts)
Dain! Wawa!!

No reply.

They hurry on.

EXT. FOREST'S EDGE. DAY.

Mikum - searching with the Imetin warriors - hears Lingai's call and emerge from the forest to see:

Lingai, Albi and Selin heading up the volcano's flank.

Mikum shouts to the troops.

MIKUM

That's the Yakel Mob. This way!

EXT. SUMMIT OF THE VOLCANO. MORNING.

ALBI, LINGAI and SELIN approach the summit.

They see the lovers lying in each others arms and covered in ash on the edge of the volcano.

SELIN

It's them. I can see them.

(shouts)

Wawa! Dain!

They hurry towards them. The lovers don't stir.

As they come closer it's clear that all is not well. The lovers lie there limp and lifeless.

The purple dye from the mushrooms is on their lips. A few uneaten mushrooms lie scattered around them.

LINGAI

Oh no. Shit. They ate mushrooms!

He tries to rouse them.

LINAI

Wawa!

ALBI

Dain!

SELIN

Wawa. Wake up!

The lovers can't be woken.

LINGAI

Is there an antidote?

ALBI
Nothing. We're too late.

LINGAI sinks to his knees and lets out a terrible heartfelt scream of lamentation.

The Imetin WARRIORS run uphill towards the little group

Such is his distress LINGAI only notices them once they are almost upon him.

MIKUM
What happened here?

ALBI
You got what you wanted. They've taken their own lives. They're dead now.

Even the Imetin chief looks moved by the awful situation.

Kaptan Cook check Wawa's pulse and bows his head.

Selin is weeping over her sister, inconsolable

EXT. VILLAGE GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Selin and Yowawin sit at the graves of Wawa and Dain.

Dain's panpipes, bow and arrows, headdress and bag lie alongside Wawa's skirt, headdress and bag.

We hear a mournful note from a conch shell.

Slowly mother and daughter rise and walk towards the nakamal.

EXT. NAKAMAL. DAY.

We see one villager then three, then many emerging from the trees.

CHIEF MIKUM LEADS THE Imetin into the nakamal were all the tribes converge.

At the Nakamal a fire is burning. New arrivals bring wood they have picked up in the forest and lay them in the middle of the meeting place.

When everyone is gathered together, Albi stands up to speak.

ALBI

Settle down and listen.
On the summit of Yakul I
received a message from the
spirits of Dain and Wawa. I must
teach you their message.

His voice cracking with emotion, he sings:

ALBI (CONT'D)

*"Our story is not a new one.
Its ending is full of tears.
No medicine can heal a broken
heart.
No magic can wind back years."*

*"Your grief when you remember
us,
Is all that will remain,
If others marry out of love,
Our deaths are not in vain."*

He breaks off in tears.

Others pick up the song and repeat the verse

Then Chief Charlie stands up to speak.

CHIEF CHARLIE

My heart is heavy at this
moment. My only grandson has
died with his love. It's as if
my most precious plant has been
cut down while still growing.

(A beat)

Dain's mother and father were
killed because of the war. He
was the only one left, and I'm
sure he killed himself to avoid
further bloodshed.

(Beat)

I want us all to repeat Albi's
song and understand it's
message. Understanding the
spirits message is the only way
to find the way forwards, out of
this darkness.

CHIEF MIKUM takes his time before rising to his feet.

CHIEF MIKUM

I cannot deny my part in this
tragedy. I thought I was
upholding Kastom - the fire
which will always warm us, but I
see now that our children are

the future of Kastom. If we
don't listen to them the fire
will go out.

CHIEF MIKUM reaches down to pick up a large piece of fire
wood, walks over to the fire in front of Chief Charlie
and places it in the flames.

Chief Charlie stands to his feet.

CHIEF CHARLIE
Mikum spoke wisely. We must do
what the spirits tell us.

Chief Charlie picks up a piece of wood and places it
alongside MIKUM's in the flames.

Another Chief, CHIEF YALTA rises to his feet.

CHIEF YALTA
I agree with all that has been
said. We were wrong to ignore
the power of love. Now we must
relight the fire again.

He places wood into the fire.

CHIEF MUNGOW rises.

CHIEF MUNGOW
I agree with all you've said.
Let's relight the fire so that
our grandchildren can be
nourished by it.

CHIEF MUNGOW places the last piece of wood on the fire.

MIX TO:

INT. ALBI'S LEAF HOUSE. NIGHT.

The cooking fire in Albi's leaf house.

Albi is holding his grand-daughter, Selin, who is still
traumatized by her sister's death.

The two of them stare into the flames, Albi's voice low
and contemplative.

ALBI
You see the thing is that old
men make the laws.
That's true even in the place-
belong-Prince-Philip.

But old men forget stuff, and
sometimes we need young people
to show us the way.
Wawa didn't die in vain. She
caught light and burned
brightly. Her song is now part
of Kastom, the knowledge that we
pass down from one generation to
the next.
We'll sing it at the harvest
festival.
Maybe we'll sing of you too, one
day.

She laughs at this impossible notion, but Albi is serious. In a changing world, strange things do happen.

EXT. NAKAMAL. DAY

A bright sunny day.

HIGH SHOT looking down on hundreds of men, women and children from all the traditional tribes of Tanna make a circle and begin a dance celebrating the Niel (harvest) Ceremony.

They sing together, a traditional song of thanks

SONG

*'These are the songs we learn
together.
These are the songs that make us
strong.
Songs unite us all whenever
Chaos strikes and things go
wrong.'*

*'No one season lasts forever,
Every heartbreak starts to mend,
Let us move ahead together,
In the circle without end.'*

Yowawin sits to one side, watching her daughter Selin, wild and carefree as the wind, skipping round and clapping in time to the beat.

Wawa's death still weighs heavy on her. But in Selin she sees an indomitable spirit. A hope for the future.

Pull up and out from the nakamal, the circle of people within the circle of trees. In the circle of the island. In the circle of the world.

THE END