

Author interview - Eva Abraham

By Sarah Dunaway

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Eva Abraham is 19 years old originally from Pohnpei (Capital of the Federated States of Micronesia). She has been living in Hawai'i for almost 10 years. She is currently a student at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo with a major in Business Administration and a Certificate in Performing Arts. She is currently writing a short play titled *Black Magic* which is based on a true story of things she was told as a little girl back on her island of Pohnpei.

Q. Why did you choose the title *Black Magic*? What inspired you to write this story?

I chose this title because I felt that it would hook audiences with a sense of mystery and magic and it is the essence of my story. I wrote this because it was a story that I grew up listening to. It was based on a true story, which gives it more value and it teaches a great lesson about the importance of LOVE or rather, the lack of it. Also, Black Magic, or supernatural powers and occurrences are very real in my culture. I wanted to share a piece of my childhood and culture.

Q. What is this story about, and how does it relate to life in Hawai'i?

This is based on a true story. I tweaked it a bit to make it more dramatic, but the main plot remains. It is about a little girl who lives with her mother in the woods after being alienated from the village. Her mom (MAMALU) abuses her, verbally and physically. One day, the girl runs away from home and comes across a witch (OVA) in the forest, who convinces her to come and learn black magic so she can escape the pain. Seduced by the possibility to acquire her own power and the possibility to run away from the pain, the little girl (TINTIN) accepts the black magic and ends up leaving with the witch. The mother is left with pain and regret. I felt that this story might relate to Hawaiian indigenous beliefs and practices because we're all Pacific Islanders. I imagine that Hawai'i must have something like this back in its history too: strong beliefs in superstition and magic that still continue (somewhat) today. Because back home, a long time ago, we believed in black magic, and the two essences of the island: the good witch and the bad witch. In my story, the bad witch is Ova, and the lesson is not to wander late at night into the woods or the forest, because there is dark magic at work and you don't want to anger the bad witch. On different islands, "black magic" means different things.

Q. How do you feel about this story? Why?

I have mixed emotions about my story because it happened to a family friend. Although I am glad to share a part of my childhood and culture, I feel that the story is about a dark side of history on my island. The mother lost her daughter to mysterious magic; so as children, my cousins/siblings and I grew up in fear of that "Black Magic."

Q. What was the hardest part you encountered when writing this short play? Do you think you did a good job on this piece of work? Why or how?

Some challenging aspects with writing this piece was balancing the dialogue between the characters, coming up with catchy character names, and describing the scenes in detail. I believe I did the best I could with the time I was given, but there is always that feeling that I could have added some more things to it, whether it's more dialogue, more character development or more context. It is always a work in progress.

Q. What is the protagonist's view on this story? The antagonist?

The protagonist and antagonist in my story is actually not quite clear. It all depends on the individual audience member. One person might think one character is the hero while another may think that character is the villain. I think the protagonist and antagonist are interchangeable because regardless of the perspective she chooses to take, it will justify her actions for the better, not for the worse. The witch may think she's doing the little girl a favor, saving her from the abusive mom. The abusive mother may think she's only doing what's best for her daughter by teaching her discipline. The little girl may think she is doing the right thing by running away from the pain because she doesn't want to live like that anymore. In my story, I intended for the audience members to decide for themselves who the hero is and who the villain is.

Eva will be showcasing her work at the end of October 2017 in the University of Hawai'i at UH Hilo Performing Arts Center. Please come and witness something magical.

<https://hilo.hawaii.edu/news/stories/2017/10/16/drama-club-to-haunt-uh-hilo-performing-arts-center-oct-30-31/>