

Mother Marianne Cope on Molokai

A full-length play by

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Characters

Mother Marianne Cope

Sister Dominica, who left the convent in Syracuse but later returned

Sister Bonaventure, reliable and sometimes in charge in Mother Marianne's absence

Sister Crescentia, reliable and sometimes left in charge

Sister Leopoldina, chronicled work in Hawaii; compassionate, dedicated despite her concerns

Sister Vincentia, who went to Molokai but couldn't handle it

Franciscan Sisters Benedicta, Bernardina, Antonia, Renata, Rosalia, Ludovica, Antonella, Agnes, Placida, Vincentia, Irene, and Carolina

Father Leonor Fouesnel, representative of the King and Queen of Hawaii and of the Bishop of Honolulu

Father Joseph Lesen, the Franciscan Sisters' superior in Syracuse, New York

Walter Murray Gibson, Prime Minister of Hawaii and head of the Board of Health

Queen Kapiolani

King David Kalakaua

Dr. Henry Van Giesen, head of Kakaako hospital

James, a dying young leprosy patient

Other leprosy patients: George, Charlie, Mary, and Adelaide (adults), Julia (a teenager), and Teresa, Emma, and Robert (children)

Father Damien de Veuster

Ellen Davis ("Snowdrop"), a young girl living with the leprosy patients

Tom Burch, head of the leper constable force

A second constable

Olinda Gomes, servant in the convent

Dr. Jenkins from the Board of Health

Dr. Nathaniel Emerson, new head of the Board of Health

Brother Joseph Dutton

Ah Kyan, wife of a male patient on Molokai

Robert Louis Stevenson

Father Francis Neubauer, the Franciscan Sisters' new superior

Notes on the play

The play represents events in Mother Marianne Cope's life from the time she was asked to go to Hawaii until her death.

Some of the dialogue is based on letters, diaries, and reports, but most is speculative, although consistent with known facts. A little of the dialogue has been shifted from those who spoke it and is instead spoken by other characters, in order to have fewer characters.

All the character names except Dr. Jenkins and some of the leprosy patients are real. Charlie, Tom Burch, Julia, and Ellen ("Snowdrop") are real names. Not many patients' names are known today, so the other patients' names are fictional but, I think, plausible.

The Sisters probably address each other by name more than they did in real life. This is to help the audience distinguish characters who all dress alike.

Most of the incidents shown in the play are from real life. A few have had their chronological order changed or are combined to simplify the story (for example, it was on Father Damien's second visit to the Sisters in Honolulu that he told them he had leprosy and that Mother Marianne would need to come to Molokai; the two visits are condensed into one). A few incidents are speculative but, again, consistent with known facts. For example, the opening scene is speculative, but Mother Marianne did spend time in the laboratory and learned pharmacy, she did have trouble with Sister Dominica, and she did have to fire a doctor, but while strict, she also was kind and patient.

Based on what is known of the life of Marianne Cope, I have tried to faithfully present who she was and what she did, in an abridged story.

Marianne Cope was officially named a saint in 2012.

Many thanks to my longtime friend Mick Piccuiro, a retired and highly respected high school drama teacher, who gave me invaluable advice on writing and structuring this play especially for high school productions.

If you produce the play, please let me know. I would like to come see it if I can.

Steve Dunham

Act One: Syracuse, New York

(Suggestion: here and maybe when scenery is being changed, play music from the period, such as “Amazing Grace” or another hymn written before 1883, which is when the story begins. It could be instrumental music. Or you could play appropriate music of your choosing.)

Scene 1: St. Joseph’s Hospital—Mother Marianne’s empty office

(Sister Bonaventure looks in at the doorway. Sister Leopoldina is passing behind her in the hallway. Sister Bonaventure turns to face Sister Leopoldina.)

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Oh, good morning, Sister Leopoldina. Do you know where Mother Marianne is?

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

In the laboratory, I think, Sister Bonaventure. Mother Marianne is learning apothecary. Oh, here she comes now.

(Mother Marianne approaches the doorway.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Good morning, Sisters. Were you looking for me?

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Good morning, Mother Marianne. Yes, I was looking for you.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

I was on my way to the women’s ward.

MOTHER MARIANNE

(cheerfully)

All right, Sister Leopoldina. Go and comfort the patients with your kindness, as you always do.

Please come in and sit down, Sister Bonaventure.

(Mother Marianne sits at her desk, facing Sister Bonaventure, who sits in a chair facing her.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Is anything wrong, Sister?

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Unfortunately, yes, Mother. Actually, we have two problems.

First, one of the doctors isn't following the rules about sanitation. The other doctors are complaining about him, but I don't think it's my place to intervene.

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are right, Sister Bonaventure. It's my responsibility as head of the hospital. I will look into it. Some doctors haven't learned to practice sanitation, and some hospitals are still just places for people to die. But you know that. And if a doctor doesn't practice sanitation, he won't be allowed to remain here at Saint Joseph's.

(smiling)

And what's the other problem, Sister?

SISTER BONAVENTURE

I feel like a gossip telling you this, but I'm not sure how to handle it. Sister Dominica keeps complaining to me. She thinks our life here is too strict. I try to answer her cheerfully and encourage her to look on the bright side, and if it's just her attitude, I guess I just have to respond with patience. But if any of her complaints are valid, I don't know how to address them.

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are right to ask for advice, Sister. If I thought you were gossiping, I would correct you, but you are right: maybe Sister Dominica has valid complaints. The next time she complains to you, please tell her that I am always ready to listen to people's problems and help if I can.

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Yes, Mother. I'm sorry to bring you two problems in one day.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Don't be sorry, Sister Bonaventure. If you need help with problems, please do bring them to me. Our Lord said that each day has its problems. And He is always with us. "Behold,

I am with you always,” He said. “Behold” means “look.” Look, and we will see that He is with us.

(Sister Bonaventure exits. Mother Marianne begins working at her desk. Soon, Sister Dominica knocks at the open door.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Come in, Sister Dominica.

(Mother Marianne puts aside the work she is doing and gives her full attention to Sister Dominica. Sister Dominica enters and sits in a chair facing Mother Marianne.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

What can I do for you, Sister?

SISTER DOMINICA

I want to be released from my vows. I want to leave the Franciscan order.

MOTHER MARIANNE

And why is that, Sister?

SISTER DOMINICA

You act like a despot. You lay down inflexible rules. You criticize me. You keep secrets. I cannot be happy here.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Dominica, I am sorry to hear that you are unhappy, but these are general complaints. If you want a rule to be changed, or if you want an exception to accommodate you, you know that it’s a decision for all the Sisters to vote on. If there is something you need to know about, you can tell me. The Sisters, the doctors, the patients—sometimes their situations or words require privacy. But if you need to know something to carry out your duties, tell me, and you will receive the information. When I have corrected you, you have always been free to disagree and discuss it.

SISTER DOMINICA

That’s not enough. I can’t stand any more. I want to be freed of this life.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister, I won’t agree to that. It would not be best for you or for our community of Sisters.

SISTER DOMINICA

I'm leaving anyway, with or without your permission.

(Sister Dominica gets up and storms out of the room. Mother Marianne sadly watches her go. Then she takes pen and paper and begins to write.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(reading aloud what she is writing)

Dear Reverend Father Lesen,

Here is my new report on Saint Joseph's Hospital.

The medical care given at Saint Joseph's is the best possible but still improving. I emphasize scientific diagnosis, methods, techniques, and training, along with sanitation. Since the Medical College of Geneva, New York, began sending its students here, the atmosphere has gotten even more professional. I also have reduced the hospital's debt and raised funds.

Sadly, I had to dismiss one of the doctors for not strictly following our procedures concerning sanitation.

Also, Sister Dominica suddenly left, without permission, though I discouraged her from this rash action ...

(Sister Bonaventure knocks and enters. Mother Marianne pauses in her writing.)

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Good morning, Mother. Here is today's mail. You have a letter from Saint Mary's Institute in Dayton, Ohio.

(Sister Bonaventure places a stack of mail on Mother Marianne's desk.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, Sister.

(Sister Bonaventure leaves. Mother Marianne takes the letter from St. Mary's off the top of the stack and opens it.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

From Father Leonor Fouesnel ...

FATHER LEONOR FOUESNEL

(offstage, speaking the contents of the letter)

Reverend Mother Superior:

For 29 years I have been a missionary in the Sandwich Islands, also called Hawaii.

At present I am in America. My Bishop, Right Reverend Hermann, requested by the king and his government, sent me to this country to look for Sisters, who would take charge of our Hospitals, and even of our schools, if it were possible.

I take, therefore, Reverend Mother, the liberty of addressing myself to you and begging you to assist us in our work.

I am supplied with full power to transact business. My Bishop, the President of the Board of Health, and the king chose me as *Special Commissary* to settle this affair. Besides, I deposited in the California Bank of San Francisco enough money to pay all the travelling expenses of the Sisters. One hospital is already built at Honolulu, the capital of the islands; and arrangements are taken to build two others.

With regard to the other conditions I find it very difficult to develop them in a letter. If you give me some hope to get the Sisters I will at once pay you a visit and explain verbally the matters to you.

(Mother Marianne closes her eyes and bows her head. After a moment she takes pen and paper and begins writing.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(reading aloud what she is writing)

Dear Father Fouesnel,

I hardly know what to say. Shall I regard your kind invitation to join you in your missionary labors, as coming from God? My interest is awakened and I feel an irresistible force to follow this call.

Please give me details about the place and its conditions. Here at Saint Joseph's Hospital I am always searching for money to pay the hospital's expenses. If I had to do the same in Hawaii, I would not like that.

I see too many difficulties or rather impossibilities that could not be overcome just now. We have already more work than we can do.

Our Reverend Father Superior, Joseph Lesen, is at present in Europe, and without his approval I could not give you any hope of coming to your assistance although my heart and hands are more than willing to be at your service.

I would beg the favor that you write me again about the matter. I may be of some help to you, if not now, it may be later.

Scene 2: St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse, New York—Mother Marianne's office

(Mother Marianne is seated at her desk, working. Sister Bonaventure enters, carrying mail. Mother Marianne looks up.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Good morning, Sister Bonaventure. I see that you have the mail. It has been weeks since I replied to Father Fouesnel. Do we have a reply from him yet?

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Good morning, Mother. Yes, there is a letter from Saint Mary's Institute.

(Sister Bonaventure places the mail on Mother Marianne's desk, then exits. Mother Marianne takes the letter from Saint Mary's Institute, opens it, and begins reading aloud.)

FATHER LEONOR FOUESNEL

(offstage, speaking the contents of the letter)

Your kind and welcome letter was like balsam for my heart. Your sentiments of devotedness and charity moved me to shed tears. Oh, would to God you could help us in our distress!

I will try to answer completely your question about the conditions you would experience here.

The government supports all the hospitals and defrays all expenses. The Sisters will direct the hospitals; the government will not interfere with the Sisters' way of doing things. The Sisters will be helped and assisted by as many servants as they would want, and will receive from the government a salary of at least twenty dollars a month.

The climate is delightful—a kind of earthly Paradise.

Write then, dear Sister, to your Reverend Father Provincial, and if he can send a favorable answer, let him send a telegram.

(Sister Crescentia knocks and enters. Mother Marianne looks up.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother, Sister Dominica is back!

(Sister Crescentia steps aside, and Sister Dominica enters. Sister Crescentia leaves.

Mother Marianne comes out from behind her desk, and Sister Dominica kneels on the floor in front of Mother Marianne.)

SISTER DOMINICA

Mother Marianne, please forgive me. I was wrong to run away. I was wrong to be angry with you. I was always stormy in my manner. I beg your permission to return to this community.

MOTHER MARIANNE

(Mother Marianne places her hand on Sister Dominica's shoulder.)

I forgive you and welcome you back.

(Mother Marianne takes Sister Dominica's hand and leads her to stand.)

As you know, the community of Sisters must vote on whether to accept your return. I will try to arrange a meeting for that soon, maybe today. Some of them are on duty in the hospital now, so I cannot do it immediately. However, until the Sisters can meet and vote, I invite you to stay in the convent as a guest.

SISTER DOMINICA

Thank you, Mother.

Scene 3: St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse, New York—Mother Marianne's office

(Mother Marianne is seated at her desk, working. Sister Bonaventure enters, carrying mail. Mother Marianne looks up.)

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Mother, there's a priest here to see you. His name is Father Fouesnel, and he said you would be expecting him.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Oh, Father Fouesnel has come. His last letter said he would visit us. Please show him in.

(Sister Bonaventure exits and returns a moment later with Father Fouesnel. Mother Marianne rises to greet the priest.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Father, I am happy to meet you. This is Sister Bonaventure.

(turning to Sister Bonaventure)

Sister, please stay with us.

(Mother Marianne gestures to a chair.)

Please sit down, Father.

(Father Fouesnel sits; Mother Marianne resumes her seat at her desk; Sister Bonaventure takes another chair.)

FATHER FOUESNEL

I am happy to meet you too, Mother Marianne. I wrote to fifty congregations asking them for help at our hospitals in Hawaii. Some Brothers of Mary agreed to come and teach at a boys' school in Honolulu, but the Franciscan Sisters here in Syracuse, New York, offered the only positive response to my request for nursing Sisters. I realize, Mother, that you cannot simply agree to come to Hawaii, that you must have the consent of your Father Provincial, Father Lesen.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Not only Father Lesen would have to approve; the community of Sisters would also have to vote their approval. I am the leader of our province here, but we make such decisions as a group.

FATHER FOUESNEL

I understand, Mother. So I will explain why we need your help. There is more I need to tell you about our medical missionary work.

You have no doubt heard of Father Damien de Veuster. Ten years ago, he went to the Hawaiian island of Molokai to serve the lepers living there. Two percent of the population of Hawaii has leprosy, Mother! The Hawaiian government pays for their care, but there are twice as many lepers as were anticipated in the budget.

When suspected cases of leprosy are discovered, those people are sent to a hospital and receiving station in Honolulu, on the island of Oahu. Doctors determine who has the disease, and those who have it are sent to Molokai so that they will not infect others on Oahu, where most Hawaiians live.

The government is straining to meet the expense of caring for these pitiable people, but it is paying for new hospitals, and it will pay for nursing Sisters.

However, until now, no Sisters have offered to come.

Bishop Koeckemann of Honolulu and the King and Queen of Hawaii all asked me to beg for your help.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Father, here in our hospital I have been serving the sick for many years. I am not afraid of any disease. It would be my greatest delight to minister to the lepers. I will gladly accept the work if the other Sisters are willing. I must present your need to them, and if any are willing to go to Hawaii, I will ask Father Lesen's permission for us to go. This will take a little time, but I will let you know as soon as I have a definite answer.

FATHER FOUESNEL

Thank you, Mother! I appeal to the Sisters and to Father Lesen in the name of our Savior, Jesus, who cured the sick.

MOTHER MARIANNE

(smiling)

Yes, Father, I understand the need, and I believe that your request is coming to us from God. If the other Sisters and Father Lesen agree, then I will sent you an affirmative answer.

Scene 4: St. Joseph's Hospital—a meeting room

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Leopoldina, Benedicta, Vincentia, Dominica, Renata, Rosalia, Ludovica, and Antonella are sitting around a table.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(concluding a prayer)

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

ALL THE SISTERS

Amen.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Dear Sisters, first of all I am happy to have Sister Dominica here as one of us today. I couldn't tell you how to vote, but I am glad you voted to accept her back into the community. Some of the Sisters are on duty in the hospital now, but I will speak with all of you to tell you the same things.

I am sure you have all heard about our visit from Father Fouesnel, a missionary in Hawaii. The Bishop of Honolulu and the King and Queen of Hawaii all asked him to look for nursing Sisters to serve in their hospitals and maybe in their schools too. I received his appeal earlier this year in a letter.

However, in his visit he told me more: nursing Sisters are needed especially to care for people who have leprosy. You have all heard of leprosy. It is in the Bible. It is an infectious, fatal disease that horribly disfigures people. All of us are nurses, but here in New York we have never seen a case of leprosy.

I am willing to go to Hawaii to serve the lepers. Not one of you has to go. But I will ask Sister Bonaventure to ask each of the Sisters privately: Are you willing to go

too? If any of you are, I will ask Father Lesen's permission for some of us to be medical missionaries in Hawaii.

Scene 5: St. Joseph's Hospital—Mother Marianne's office

(Mother Marianne is seated at her desk working. Sister Bonaventure appears in the doorway of her office. Mother Marianne looks up and puts down her pen.)

MOTHER MARIANNE
(smiling)

Come in, Sister Bonaventure. Please sit down. Did any of the Sisters offer to go to Hawaii?

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Yes, Mother. Thirty-five said yes.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thirty-five! We cannot bring that many. We still need to staff Saint Joseph's Hospital. But I am amazed by the Sisters' willingness. Thirty-five! I will ask Father Lesen to come see us as soon as he can.

Now, I see Sister Dominica waiting to talk to me.

(Sister Bonaventure exits. Mother Marianne beckons to Sister Dominica to enter and gestures for her to sit. Sister Dominica enters the office and sits.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Dominica, what can I do for you?

SISTER DOMINICA

Mother, I told Sister Bonaventure that I want to go to Hawaii to serve the lepers.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Would this be an act of penance, Sister? If so, it is not necessary. Our good Lord forgives and forgets our sins. But there is more: you are experienced in running a hospital. It is not up to me to decide who will run Saint Joseph's if I go to Hawaii, but I want you to be available here. I've noticed that, since your return, you have been less "stormy," to use

your word. A calm, firm, gentle person in authority will be valuable—someone with a touch of stubbornness too.

(smiling)

SISTER DOMINICA

Thank you, Mother. I understand. And thank you for your confidence in me.

Scene 6: St. Joseph's Hospital—a meeting room

(Father Lesen, Mother Marianne, Mother Bernardina, and Sisters Antonia, Bonaventure, Vincentia, Dominica, Renata, Rosalia, and Agnes are seated around a table.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

So, Father Lesen, Bishop Koeckemann of Honolulu has sent us letters answering all your questions. He assures us that we Sisters would be under his care in Hawaii, that we would have a right to return to New York, that the government will pay all our expenses, and that we can establish schools and run them.

And, Father, the Sisters all think that I or another experienced leader should go with them to Hawaii to get the mission established.

FATHER LESEN

Mother, and all of you, I appreciate your enthusiasm and willingness to serve. But I fear that you do not know what a difficult task you would be taking on.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Father, I understand your concern. However, all of us have been hospital nurses for years. We are not afraid to serve our patients, however sick they may be. Also, Saint Joseph's is a leading hospital in practicing sanitation and science. We will continue to depend on sanitation and science if we go to Hawaii. Furthermore, we trust in God's protection, believing that He is calling us to this work.

FATHER LESEN

Very well, Mother. Bishop Koeckemann has addressed all my concerns. You nine Sisters here would not all be going to Hawaii, but you would be giving your community's permission for Mother Marianne and six other Sisters to go to Hawaii as medical missionaries. Please vote either yes for them to go or no for them to remain in New York.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes.

MOTHER BERNARDINA

Yes.

SISTER ANTONIA

Yes.

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Yes.

SISTER VINCENTIA

Yes.

SISTER DOMINICA

Yes.

SISTER AGNES

No. I think it would be naive to go. We have no idea what perils, dangers, and trials await us.

SISTER RENATA

Yes.

SISTER ROSALIA

Yes.

FATHER LESEN

Eight in favor, one against. Very well, then, Sisters. You have my consent and blessing, and may God go with you.

Act Two: Honolulu, Hawaii

Scene 1: Outside the convent in Honolulu, Hawaii

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Renata, Rosalia, Ludovica, and Antonella are led to the house by Walter Murray Gibson.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you for meeting us at the ship, Mister Gibson.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

You are welcome, Reverend Mother. Was the trip tiring?

MOTHER MARIANNE

It was long—about six days by train to San Francisco, and a week on the ship. But we had time to rest too.

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Mother won't complain, Mister Gibson, but we all were seasick for the first few days on the ship—all except Mother. She was seasick the whole time. All she has to do is look at a boat and she gets seasick.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Well, God was with us, and I am all right now.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

I am glad to hear it Mother. I will wait here on the porch until you get settled.

(The Sisters enter the house. Gibson waits on the porch looking for someone else to arrive. Soon, the Sisters come back onto the porch.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

I knew you were waiting here, Mister Gibson, so I told the Sisters we could unpack later.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Thank you, Mother. Some visitors are coming to see you. I think I see them coming.

(King David Kalakaua and Queen Kapiolani arrive.)

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Your Majesties, these are the nursing Sisters who have come to staff our hospitals and care for the lepers.

Sisters, I want you to meet King David Kalakaua and Queen Kapiolani.

(The Sisters bow.)

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

Dear Sisters! I love you! You have left your home and country to come to these faraway islands to care for my poor afflicted children.

(The queen begins to cry and dabs at her eyes with a handkerchief. The king stands silently and solemnly.)

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

I shall never forget you, and you are my Sisters and I shall always love you.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, our queen, our mother. I am hungry for the work. Waking and sleeping, I have been on the islands.

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

We are so grateful that you are here! Whatever you need, call on Mister Gibson, call on Bishop Koeckemann, or call on me. All of us are ready to help you in any way we can.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, dear queen. After we get settled in our house, we are ready to work.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Mother Marianne, as soon as you are ready, I will take you to visit the Kakaako Branch Hospital, where cases of leprosy are brought.

Scene 2: The Kakaako Branch Hospital

(Gibson leads Mother Marianne and Sister Bonaventure into the hospital. Eight leprosy patients—George, Charlie, Mary, Adelaide [adults], Julia [a teenager], Teresa, Emma, and Robert [children]—and Ellen silently watch them as they enter. Ellen is very dirty. Waiting for Gibson and the Sisters is Dr. Henry Van Giesen, head of the hospital.)

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Mother Marianne, Sister Bonaventure, this is Doctor Henry van Giesen, head of the Kakaako Branch Hospital. Doctor, these are two of the Sisters who have come to work here, helping to care for the lepers.

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

Good morning, Mother and Sister.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Hello, doctor.

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

Thank you for coming here to work with us and help these unfortunate people. But, as you know, leprosy is fatal, and there is nothing much we can do for them. However, I will show you the hospital.

(Dr. Van Giesen leads Mother Marianne, Sister Bonaventure, and Gibson into the kitchen and dining room, which are dirty and buzzing with flies.)

SISTER BONAVENTURE

(speaking quietly to Mother Marianne)

It's filthy!

(Van Giesen leads them into another room. James, a young man, is lying on a dirty mat on the floor and is covered with a blanket.)

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

Hopeless cases are brought here to die. We just leave them alone to await the end.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Don't you care for them? Treat them? Give them food and water?

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

No, it's hopeless.

(Mother Marianne walks over and kneels next to the dying man and places her hand on him.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

What is your name?

(James does not answer. Mother Marianne looks at Henry van Giesen.)

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

I don't know his name.

(Mother Marianne bends close to James.)

JAMES

(whispering)

James.

(Mother Marianne raises her head.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

He said his name is James.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Doctor, I am now head of the Board of Health. Move this man to a bed. Give him milk and food. Take care of him, even if he does not get better.

MOTHER MARIANNE

There is much that the Sisters can do to help!

Scene 3: Inside the convent at Kakaako Branch Hospital

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Renata, Rosalia, Ludovica, and Antonella are present.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

My Sisters, I have told Mister Gibson that we are ready to work. We will take care of the patients. We will not avoid them. But we will be cautious. Back at Saint Joseph's Hospital, we used sanitation and science. We will do the same here. None of you will become a leper.

We don't know for sure how leprosy is spread. Some doctors think it is by mouth. So as a precaution, we will not eat food that is prepared by lepers. Sister Ludovica, you will not enter the hospital. You will be our housekeeper and cook in the convent. You may go outside, certainly, but not into the hospital.

SISTER LUDOVICA

Yes, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Now, to work. We will tend the patients, and we will clean and bandage their sores. Do not be afraid. We will care for them, for they are God's children, and God will protect us.

ALL THE SISTERS

Yes, Mother.

(Mother Marianne and all the Sisters leave except Sisters Ludovica and Antonella.)

SISTER LUDOVICA

How does Mother Marianne know that none of us will become a leper?

SISTER ANTONELLA

Because she has asked this favor from God, and she is sure that her prayer has been heard.

Scene 4: The Kakaako Branch Hospital

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Renata, Rosalia, and Antonella enter the hospital. George, Charlie, Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, Emma, Robert, and Ellen watch them enter. Ellen, as before, is very dirty.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Good morning! I am Mother Marianne. These are my Franciscan Sisters: Sister Bonaventure, Sister Crescentia, Sister Renata, Sister Rosalia, and Sister Antonella.

(Each Sister bows as her name is spoken.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

We have come to serve you. What are your names?

GEORGE

I am George.

CHARLIE

Charlie.

MARY

My name is Mary.

ADELAIDE

Adelaide.

JULIA

I am Julia.

TERESA

Teresa.

EMMA

Emma.

ROBERT

Robert.

(Ellen does not answer. Mother Marianne looks at her. Ellen still does not answer.)

JULIA

She is Ellen.

MOTHER MARIANNE

We are happy to be here and meet you.

(Mother Marianne turns to the Sisters.)

Let's get to work.

(The Sisters look in cabinets and closets and find a broom, rags, and a mop. They begin cleaning. George, Charlie, Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, Emma, Robert, and Ellen watch them. Then the adults—George, Charlie, Mary, and Adelaide—along with Julia begin, one by one, to help the Sisters clean the rooms.)

(Mother Marianne takes Sister Crescentia aside.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(quietly)

Sister Crescentia, would you please take charge of that girl Ellen? Give her a good scrubbing?

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Yes, Mother.

Intermission

Scene 5: The Kakaako Branch Hospital (the next day)

(Mother Marianne and Sister Bonaventure are cleaning and bandaging patients' sores. Sister Crescentia enters with Ellen Davis, who is neat and clean.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Ellen, you look wonderful. I will give you a nickname: Snowdrop.

ELLEN DAVIS

I like it. I like being called Snowdrop.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Crescentia, you have uncovered a pretty child.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Yes, Mother. Thank you, Mother. And I see no sign of leprosy on Ellen—I mean, on Snowdrop.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Good news! Show her to Doctor van Giesen.

(Walter Murray Gibson enters.)

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Hello, Mother Marianne!

MOTHER MARIANNE

Hello, Mister Gibson.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Father Fouesnel tells me that no one could equal the Sisters' work.

MOTHER MARIANNE

That is kind of him. But we are facing some trials and difficulties, and I am counting on you to help.

The female patients are unprotected. I want the males and females separated. Some of the children are running wild, and some of the female patients are prostitutes. Eight strong patients act as constables, but they cannot control all the patients.

The constables cannot even protect Doctor van Giesen. He is harsh, as you know. He has made enemies among the patients, and he says they will try to kill him.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

I see, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Also, Mister Gibson, the Sisters are not directing the operation of the Kakaako Hospital. As you know, Doctor van Giesen is still in charge, and he is making things difficult for everyone. I and the other Sisters are used to running hospitals. You knew that when Father Fouesnel came asking for our help. We are up to the job, and I am sorry to say that Doctor van Giesen is not. Also, we do not have the servants you promised we would have to assist us. If we do not have the freedom to do our job, we may have to leave Hawaii.

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Mother, I will speak to the bishop, and to the king and queen too.

Scene 6: The Kakaako Branch Hospital, a few days later

(Mother Marianne and Sister Crescentia are tending two adult patients, Mary and Adelaide. Ellen runs in. She is very dirty again. Sister Crescentia looks at Ellen.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Oh! Ellen, come here!

ELLEN DAVIS

My name is Snowdrop!

MOTHER MARIANNE

Ellen, you look like a ball of mud, not a drop of snow. You go with Sister Crescentia and let her clean you up again.

(Sister Crescentia takes Ellen by the hand and leads her out.)

Scene 7: Outside the Kakaako Branch Hospital, that night

(Loud noises of arguing and banging offstage. The Sisters come hurrying out of the convent and to the hospital. They find Tom Burch and a second constable with Dr. van Giesen. Van Giesen's clothing and hair are messed up, and he is sitting and gasping.)

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

They dragged me out of my office! A bunch of the patients grabbed me and dragged me outside! They were going to kill me!

TOM BURCH

We constables stopped them. The constables rescued Doctor van Giesen.

DR. HENRY VAN GIESEN

I am not safe here! I cannot stay at this hospital! The patients are wild!

Scene 8: The Kakaako Branch Hospital

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, and Rosalia are present, along with the patients George, Charlie, Julia, Teresa, Emma, and Robert. Mother Marianne and each of the Sisters is cleaning and bandaging sores on one of the patients. Ellen runs in. She is clean and wearing a new dress.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Snowdrop! You are looking much better.

Well done, Sister Crescentia.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Thank you, Mother.

Snowdrop, stay with us. When I am done here, I want you to help me.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Snowdrop, come here.

(Ellen runs over to Mother Marianne. Mother Marianne has a ribbon, which she ties in Ellen's hair.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

There, that ribbon in your hair makes you look even prettier. Now you must take care of yourself and stay clean.

(Snowdrop jumps up and down and moves around the room, fidgeting for the rest of this scene. Walter Murray Gibson enters.)

WALTER MURRAY GIBSON

Hello, Mother. Hello, Sisters. Hello to the rest of you.

Mother Marianne, I spoke with Bishop Koeckemann. He assures me that he will be the father and protector of you and your Sisters. He also will ask Father Lesen to let

you be part of his diocese here. You would still be under the guidance of Father Lesen, but you would have the local priests here at your service.

I told the Board of Health that Doctor van Giesen must no longer be head of this hospital. You and your Sisters will be in charge now. The patients who attacked Doctor van Giesen are in jail until the situation is settled.

And I spoke with the queen. I told her that you should have a chapel here, and she said that you shall have it. And she is on her way here!

I will call the rest of the patients to come here.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, Mister Gibson. This is good news indeed!

(Gibson leaves, and Mother Marianne and the Sisters resume tending the patients. Shortly, Gibson returns with Mary and Adelaide. Queen Kapiolani enters.)

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

Dear Sisters! I am happy to be with you again.

(turning and addressing the patients)

My dear children, I love you, but you must obey the law, and you must obey the constables. Doctor van Giesen will be leaving, and Mother Marianne and the Sisters will be in charge.

(The patients murmur approval.)

The Sisters will take care of you, and with Mister Gibson they will make the rules. You must obey them.

CHARLIE

We will obey the Sisters, your Majesty. They are good to us. We trust them.

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

Thank you all, my children. I know that your lives are difficult, but the Sisters will help you as much as they can. They love you, and I love you.

Scene 8: Outside the convent

(There is a sign attached to the porch of the convent. Sister Rosalia comes out of the convent, looks at the sign, then walks toward the hospital. A moment later she is back.)

SISTER ROSALIA

(calling loudly)

Sisters! Mother Marianne! Come see this!

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, and Ludovica come out of the convent.)

SISTER ROSALIA

Look at this sign. There are others like it, attached to the hospital, nailed to trees ...

(Mother Marianne and the other Sisters crowd around the sign attached to the convent porch.)

SISTER ROSALIA

What does it say? I can't read it, whatever language it is.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Rosalia, please find George and ask him to come here.

(Sister Rosalia hurries off to look for George. Mother Marianne and the other sisters remain looking at the sign. After a moment, Sister Rosalia returns with George. The Sisters make room for him to approach the sign.)

GEORGE

It says that Tom Burch is now the great boss and manager of the Kakaako hospital.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Tom Burch thinks he's the boss?

(Tom Burch has been watching from a distance [offstage]. Mother Marianne looks around and spots him.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Tom Burch! Get over here!

(Tom Burch slowly walks over to Mother Marianne.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are not the boss of the hospital. You take down those foolish signs!

(Tom Burch walks over to the sign attached to the convent porch and angrily rips it down. Then he walks offstage.)

Scene 9: Outside the convent that night

(The second constable approaches the convent.)

SECOND CONSTABLE

Sisters! Mother Marianne! Come quickly!

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Ludovica, and Rosalia come out of the convent.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

What's wrong?

SECOND CONSTABLE

Tom Burch is locked in a room with Julia.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Take me there right away.

(The second constable leads Mother Marianne to the hospital and a locked door. Mother Marianne tries the door and cannot open it.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Tom Burch! Open this door and come out!

(After a moment, Tom Burch comes out, followed by Julia.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are no longer a constable. Give me your keys!

(Tom Burch pitches the keys offstage. A splash is heard.)

JULIA

He threw them into the ocean!

MOTHER MARIANNE

Tom Burch, you should be ashamed of yourself. And, Julia, you should be ashamed of yourself too. From now on, you stay away from Tom Burch. And Tom Burch, you stay away from all the women. Remember, there is a jail here, and if I have any more trouble from you, that's where you will be.

Scene 10: Outside the convent, daytime

(Mother Marianne and Sister Bonaventure are present.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Bonaventure, it's been only a few months since Mister Gibson promised us that we would have a chapel, and now it's finished! And Father Damien is arriving from Molokai today to attend the dedication. We've had some trials and difficulties since we arrived, but today, especially, God is smiling on us.

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Yes, indeed, Mother. And ...

(Sister Bonaventure looks offstage.)

That might be Father Damien approaching now.

(Father Damien approaches.)

FATHER DAMIEN

Hello, Sisters! I am Father Damien de Veuster, just arrived from Molokai.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Welcome, Father.

(Mother Marianne turns toward the convent.)

Sisters! Come out and meet Father Damien!

Two of our Sisters are absent, Father. Sisters Renata and Antonella have gone to Maui. The queen asked the Franciscan Sisters to run a new hospital there. Princess Liliuokalani visited the new hospital and named it Malulani, which means “under the protection of heaven.”

(Sisters Ludovica, Crescentia, and Rosalia come out of the convent.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sisters, you all have heard of Father Damien, who has been serving the lepers on Molokai for ten years. He has come for the dedication of our chapel.

Father, please come into our parlor and have tea.

FATHER DAMIEN

Thank you, Mother, but for your own safety, I can't.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Father—what?

FATHER DAMIEN

I have the disease. I am now a leper....

Does this shake your faith?

MOTHER MARIANNE

No, Father. But I promised the Sisters that none of them would become a leper.

FATHER DAMIEN

Then God will hear your prayer and honor your promise. You are all nursing Sisters, and you are used to working with ill people while not getting sick yourselves. But I have given my life to the lepers on Molokai, sharing everything with them. Brother Joseph Dutton is assisting me on Molokai too, helping with the boys. Now I share the patients' illness too. I have at most a few years to live. Before long, you will need to come to Molokai yourself. When you do, serve the people with care, but with caution.

MOTHER MARIANNE

But, Father, there are only five of us on Oahu, and we are staffing the hospital here in Honolulu.

FATHER DAMIEN

Perhaps more Sisters will come. Not today, maybe not this year, but you will be needed on Molokai.

Scene 11: Late that evening, in the hospital

(Sister Crescentia is alone bandaging one of Adelaide's sores.
Mother Marianne enters.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Crescentia, you are working late.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

We all work late, Mother. And you, Mother: you are here to work?

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, Sister, it's true. The need is great. We need help. Let us pray now that God will send more workers to this hospital ...

Scene 12: In the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Ludovica,
and Rosalia are present.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Good news, Sisters! For weeks we have been praying for helpers to assist us in our work. I have just received a letter from Syracuse. The Hawaiian government said it would pay for eight more Sisters. Our congregation in Syracuse can't spare eight Sisters from Saint Joseph's Hospital there, but six more Sisters are on their way. And joining us today is a teenage girl, Olinda Gomes, newly arrived from Portugal. She heard about our work and offered to come and be a servant in the convent.

SISTER LUDOVICA

Oh, Mother. I can do the work, but I am sure that God has sent Olinda.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I agree that God has sent Olinda, and He must know that we will need her. You are doing a fine job, Sister Ludovica, but remember that you are serving only the five of us,

counting yourself. Soon we will have twelve, with the arrival of Olinda and six more Sisters.

SISTER LUDOVICA

Yes, Mother. Excuse me—someone is at the door.

(Sister Ludovica walks offstage and returns a moment later with Olinda Gomes.)

SISTER LUDOVICA

Sisters, this is Olinda Gomes, from Portugal. She has come to help us in our work, serving us in the convent. Olinda, let me introduce you to Mother Marianne and the Sisters ...

Scene 13: In the hospital

(Sister Crescentia is cleaning one of Charlie's sores, with Robert at her side.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister, you have a helper! Good morning, Sister Crescentia. Good morning, Robert. Some time ago, Sister, I found you here working alone late in the evening, and we prayed for helpers. And now you have Robert. Thank you, Robert.

ROBERT

Good morning, Mother. You're welcome. I'm happy to help.

(Ellen Davis runs in. She is still clean and neatly dressed.)

ELLEN DAVIS

Hi, Robert! Hi, Sister! Hi, Mother!

(Ellen Davis runs out.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

I see that Snowdrop has stayed clean!

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Not only that, Snowdrop has stopped lying and mostly stopped stealing. She does chores for the Sisters in the hospital office, and she has learned to knit and crochet.

MOTHER MARIANNE

A miracle! Not an impossible happening, but a miracle of grace. And it was you who taught her to knit and crochet?

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Yes, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Well done, Sister Crescentia!

SISTER CRESCENTIA

It was God's grace, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

God gives us the grace, but we still have to do the work. So, again, well done, Sister.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

One more thing, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, Sister?

SISTER CRESCENTIA

You are ill, aren't you?

MOTHER MARIANNE

I admit that I have had headaches and stomach pains. I am not well, but neither am I sick. I am growing older and am not able to do as much work as I wish to do.

SISTER LUDOVICA

(calling from outside the hospital)

Mother! The new Sisters are here.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother, let me—and the new Sisters—take on some of your work.

(Mother Marianne goes outside, followed shortly by Sister Crescentia, Charlie, and the other patients. The other Sisters plus Olinda are waiting, along with the six new Sisters from Syracuse: Leopoldina, Benedicta, Carolina, Vincentia, Antonia, and Placida.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

My Sisters! I am so happy to see you! Thank you for coming here to join us. All of us Sisters know one another from Syracuse, but I want to introduce our patients and our helper Olinda to you: Sisters Leopoldina, Benedicta, Carolina, Vincentia, Antonia, and Placida.

(Each of the new Sisters bows as her name is spoken.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

And this is our helper Olinda Gomes, and these patients are ...

SISTER LUDOVICA

Mother, the king and queen are here, along with Mister Gibson.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Well, then I will introduce the new Sisters to them too.

(King Kalakaua, Queen Kapiolani, and Walter Murray Gibson enter.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Welcome, your majesties. Welcome, Mister Gibson. Thank you for coming to visit.

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

My Sisters! My children! I have heard good reports about your work and progress since the Sisters began running this hospital themselves. What can I do to help?

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, Queen Kapiolani. I do have a bold request: only yesterday I received a letter from Father Damien on Molokai. He said that there are children there who do not have

leprosy, and he wants to send the girls here to live. We don't have room, so we would need a home for them.

QUEEN KAPIOLANI

We will do this! King David and I will help. Mister Gibson, talk to the bishop and get his help too. Father Damien is right: separating healthy children may preserve them from leprosy. Separation will be painful for the families, but if necessary I will go to Molokai and talk to them myself.

And Mother Marianne, I see that you have six more Sisters here. Please introduce them to me.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, our queen. They have just arrived: Sisters Leopoldina, Benedicta, Carolina, Antonia, Vincentia, and Placida.

(Again the new Sisters bow as Mother Marianne names them.)

They can help with the home for healthy girls once it is built. We will call it the Kapiolani Home.

Scene 14: In the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sister Benedicta are present.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Benedicta, I have just received sad news from the island of Maui. Sister Antonella has died! She had tuberculosis. She must have had it even when we first came to Hawaii.

In the months since you arrived, your work has been splendid, as it was in Syracuse. The Kapiolani Home is now open, thanks to your help.

SISTER BENEDICTA

Thank you, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I would like you to go to Maui, and take Sister Antonella's place. You would run the school, and you would be with Sister Renata, who is on Maui now.

SISTER BENEDICTA

Of course, Mother. I will be happy to go.

MOTHER MARIANNE

It may be only for a while. The bishop asked me about going to Molokai. I told him that I and the Sisters are willing. None of the Sisters will be required to go, but I am sure you remember that we had thirty-five Sisters volunteer to come to Hawaii. I am confident that many Sisters will be willing to go to Molokai. I may ask you to go there or to come back here to Oahu to work.

SISTER BENEDICTA

Wherever you want me to work, I will cheerfully accept that as God's will.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I know you will, Sister. You are capable and willing. That's why I trust you to work far away on Maui, at least for now.

(Sister Ludovica hurries in.)

SISTER LUDOVICA

Mother Marianne! A revolution!

MOTHER MARIANNE

A revolution! Is it a war?

SISTER LUDOVICA

No bloodshed, according to the news we have heard, but the businessmen who run the government have accused the king of issuing licenses to sell opium and have taken power away from him and the queen. They accused Mister Gibson of embezzlement and arrested him.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I don't know whether Mister Gibson and the king are guilty, but because of them and the queen, the government has been funding and protecting our work. We have no revenue of our own, so we will hope and pray that the Hawaiian government continues to pay for our efforts. Meanwhile, we must carry on and trust in God. He brought us here, and He will bring our good work to completion, as Saint Paul wrote.

(Sister Bonaventure hurries in.)

SISTER BONAVENTURE

Oh, Mother. Doctor Jenkins from the Board of Health has just showed up at the hospital and ordered that all the patients line up outside!

Scene 15: Outside Kakaako Hospital

(Doctor Jenkins and all the patients are present. Mother Marianne and Sister Bonaventure come to see what is happening.)

DOCTOR JENKINS

George, Charlie, Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, Emma, Robert: You all have leprosy and are leaving today for Molokai.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Doctor! This is so sudden!

DOCTOR JENKINS

No, it isn't. Anyone who comes here to Kakaako and is diagnosed with leprosy must go to Molokai. That has been the rule for many years.

MOTHER MARIANNE

That much is true. But why now? Why today?

DOCTOR JENKINS

Gibson, as head of the Board of Health, was lax in his duties. Now he is gone, and things will not be lax any more.

(The patients walk offstage, and Dr. Jenkins leaves.)

Scene 16: In the convent

(Mother Marianne is present, along with Sisters Bonaventure, Crescentia, Rosalia, Ludovica, Benedicta, Carolina, and Placida.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sisters, we still have patients in Kakaako Hospital who do not definitely have leprosy, and we have the Kapiolani Home, plus the school and hospital on Maui. The bishop and Father Damien both asked me to go to Molokai. Three hundred people on Molokai signed

a petition asking us to go there. However, only those Sisters who choose to go to that leper island will go. No one has to go. But we cannot go without permission from our congregation in Syracuse. I will ask for their approval.

SISTER LUDOVICA

There's someone at the door.

(Sister Ludovica leaves to answer the door and returns with Dr. Nathaniel Emerson.)

SISTER LUDOVICA

It's Doctor Emerson, the new head of the Board of Health.

DR. NATHANIEL EMERSON

Mother Marianne, good Sisters, I have met some of you before. I came to reassure you. I realize that Doctor Jenkins was abrupt in sending our leprosy patients to Molokai. However, he was right that they should have been transported there long ago. Nonetheless, the new government of Hawaii appreciates your work, and the Board of Health agreed to pay for all eleven Sisters on Oahu, Maui, and Molokai. In addition, a businessman, Arthur Bishop, is paying for construction of a home for the girls and women who are patients on Molokai, and the Hawaiian government wants you Sisters to staff the Bishop Home.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you for the reassurance, doctor. We were just discussing the possibility of going to Molokai, but although we are willing, we need permission from New York. I will let you know when we have an answer and then decide how to proceed.

DR. NATHANIEL EMERSON

Thank you, Mother. I know that in the past you had the support and understanding of Mister Gibson and Queen Kapiolani. I promise you my support and understanding too. If you go to Molokai, I will go with you initially.

Scene 17: In the convent

(Mother Marianne is present. Sister Ludovica enters.)

SISTER LUDOVICA

Mother Marianne! A telegram from Syracuse!

(Sister Ludovica hands the telegram to Mother Marianne, who opens it and reads it.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

It says we may go to Molokai if the conditions are favorable. That's a difficult question. One of Mister Gibson's assistants called it a filthy place.

SISTER LUDOVICA

So was Kakaako before we arrived. I myself would be afraid to go, but I would put aside my fears at the thought of obedience.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, dear Sister. I will ask each of the Sisters their opinion. They can give me their answers privately in writing.

(Days later, Mother Marianne is seated at a desk in the convent, reading the Sisters' replies.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Benedicta says:

SISTER BENEDICTA

(Voice offstage: Mother Marianne is reading Sister Benedicta's reply.)

I am afraid, I have heard so much about those poor people. I heard also that there are no rules and regulations. That everyone does as he pleases, but I trust in the good Lord.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Renata says:

SISTER RENATA

(voice offstage)

I am not in favor of the Sisters going there, neither do I discourage those who are aspiring to go.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Leopoldina says:

SISTER LEOPOLDINA
(voice offstage)

Yes, Mother, I'll go.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Rosalia says:

SISTER ROSALIA
(voice offstage)

No indeed, I'll not go to Molokai.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Vincentia says:

SISTER VINCENTIA
(voice offstage)

I am ready at any time to go.

Act Three: Molokai

Scene 1: Outside on Molokai

(Mother Marianne, Dr. Emerson, and Sisters Leopoldina and Vincentia arrive at Molokai. Father Damien, Brother Joseph Dutton, and patients George, Charlie, Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, Emma, and Robert are waiting to welcome them.)

FATHER DAMIEN

Welcome, Mother! Welcome, Sisters Vincentia and Leopoldina! Thank you for coming! This is Brother Joseph. He works with the boys. You know these patients already.

GEORGE, CHARLIE, MARY, ADELAIDE, JULIA, TERESA, EMMA, and ROBERT
Mother Marianne! Sisters!

BROTHER JOSEPH

Mother, Sisters, welcome to Molokai the blest.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

(quietly, to Sister Vincentia)

What a lonely barren place, Sister Vincentia. Not a tree nor a shrub. Yet he calls it blest.

MOTHER MARIANNE

(weak from seasickness but cheerful)

I am happy to be here with all of you! This is now my home.

BROTHER JOSEPH

Mother, Sisters, let me take you to the convent; then I will show you the Bishop Home for girls and women, the home for boys, the chapel—we have our own town here.

Scene 2: The Bishop Home for girls and women

(Mother Marianne and Sister Leopoldina work with Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, and Emma, washing their sores and bandaging them. Sister Vincentia stands back, trembling; she can't bring herself to touch the lepers. Mother Marianne notices but says nothing.)

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

(quietly, to Mother Marianne)

Sister Vincentia does not seem well.

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are right, Sister Leopoldina. She was ready to serve on Molokai, but maybe the reality is a shock to her. I will speak with her.

(Mother Marianne walks over to Sister Vincentia.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(quietly)

Sister Vincentia, you don't seem well.

(Sister Vincentia is still trembling and says nothing.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(quietly)

Come with me to the convent. You can work there instead. Outside the convent, we will plant a garden and trees. You can help me with that. It will make it feel more like a home.

(Sister Vincentia is feeling ashamed and starts to cry. She and Mother Marianne exit. Sister Leopoldina is still tending the patients.)

MARY

Sister Leopoldina, there are some men at the door—patients.

(Sister Leopoldina goes and talks to the men, who are offstage.)

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

No, you may not come in. This is the women's home. Go back to your own quarters. Don't you have useful work to do? If you are well enough to bother the women, you are well enough to do some work.

(Sister Leopoldina returns to the female patients.)

MARY

Those men are always coming here and trying to get in.

(Father Damien arrives at the door but does not enter.)

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Hello, Father Damien. Some men were just here trying to get in.

FATHER DAMIEN

The male patients are hard to control. Brother Joseph and I have been trying for years. Those men are always trying to get at the women.

Scene 3: The convent porch that evening

(Ah Kyan knocks on the door. Sister Leopoldina opens it.)

AH KYAN

Sister Leopoldina! Some of the male patients plan to attack the convent tonight. My husband is one of the gang. They want to get rid of Mother Marianne. They think that with her gone, they can do as they please with the women at the Bishop Home.

(Julia overhears this, goes to a closet, gets out a hatchet, and starts sharpening it.)

When Mother Marianne opens the door, they plan to stuff her mouth so she cannot scream, and then they will carry her away.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Thank you, Ah Kyan. I will warn Mother not to open the door tonight.

AH KYAN

When I tell my husband's gang about the girl sharpening the hatchet, maybe they will change their minds.

(Ah Kyan leaves. Mother Marianne sees Julia sharpening the hatchet and comes out onto the porch.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

I heard. Saint Paul said to do everything decently and in order. That is why we allow the men to have supervised one-hour visits with women. And we will not tolerate threats or violence against any of the women. When Ah Kyan reports what she saw, I think that the gang will get the message.

So, let us trust in God and act with hope....

Shall we take some girls to the beach tomorrow?

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Yes, Mother. We all would like that. Afterwards we could bake bread with the girls. We are busy running the Bishop Home, but only a few patients are so sick that they stay in bed. I'm glad we can do some fun things with the others.

MOTHER MARIANNE

So am I. But we may have some more work to do. Brother Joseph told me that he and Doctor Meyer want us to run the boys' home too. The Board of Health and the bishop agreed. However, two more Sisters are on their way here to work with us.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

I have never seen Doctor Meyer.

MOTHER MARIANNE

He is in charge of the leper settlement, but he lives on another part of the island. He rarely comes down here. However, Brother Joseph told me that Doctor Meyer is helpful. When Father Damien told him that a pipeline for fresh water was needed, Doctor Meyer made sure it got done.

(Adelaide arrives at the convent.)

ADELAIDE

Oh, Mother, Sister. I'm glad you're up and out so I don't have to disturb you.

MOTHER MARIANNE

What is it, Adelaide? More trouble from some of the male patients?

ADELAIDE

No, Mother. Father Damien has died!

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Oh! Life will be harder without him.

(Sister Leopoldina starts to cry. Mother Marianne puts her hand on Sister Leopoldina's shoulder.)

ADELAIDE

Yes, he made life here better for everyone.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I will miss him very much. It will be difficult to carry on our work without him, but I am happy for him. He is free of leprosy, and I'm sure he is in heaven.

(Adelaide leaves. Mother Marianne turns to step inside the convent. She staggers and has to lean on the doorway for a moment. Sister Leopoldina notices.)

Scene 4: Outside the Bishop Home for girls and women

(Mother Marianne, Sisters Vincentia and Leopoldina, and Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, and Emma are waiting for visitors to arrive. Sisters Irene and Crescentia appear; Brother Joseph, Charlie, and George appear, carrying luggage, followed by Robert Louis Stevenson with a croquet set.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Irene! Sister Crescentia! How good to see you! Thank you for coming. And thank you, Brother Joseph, Charlie, and Henry, for helping. And who is this man who plays croquet?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

I am Robert Louis Stevenson. I heard so much about Molokai that I wanted to see for myself. I hope I won't be any trouble. In fact, if I can brighten anybody's day a little, my visit will be worthwhile.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Welcome, Mister Stevenson. You are brightening our day already. Where will you be staying?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

There's a guest cottage. But I hope to visit the Sisters and the patients every day and play games with the girls.

MOTHER MARIANNE

You are always welcome to visit, Mister Stevenson. We have work to do, certainly, but if you want to talk with the Sisters or ask us questions, you are welcome to have tea with us, every day if you want to. And I'm sure that the girls will enjoy playing games with you.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Delighted! I'll go to the cottage and unpack. Later, I'll show the girls how to play croquet.

(Stevenson leaves the croquet set at the Bishop Home, then exits, with Charlie and George helping him with his luggage.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(laughing)

You will like it here, Sisters Irene and Crescentia. Every day we have tea, and then we play croquet.

(All the Sisters walk offstage to the convent. Robert Louis Stevenson returns.)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Girls! Who wants to play croquet? I'll show you how.

(Mary, Adelaide, Julia, Teresa, and Emma come out. Robert Louis Stevenson takes the croquet set and leads them offstage. Mother Marianne returns with Sister Vincentia, who looks with curiosity toward the female patients who have just walked off with Stevenson.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Do you want to join them and play croquet? Go ahead if you want to. We can spare you for a while, Sister Vincentia.

(Laughter from the female patients and Robert Louis Stevenson is heard offstage.)

SISTER VINCENTIA

I'll go and watch.

(Sister Vincentia walks offstage to follow the female patients and Stevenson. Sister Leopoldina comes out of the Bishop Home.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

I just told Sister Vincentia that she could go play croquet with Mister Stevenson and some of the female patients. It would do her good. She is afraid of the lepers. She said she would watch. Even that might help.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Good idea, Mother.

(Sister Vincentia returns from offstage.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Back so soon?

SISTER VINCENTIA

Mister Stevenson is always laughing, but when the girls take their turns, he lies down on the grass. I fear that he is not well.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Maybe you are right. I am glad that the girls can play outside with him, but I will encourage him to rest.

Scene 5: On the porch of the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Leopoldina, Vincentia, Crescentia, and Irene are present with Robert Louis Stevenson.)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

The girls all like playing croquet. And they're getting good at it. I'm glad they are happy and having fun even though they are sick.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, Mister Stevenson. I'm glad that you too are happy and having fun, though maybe you are not well yourself. Maybe you should rest more.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(laughing)

I do get tired, Mother Marianne, *Nurse* Marianne. Thank you for your concern, but I want to help the girls enjoy each day while I'm here.

I get a little tired, but I still was strong enough to write a poem for you. Would you like to hear it?

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, please.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

To see the infinite pity of this place,
The mangled limb, the devastated face,
The innocent sufferers smiling at the rod,
A fool were tempted to deny his God.
He sees, and shrinks; but if he looks again,
Lo, beauty springing from the breast of pain!
He marks the sisters on the painful shores,
And even a fool is silent and adores.

MOTHER MARIANNE

It's lovely, Mister Stevenson. How well it describes Molokai. Pity, but with beauty, and God's presence is evident here. Even a fool could see it. This is Molokai the blest, as Brother Joseph calls it.

Scene 6: Evening, on the porch of the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Leopoldina, Vincentia, Crescentia, and Irene are present.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

What a happy week that was with Mister Stevenson here. Two weeks later, there is still a joy remaining from his visit. Sister Vincentia, did you hear what arrived at the Bishop Home today?

SISTER VINCENTIA

No, Mother.

MOTHER MARIANNE

A piano! Mister Stevenson bought it when he got back to Honolulu and had it shipped here.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Now we will always have music in the Bishop Home. The girls have beautiful voices. and they like to sing. I'm sure that some of them will learn to play the piano.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, even after his departure, Mister Stevenson continues to be a blessing to us.

Well, Sisters, I received some news from New York today: Father Lesen is no longer our Provincial Minister. Father Francis Neubauer has replaced him, and Father Neubauer is coming here to Hawaii to see our work.

Scene 7: Evening, in the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Leopoldina, Vincentia, Crescentia, and Irene are present, along with Father Francis Neubauer.)

FATHER FRANCIS NEUBAUER

Don't we ever have meat with our meals, Sister Vincentia? I've been here five days, and I haven't had one bite of meat. Is every day here a meatless Friday?

MOTHER MARIANNE

Father Neubauer, Sister Vincentia is our cook and housekeeper, and she does a very good job. I don't expect her to raise and slaughter livestock too. We have a garden, but not a farm. Sometimes Doctor Meyer sends us meat from a farm on another part of the island, and sometimes we get salted meat sent to us from Oahu. Sometimes the patients bring us fish they have caught. Otherwise our diet is mostly fruit and vegetables.

FATHER FRANCIS NEUBAUER

It would be a nice change to have some fish for dinner. Maybe tomorrow?

MOTHER MARIANNE

We will see whether the patients bring us any.

FATHER FRANCIS NEUBAUER

Maybe the Sisters could start raising farm animals. You now have four Sisters to run the Bishop Home, and what—fifty patients? And nearly all of the patients are able to do some work. And one housekeeper for a total of five Sisters? I think you should come back to Syracuse, Mother. There are more than enough Sisters here.

MOTHER MARIANNE

I decided that Sister Vincentia was better off working in the convent. We also run the Kapiolani Home on Oahu and a school and hospital on Maui. And the Board of Health and the bishop want us to take over the boys' home on Molokai.

FATHER FRANCIS NEUBAUER

Well, I don't want to argue with a bishop. But the Sisters, except for you, seem melancholy. Maybe they don't have enough work to do. You are the only cheerful one.

MOTHER MARIANNE

With a little encouragement, Father, they would be happy. A kind word from you would cheer them up.

FATHER FRANCIS NEUBAUER

Or make them lazy!

Scene 8: Evening, on the porch of the convent

(Mother Marianne and Sisters Leopoldina, Vincentia, Crescentia, and Irene are present.)

SISTER IRENE

Thank goodness Father Neubauer has gone back to New York!

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Sister Irene! He is our superior!

MOTHER MARIANNE

He is hard and heartless, Sister Crescentia.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother!

MOTHER MARIANNE

A week of criticism is hard to bear. It's the opposite of the visit from Mister Stevenson. Well, we have to accept the bad with the good. The patients must do the same, and they have far more bad to accept than we do. Still, Sisters, I too am happy that Father Neubauer is back in New York, and we must continue to pray for him. As Sister Crescentia said, he is our superior. Maybe after he gets home and has some meat, he will reflect on his visit and see some good in us.

And speaking of superiors, I have some good news. I got a letter today announcing that our friend Father Gulstan Ropert will be the new bishop of Honolulu. Although the Sisters will be working in the boys' home with Brother Joseph, Bishop Ropert plans to travel to Europe and look for some more Brothers to run the boys' home.

I know that you are busy with the patients, Sister Leopoldina, but I have one more job I would like you to take on: take notes and write down the history of our mission here. We have been on Molokai several years already, and although I send reports to Syracuse, they don't fully tell our story.

I try to stay up late to take care of the paperwork for running the Bishop Home, but lately I have been tired and not able to keep working at night. I don't want you to work late writing our story, but I would like you to do it when you have the time and energy.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

Yes, Mother, I can do that. I am busy with the patients, but it won't take a lot of time to write down what happens here. Now I must go to the Bishop Home and check on the patients and say goodnight to them.

(Sister Leopoldina walks to the Bishop Home. As she approaches it, piano music and singing can be heard—in this case, something written before 1889, the year of Stevenson’s visit, or appropriate music of your choosing.)

Scene 9: A room in the convent

(Sister Leopoldina is sitting at a desk, writing.)

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

(talking to herself)

It’s been years since Mother Marianne asked me to take notes of the happenings here on Molokai. I already wrote the story of what happened until Father Neubauer came. I will try to turn the rest of the notes into a story.

(speaking aloud what she is writing)

After our difficult time during Father Neubauer’s visit, things became easier. Bishop Ropert returned from his trip to Europe with three Brothers to work at the boys’ home. He also brought us a pleasant surprise: Father Damien’s brother Pamphile, also a priest. Father Pamphile stayed on Molokai for two years.

More Sisters came to join us, and some went home.

Even on his way back to New York, Father Neubauer reflected on the kindness of our good Sisters, as he called us. Three years later, he praised us in Syracuse and asked other Sisters to join us in Hawaii.

When Father Damien first came to Molokai in 1873, he was serving more than a hundred lepers. By 1889, we Sisters and the Brothers were serving more than a thousand. Since that time, though, the number of patients has gone down every year. Mother Marianne believes it is because the healthy children go to live on Oahu, so there are not as many people growing up with the disease.

In 1893, another bloodless revolution removed the king and queen entirely and established the Republic of Hawaii. This may have been progress, but it lasted only five years. In 1898, Hawaii became a territory of the United States. The territorial government improved the housing and medical care for the lepers on Molokai.

In 1899, Mother Marianne became seriously ill, throwing up blood for days. The doctor ordered two months of rest and quiet for her, and no more sea travel. So there was no more question of her going back to New York or even to Oahu or Maui, but she never wanted to leave Molokai anyway. Thank God, Mother Marianne is still with us, although she has had to let the other Sisters take on much of the work she had been doing.

In 1905, the new Franciscan Minister Provincial from New York, Father Louis Miller, visited the mission on Molokai. With him was Father Alphonse Lehrschohl, Mother Marianne’s nephew. Father Miller was not like Father Neubauer. Father Miller was friendly and took a genuine interest in our work.

In 1908, the U.S. Leprosy Investigation Station was built on Molokai, with hospital wards, stables, labs, and homes for the staff. If the United States wanted somewhere to study leprosy, Molokai was the place. But the Leprosy Investigation Station had a fence around it, and we were never invited inside, and the staff never came out. Only nine leprosy patients ever went inside, and the station closed two years after it had opened.

By this time, Mother Marianne was 70 years old and was sick enough to worry even herself. Her heart and kidneys were ailing. Mother Margaret in Syracuse appointed Sister Flaviana to lead the Franciscan Sisters on the Hawaiian Islands, while Mother Marianne remained officially in charge. Mother Marianne did as much work as she could, and always told us ...

(The focus—maybe by a change in lighting—shifts to Mother Marianne, who is now on stage, sitting in a wheelchair.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

Let us make use of the fleeting moments. They will never return.

(Sister Crescentia enters the room.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother, would you like me to roll you out onto the porch?

MOTHER MARIANNE

Yes, please, Sister Crescentia.

(Sister Crescentia pushes Mother Marianne in her wheelchair out onto the convent porch and rolls her around.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

You don't need to stay with me, Sister.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

I don't mind, Mother. I enjoy being with you. You have spent so many years serving the patients and serving us—with pleasure. I can serve you with pleasure.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Thank you, Sister. I'll be happy to just sit here now.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

I'll be happy to sit with you.

(Sister Crescentia sits in a chair next to Mother Marianne. Mother Marianne coughs, then closes her eyes.)

Scene 10: Mother Marianne's room in the convent

(Mother Marianne is in bed, her eyes shut. Sister Crescentia enters the room. Mother Marianne opens her eyes.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(feebly)

Hello, Sister Crescentia.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Hello, Mother. Two girls from the Bishop Home would like to sing for you. Would you like me to roll you out onto the porch?

MOTHER MARIANNE

No, thank you, Sister. I don't feel well enough.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Then I will ask them to sing outside your window.

(Sister Crescentia leaves the room. After a moment, the girls can be heard singing outside Mother Marianne's room—maybe "How Can I Keep From Singing?" or something else written before 1918, the year the story ends, or appropriate music of your choosing.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

That was delightful.

(Sister Crescentia goes to the window.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Thank you, girls. Mother Marianne enjoyed your singing very much.

MOTHER MARIANNE

Sister Crescentia, please ask a priest to come.

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Yes, Mother.

(Sister Crescentia leaves.)

(Evening. Sister Crescentia leads Sisters Leopoldina, Irene, and Vincentia into Mother Marianne's room.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

You asked us to come, Mother?

MOTHER MARIANNE

(feebly)

Yes.

(With difficulty, Mother Marianne raises her hand to bless the Sisters. The Sisters kneel.)

MOTHER MARIANNE

(Making the sign of the cross over the Sisters.)

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

SISTERS CRESCENTIA, LEOPOLDINA, IRENE, AND VINCENTIA

Amen.

(Mother Marianne closes her eyes and is still.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother called for a priest this afternoon.

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

I will ask the patients to come and gather outside.

(Sister Leopoldina leaves.)

(The patients can be heard singing outside the window. Sister Leopoldina returns. Sister Crescentia goes to Mother Marianne's bedside and lifts Mother Marianne's limp hand.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

Mother has gone to be with our Lord.

SISTERS CRESCENTIA, IRENE, LEOPOLDINA, AND VINCENTIA

Eternal rest grant to her, and may perpetual light shine upon her.

(The Sisters weep. Sister Crescentia goes to the window.)

SISTER CRESCENTIA

(tearfully)

Mother Marianne has died.

(The patients can be heard crying outside the window.)

SISTER LEOPOLDINA

I thought—I thought I could hear Mother saying, “Now I will help you more than I could before.”

(The patients can be heard singing outside the window.)

(The end.)