

Subscriptions

*Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.* "

Pauanne,

The descent from the mountaintop was a comparatively easy jaunt. Except for a few slips, luckily with just a few scrapes, we made the 15-minute hike down in fast-forward mode.

Tom, the taximan, was waiting for us with a wide smile. Delighted when we told him we had made it to the top, he had a suggestion, "Now, would you like to see the house of Mr. Stevenson?"

I had been told it was closed to the public, it now being the residence of the King of Samoa (whose official title was "Head of State"). "Of course," we chorused.

Tom drove toward the outer boundary of the grounds of the distant white mansion. The guard at the perimeter entrance turned out to be Tom's nephew and we were waved through. Suddenly Tom braked the car to a halt.

"There's the King and Queen," he blurted, nodding reverently. Somewhat awestruck, we stared at the two tall, gray-headed personages in Samoan dress, standing on the lawn. Having never been introduced to royalty before, I decided to do the honor myself. Our state of attire was bedraggled to say the least: Simone's reddish hair disheveled, her pink dress straps askew; Adam in a sassy-worded T-shirt and sawed-off denim shorts; and me, in a sweat-drenched state of scruffiness presented a grungy trio of trespassers.

I bounded across the grass, trailed reluctantly by Simone and Adam. "Good morning, your Highness," I grinned. "My name is Jack Goldfarb... I'm a writer from New York... I just wanted to say Hello to you..." I introduced the hesitant Simone and Adam. Tom had prudently remained in the taxi, disassociating himself from the brash *papalagi* foreigners. But His Highness and Her Highness responded graciously with warm smiles and polite handshakes. After a few moments of strained small talk, His Highness invited us to come inside and join them for tea.

HIGHNESS HEAD OF STATE SUSUGA MALIETOA TANUMAFILI II

The royal couple, Susuga Malietoa Tunamafili II and Masiofo Lili Malietoa, led the way upstairs to a second floor lounge. In the spacious room, the wide open windows did little to dispel the sultry air. Stripping off his well-tailored jacket, and perching on a simple chair in his cuff-linked white shirt and dark *lavalava* male skirt, His Highness immediately put us at ease with his informal friendly manner. Her Highness, robed in an ankle-length, lemon-colored

puletasi, settled on a sofa. The red-cummerbund, barefoot butlers were instructed to bring tea and sandwiches. "And for you, young man, said the King to Adam, "we have chocolate cake." Her Highness offered Simone a fragrant yellow frangipani flower for her hair, while she fastened a matching one behind her own ear.

Seated on the plush red divans, sipping tea out of Noritake china cups, we listened to His highness tell amusing stories about himself. A relaxed, informal ruler accustomed to the open Samoan society, he related how he was so often "overprotected" by armed security guards when he traveled abroad. Attending the Los Angeles Olympics, for instance, he was so exasperated by bodyguards that he retreated to his hotel room to watch the events on television. But that didn't stop the dozen security agents camped in the corridor from pounding on his door regularly to check on his well-being. He told of sending his eldest son abroad for a Western education. "After years of schooling in New Zealand and Australia," His Highness chuckled, "the boy returned home half a kiwi, half a kangaroo."



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