

Nothing is the Same

by Y York

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Characters:

George, male, Filipino heritage.

Bobbi, female, Korean heritage.

Mits, male, Japanese heritage.

Daniel, male, Korean heritage.

All are eleven years old.

Time-Location:

Wahiawa, Hawai'i, located near Wheeler Air Force Base and Schofield Barracks on the northern side of O'ahu. December, 1941, to March, 1942.

Note on the language. This is written in Hawai'i-Creole English, which is much more accessible aloud.

SCENE ONE.

(A church yard. Early morning. George draws a circle in the dirt with a stick. Bobi enters.)

BOBI. Hey, George, look dis, look dis.

GEORGE. Go home, Bobi.

BOBI. You gotta look dis.

GEORGE. I tink I hear your mahdah calling you.

BOBI. You nevah guess what I get.

GEORGE. You right, I nevah guess— I nevah like guess.

BOBI. I get one cat eye.

GEORGE. Whachu did to your cat?!

BOBI. Look at um. (She shows him a marble.)

GEORGE. (Impressed.) Ho!

BOBI. Good, yeah?

GEORGE. Nice dis. But not from your cat—

BOBI. No, but from one noddah cat.

GEORGE. Look like one marble, dis.

BOBI. (Caught.) Look little bit like dat. Dis cateye wen start out his life in da eye of one god—

GEORGE. I not going listen—

BOBI. One dark night in Africas...da ground shake wid fire... errybody stay shaking in dea beds, nobody come out fo see what shake da ground or make da fire. Den when da sun come out and errybody feel safe, onacounta get light again, errybody go outside and find one tall black cat god. (Triumphantly) Dis eye come from dat god was made outta stone.

GEORGE. ...Sound more like da hist'ry lesson on Egypt Miz Hirogashi wen give.

BOBI. (Caught.) Sound little bit like dat.

GEORGE. Come on— we play marbles—

BOBI. No. You play fo keeps. I no can lose um.

GEORGE. You like play wid da guys, you gotta take da risk. Us guys take da risk. Lass cheer my Christmas keenie, was one good marble.

BOBI. Was one good marble.

GEORGE. I coulda kepp um in my pocket, nevah show, if I scared. If I too scared fo put um in play. Too scared fo take da risk.

BOBI. (Mocking him.) Yeah. You wen take da risk alright— you wen lose dat good marble. Mits get um now.

GEORGE. Yeah, but I took da risk.

(Enter Mits, he has overheard them.)

MITTS. “Samurai nevah take his eye off da marble.”

GEORGE. Hey, Mits.

MITTS. “Samurai know da enemy marble going make die dead.” You ready fo play, George?

BOBI. I ready. I get one new kine marble.

MITTS. Show me.

BOBI. (Showing.) No can touch um.

MITTS. Nice cateye, dat.

GEORGE. You wen see dem before?

MITTS. Castner’s store got um.

GEORGE. “Eye of one god.” Bobi, you such a liar.

BOBI. You nevah believe um, so no count as one lie.

MITTS. Cost one quarter, dem.

BOBI. (Impressed.) Ho— Expensive da present.

GEORGE. Dis your birfday?

BOBI. (Caught.) ...I don know.

GEORGE. Bobi...whachu wen do?

BOBI. Dis my Christmas present. I wen open um.

GEORGE. Hala! You going get lickens.

BOBI. Was going die from da wrapped-present disease. Could hear someting calling me from inside da box. “Come get me, come play wid me, I lonely.” I going put um back before Christmas. Das why I no can take da risk. My fahdah see dat empty present box, I get lickens fo sure.

GEORGE. Fo’get her, Mits. We go play.

MITTS. Who wen draw dis circle?

BOBI. George wen draw um.

MIT. All hamajang, dis. (Mits picks up a stick to redraw the circle.) Gotta concentrate when you draw da circle. Stand like dis wid chor stick touching da ground, den go all da way round like dis, nevah move your arm— move your whole body in one circle. I stay da stick.

BOBI. You no look like da stick—

MIT. I stay da stick. I stay da circle.

BOBI. Ho! Dat one round circle now.

MIT. (Bows, a sort of prayer.) "Today, I know I going lose my marbles. I know I going home wid no marbles."

BOBI. (Derisive.) Meybe you wen lose your marbles already... (Mits scowls at her.) I no mean nutting by dat.

MIT. Wea da ress, George?

GEORGE. Das all I wen bring today.

BOBI. Why? You too scared fo take da risk?

GEORGE. (A threat.) Bobi, you like stay or you like go?

BOBI. I like stay. Quiet, me...Quiet like one stone. Quiet like one still night. One Silent Night, me!

GEORGE. Talk talk alla time talking, you. (He misses.) Shoots.

MIT. I go. Stand back. Samurai need plenny room fo shoot.

BOBI. Ho, you going lose George.

MIT. "Samurai take up one marble, da marble come one extension of his arm. Da Samurai stay da marble." (Mits shoots and wins.)

GEORGE. Ho, I no like lose dat one.

BOBI. You like I make some distraction, George?

MIT. "Da Samurai no can hear da distracting talking talking from da noisy wahine on da sidelines." (Mits shoots and wins.)

BOBI. Who da noisy wahine? I not noisy.

GEORGE. Ho, I no like lose dat one, too.

BOBI. Should nevah play fo keeps wid one Samurai.

MIT. "Da lass lass, very lass marble. Da marble stay one long way away from da shoota, but da Samurai no fear nutting. Take in air, let out air, ready fo shoot." (Shoots and wins.)

GEORGE. I get no more.

BOBI. (Disappointed.) Mits da winnah— errytime Mits da winnah— like one skipping record.

GEORGE. Mits, you going show me da Samurai kine?

MITTS. No can. You Filipino— (Proudly.) —Samurai only Japanee.

(Enter Daniel.)

DANIEL. Hey! Why you here, Mits? Not your church.

GEORGE. ...Not my church, too.

DANIEL. More your church den his church— Buddahhead.

MITTS. Howzit, Daniel?

DANIEL. No talk wid me. Who wen make dis circle in my church yard?

MITTS. I wen make um.

DANIEL. Da minister going make you pray to Jesus, he see you here.

MITTS. I going go before church time. Why you here so early, Daniel?

DANIEL. No ask me nutting, you. Go Japanese school, you, stay away from here. (To Bobi.) Da minister wen come yet?

GEORGE. Yeah, I wen see him come in before.

DANIEL. I here fo da sugah donuts. He put um out fo da pigeons. Dey real good and fresh. I going get um before da pigeons.

BOBI. Dey not fo da pigeons doze donuts—

GEORGE. Shut your mout, Bobi!

DANIEL. Da minister wen say dey fo da pigeons. Whachu talking about, mosquito?

BOBI. I talking about—

GEORGE. She talking about talking. She don know what she stay talking about.

DANIEL. She like get um, das why. Stay here, you. Da sugah donuts, dey mines. (Exits.)

BOBI. Ho! Dat guy, he no like you, Mits.

MITTS. His fahdah Korean, das why— He hate da Japanese.

BOBI. My fahdah Korean— we no hate nobody.

GEORGE. Mean Daniel, das why.

BOBI. (Realizing.) Hey— dey no more food, das why. He going eat da sugah donuts—

GEORGE. Yeah, you crazy or what? You was going tell how da minister put um out fo da poor kids. You call Daniel one poor kid, you going stay one dead kid.

MIT. I not scared him. Samurai not scared, das why.

GEORGE. Mits, I no care I not Japanee. I like you show me da power.

BOBI. I show, George. (Tries to move like Mits.) “Ho, I one Samurai me—”

MIT. Hey— no can!...I show— little bit I show. (Demonstrates.) Look dis. Dis marble on da ground, all separate dis one. But when I pick um up— no more separate. Da marble wen come one parta da arm— connected tru da eye.

(There is the far off sound of rumbling. They look toward the sound. They are initially surprised and quite indignant.)

BOBI. Look dea.

GEORGE. Da army stay making maneuvers.

BOBI. Hey, not allowed.

GEORGE. (To planes.)...Hey...whachu doing?

BOBI. (Shouts to planes.) Go home. No can fly today. Dis Sunday.

GEORGE. How come dey's flying here? Dey supposed to go da oddah ways.

MIT. Close, dey coming. Low, too.

BOBI. Hey, look dea. Da army wen paint one red circle on da airplane. Too real dat kine. (The sound of bombs.) ...Hey, what dey stay doing—? (To planes.) Whachu stay doing?!

GEORGE. Hey, no shoot ovah here. You stupid, you stupid—

BOBI. He coming, he coming— we going make we going make.

(More bombs and shooting. While the others duck, Mits raises his arms towards the approaching airplane. The plane veers and recedes in the distance. Mits is frozen, his arms raised.)

DANIEL. (Entering.) Dey going ovah da houses! I going check my house!

(Daniel exits. Bobi throws her marble toward the planes.)

BOBI. (Crying.) You buggahs, you flying buggahs.

(Bobi exits. The sound of bombs and planes in the distance continues. George picks up Bobi's

marble.)

GEORGE. Bobi— (But she is gone; he pockets the marble.) Hey, Mits, take down your arms. (George pulls Mits to the ground.) We wait here til pau da bombs. Mits, you not breathing.

MIT. (Gasps.) George. Why dey wen do dat? Why da army bomb us?

GEORGE. You crazy? Dey not da army. Dey da Japanese.

SCENE TWO

(The church yard, one week later, Sunday. Bobi enters looking for her cateye.)

BOBI. Wea you stay hiding? Wea you stay hiding? I like put chu back in your box before Christmas. (She gives up, starts to play.) “Giant monstas in da sky breathing fire ova da land. Da peoples try fo run, try fo hide, but get too many monstas spitting too much fire. Try fo trow rocks, try fo pray— Monstas more strong den rocks, more strong den gods. Houses burn down wid fire, boats sink, plenny peoples die. Da res stay scared da monstas going come back and—” (She makes bomb noises.)

(George enters.)

GEORGE. You going scare da kids.

BOBI. No kids. Errybody wen go already. Your church ovah, too?

GEORGE. We nevah wen go mass. My mahdah stay too scared fo leave da house. Dey all stay sleeping now, so I wen sneak out.

BOBI. My mahdah scared da baby going come early.

GEORGE. She okay?

BOBI. She okay. No baby. Ho— one crying baby going make me lolo....I so sicka dat house. Nevah go outside fo one week. Was going kill my sistah if one more hour stuck inside wid her. She talk talk, alla time talking.

GEORGE. Jus like da oddah sistah.

BOBI. ...Whachu mean? I da oddah sistah.

GEORGE. Nevah mind.

BOBI. Hey, George, da soldiers from Wheeler wen shoot down one plane.

GEORGE. I know dat!

BOBI. Yeah, but you don know dey wen bury da Japanese pilot inside da cemetery.

GEORGE. No can.

BOBI. Can. Dey no tell wea onacounta dey scared some Wahiwawa peoples going dig um up and

“desecrate da body.”

GEORGE. What dat mean, “desecrate da body?”

BOBI. ...Make shishi on um?

GEORGE. Wahiawa peoples no “desecrate” nutting.

BOBI. Dey do when dey mad. Was bad here da shooting, but da harbor was one disaster. Dey never had one chance, da ships. Da sky wen fill up wid planes, all dropping bombs. Had fire errywea you look, den black smoke fill da whole sky, and so loud could make you cry fo quiet. Lasted da whole day dat sound and nevah stop nighttime. Tousands of soldiers wen die right away. Da ships wen sink. Dey wen huli, belly side to da sky. Had men still alive in dea. Climb to da bottom of da ships, tap tap fo help, but no can— tap tap—

GEORGE. Shut your mout, Bobi— I not going listen—

BOBI. True, dis— we wen pray fo dem in church! Know what else? My sistah wen get one bullet hole in da middle her face.

GEORGE. You one mosquito buzzing round my head. I going swat you.

BOBI. I not one mosquito.

GEORGE. No, you one liar! I jus saw your sistah! She no more hole in her face. You alla time lie.

BOBI. (Angry.) ...You bettah tell your fahdah, be careful when he go check da watah tower.

GEORGE. Why?

BOBI. He going get shot.

GEORGE. (Scared.) Who going shoot my fahdah?

BOBI. Dey catch him outside nighttime, dey going shoot him.

GEORGE. We not Japanese.

BOBI. Da soldiers, dey don know dat. Korean, Chinese, Filipino, dey all look Japanese to da soldiers—

GEORGE. Den your fahdah da same, going shoot him, too!

BOBI. My fahdah not out nighttime!...Dey all going know he Korean, he going tell errybody—

GEORGE. You don know nutting, Bobi. Erryting you say, plenny shibai.

BOBI. No call me Bobi. Go call me “Roberta.”

GEORGE. I not going call you dat.

BOBI. Das my name. Bobi short fo Roberta. Sound more American. Bobi sound more like some

oddah place... Japan, meybe.

GEORGE. Go home. Go way.

BOBI. Dis my church. Whachu stay doing here?

GEORGE. ...Nevah mind.

BOBI. ...Mits not going meet chu fo marbles. No can wait fo Mits.

GEORGE. You don know nutting.

BOBI. Alla Japanese stay hiding. Police going arrest um, das why.

GEORGE. (Shocked.) Not Hawai`i-Japanese. Police no can.

BOBI. Can. We not suppose to play wid Mits.

GEORGE. Who I going play wid?

BOBI. Me.

GEORGE. Fo'get it. You no take da risk.

BOBI. Mits stay one spy. He wen signal da pilot wid his arms in da air.

GEORGE. He nevah— he nevah— (Approaching Bobi.)

BOBI. (Backing away.) Hey, I stay one girl— I stay one girl.

GEORGE. You one mosquito. Get outta here. Go play wid da oddah girls.

BOBI. I stay looking fo my cateye.

GEORGE. ...You wen trow um ovah dea aftah you wen shishi in your shorts.

BOBI. I nevah wen shishi— I going find um, put um back in da Christmas present box.

GEORGE. Fo'get it. Not going get Christmas. Get one war now.

BOBI. Can get Christmas and war, can get both.

(Bobi exits. George looks around for Mits.)

MITs. (Off.) Psst. Hey.

GEORGE. Mits, whachu doing?

MITs. (Entering.) I no like see nobody.

GEORGE. You ack like one spy, you stay hiding like dat...I wen look fo you. Nobody your house.

MITs. My mahdah and sistahs wid my auntie. My fahdah stay digging one sheltah.

GEORGE. My fahdah, too. I nevah going stay undah da ground.

MIT. I going do what da soldiers tell fo do, whatevah dey tell, I going do um. I no like da gov'ment guys take me away.

GEORGE. Nobody going take you—

MIT. Dey wen take Mr. Tsuda! Was looking fo him all Sunday all Monday. Dey wen say he was hiding. Was not hiding, him. Was fighting da fires at Schofield. Da gove'ment guys wen arrest him.

GEORGE. What he did?

MIT. Nutting.

GEORGE. ...He must did someting, Mits.

MIT. He born Japan, das why. Das all.

GEORGE. ...Your fahdah born Japan.

(Brief pause. Mits retrieves a sword and something wrapped in an undershirt from the bushes.)

GEORGE. Whachu going do wid dat?

MIT. My fahdah say trow dis down da rivah. He scared da gove'ment guys going find um— tink we not loyal Americans.

GEORGE. Not da sword— cannot.

MIT. (Idea.) ... You take um, George? Hide um your house?

(George unties the undershirt, in which is wrapped a small metal offering bowl with its wooden mallet.)

GEORGE. Wha chu going do wid dis one? (George gongs the bowl with the mallet.)

MIT. My fahdah wen take da shrine away.

GEORGE. Wea?

MIT. He nevah tell. Da shrine corner stay empty now. I no like, scared me, in da empty corner. Get one big hole inside my chess, feel bad, getting biggah da hole—

GEORGE. You talking crazy—

MIT. Had one dream. I one Samurai soldier trying fo protect da village. Strong me, brave me. —I hear da sound from da planes—I da pilot we wen see in da plane, me da pilot, was my face— oh George, George, was me, was me! I wen look down at da ground and see you and see me and see Bobi and see Daniel—

GEORGE. Was just one dream. Fo'get it— fo'get da dream! You not one pilot. Was jus one dream. I take care dis stuff fo you. No worry.

MIT. Hide um good. Dey catchu wid dat, going take you out and shoot chu.

GEORGE. Dey going shoot me fo dis?

BOBI. (Entering) Dey going shoot chu cuz you friends wid one spy— wea my cateye stay, Mits? Whachu wen do wid um—?

GEORGE. Dat's it— you going make. (George corners Bobi, who curls up in a defensive ball.)

BOBI. Mits, save me—

GEORGE. Come outta dea, mosquito— I going swat you. (Mits drags George away from Bobi.) Let me go, Mits, I going smash dat bug.

BOBI. How come you like be friends wid one traitor, George. I one good friend fo you. (Exits.)

GEORGE. (Shouts.) Dat traitor wen save yo life— you nevah going get chor cateye...(To Mits.) Why you wen stop me? She wen call you one spy ...you not one spy. Hey, Mits, you not...tell me you not one spy.

MIT. (Still shocked by Bobi calling him a traitor.) Why you like ask me dat?!

GEORGE. I like know.

MIT. Why you tink dat kine? (Exits.)

GEORGE. Hey— Mits— You not one spy. You not.