

SONS of VAO

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## **SONS OF VAO**

**Synopsis:** Three brothers reflect on their journey growing up in the small village to the bright lights of Auckland, New Zealand. Four decades of stories from the heart. In the centre of their lives, their Father, VAO and his teaching to his sons that will leave so many memories, pain, struggles, tears and most importantly to find closure, forgiveness within themselves.

### **Characters:**

**TOPI**-The eldest son. Holder of stories. Smart and very observant of his surrounding but weak and vulnerable physically. Being a clown at school was the only way to keep him safe from the bullies on the playgrounds. The only escape is reading adventure books at the library in a corner hiding from the mad world.

**SET** - The second son. Durable carry the Father's good looks-the favourite child. He loves sport and worships the grounds his Fathers walks on.

**SAU** - The youngest son. Angry. His teachers are on TV. His trademark his long hair for twenty-one years of his life. Easily emotional with his feelings when angered.

**VAO** - The Father. A handsome man with charm. A plantation man that loves to drink beer and fistfight. Funny with a sense of humour, but when angry, he is a monster.

### **SETTING:**

In the middle of the stage is a big brown wooden box with the actor's props stored inside. This brown box is part of the design of the show use right through the whole play.

Behind the big brown box, is a wooden mantelpiece. Above the mantelpiece hang a single black and white large framed photo of a man. Deep red necklace flowers draped around the photo frame. Next to the framed picture is a silver urn, VAO ashes.

An old cane chair behind away from the brown wooden box - this is VAO's chair. Island mat spread across the back of the stage; this is where the boys are sitting if not on stage.

**Note:** TOPI is the narrator and sometimes talk directly to the audience his monologues are shared with SET and SAU.

The three boys are all dressed the same three, yellow high neck skivvies, brown khaki pants, bare feet.

VAO is dress long grey pants and his favourite red Aloha shirt and no shoes.

### **Scene One:**

The funeral bells are ringing in the dark and fade out. An old Niuean church song is gently playing in the background.

The theatre lights slowly warmth the stage, painting the dusk of sunlight rising above the Pacific horizon over the Pacific ocean.

TOPI, the narrator makes his way to the centre stage.

TOPI

Introduction: Every child has a hero someone that they look up to help the child when he falls. When I am in trouble, I dream the hero will come in and save me for all the bad things that happened to me as a child. But no one came to my rescue. So many things I want to change from the past. If only I can find a way to go back in time.

The song "*Rivers of Babylon*" By Boney M is playing.

TOPI eyes sparkle with happiness and mix with a little sadness as he hears the song that takes him to his childhood. He does a little dance to the music. The dance moves its more of a reflection back and how the song makes him feel when he was a young child.

TOPI (cont'd)

The year was 1970. I arrive in this miserable world. My Mother delivered me on a hot summer day next to a banana tree all by herself; she told me I was a pain, and she pulled me out of her. I didn't want to come out; I was not ready to enter this world. I still needed time inside my Mother to develop, but what was the hurry I got a few months inside my Mother's womb before I am ready to come out.

(MORE)

TOPI (cont'd)

I can feel my Mother screaming and screaming and finally somehow, I am not prepared to come out, but I had no choice the young girl who is my Mother demanded that I came out now! Okay, so I squeeze my way out. Out came me, greeted by the flies and the hot sun, the air was murky and hard to breathe. My eyes open to see my a young girl holding me with tears of sadness. I found my strength and cried my lungs out to the world. Kicking my little legs and throwing my small arms around. The young girl was stressed out and did not know what to do? She just watched me baked in the sun and until she got her sense together. When she was ready to go back to her home village, she quickly wrapped my little body in a banana leaf and carried me home.

I still don't know how they met, was it love or lust? Never really speak about those loving things with Island parents unless you want to cry. No talking about those things that adult do in the night. No talking about kissing or how did we get here. Those things are only for Jesus to know, and we don't need to know. If you talk about it, you are going to cry.

The year was 1975. My brother was born. He was blessed with a pleasant face and looked like my Father in every way. He put a smile on my Father's face, and my Father gave him his brother's name, SET.

SET walks and join TOPI on stage.

A proud young man that carries himself like he is the King of the palace.

SET

I am my Father's apple. I am no mistake. I am everything to him. I carry his strength, his eyes, his hair and most importantly, his good looks.

TOPI

The year was 1977; my third brother arrives in the world. He was in such a hurry.

SAU walks to the middle of the stage and joins his two brothers.

SAU

I want to see the world and what the world has to offer me.

TOPI

SAU nearly killed our Mother because of the way he arrived into the world.

SAU

That is me—most vital of the three. I wanted to see the world! Let me out of here. And here I am. Wow, this is what the world looks like? I want to go back!

He tries to go back to leave the stage in fright, but his brothers grab him and throw him back on stage. SAU sits on the ground and cries.

TOPI

No tears.

SET

No tears are allowed.

TOPI

SAU no tears.

They all look back at VAO's chair.

TOPI whispers.

TOPI (cont'd)

We are not allowed to cry.

SAU lets out a little cry. TOPI and SET close their ears. SAU still cries.

SAU

I don't want to be here. You guys are not my real family!

SET

Shut up! We are your family.

SAU  
But I don't like you guys.

TOPI  
We don't like you too!

SAU cries like a baby.

TOPI and SET drag SAU to a place where no one can hear the cry. They muffle him up and hide him in the brown box and closes the box. TOPI and SET sit on the box to stop SAU from crying.

SET  
Has anyone seen our brother?

TOPI  
Nothing in here.

TOPI and SET laughs.

SAU knocks on the box to let him out.

SAU  
Alright! You guys are my family. Let me out!

SET  
No tears!

TOPI  
No tears!

SAU  
No tears.

They let SAU out. SAU is holding his tears.

TOPI  
As much as we want to cry, we are not allowed to have any tears.

All three boys are sitting on top of the brown box like the image of a family photo that hangs on the living room wall.

SET  
But we are allowed to laugh.

TOPI  
Yeah, we are allowed to laugh. Go on  
and laugh SAU.

SAU doesn't laugh.

SAU  
I don't feel like laughing.

TOPI and SET tickle SAU.

SAU in laughter.

They all laugh. All three are laughing like something  
hilarious, belly laugh.

TOPI  
As kids, we laugh at our pains. It  
was the only way to pass away the  
time.

SET  
We laugh ourselves to sleep!

SAU  
We laugh at our hunger.

TOPI  
Even when we get hiding, we still  
laugh. Tears and laughter as we go  
through our pains. We laugh at our  
chores, the dishes, the cleaning,  
more cleanings and if not cleanings  
then its our parents chasing us to  
give hidings!

They comically slap one another, punch, kick one another.

All three laughs.

TOPI (cont'd)  
We are the village kids.

SET  
We are so lucky living here on the  
Island.

SAU

Lucky? How I'm I lucky when we lived in a house that has no window. A place that has no doors hold up by vines and old nails. A roof that easily blown away by Hurricane and the same food!

SET

Taros, fish, wild chicken, drinking coconut on repeat.

SET/SAU/TOPI

We should be so lucky our parents tell us.

SAU

I dream of bread, jam, peanut butter, all the excellent food I see in the movies.

TOPI

Movies were our way out of here! Our minds wander with the silver screen.

SAU

Watching movies on Friday night is our happiness!

TOPI

Only till the generator breaks down and no more movies.

SAU/TOPI/SET

No!

They all get off the box. Open the box and get some white rocks and draws pictures on the ground.

TOPI

We are the village kids, and this is our village. We love to draw pictures on the cement pavement with white rocks is our happiness.

SET  
 Burning coconut husks end of a stick  
 and pretend its a ship in the ocean  
 while it's smoke its happiness.

TOPI  
 Making a flying kite and flying over  
 the coconut trees is my happiness.

SAU  
 I drew soldiers. Roman soldiers. I am  
 to be a Roman soldier when I grow up.

TOPI  
 We watched movies. Bruce Lee was the  
 favourite village film. How many  
 times the village played those  
 movies.

TOPI replays a scene in *Enters the Dragon* when the enemies  
 surrounded Bruce Lee.

SAU and SET become part of it, surrounding TOPI.

TOPI (cont'd)  
 Bruce Lee was a Kung Fu master. A  
 hero of mine. One time he was  
 surrounded by hundreds of men armed  
 with weapons and he chop them all  
 down. One by one they rush for him, a  
 chop here, a kick in the face.

SAU and SET rushes towards TOPI but comically SET and SAU  
 falls to the ground.

SAU  
 Can Bruce Lee beat our Father up?

TOPI  
 Yes, he can.

SET  
 No, he can't!

TOPI

Bruce Lee fought a hundred men in his movies. I wish I had the power of Bruce Lee. I told all the kids at school that my name is Bruce.

SET

Our Father VAO fought the whole village.

SAU

TOPI never say that another man is strongest than our Father VAO. Our Father is a warrior.

TOPI

Okay. I know. I wanted to be like Bruce Lee. So I can beat everyone at my school and waste anyone in my village.

SAU open up the big brown box and pull out a brown sack and in it three toy puppies dog.

SAU

We found the puppies in the forest.

TOPI

These are our little friends. My dog; his name is Black.

SET

My dog is the name, Black.

SAU

All our dogs' name is BLACK!

They all laugh.

SAU (cont'd)

My dog is black. I call my dog black because it's black and you can't see him in the dark. He comes over where I sleep and lick my face. I hide my dog under my mat. I call my dog Kung Fu because I like Kung Fu movies.

TOPI  
My dog name is Bruce.

SAU  
My dog name is Bruce.

SET  
My dog name is Bruce.

TOPI  
No, my dog name is Bruce. You two  
find another name.

SAU  
But Bruce Lee is the strongest.

TOPI  
Okay! Our dogs' name is Bruce after  
our hero Bruce Lee.

SAU  
Our Father hates our dogs, so we hide  
them away from him.

SET  
No one cares about dogs here on this  
Island. If they see your dog running  
around, they'll shoot it. Bang! Bang!

SAU  
No!  
  
SAU holds his puppies close to him.

TOPI  
That is why we hide our black dog's  
puppy in the box. We only bring our  
dogs at night when everyone is  
asleep.

They hear their VAO ahead heading towards the stage.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Quickly put them back!

SET  
Put them away.

TOPI  
Quickly put them away, SAU.

TOPI swiftly put the dogs back in the sack and put them back into the box.

The rooster is crowing to signalled the early morning hours.

A change of light to let the audience know its a start of a new day.

The boys take out three sizeable brown bags and three machetes.

All are standing on top of the box looking out for their Father VAO.

TOPI (cont'd)  
The year was 1978, it's very early in the morning, and we are getting ready to go to the plantation. We are the village boys more like slaves to the plantations work and village rules. We wake up early to get ready for the bush work before school.

Rivers of Babylons is playing in the backgrounds.

SAU  
I like this song. What's the name of this song?

TOPI  
*Rivers of Babylons*. That's all I know.

SAU  
Yeah, but what are the words to the song?

TOPI  
We don't know, and we just made up our words to the song.

SET  
Yeah, this song.

They all started to dance to the beat of the song on top of the box. Each has their movements to the music of *Rivers of Babylons*.

TOPI  
I so love the beat of the music. The  
feel of the song somehow stayed with  
me for the rest of my life.

All three boys make up their own words to *Rivers of Babylon*.

Song stops.

TOPI on top of the brown box looking out.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Enough! Our Father is coming.

VAO rides on stage on an orange bicycle. He wears long trousers and no shirt.

TOPI (cont'd)  
In our village, the old truck that  
carries the villagers to the main  
town and then this orange bike that  
takes us to the bush and back. This  
bike is our means of transport! Our  
lives depend on this bike.

The bike stops in the middle of the stage. VAO is singing *Rivers of Babylon* his version of the song.

TOPI (cont'd)  
This man is our Father.

SET  
VAO.

SAU  
VAO.

TOPI  
His name is VAO - which means, bush,  
forest. Forest King. No other name.  
His name is VAO. Never do we call him  
Father, Dad or any other name then  
VAO. Everything he does we follow his  
word is the law.

They all slowly get off the box and move towards VAO with their machetes.

SET

You break his law. You are crying.

SAU

You are crying; he doesn't care about your tears.

TOPI

He doesn't like people in tears.  
No one can beat VAO. He was the best  
dancers and drinker of the village.

VAO makes a cool dance moves. He's got the groove like the  
guy on *Rivers of Babylon*.

VAO

No one can dance like me. If you want  
to know, asks the girls who the man?  
No one can fight like me. If you want  
to know, asks the boys about how I  
knocked then out. If you want to know  
about me, asks the village about me.

TOPI

VAO is a hunter. A man of the land.  
He lives for the land.

VAO

You three are my boys. You three  
should be like me strong, drink the  
beer and fight!

TOPI

He likes to see us fight. I don't  
want to fight.

VAO

Fighting is good.

TOPI

We wrapped our fist in T-shirts as  
boxing gloves and fought till our  
nose bleed but never do we cry.

VAO

A quick fight. You two come, put em  
hands up and fight!

TOPI

VAO says that real men know how to fight. All domestics always lead to a fight.

All three boys have their t-shirts off wraps their hands like boxing gloves.

VAO

SAU, SET come on.

They walk around eye each other up.

VAO laughs.

VAO (cont'd)

Good now, hurry up we don't have all morning.

VAO cheers them on.

SAU and SET square up and throw punchings like they are in a boxing match. SAU is the better of the two boys.

VAO (cont'd)

Fight! Stop walking and fight. Go!

SAU is the better of the two and beat SET. SET stops and cries.

VAO is not happy.

VAO (cont'd)

SET no tears. I don't want to see the tears. How you going to be a man if you are always crying. Bloody useless!

SET wipes his tears.

VAO looks over to TOPE.

VAO (cont'd)

You fight.

TOPE

I have no choice but to fight my brother.

Again they walk around the stage. TOPI has his hands high to protect himself and more running kind like dancing.

VAO laughs.

VAO  
No dancing! Stand still and fight the  
boy!

TOPI stops and takes his beating from SAU a better fighter  
of the three.

VAO (cont'd)  
Good boy SAU.

VAO pats SAU on the head.

TOPI and SET holding their tears. VAO sees it. The boys hold  
on to every word of the man.

VAO (cont'd)  
Save your tears. I don't want to see  
you crying. Crying is for girls like  
your, Mother or your Grandmother all  
those church women. I don't want to  
see tears, boys.

The three boys nod in agreement. VAO is standing proudly  
next to the bicycle like in some display in a shop.

VAO (cont'd)  
Everyone gets on!

TOPI  
The bike belongs to our Grandfather.

SET  
A horse would be better.

TOPI  
We don't have horses on the Island.

SAU  
Or even the village truck.

TOPI  
One truck on the Island, and it's not  
ours, but we do have a orange bike!

Everyone tries and get on the bike. It's more comical.  
Everyone trying to all fit on the bike. The whole family  
managed to all fit on the bike with VAO driving it.

VAO

Hold on tight. Ready, steady, and we go!

TOPI

Here we are all on the bicycle with our sacks and machetes it's off to the bushes we go!

VAO does a few rounds around the stage. The bicycle arrives back on centre stage. They all jump off the bike.

SAU took the bike and parked it up on the wall.

VAO holds up the sharp knife with a twinkle in his eye. His words are for his three sons.

VAO

If you don't know how to use this, what kind of man are you? Clear the bush ready to plant the root of the taro in a few weeks.

TOPI

Every child must know how to use a machete. It's like our best friend when you in the bush without it, we are nothing.

VAO

You don't need school. Here is your schooling.

TOPI

He never did go to school. When our Father was younger, they forced him to stay all by himself at the plantation. To guard the farm from the thieves in the night come to steal his family taros.

SAU

Now that is scary all by himself in the middle in the pitch darkness.

VAO  
 Nothing to be afraid of when you got  
 this. (VAO holds up the machete.) If  
 you lose your knife, you will lose  
 yourself.

VAO takes the machete and swings at the bush. He never gets  
 tired of the plantation work. The three boys all have  
 knives follow VAO's instructions.

VAO (cont'd)  
 Spread out and stay with me, don't  
 fall back or else. Understand?

TOPI/SET/SAU  
 Yes.

TOPI  
 Our Father, grew up on the taro  
 plantation. He knows everything about  
 the land.

VAO  
 We don't have long before the sun  
 brings out the fire. Stay with me!

TOPI/SET/SAU  
 Yes.

VAO  
 Be strong.

TOPI/SET/SAU  
 Yes, be strong.

VAO  
 Good. Clear the land for food. You  
 must work. If you don't use it, we  
 don't eat. Don't stop!

As VAO speak, he never stops cutting the bushes.

The three boys work hard but trying hard to keep up with the  
 pace. The three boys fall back behind. Up ahead, VAO  
 disappears into the distance leaving the three boys behind.

The boys clear the land.

They hum Boney M, *Rivers of Babylon*. VAO takes a seat at his  
 chair.

The work for the day is complete; they put their knives away. The sunsets make its way across the stage, painting a beautiful evening.

An audio of a burning fire is playing in the background.

The boys are making an Umu earth oven to cook their food. VAO is sitting as the chief Sitting Bull waiting for his food. The food is ready, and the boys are serving VAO.

TOPI

We know everything about cooking.  
Everything about the work and shows  
no sign of weakness. We never see our  
Father cries. He has no tears. We  
have no tears.

SET

Food is ready.

SAU

Oh, this the best part is the food.

TOPI

We, Islanders, love our food. But the  
chief has to be served first.

SET Takes a plate of food and places next to VAO feet. With love and respect to our teacher of life.

SET

It's my job to serve the protector of  
our house.

TOPI

He eats first, and we just watched  
and wait for our turn to eat. We wait  
till he finishes eating then it's our  
turn.

SAU

This worst than the kids in Africa! I  
am hungry. Even the smell of food is  
killing me.

TOPI

If he eats all the food, then it will  
kill us!

VAO is enjoying his meal. He throws a bone out, and SAU runs and catches it.

SAU is happy with his catch.

SAU  
I got it! Now my dog Kung Fu Black  
can eat.

SAU shoves the bone down his pocket.

VAO throws another bone out. TOPI catches.

TOPI  
Now my dog can eat.

When VAO finish his dinner, the boys scramble to the UMU place. They eat whatever is the leftover. They lick the plates like savages but smiling.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Why are we rushing we have plenty of  
food here.

SAU  
We slave labour, overworked and  
hungry. Get out of my way!

SET and SAU fight over food.

TOPI  
Savages! There is plenty of food for  
all of us.

They all laugh with their plates of food sit in front of the audience and eat.

TOPI (cont'd)  
The only time we don't fight, we  
don't laugh, and happy is when we  
have food in our stomach.

VAO  
Bring me my drink!

No one moves. The three boys look at each other.

VAO is getting angry as he doesn't like to repeat himself.

VAO (cont'd)  
Bring me my drink or else?

SET

TOPI you get it you the eldest.

TOPI walks off and brings back a bottle of homebrew. He is careful about how he handles the brew.

VAO gets up.

VAO

Not so fast boy. Don't drop it.

VAO on his feet, his eyes focus on the bottle of homebrew. TOPI is walking across the stage as slowly as he can.

TOPI

Alcohol was not allowed in our village. Our Father was the master at making homebrew. How did he know how to make this beer? The church missionary taught him. So that was the only reason he goes to church. To learn how to make homebrew?

SET

The sons of God taught our Father to make homebrew?

TOPI

Amen. The only time that God hears our prayers is when our Father wanted to know how to make homebrew. Amen.

TOPI nearly drop the bottle.

VAO

Boy! You drop that bottle you know what you are going to get.

TOPI

The yeast is alive in the bottle and dying to escape. The last time this happened and the bottle blew up in my face.

SAU

Is that why you have an ugly face?

SET

Nah, he was born like that.

SAU and SET giggles.

TOPI

Not funny! This bottle drops we all going to cry. You want me to drop the bottle? You want me to drop this bottle?

SET

if you drop that bottle, then we are all dead.

TOPI

Our Father hides his homebrew at the back of the house so no one can see it. And in a few weeks, the brew will be ready to drink with his friends and then beer to drink and beat up the wife and fight everyone in the village. Oh, I can smell the brew and hate every bit of it. All you needed is yeast, sugar and any fruits. The sugar, yeast comes from the only shop on the Island. In Town.

SAU goes over to help TOPI.

VAO

Drop that bottle, and both youse get good hiding!

SAU

Money? Where he gets the money to buy all these things? We have been wearing the same clothes from the day we were born.

TOPI

Selling dried coconuts why do you think we cleared the land. So we can plant more coconuts to make money to buy our Father's sugar and yeast for his homebrew.

SET/SAU

Aha! what a smart man.

TOPI

Meanwhile, the house needs a door; the window needs a window.

They all giggle.

VAO  
I don't know what so funny? Hurry up  
and pour me my drink.

SET brings a cup over. TOPI slowly pours the brew and takes  
it over to VAO.

TOPI  
The is the golden rule is never shake  
the bottle of homebrew, never shake  
the medicine.

They watched their Father drink the cup with satisfaction.

VAO  
Another one.

Pours another one and VAO drinks it down.

VAO (cont'd)  
One more for the work.

Pours another one and gives it to VAO.

SET  
I want some?

VAO  
A little taste.

SET takes a sip from the cup. His stomach tries to hold the  
strong smell.

VAO (cont'd)  
Handle it, boy, handle it.

VAO skulls it back. Happy.

VAO (cont'd)  
And the final, final one for the  
night.

TOPI pours another one into VAO's cup.

VAO (cont'd)  
I am going out for the night. Get  
some sleep.

VAO leaves the stage in a happy mood. They wait for him to go off stage. The boys get their mats and lay in the centre of the stage.

SAU goes and gets the puppies out of the box. They feed the dogs with the leftovers.

They all lie down they put the toy dogs on their chest looking up to the sky.

TOPI

You see those stars in the sky it's  
our ancestors looking down on us.

SET

What! I thought it was just the moon  
at night.

SAU

Can we go inside its a bit dark?

TOPI

We should all sleep outside with our  
dogs.

SAU

Not a good idea to sleep outside at  
night.

TOPI

You are afraid of the ghost aye. We  
sleep with our deads.

SAU gets closer to the boys.

SAU

No, my dog will protect me.

The boy lays down to sleep with their dogs. They fall asleep. In the dead of night. They hear VAO stumbles on stage. He is drunk. They try and hide.

VAO

What did I say about those dam dogs!

TOPI

But when our Father is drunk, even  
Bruce Lee could not stop him. When  
he's drunk, we go into hiding, Space,  
a place that he will not hurt me.

SAU

But because the house has no windows,  
no door so they are no place to hide!

His eyes are burning with anger.

VAO

What did I say about those dam dogs!

VAO takes the puppies one by one and throws them inside the bag, fling the bag over his shoulder. He takes the machete and demand to his boys.

VAO (cont'd)

Follow me!

They come across to an open cave. VAO throws the sack into the mouth of the cave. The three boys can only watch on. They tried to hold their tears back.

TOPI

Our Father says, too many mouths to feed.

VAO

Follow me. Follow me. I said to follow me. Follow. Follow me.

He starts to shake. He can't control his body.

VAO falls to the ground and has a fit. Saliva foam out of his mouth. The three boys just watch on they form a circle around their Father and waits till it's over.

The three boys are not afraid as they watch their Father going through his sickness.

SAU

He is sick because of the dogs.

The boys step back and just watches as VAO has a seizer. He shakes violently.

TOPI

He says its the churchwoman with Asian eyes hiding behind the big white hat that put a curse on him.

SET

She is the devil that rapes him in the night. Strangle him, choke the life out of him and we hear him curse the pitch-black night.

VAO is struggling to say something, but no words come out of his mouth, and then a painful scream pierce out of his mouth that frightens the boys.

VAO

LEAVE ME ALONE! I WANT TO LIVE! GO  
BACK TO YOUR HOUSE!

TOPI

In the pitch blackness of our humble shelter, he screams at the top of his lungs. The whole village hears his cry. The night is still with fright; even the moon hides behind the midnight clouds till the early morning when it's safe to show herself.

SAU

We can hear the village dogs barking, and we hide under our mat trying to mute the noises. We just wanted his suffering to end. I close my ears in fear.

TOPI

The only time we see our Father in a struggle is in his nightmare. His eyes big as the fish eyes nearly popping from its socket. His pink tongue out like that of a roasted pig, hanging for dear life.

VAO

I WANT TO LIVE! LET ME LIVE!

SAU

Stop! You are scaring me!

SAU in fear, tries to find somewhere to hide. He curls himself as small as he can be wrapping the sleeping mat around him for protection.

SET

Help him! We can't just stand and look on.

VAO tries to scream out, but no words come out of his mouth. It's like the man is drowning in deep water. He is trying to survive.

SAU

It's the mother dog, cursed him for  
killing her puppies!

Then silent. VAO remains still like he is dead.

TOPI

Our Father, will never admit it was  
epilepsy and not a curse. But our  
Father still believes it was the  
churchwoman with the long black hair,  
with long nails in the white church  
hat that put a curse on him. She  
lusts for our Father, but she was too  
old for him. When she died, she still  
chased him in the dead of night. So  
that very night, when the moon was  
the only witness to his crime. He  
took his machete in the dead of night  
and smashed the churchwoman tombstone  
to a hundred pieces! The next morning  
the husband of the old churchwoman,  
our church minister called a meeting  
and desperately investigated the  
crime of who broke his wife  
tombstone. No one knew it was our  
Father.

The three boys watch as their Father lies still.

TOPI takes a silver spoon out of his pocket and gently puts  
it in VAO's mouth.

TOPI

He might bite his tongue.

A moment later. VAO fit is over. For a moment he doesn't  
know where he is. He sits himself up, stares blankly out to  
the audience. It takes a little while for him to adjust his  
mind back to his reality.

VAO's clothes are wet from his urine. His three boys bring  
him new changes of clothes. They shield him from the  
audience as VAO changes.

Like a terrible storm that hit the village is over,  
everything returns to normal.

TOPI (cont'd)

October 1978 our family gets the news  
that VAO been waiting. Our family in  
New Zealand send us the money for his  
airfare. He's going on a plane.

SET  
What's in New Zealand?

VAO  
Ice creams, apples and bread. White people as white as the clouds in the sky and blue eyes like the ocean.

SAU  
I can't wait to go to New Zealand.

SET  
Our Father has to go first, work in New Zealand and then we all follow, SAU.

TOPI  
We have been getting a lot of letters from our wealthy family in New Zealand. They even send us a box of delicious red apples.

TOPI pretends to read the message out.

TOPI  
"Dear family hope you guys enjoy the box of apples and the new clothes for the kids. We have plenty of money here we can't wait for you all to come over. Uncle."

VAO walks on stage dressed ready to leave for the airport.

TOPI  
Our Father VAO is getting ready to board his flight to New Zealand. He wore his favourite red aloha shirt; his hair was comb back he looked like Elvis Presley.

VAO  
Look after this house. Look after your Mother. Tell those men to stay away from my home, or they get the machete. Understand?

Boys all together in unison.

SET/SAU/TOPI  
Yes.

VAO  
I will be back. I will send money  
back for you all.

The three kids can only look on with a smile.

SAU starts to tear up, but VAO quickly stops him.

VAO (cont'd)  
I don't want to hear you cry like  
your Mother!

SAU nods and wipes his tears.

VAO (cont'd)  
TOPI lead this family. SET, you will  
protect the family. Okay, where is  
the needle?

TOPI goes over and hands VAO a sewing needle. VAO looks at his left hand. On it is a small tattoo of a Nazi swastika next to his left thumb. VAO stabs the needle until the blood seeps out of his left hand. He shows no pain. He keeps digging at the tattoo on his hand.

The three boys look on with curiosity.

TOPI  
VAO has two tattoos, one on his left  
hand and the other on his right arm,  
which is a butterfly...

VAO cut TOPI off.

VAO  
It's an Eagle!

TOPI  
An Eagle.

VAO  
They might never let me into New  
Zealand if they see this on my hand.

VAO holds out his left hand for his sons to see. He goes back to trying to remove the tattoo.

TOPI  
On his left hand is a tattoo of a  
German swastika.

SAU

He saw a movie about German soldiers,  
and he liked the way it looked and  
got it done on his hand.

SET

When I grow up, I am going to get one  
done.

TOPI

I remember our Father sitting out in  
the opening kitchen blood running  
from his hand as he tries to scrap  
the swastika tattoo off his left hand  
with a needle.

SET

Are we Germans?

SAU holds up one of his toy soldiers for the audiences to  
see.

SAU

I am an American soldier waiting for  
back up to get me off this Island.  
He salutes.

TOPI

We are not, Americans or Germans. We  
are Niueans.

SET

We are German Niueans.

SAU

What! I thought we were Niueans,  
Samoans!

TOPI

We are Niueans, full stop. Our Father  
ran away from Samoa cos; he was a  
treated a slave.

SAU

We are slaves.

TOPI

No like, real slaves.

SAU

We are real slaves.

TOPI

True that. We are slaves to our parents doing chores before school, and when at school, we are slaves to the teachers who beat us. We are slaves to the village kids who mocked and teased us. They bullied me, never can stand up for myself, and my Father hated it. He can't stand his name been associate with weakness.

VAO looks over at his boys.

VAO

No tears, no crying. Fight back, boy.

VAO goes back to his business of trying to remove the tattoo on his hand. He stabs the needle into his hand and tries to cross the Swastika out. He holds it up. Happy with himself.

SAU

Fight back, you useless boy.

SET

Useless!

TOPI

That's all I hear from everyone, useless! Useless! I am useless.

SET

Fight back, you useless.

SAU

Yeah, come on useless.

TOPI

I can't; I don't like fighting.

SET

Then stay useless. Let everyone beat you up at school.

TOPI

That was my problem everyone liked to pick on me. Like I am a walking target that says come and beat me up. I don't ask for it; my bullies just come to me. But what saves me is my jokes. I was funny, and at school, everyone likes funny kids, and that's when I discover my most comic. I am a comic—a comedian.

(MORE)

TOPI (cont'd)  
I don't care if they laugh at me as  
long as my classroom liked me.

SET and SAU become bullies and taunt TOPI.

SET  
Yeah, his report was a comedy!  
Everything about our older brother is  
a joke! Tell us a joke, funny boy.

SAU  
Yeah, tell us a joke. Make us laugh,  
or we are going to give you a hiding.

TOPI tries to be funny, but it is not funny. SAU and SET  
beat him up. TOPI is on the ground.

TOPI is in the middle as the SAU and SET on either side of  
TOPI.

SET plays the teacher.

TEACHER  
You are useless, just like your  
parents! Tell your Father to go back  
to Samoa! Put your hand out.

TOPI  
For what?

TEACHER  
For another beating for asking  
questions!

TEACHER smack TOPI on the hand.

TOPI  
The beating was part of our  
upbringing. To this very day, I still  
don't understand why I got so many  
hiding I mean, what did I do wrong to  
get a beating. You see a beating is  
not just smacking around the ears; no  
a beating is when my Father is in  
rage and destroys everything in his  
wake. Everyone in our village was  
afraid of him.

VAO  
Did you get my bag ready?

TOPI

No.

VAO

That's another beating!

TOPI

Okay, I believe in a little discipline. Still, even at primary school, they the teacher love giving us kids hiding—anything to get a beating. A smack here...

SAU

A clip here.

SET

Hair pull here, slap there!

TOPI

Beatings everywhere! STOP! Even if you scream out, they won't stop.

SET

You take your punishment like a grown-up. Harden up and take it like a grown-up. Be a man.

TOPI covers himself up like a boxer on defence with his arms holding up to his face.

SAU

What are you doing?

TOPI

I am protecting myself, you idiot! Please help me!

VAO

Bring the belt!

SET opens the brown box and pulls out the leather belt. He shows the strap to the audience.

TOPI

Our Father wears a particular brown leather belt. It was the only belt he wore in his lifetime.

VAO

Come, boy.

SAU and SET laugh as they watched as TOPI goes through the beatings.

TOPI  
I feel no pain; it seems like my whole body can take it, and that just enraged my Father that I am crying! It was here that I stop believing in Jesus.

SAU  
Not Jesus!

SET  
We need Jesus right now.

TOPI  
He never saves me. No matter how hard I pray for him to come and save me from my Father. I don't understand why he doesn't keep me. On Sundays, we are sitting in front of the church, smiling as he held us.

All three boys are on sitting on top of the brown box morning service church.

SAU/SET/TOPI  
Jesus, why you did not save us from our Father?

SAU  
Jesus is asleep.

SET  
Never hears our prayers.

The belt is placed back in the box.

TOPI  
Our prayers in vain. No matter what we must obey our parents. Love our Father, now that is a word we never hear in our house. No love. My Father hated me for being physically weak. I can only cry inside and moving on with my life in the village.

Pause.

SET  
Indeed we had some happy memories in our childhood in the village?  
(MORE)

SET (cont'd)  
Surely you are not making all this  
stuff up. How terrible for our  
Father to hear all this.

TOPI  
Of course, we did!

SET  
Now we are talking!

TOPI  
Well, we had freedom outside chasing  
the chickens with our dogs.

VAO comes back on stage, ready to leave.

VAO  
Goodbye.

TOPI/SET/VAO  
Goodbye!

VAO leave the stage.

Pause.

TOPI  
We are free and happy at last!

SAU  
Jesus has answered our prayers!

SET  
Thank you, Jesus.

TOPI  
Thank you to the family in New  
Zealand! With our Father gone to a  
faraway country, we are free to do  
what we wanted. We did what we liked  
on the Island. Now we can do anything  
that we wish to!

The three boys sit on the brown box.

TOPI (cont'd)  
This is the life!

SAU  
No news from our Father.

SET  
No letters from our Father.

TOPI  
 Happy no news from our Father! I  
 mean, look at the freedom we are  
 having here guys.

TOPI is celebrating with his dance moves getting better and  
 funny too.

SET  
 August 1979, we received a letter  
 that will change our lives.

TOPI  
 Nooo!

SAU  
 Yes!

SET quickly opens the letter.

SAU/ SET  
 We are going to New Zealand!

TOPI is the only one who is not happy. He takes the letter  
 and read.

TOPI  
 "Dear family, you are all going to  
 New Zealand..."I don't want to go!

TOPI runs around the stage, protesting not wanting to go.

TOPI (cont'd)  
 I don't want to go!

SAU  
 We have no family left here. Everyone  
 has packed up and left.

TOPI  
 We wore matching brown khaki pants,  
 yellow turtle neck skivvies. Coconut  
 oily hair dripping from our brown  
 faces. Our Mother in a beautiful blue  
 dress with flowers. She gave me a  
 broom to take to New Zealand because  
 one of the family members wanted an  
 Island broom. For the first time, I  
 was happy to carry a broom and not  
 run away from it.

SAU

Does New Zealand have no broom?

TOPI

You want to cry SAU? For asking too many questions?

SET

Coconut oil stuff and every Island thing that we can carry in the bag and all our hopes and dreams in our Island bags flung over our shoulders, and we headed to our new so call home.

TOPI

We were excited and nervous at the same time, that feeling of happiness in our round happy faces as we march to our future.

SAU

New shoes stuck to our feet. The first time my feet wore shoes. It hurts my feet just walking. I wanted to walk in barefoot to New Zealand.

TOPI

We left our house that has no window, no door; we left our cats, our pigs and chickens. We said goodbye to our Grandfather, who buried on the land. Our Mother planted a coconut tree at the back of the house to mark the time we left in case one day; she might return home.

SAU

We said our farewell to families, friends, many tears like someone just died, it was like a funeral, but it was the last time we get see our families for a very long time.

TOPI

Oh, I forgot to tell you all that we have to cut our "thingy" ( points to his penis). We need to get the chop before New Zealand. So it was a quick trip to see the village doctor and snip, snip.

TOPI and SET quickly on the brown box pants down to their ankles.

TOPI (cont'd)  
It was the instructions from our  
Father that we all need to get the  
snip.

TOPI/SAU/SET  
Snip, snip it! Get it cut and keep it  
clean!

TOPI  
The nurse has known us since we were  
born with the scissors in her hand;  
she made a man out of us three with a  
single cut.

SAU cries.

TOPI/SET  
Now what?

SAU  
She cut my ding a ling!

They all laugh.

SAU (cont'd)  
We left for a better future. We went  
to see the land of bread, butter and  
milk and TV!

TOPI  
In one of the letters from our family  
in New Zealand that we have to be  
careful in New Zealand of the people  
with big hair! Didn't we understand  
what the messages were about?

SAU  
What is wrong with people with big  
hair?

SET  
Scary people have big hair with big  
beards.

TOPI  
We found out that the big hair people  
were Maoris.

SET

And why are we afraid of them?

TOPI

The letter just said, to stay away from the big hair people. We took a final photo with our neighbours. We will never get to see them again. They wish us luck and prayed for us.

All three boys are on top of the brown box.

The sound of a plane getting ready to take off.

TOPI (cont'd)

First time on the plane. Everything is new, the smell of new in my nose.

SAU

I like this smell—a new kind of smell like lollies.

SET

Smells like PK chewing gum.

TOPI

And its much cooler here. A woman with a beautiful face smiles at me for the first time someone is smiling at me.

SET

Do all people smile like this in New Zealand?

SAU

She looks like the woman in the movie.

TOPI

She showed us to our seat with her kind hand. I hold on to the broom tightly and smile back at her. We boys giggle at the friendly woman. The plane took off into the night sky Island disappears into heavens. The palagi woman with nice hair and perfect smile gave us lollies we scoff it down like we never had this many lollies before. She just kept smiling, and everyone on the plane was smiling and happy kind of people.

The sound of the plane taking off. The boys hold on tight.

SET

I got sick. Spew in a brown paper bag.

SET spewed into the bag.

TOPI

The Palagi woman is not smiling anymore. She is helping my brother with his spew all over himself, the idiot! Now the plane smells like spew, and no one is smiling anymore!

SET

I don't feel too well.

TOPI

That's what happened when you eat all the lollies. Now the Palagi woman doesn't come to us anymore. Sorry Palagi woman.

SAU

Sorry Palagi people.

SET

Sorry Palagi woman. Where should I put this bag?

TOPI

Hours later we arrived at our new home, New Zealand. High above the midnight sky, New Zealand lights up like a Christmas tree. Beautiful! Look at all those lights, millions like stars in the sky. Not even in our village has that so many lights. We are not village kids anymore!

SAU

We are New Zealand kids!

TOPI

Kiwi kids that showers and sleep on time for school.

SET slaps SAU to sit down.

SET

We are still Island kids smell like coconut oil and smell like burning bushes in the hot sunny day.

TOPI

The year was August 1979. We landed in Auckland. For the first time in almost a whole year, we saw our Father. Everything came flooding back. Hide!

The boys hide behind the brown box.

VAO laughs.

VAO

Welcome to New Zealand!

TOPI

Something a little different about him, I can tell. He was wearing a blue jean jacket and smiling at us. He looked at us and smiles. Wow, he's changed. It's like we got a new Father, but still, he carries the danger with him. I can see it in his eyes.

VAO reaches over to his boys; the boys don't react fear of getting a clip around the head. They respond like VAO going to do something to them, BUT Vao pulls them together.

VAO

Family. Welcome to New Zealand, the land of lots of money.

TOPI

We rode a taxi back to our new house, a place we called home but in actual its called prison. We were better off before living in our house back on our little Island, but we are here now. In the dark, cold street waiting for someone to open the gate. An angry German shepherds dog barks in the night.

SAU

This dog had big ears, big teeth, not like our dog back at home.

TOPI

Finally, a woman opens the gate, and she looks angry that she has to open the gate for us. We walked into the house that has walls, furniture and smells of cooking that our nose has never experience before.

SET

A large woman with an angry face greeted us; this was our Grandmother, a witch doctors, who loves horse racing. That all she cared about was her bush medical practices mixing all sorts of plants so people can give her money for her witch doctors medicine.

TOPI

She was not a real doctor, then?

SAU

Her real passion was horse racing up at the TAB.

TOPI

She looked like she ate the horse. She slapped her fat arms around us and greeted us. And next to her another angry woman with sharp eyes and long red fingernails that can scratch your eyeballs if you look at her wrong this is our aunty. We all just stood there like baked coconuts in the hot sun. Nothing to say but our fake smiles to our newfound family.

SAU

We should go back home.

SET

Too late now.

TOPI

I told you I didn't want to come to New Zealand. Our fat aunty smile at us with her big eyes like a cat in the night. Her fat kids came all running out to greet us all with their fat faces.

SAU

But wait, look at that! It was the first time I saw a black and white TV. We became bests of friends.( SAU hugs the TV). A man was trying to get on a horse. My eyes stuck to the screen until the Kiwi and his friendly cat tells me to go to sleep. But I don't want to go to sleep. My eyes awake at night my imaginations running while Sunday horrors are chasing with his long black cape with sharp teeth trying to bite me. I escaped only to fall into a hole, and a monster ate my head and woke up with my pant wet. I turn the lights on, only to be told off to turn it off to save power. I wet the bed cos I was afraid to go to the toilet. I get a beating in the morning for wetting the bed.

TOPI

They direct us to the round red table, and we sat all together up against the wall, watching them speak very fast, their English as perfect as the woman on the plane. We sit and wait and wait, we remain very still like the ticking of the clock on the wall our belonging in our bags, our coconut oil, frozen in the cold, but our eyes stuck to the black and white TV screen like glue.

VAO

This is home.

TOPI

This is a prison. We are stuck inside the room every hour of the day.

SAU

The outside shower and toilet were for our family.

SET

We sneak our food through the back window so no one can see us.

TOPI

When we speak to our witch doctor  
Grandmother and fat aunty, our eyes  
are on the ground. Never stare them  
in the eye. Our Mother just smiled.  
Our fat aunty slap our Mother with  
her fat hands! Whack!

SET

Our Mother falls to the ground.

TOPI

Our Father said it was our Mothers  
fault for not fighting back.

SAU

The fat bitch! Dare she hit our  
Mother.

SET

Wanted to punch her fat stomach.  
Hated them they always compare us  
kids with them. They said that we are  
not going to be anything. She called  
us kids "Useless". Our Father only  
words.

VAO

Why are you kids so useless!

TOPI

My name is useless!

SAU

I am useless!

SET

Useless!

TOPI

And we started to believe them! We  
began to think that this family is  
useless!

SAU

We really need a new family like the  
ones on TV.

TOPI

The next morning our Father woke us  
up. We pissed in the toilet all three  
of us, around the white toilet bowl  
pissing, pissing.

(MORE)

TOPI (cont'd)

Our Father told us next time one by one goes into the bathroom.

SAU

But we are so used to doing things altogether.

SET

Back at home, we didn't have toilets as clean as this one. We have those long drop ones. Bombs away! Drop!

TOPI pretends that he is on a long drop toilet on top of the brown box.

SET (cont'd)

Don't fall in the toilet!

They all laugh.

VAO

Hurry up.

TOPI

We are in New Zealand now. We have toilet paper for our arses. Wipe, wipe. Our bums are as clean as the toilet seat.

SAU

Our Father took us up to the shop. The walkway up to the shop was clean with so many people on the street.

SET

We kept an eye out for people with big hair in case we see them on the road.

SAU

The shop was like a new world to us Island kids. Never before have we seen a real shop full of goodies. We wanted it all the things in that shop.

TOPI

Our eyes nearly pop out of our heads with so many. Lollies in the shop! We stacked our pockets with chocolates as we walked back to the fat people house.

SAU

I see so many cars on the road!

TOPI

I can't wait to have a car. I mean we need a car because we are in New Zealand now. But we didn't have a car; our car was our feet. We beat the feet everywhere it was our only transport.

SAU

We need a car cos we are in New Zealand just like the family on TV.

SET

Shame! We hid as we are walking ashamed that we are the only family didn't have a car.

TOPI

We are in New Zealand now. We change everything to fit our new start. We have new clothes, but not we have second clothing. We can't afford new clothes. Our Mother would shop for us, but we are too afraid to wear them to school or kids will know that we shopped at a second-hand store.

SET stops TOPI.

SET

We have to go and pick our Father up. He's drunk, again. Our Father was a drunk; he drinks with his friends at the pub until we go looking for him to help him back home.

TOPI

The year was 1980. The shop was the place to hang out and play Space Invaders games. We had no money, so the milk bottles outside were the only way to get money. We were too fast for older adults trying to chase us down.

SAU

Back in those days, the early 80's  
fish and chips were cheap and class  
bottles you can collect and take the  
bottles back to the shop to exchanges  
for coins.

SET

We had our new flat, plenty of rooms  
to run around but still, we didn't  
bring our friends around our house.  
We had nothing, no fridge, no new TV.

TOPI

We had nothing to show them. We had  
no food in our house, and that was  
the reason for not bringing our  
friends around, and we didn't want  
them to meet our angry Father.

SET

Shame!

SAU

Shame!

TOPI

Extra shame! Our Father still worked  
in a bed factory. We never had real  
beds in our house. We shared the same  
bed. I want my bed! I dream that one  
day I will have my bed like my  
friends at school they have their  
beds. Our Father was always drunk.  
Here in New Zealand, he didn't have  
to make homebrew here the beers flows  
freely with this workmates. While the  
palagi goes and have one or two beers  
after work, my Father and his Island  
mates will drink the bar down and  
have some fights with one another.  
Old disputes sorted the Island way,  
and that is fights! Welcome to New  
Zealand!

SAU

They said, "this was a quiet country  
until we came."

SET/SAU/TOPI

Fight! Fight! Fight!

All three boys are on top of the brown box cheering the fight.

SET/SAU/TOPI (cont'd)  
Punch him, kick him! Smash him with a bottle, a rock his face!

SET  
No one can beat our Father in a fistfight.

SAU  
We never see VAO training, but he can fight when it time to put em hands up!

TOPI  
Why can't we read a book? And be like normal kids.

SAU  
We are normal, but we don't do "normal" things.

TOPI  
You guys can't read! The library was my escape—Runaway from this mad family.

TOPI open the box and takes out a book and hides on the other side of the brown box reading a book.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Here is my future!

TOPI holds out a book. He reads to himself.

SAU  
Why can't we have those happy family like the ones on TV!

SET  
Yeah, those white families with the perfect smiles and beautiful white teeth. A lovely mum that is well dressed.

SAU  
A big car.

TOPI  
New clothes.

SAU  
And lots of food in the fridge!

SAU/SET  
Our house we have nothing!

TOPI  
Here is our future.

TOPI holds out a book.

SAU/SET  
We don't read!

SAU  
Can that book buy us our future?

SET  
Can your books beat our Father up?

SAU  
Your book is useful to wipe our bums  
when we run out of toilet papers!

SET  
Shame!

SAU  
Shame!

TOPI  
We blame our parents for not having  
enough. We were better off in the  
Islands, but we are here now. We can  
grow up to be doctors and lawyers.

SAU  
Oh, join people with big hair and  
long beards.

They all laugh.

TOPI  
On his payday, we are waiting for him  
outside the pub for money for food.  
He gets paid on Thursday, this going  
to be a long weekend of no food and  
no smokes for him.

SET

As long as we get flour, sugar and tea, we should be sufficient for the week till his next payday.

TOPI

1985 with new music to dance to groove in front of the mirror. We finally move from away from the fat people house.

SET/SAU/TOPI

Goodbye, fat people!

TOPI

We get another new flat! We don't have to be in the same place with our parents at night we have to close our ears and not to hear anything.

SET

But we still shared the one bed.

SAU

I am in the middle.

TOPI

We are old enough to sleep by ourselves!

SAU

But we always do things together, TOPI.

TOPI

Okay, but stop pissing on the bed. You are old enough to get up and go to the toilet.

They laugh.

TOPI (cont'd)

You watched too many movies and TV.

SAU

I am like the Incredible. Hulk when I am angry I smash everyone!

TOPI/SAU/SET

Welcome to New Zealand!

TOPI

We still struggle to pay our bills because the white landlord in really tight shorts will turn up on Friday morning expecting my parents to pay for the rent.

SET playing the white landlord in tight shorts.

LANDLORD

Money? Your rent is behind. If you can't pay your rent, then get out!

TOPI

We got so many warnings about the rent. New Zealand was all about paying the rent. How did we get through all those years? Looking back and trying to find out how did we pay our rent?

SAU

We struggle to meet ends meet.

SET

Chicken backs and noodles for dinner on the concrete floor. Newspaper as a table cloth. We had no table or flashed chairs like we see our friends at the school. They talked about their families who has everything in their house. Even their dogs have a home!

SET/SAU/TOPI

Even the dogs have a home!

TOPI

We don't even have a kitchen, a fridge; our milk was kept in the sink with cold water to keep it cool.

SAU

Not cool! I want to be like the family on TV where everything is perfect—always smiling family on TV. Forever the happy family. That's my real family!

SET friendly cuffs SAU on the head.

SET

No! This is your family.

TOPI

We try to be cool at school in case some kids find out that we are the most impoverished family on the street. We told them lies, more lies to gain friends and to be blend in with the cool kids. But cool kids wore Levi jeans and nomads shoes. We have second-hand shoes and woollen colourful rainbow jumpers!

TOPI picks up a newspaper and reads from its headline.

TOPI (cont'd)

"The world is changing", and we are still to find our world.

TOPI/SAU/SET

New Zealand is all about money if you have none, honey. Well, you are going to sleep outside. We steal to feed ourselves! Thieves, robbers that were us! We are coming for your stuff.

Pause.

TOPI on top of the brown box.

TOPI

Our Mother steals to feed us—a pack of meat stash under a pram. She was so good at stealing she kept at it. We had good food when she steals.

SAU

What? Our Mother, who goes to church?

TOPI

Yes, our Mother, who goes to church on Sunday but steals on Monday to feed us, kids! Where was Jesus in all of this?

SET/SAU

He was asleep!

TOPI

Don't judge the poor we are just trying to survive.

SET

The Devil is with her.

SAU

Her fingers like an invisible hand, she takes your wallet when you are not looking.

TOPI

Keep stealing Mother until one day she got caught. And what did our Father do? Give her a hiding for bringing shame to his name!

SAU/SET/TOPI

Bastard! How dare he hit her, he ate the stolen chicken she stole!

TOPI

His fat sister wanted to give her hiding, too when she found out that our Mother was caught stealing.

SAU

We scab other kids lunches. If they hand over their lunches, we beat them up.

SET

We raid the fruit trees to feed our hungry mouths.

SAU

We dream of the good food we see on the TV.

TOPI/SAU/SET

No fun has no money. We don't have any cash on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday but praying for Thursday to hurry up cos that is when our Father gets paid! Still, its all spend on the drink and playing poker and lose all his money. At the game, we learn to cheat to win. He taught us to cheat to win.

TOPI  
 Sometimes he wins all the money from  
 the game of poker and gives us all  
 his silver coins.

VAO walks on stage and drops silver coins for his boys. The  
 boys run for it.

SAU/SET/TOPI  
 RICH! We are rich!

SAU holds the silver coins out.

SAU  
 Rich like the family on TV.

TOPI  
 Finally, I can buy a pie tomorrow at  
 school!

SAU  
 We are rich! Oh, the feel of  
 richness. I want to buy every lolly  
 at the shop.

SET  
 But the next morning he asks for it  
 back!

VAO  
 Give me back my money.

They all line-up and hands the silver coins back.

VAO (cont'd)  
 All of it.

They hand all the money back to VAO.

TOPI/SAU/SET  
 Friday is no money day and the  
 weekend is never any money in the  
 house! WE don't get Xmas presents cos  
 we never have enough money. We don't  
 celebrate birthdays cos we don't have  
 any cash! Never enough to eat, never  
 enough to buy the right clothes,  
 shoes that other kids have. We are  
 poor but happy they say and be  
 grateful for what we have? We have no  
 choice but to dream and wake up in  
 our dreams, still hungry. Why did we  
 come here to New Zealand!

Enters VAO. The boys stop their rant.

VAO  
Food. Drink. Smokes.

SAU  
Smokes. Food. Drink.

SET  
Drink. Food. Smokes.

TOPI  
That is all he wants but its not  
payday. Today is Sunday. Maybe if we  
pray to Jesus, he can give us some  
fish to feed this poor family.

VAO  
Hurry up. I want food. Drink. Smokes.  
That is all, nothing more.

VAO makes his way to his chair. He is grumpy and not in a  
good mood.

TOPI  
Our Father still drinks and gives our  
Mother hiding when there is no food  
in the house. A black eye or a  
broken arm. She leaves the house, but  
the next morning she comes back home.  
We can only look on and hope that we  
can fight him one day. Even when he  
gives us hiding, to tell our teacher  
that we fall or we played rugby or  
some lies to keep our Father away  
from jail. We don't talk to our  
teachers about our lives at home. We  
just happily go about with our pain.

SAU  
We never went to school. We had the  
measles, spots and sores all over our  
bodies; we look like Leopards in  
Africa.

SET  
The year is 1981 primary school, the  
smell of meat pies and new teachers  
and new kids.

(MORE)

SET (cont'd)

We wanted to be like the other kids wearing no shoes to school only to get home and get a hiding from our Mother for trying to be like those kids.

TOPI

But when we finally went to school. We dressed in the same clothes yellow turtle high neck skivvies, baby oil in our hair lots of it and Island bags to carry our taros and banana for lunch. Which we never ate, too shy to even bring it out. Other kids had real lunches like New Zealand food, and here we are carrying our Island food around in our bag. We left them in our bags till we on our way back home to eat when no other kids were around.

SET

I love school here. Sports, and all the Palagi girls. Hello. Palagi girl do you want to be my girlfriend?

SAU

I didn't understand school. They said I was stupid for can't read. But I know all the TV shows on TV.

TOPI

We wanted to be like the Palagi kids. You know, wearing no shoes to school, walking in the rain, talk back to the teachers.

SET

That was the best part of schooling here to talk back to the teachers. Nah, you suck miss!

SAU

Back in the Islands, you talk back to the teachers, and in no times you be talking to the floor with no teeth.

TOPI

They put me in the same classroom with my brother. What not with these two.

SET

Brother!

SAU

My brother, we share the same bed now  
we are in the same classroom.

TOPI

The same class among all the other  
Island kids. Extra English classes  
for us to catch up with other English  
speaking Islanders. We spoke English,  
but it was not proper English.

SAU

Broken English like our Father!

TOPI

"You go for me to smoke".

SAU

"You drink for me."

SET

"Goodbye for you".

They all laugh.

SAU

What's proper English?

TOPI

The proper English is "Fuck you,  
miss!" Nah, your classroom sucks Mrs  
Myers!

TOPI gives the finger to the audience.

TOPI (cont'd)

Our teacher never to meet our  
parents! We waited for our reports  
cards at the mailbox. We read it. Oh  
look at that I got an A for ASS! We  
made kites out of our report cards  
and fly away to the rubbish.

SET

Our Father dreams were for us to do  
well at school, and one day, one of  
us plays for the All - Blacks.

TOPI  
I tried playing rugby, but I was too small.

VAO  
Too small in heart and bloody useless!

SET  
Bloody useless! TOPI runs like a girl on the field.

SAU  
Put a dress on him and watch him run like the girl on TV running down the hill.

TOPI  
I hate rugby! I can't play rugby.

SET and SAU laughs.

TOPI (cont'd)  
In New Zealand, three things that make him happy drinking, rugby and playing the guitar.

SAU opens the brown box and gives a guitar to VAO. VAO plays the guitar.

Pause. For a moment peace in the house with VAO playing the guitar.

SAU  
Aha! The story of the ten guitars. They all have the same tune, smash against the wall when our Father was angry.

SET  
Only if the All Blacks win and they must win, and most times they win!

VAO cheering the All Blacks on.

VAO  
Go, Black!

TOPI  
He never says All Blacks.

VAO  
Go, Black!

TOPI  
If they don't win our TV, fly out the  
window!

VAO takes the TV out of the brown box and throws it off  
stage.

VAO  
Useless, Black! Useless!

SAU  
And we will have no TV for ages to  
watch out cartoon!

SET  
No Star Treks.

TOPI  
Night Riders, A-Team or Charlies  
Angels!

SAU  
And then we have to listen to our  
Father play the guitar alone in his  
room singing his Island songs.

VAO takes another guitar out of the box and plays a tune.

TOPI  
Just him and his guitar as we all get  
ready to sleep. He plays the guitar  
the only peaceful moment in our lives  
as we lie on our one bed listening to  
him play his songs. I wish he knew  
how to play *Rivers of Babylon*. We  
will sleep into the night and dream  
of waking up to a house full of food  
and happy family.

SAU  
Yeah like that TV shows that they all  
say goodbye to everyone before going  
to bed. Bye, TOPI.

TOPI  
Bye, SAU.

SAU  
Bye, SET.

SET

Shut up, man! And don't wet the bed.  
Bunch of dreamers! Nothing here but a  
white jumbo bread that we will toast  
up using the gas oven and that is all  
we are going to have for dinner.

SET pulls out a loaf of sliced bread and throws it on the  
brown box.

TOPI

We all made a promise that went we  
all grow up - I will work at the Milo  
place so that we won't run out of  
Milo. SET will work at bread factory  
so we won't run out of bread and SAU  
works at butter place.

SAU

I want to work at the Jam factory.

SET

No, you are working at the bread  
factory cos we need bread.

TOPI

SAU you are working at the bread  
factory.

SAU

And none of us kept our promise to  
each other. Useless!

VAO

Smokes for me!

VAO calls out.

TOPI

When our Father had no smokes, he  
tells us to go to the next door and  
asks for smokes for him, and he'll  
pay them back on this payday on  
Thursday. Always shameful when he  
does that. I'll hide outside and count  
to a hundred.

TOPI hides behind the brown box and counts to a hundred.

TOPI (cont'd)

The man says he's got no smokes. You can see the changes in our Father, his nostrils flares like a pig, his mouths open like a volcano and out spit the demon of hate!

SAU

He changes quickly, his mood changes like Hulk. Yeah, smash time. Someone is going to get hurt. Flying cups, flying furniture and flying limbs across the room!

The boys hide behind the brown box watching VAO in rage. VAO smashes the guitar on the wall and anything in his way he smashes.

VAO

Ahhhhhhhhh! I want smokes!

TOPI

He needs cigarette!

TOPI opens the brown box finds a smoke. VAO falls to the ground has a fit. TOPI put the burning smoke in VAO's mouth and just watches him go through his fit with the smoke in his mouth. VAO on the ground with the burning smoke in his mouth. No one moves.

SET pick up the smoke and smokes it. Offers it to his two brothers, both turns it down. SET helps VAO up back to his chair.

SET

Come on old man, you are too old for this.

TOPI

The year is 1990, the Factory moved, and he decides not to go with the job. Too hard for him to work. He gets sick too many times. The only cure for his sickness is the bottle of beer.

SAU

He's getting old; his body is breaking down from years of abuse. His teeth are falling one by one.

TOPI

We are like a pack of Hyenas licking our paws, and we wait. The time is nearly here. I note that down that VAO getting old and that is a sign of weakness. His body starts to swell of fat, his hair starts to fade, and he's starting to give us advice on life and school. I just turn my ears off.

VAO

Be good kids.

TOPI

We don't want to listen! He preaches about life, and we don't want to hear his advice.

SAU

It was the summer of 1992 a beautiful Saturday day. A family down the road was having a party, and we have known them since we moved to this new part of town. We get an invite to the party, but because our Father wanted to drink, he went to the party early.

VAO, with his best Island shirt, makes his way to the middle of the stage. TOPI, SAU and SET stand at the back of him like in a semi-circle.

SAU becomes angry and stops. TOPI takes over telling the story.

TOPI

It was this very moment that his life would change and his past catches up with him.

SET

A group of men he knows from the Island attacked him beat him to the ground.

SAU hits VAO from behind, and VAO falls to the ground. They kick VAO on the floor. VAO crawls back to his chair as the boys continue with the story.

SAU

He makes himself home, covered in blood his front teeth loose from the kick of the boot he pulled his two front teeth out!

VAO painful scream.

SAU (cont'd)

He seeks revenge on those that hurt him.

TOPI

He got what he deserved some say. It was a long time coming; his past caught up with him. He was a bully back in the Island, and now they are coming for him.

SAU

I took a piece of wood up to the house only to find them gone. Those men names are in our memories. When I got there, they all have fled the scene; some old lady talks some sense into me. I wanted to break the house down with my piece of wood. I spent my days looking for those men. They talk and laugh at what happened to our Father.

SAU (cont'd)

We have to take revenge for our Father.

SET

We have to restore the honour of the family.

TOPI

I could not do it. Years ago, when I saw one of the men in the dark streets while he was going to his car. I walked up to the man, and he turned to me and smiled.

SAU

That was your chance.

TOPI

I didn't dare to seek revenge. My heart didn't let me take revenge.

SET

Useless! If that was me, I would have dealt with that man. Boots and all over his face! Die! Die!

SAU

You let that man go free! What kind of son are you?

TOPI

I am sorry. I let us down.

SAU

Don't worry, we will find them.

SAU helps TOPI up.

SAU (cont'd)

Its time the weak to step aside.

A slow drum is playing in the background. A red light, light up the stage.

SAU and SET are angry.

SET

We are sons of the great VAO. We say our Father was great because he taught us all things about fighting, drinking and never back down from any man who dares to challenge us in a fistfight.

SAU

A man, his few words were the laws for our young ears. As we grew these words becomes our prison, but we held on to every one word that came out of our Father's tongue.

SET

His angry blood runs through us like the blade of the machete hacking the trees down. They fall, fall to the ground like a rock dropped in the ocean that frightens away the fishes in the sea. We are the blade; we are the rock, we are the rough of the sea.

TOPI

He was a fearless warrior on the sea  
and land. He put food in our hungry  
little mouths. Always his ways or pay  
the price if you disobey. We never  
saw him cry. Only girls cry tears,  
and only our Mother calls in her  
loneliness.

SAU

We witness him as the King of men in  
our village. He fought all those who  
can put them hands up and drank  
homemade liqueur till the morning  
sun.

SET

The pretty village girls excited when  
he walks the village at night. Old  
village women gossip around the fire  
of the great deed our Father did for  
the town. Some men feared him others  
drink and smile with him, but behind  
the closed doors, they silently plot  
his downfall with their lies and  
jealousy until they succeed.

TOPI

Now they live with laughter while our  
Father sleeps in anger. Revenge we  
scream! We are the sons that must  
avenge our Father. His sons will hunt  
them down and bury their bones upside  
downs in the dirt of the ground.

SAU

We know your names, your names are  
written in the sharpness of our  
blades. Your ugly eyes will see our  
anger, and your teeth will feel our  
boots to your mouth.

SET

Our knives are sharp as our rocks are  
ready to seek justice for the death  
of our dearest Father! He was alone  
when trouble arrives, and we were too  
young when he called out.

TOPI

The protector of our house has gone.

TOPI/SAU/SET

The home of VAO has fallen! We must rebuild at once. We are the sons who hold the machete to protect our honour and uphold his mighty name. We are his sons.

TOPI

Our tears are for ourselves; our tears are for the strong.

SET/SAU

We are the sons of the great VAO!

The drum stops. The light changes back to normal.

TOPI

The year was 1991 we moved from our old flat into a house—a new start for our family. Our Father a little older and we a little stronger but still never lay a hand on our Father.

They all walk up to VAO and measure themselves to him by facing him. They open the big brown box and brings out bags of newspapers.

TOPI (cont'd)

We deliver morning newspapers to help out with the bills. We had a little more food on the table but still our stomach graves for the excellent food.

SAU

Our Father is growing a little older but still can pack a punch.

VAO

I am still the man of the house.

TOPI

Lucky for morning newspaper jobs we had new clothes from people clotheslines and new shoes from peoples doorsteps!

SET/SAU

Thieves! Bring back our underwears!

TOPI

It was pants, you idiots!

They all laugh.

TOPI (cont'd)  
These shoes don't fit me! That's  
okay, we sell them to our friends for  
some extra coins!

SAU and SET get shoes from the brown box.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Shoes for sale. Brand new shoes, old  
shoes we got your sizes up here for a  
few dollars. All coins are welcome!

VAO on stage asking the audience for some smokes.

VAO  
Smokes. Got any smokes? Got a fire?  
Beers?

SET Take VAO back to his seat.

SAU  
Then we grew big and a little taller  
than our Father, but still, we dare  
not look him in the eye.

SET  
Dare not face his rage when he is  
angry.

TOPI  
One day he beat up our Mother.  
Nothing new that she gets hiding just  
different day but the same beating!

SAU  
This really gotta stop!

SET  
Why doesn't she fight back.

TOPI  
She can't she loves him too much.

SAU  
What's that? She is in trouble.

TOPI  
She was to blame for no food in the  
house. She was on the ground as he  
threw punches, and I could not take  
it anymore! This shit needs to stop!  
(MORE)

TOPI (cont'd)

I found blind courage, ran over to him. He saw me coming over and stop looked at me. His fist clenched in anger.

VAO

How dare you, boy! How dare you stand to your Father!

VAO is facing TOPI.

TOPI

I am not a boy anymore. My Mother has no voice, just her tears. I feel great to stand up to my Father for the very first time. For a while, we just stare at each other. VAO breathing was anger, and mine was fear.

SAU

We were so proud of our eldest brother making a stand.

SET

Like two prizefighters in the ring ready for blood!

TOPI

I stood up to him, but his eyes were red as a burning fire. I held my gaze, but my heart was racing in fear! I wanted to run, but my legs were frozen! Come on, legs! Run!

SAU checks TOPI heart like he's a doctor.

SAU

Find your nuts, and you can do it, brother.

SET

Too much talking and not enough fighting! Hurry up and fight him. This is your moment.

SAU

Guards up! Hold em hands up.

TOPI

I am not ready.

SAU/SET

Yes, you are.

TOPI

Yes, you are right! The time is now.  
Let's go!

TOPI walks up to VAO.

VAO

You dare step up to me? How dare you!  
All your life for this, this is the  
moment you been waiting for all your  
life to beat me?

TOPI

I turn away from him. When WHAM! He  
hit me from the back. I fell to the  
ground like a tree being chop by an  
axe.

SAU

Useless!

TOPI

My face greeted my best friend, the  
FLOOR! I forgot the first rule VAO  
taught us never turned your back on a  
fight.

VAO

You can never be like me. Never ever  
raise your hand to the man who  
brought you to his world.

VAO put a boot into TOPI side. VAO struggles to walk back to  
his chair.

SAU

It was not a good idea to try and  
take on our Father.

SAU/SET helps TOPI up.

TOPI holds the side of his face.

SAU (cont'd)

The year is 1995. After years of  
abuse and hiding, our dear Mother  
turned her back on our family.

SET is angry.

SAU (cont'd)

That was a wrong move for her. She should never leave our Father.

TOPI

She needed to go. She found the courage to leave VAO.

SET

She is not a good woman.

VAO in rage.

VAO

Never trust a woman! Never trust anyone, not even your own shadow.

VAO struggle with his words like the chair has eaten the man.

VAO (cont'd)

With all my love for that woman, now she wants to leave me! How dare you leave me, woman. How dare you turn your back on me. I am your man. I am your chief. How dare you let another man take my place! I always love you, woman, you betray me my flower.

TOPI

He called his flower. It was the first time we hear him kind of crying alone in his room. He was in hell. He locked himself in his room with his radio listening to Island songs. He sings his sad Island songs. Tears. We don't need to see it, but we can feel his tears and all of a sudden. At night he calls out to God why is he still alive. He tried to reach out to us kids, but we don't know how to reach back to him.

VAO

God! Why I am, I still alive! I don't want to live anymore. Let me go to God.

SAU

That was a sad day when she packed her stuff and left. When she left, I never trusted a woman in my life. I was afraid that she might leave me.

(MORE)

SAU (cont'd)

As much I wanted love to feel another person, I was fearful that they might walk out on me. What kind of love is that when someone that you loved walked out on you.

TOPI

She had no choice but to leave. Its called real love.

SET

What do you know about real love? What you saying about VAO? He showed love to that woman, and when he was weak, she decides to leave him!

TOPI

Love is something that we don't understand something that we don't want to talk and face it!

SAU

Yeah, we don't talk about those things. Those love things. We don't love, and we smash things up. We beat people up. We hurt people. Now our Father is hurt.

TOPI

And in return, we hurt ourselves. But we won't know that until we grew up and found out for ourselves that we all need love and that what was missing in our lives, it was the love. And where was the love? Love left us from our young lives. Our Mother left us with our angry drunken Father. When she left him, he became more enraged than ever.

VAO

I wanna die! Let me die today, God!

TOPI

A broken man with his best friend the bottle is drinking his life away., a wounded beast with blood in his eyes seeking revenge.

VAO

I tried my very best. I want to find my why I am here on this earth?

(MORE)

VAO (cont'd)  
Why did God put me here? What is my  
purpose in this life?

For the first time, we hear a growing noise coming from VAO.  
Years of pain finally, he breaks his tears are ugly.

VAO has another fit. The boys don't look at VAO. They just  
left him to go through his pain.

TOPI  
I don't care anymore. The older VAO  
gets, the more fits he has. No matter  
what medicines the doctors give him,  
it gets worst. Sometimes we find him  
naked outside the house after his  
fits.

SET  
Someone put some clothes on the man.  
Have you two have no shame on our  
Father.

SET rushes over with a lavalava and wraps on VAO.

SAU  
I am telling you its the dogs.

VAO  
Fuck you son! Let me die!

SET let him go. The man is lost in his world. The floor is  
wet with urine.

TOPI  
He became a little crazy. He took  
more to the bottle and started to go  
to church. He was thinking that the  
church was going to save all his sins  
and hope it will bring his wife back,  
but his wife has found someone else.

SET  
Traitor!

SAU  
I want to find this man and give him  
the machete!

VAO  
Take the machete to that man, my  
sons!

TOPI

That even broke our Father; our Mother found someone else. He falls deep into depression and has no way out. He wanted to change, but Jesus never heeds his prayers. Jesus never hears our prayers. He was weak in words.

VAO

I don't know why I had you kids. You all deserve to die!

Pause.

TOPI

It says that real men words are when they are drunk. The only way he knows to talk about his feelings is when he is drunk.

SAU

It became non stop even though the night he keeps his preaching about life and God.

VAO is preaching about God and his life.

VAO

I should have left all of youse back in the Island. God, why is that I am still alive? What have I done? Someone make me something to eat. I am dying.

TOPI

We can't sleep at night because of his constant speeches.

SET

The only time we lay hands on him is to help him home when he was too drunk to carry himself home. Someone will call out that he is sleeping shirtless at the bus shelter and we need to go and bring him home.

VAO on the ground, drunk. He tries to pick himself up but falls flat face to the ground.

TOPI  
I am sick of this shit!

TOPI goes over to VAO.

TOPI (cont'd)  
Sleep!

SET  
He is our Father.

TOPI  
Let him sleep at the bus stop.

SAU  
We can't do that. We can't just  
leave our Father here.

SAU and SET help VAO back to his seat.

TOPI  
I am twenty one now.

SAU and SET bring a cake to TOPI.

SAU/SET  
Happy birthday dear brother.

TOPI  
It was not a big birthday--no 21st  
birthday key. A table in the living  
room with food, and that was it. My  
first birthday cake. My first  
birthday celebration.

VAO  
Here is my good son.

TOPI  
I didn't hear any words he spoke. I  
mean, I didn't want to listen to his  
words. I am a man! Finally, I can  
leave the house!

SAU  
Come back and see us.

SET  
He never did.

TOPI

I didn't want to come home. I tried to find myself in the world. But I end back at home.

SET

When it was my turn to leave the house, I keep coming back home with a beer for the "old man". Sometimes I bring him smokes, and we both sit outside enjoying a smoke. Sometimes we play poker I let him win.

SAU

When I was twenty-one, it was the happiest birthday of my life. I finally cut my hair. For twenty years, I kept my hair happy that he cut it off now. I look like a man instead of a girl with long hair.

VAO takes the scissors.

VAO

For you, my strong son.

VAO takes the scissors to SAU long hair. He drops the scissors and walks back to his chair and watches his son.

SET

We are men now. We have beards, and our nuts got some hairs. We drink like real men. We are angry men. Angry at anyone who looks at us wrong.

SAU

Smash them up if they want a fight then let's do this!

TOPI

I am lost with my self and my feelings.

SET

You are soft brother. Always have and always will.

SET gets a case of beers and sit on the brown box drinking.  
SET invites SAU and TOPI to drink.

TOPI  
I don't drink. I stay away from  
anything that reminds me of my  
Father. I did drink once, and I was a  
monster.

SET holds a beer out to TOPI.

SET  
Get em monster! Lots of beers for me  
then. Out of my way, you soft nuts!

SET drinks himself drunk.

SET (cont'd)  
We have been in this country for  
thirty years!

TOPI  
That is right.

SAU  
Wow been that long we been here.

SET  
I'll drink to that. SALUTE! I'll  
drink with my "old man".

SET goes over and hands VAO a bottle of beer, but VAO  
doesn't respond.

SET (cont'd)  
Here you Father. Drink up! Don't turn  
me down, old man.

SAU  
You are drunk, leave him alone.

SET  
This is between him and his favourite  
son, me. Drink up VAO.

SET tries to force the bottle on VAO. SET grabs VAO face for  
the first time.

SET (cont'd)  
Here is your beer. Drink up!

SET pours the beer on VAO.

SAU in rage.

SAU  
Leave him alone!

SET turns on SAU.

SET  
Fuck you! Is this what you want from  
us? If this what you want for your  
boys?

TOPI  
SET you are the favourite son!

SET  
I don't give a fuck!

SET slaps VAO. SMACK! Silent.

Pause.

SAU  
You dare disrespect our Father!

SAU runs over to SET and punches him. The brothers fought it  
out. VAO just looks on in mute.

VAO scream in horror!

VAO  
Enough kids! Enough. No more!

VAO breaks down in tears and tries to stop his two boys  
fighting, but he can't control the rage in the two boys one  
fuel by alcohol and the other by pure rage.

VAO (cont'd)  
No more - I beg of you both, no more!

VAO is in tears distraught. SAU and SET just stop walk away  
from each other. VAO goes back to his seat. TOPI just  
freeze.

TOPI cleans up the mess.

Silent.

TOPI  
I don't know why I came home.

VAO in tears.

TOPI (cont'd)

The year was 1995. I found something called love. I didn't tell anyone not even these two idiots know about it. I didn't know how to act. I mean, I don't know how to be in love. I met her at the bus stop.

SET/ SAU

What!

SET

How did that happen? Sorry, brother, I mean you are not the best looking one out of us three, and you found love?

TOPI

She found me. I allowed this girl into my life, but it took a while. But love is lovely.

VAO calls from his seat. His slurred his words, but you can still make it out what he is saying.

VAO

Don't trust her. What is she? They come into your life, and they will leave you. I know. What do you know about love? She will leave you. Let her go now.

SAU

Can we meet this girl? Your girlfriend. How do you get a girlfriend? I don't know how to talk to girls?

SET

Easy man! You, not the only one that finds love. I got a girlfriend too.

SAU

I don't have a girlfriend!

SET

Your girlfriend is on TV.

SAU

Not funny man.

SET

Here is how you get a girlfriend.  
Hey, a girl comes over here. You,  
what is your name? Do you want to be  
my girlfriend? Say yes. Nothing wrong  
with me, what is wrong with you? What  
can you cook? What kind of food can  
you make? How many kids should we  
have? Don't talk back to me or else.

SET raises his hand.

SET (cont'd)

Don't make me, girl. Don't make  
backhand your mouth.

TOPI

Don't! I have to go and pick him up  
from the police station.

SET

She was not listening. She asks for  
it. I slap her; it was out of anger.  
A reaction. Bang! She fell to the  
ground. She called the Police. She  
took me back anyway.

TOPI

No. I want my new found friend to  
stay away from this family. It took  
me a long time before I even  
introduce her to them.

SAU

She was beautiful.

SET

Good on you brother.

TOPI does a little happy dance.

TOPI

The year 2000 the Millennium bug did  
get us, but our upbringing did. We  
grew up angry men. How we react to  
other people even if they look at us,  
we get mad. We grew up not knowing  
love.

(MORE)

TOPI (cont'd)

When we did found love, we didn't know how to express ourselves and love other people. We didn't want to give in to love.

SAU

This love is only for wimps and gays; we only know how to smash people.

TOPI

The year was 2002, the girl and me I met at the bus stop started to see each other, and finally, one thing leads to another, and we had a child. I had a child, a boy with all my love. I didn't want him to be close to my Father. He held my child once.

TOPI hands the child over to VAO to hold.

VAO

Be good to him.

VAO gives the child back and walks back to his seat. They watch him fall on his chair.

SAU

Can we hold him?

TOPI

Hands over the baby. It's not a toy.

SET

What's his name?

TOPI

Halamoana.

SAU

What kind of name is that?

TOPI

Halamoana is the way to the ocean. A mighty Niuean name.

SAU

What about Bruce?

SET

Yeah, Bruce Lee is a right name.

TOPI  
What about getting your own child.

They all laugh.

From the back of the stage, a deep groan from VAO. He is not well. But no one notice. He walks off stage. He glances once to his boys and leaves the stage for the last time.

TOPI (cont'd)  
My child that everything to me.  
Everything that I had wrong with my  
Father is everything right with my  
boy and me. This girl I met we had a  
child, a beautiful boy with big eyes  
and curly hair. He is everything to  
me. I held him and made a promise  
never to hurt him. I am his protector  
and will do everything for him.

Funeral bells are ringing.

TOPI (cont'd)  
The year was 2004 was something in  
the air that particular morning. I  
was driving. I had my son at the back  
of the car when I got a phone call  
from my brother SET. It was no pull  
over it was he just said it. He is  
gone, the "old man" is dead. A sense  
of freedom came over me—a little  
sadness. I just kept driving and  
never wanted to stop. I keep saying  
to myself may God judge him.

SET  
Yeah, I remember calling you.

TOPI  
The man we all have feared all our  
lives has left this world. At the  
funeral, I had no tears. As much as I  
tried my very best, but nothing seems  
to come out of me. Because our Father  
just left us, we had no chance to  
forgive and talk about things that  
matters to us as boys. We cremated  
his body; the flames ate the wooden  
casket as we starred lost into the  
fire—his ashes in a silver urn  
sitting in the living room. We all  
moved on with our lives.

SAU

I am still stuck with my Father—his anger and fearlessness in my heart. I don't have kids; I don't want kids. I don't have a partner, a girlfriend or a wife. I don't need anyone in my life. I have a screen in front of me that I am all good. At least the screen doesn't talk back, and if I get bored with the TV I can always upgrade it or replace it or throw it outside!

SET

I have no kids too. I mean, I loved to have them, but I feel they are just too much. I have our Father here Inked in my veins. His name forever in my arm; this is my drinking arm. When I lift the bottle, I can see his name on my arm. I drink for him. This one for you "old man."

SET skulls down a can of beer.

TOPI

When he died, we took things that belong to him, something that gave us pain. We held up the brown leather belt that he beat us with the energy still stings like the snakeskin that holds so many painful memories. I was angry holding the belt. I dropped it into the fireplace and watched it burn, and the smell of leather skin melts away in the burning charcoals.

SAU

Something I kept like his clothes and radio. His room we just kept everything like it was. His mattress the same as it was when he was alive, nothing changed. Sometimes when I am sleeping in the middle of the night, I feel that I can hear him playing the guitar.

SET

Our Mother returns back into our lives.

TOPI

We welcome her back into our lives.  
We love our dearest Mother with all  
our love.

SAU

We went back home to Niue Island for  
a holiday. The old house still with  
no windows, no doors only the  
memories of that so long ago.

SET

The coconut tree that our Mother  
planted has grown so tall to the sky.

TOPI

I seek forgiveness. I cry for my  
Father, but these tears are an open  
call for love. I smile to help me  
survive my daily challenges.

All three boys are on stage.

TOPI (cont'd)

We say our farewell to each other. We  
hug like real men.

They hug each other.

TOPI (cont'd)

It's been a long road to get here. I  
set myself free from all my trouble.  
This cycle of violence has to broken.  
Love must heal for my brothers and  
me. We never got to say goodbye to  
our Father. But I know he is looking  
down on us with his love and we look  
up to the sky with forgiveness.

TOPI/SAU/SET

We love you, DAD!

They all look up to the sky as the song *Rivers of Babylon* is  
playing.

VAO comes back on stage on the orange bike. They all get on  
it and ride off stage just as the lights slowly fade out as  
music build to the end.

End.