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### Hula Heart

John D. Newman

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Houston, Velina Hasu. *Hula Heart*. 1996. 28 pp.

**B+ K-3**

Sean "Kilo" Hauptmann is a multi-ethnic seven-year-old boy from Hawaii who moves with his family to Southern California. Although his study of authentic Hula was respected on the islands, he finds that the mainland friends mock him for it. Sean finds a friend in Caleb, who comes from a similar cultural background. Ultimately, Sean finds himself torn between his loyalty for Caleb and his native traditions, and his Californian friend Julian and the pop culture which he embodies.

The script has its merits. The theme of retaining one's roots is clearly established in the play. Sean's specific cultural conflict achieves a certain degree of universality. The visions of Laka, the Goddess of the Hula, adds an interesting theatrical dimension to the piece.

However, the play paints a complex issue in rather simplistic terms. The plot resolves happily and predictably. Rather than having to make a choice between two cultures, Sean is conveniently allowed to be fully accepted by both cultures without the internal conflict that multi-cultural children must often confront. The play reads like a promising early draft but could have benefitted from more development before it was mounted.

**This play is found in:**

Jennings, Coleman A. *Eight Plays for Children: The New Generation Play Project*. University of Texas Press, 1999. ISBN 0-292-74056-5 cloth, 0-292-74057-3 paperback. \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paperback. 479 pp.

A Reviewed by John D. Newman