

KAHALAOPUNA, PRINCESS OF MANOA

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AKAACA (laughter) is a projecting spur of the mountain range at the head of Manoa Valley, forming the ridge running back to and above Waiakeakua, "the water of the gods." Akaaka was united in marriage to Nalehuaakaaka, still represented by some lehua (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) bushes on the very brow of the spur or ridge. They had two children, twins, Kahaukani, a boy, and Kauakuahine, a girl. These children were adopted at birth by a chief, Kolowahi, and chiefess, Pohakukala, who were brother and sister, and cousins of Akaaka. The brother took charge of the boy, Kahaukani, a synonym for the Manoa wind; and Pohakukala the girl, Kauakuahine, meaning the famous Manoa rain. When the children were grown up, the foster parents determined that they should be united; and the children, having been brought up separately and in ignorance of their relationship, made no objections. They were accordingly married and a girl was born to them, who was called Kahalaopuna. Thus Kolowahi and Pohakukala, by conspiring to unite the twin brother and sister, made permanent the union of rain and wind for which

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[paragraph continues] Manoa Valley is noted; and the fruit of such a union was the most beautiful woman of her time. So the Manoa girls, foster children of the Manoa rains and winds, have generally been supposed to have inherited the beauty of Kahalaopuna.

A house was built for Kahalaopuna at Kahaiamano on the road to Waiakekua, where she lived with a few attendants. The house was surrounded by a fence of auki (*dracaena*), and a *puloulou* (sign of kapu) was placed on each side of the gate, indicative of forbidden ground. The *puloulou* were short, stout poles, each surmounted by a ball of white kapa cloth, and indicated that the person or persons inhabiting the premises so defined were of the highest rank, and sacred.

Kahalaopuna was very beautiful from her earliest childhood. Her cheeks were so red and her face so bright that a glow emanated therefrom which shone through the thatch of her house when she was in; a rosy light seemed to envelop the house, and bright rays seemed to play over it constantly. When she went to bathe in the spring below her house, the rays of light surrounded her like a halo. The natives maintain that this bright light is still occasionally seen at Kahaiamano, indicating that the spirit of Kahalaopuna is revisiting her old home.

She was betrothed in childhood to Kauhi, the young chief of Kailua, in Koolau, whose parents were so sensible of the honor of the contemplated union of their son with the Princess of Manoa, who was deemed of a semi-supernatural descent, that they

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always sent the poi of Kailua and the fish of Kawainui for the girl's table. She was thus, as it were, brought up entirely on the food of her prospective husband.

When she was grown to young womanhood, she was so exquisitely beautiful that the people of the valley would make visits to the outer *puloulou* at the sacred precinct of Luaalea, the land

adjoining Kahaiamano, just to get a glimpse of the beauty as she went to and from the spring. In this way the fame of her surpassing loveliness was spread all over the valley, and came to the ears of two men, Kumauna and Keawaa, both of whom were disfigured by a contraction of the lower eyelids, and were known as *makahelai* (drawn eyes). Neither of these men had ever seen Kahalaopuna, but they fell in love with her from hearsay, and not daring to present themselves to her as suitors on account of their disfigurement, they would weave and deck themselves *leis* (wreaths) of maile (*Alyxia olivæformis*), ginger, and ferns and go to Waikiki for surf-bathing. While there they would indulge in boasting of their conquest of the famous beauty, representing the leis with which they were decked as love-gifts from Kahalaopuna. Now, when the surf of Kalehuawehe at Waikiki was in proper condition, it would attract people from all parts of the island to enjoy the delightful sport. Kauhi, the betrothed of Kahalaopuna, was one of these. The time set for his marriage to Kahalaopuna was drawing near, and as yet he had not seen her, when the assertions of the two makahelai men came to his ears.

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[paragraph continues] These were repeated so frequently that Kauhi finally came to believe them, and they so filled him with jealous rage of his betrothed that he determined to kill her. He started for Manoa at dawn, and proceeded as far as Mahinauli, in mid-valley, where he rested under a hala (*Pandanus odoratissimus*) tree that grew in the grove of wiliwili (*Erythrina monosperma*). He sat there some time, brooding over the fancied injury to himself, and nursing his wrath. Upon resuming his walk he broke off and carried along with him a bunch of hala nuts. It was quite noon when he reached Kahaiamano and presented himself before the house of Kahalaopuna. The latter had just awakened from a sleep, and was lying on a pile of mats facing the door, thinking of going to the spring, her usual bathing-place, when she perceived a stranger at the door.

She looked at him some time and, recognizing him from oft repeated descriptions, asked him to enter; but Kauhi refused, and asked her to come outside. The young girl had been so accustomed from early childhood to consider herself as belonging to Kauhi, and of being indebted to him, as it were, for her daily food, that she obeyed him unhesitatingly.

He perhaps intended to kill her then, but the girl's unhesitating obedience as well as her extreme loveliness made him hesitate for a while; and after looking intently at her for some time he told her to go and bathe and then prepare herself to accompany him in a ramble about the woods.

While Kahalaopuna was bathing, Kauhi remained

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moodily seated where she had left him, and watched the bright glow, like rainbow rays, playing above the spring. He was alternately filled with jealousy, regret, and longing for the great beauty of the girl; but that did not make him relent in his dreadful purpose. He seemed to resent his betrothed's supposed infidelity! the more because she had thrown herself away on such unworthy persons, who were, besides, ugly and disfigured, while he, Kauhi, was not only a person of rank and distinction, but possessed also of considerable manly beauty.

When she was ready he motioned her to follow him, and turned to go without a word. They went across Kumakaha to Hualea, when the girl said, "Why don't you stay and have something to eat before we go?"

He answered rather surlily, "I don't care to eat; I have no appetite."

He looked so sternly at her as he said this that she cried out to him, "Are you annoyed with me? Have I displeased you in any way?"

He only said, "Why, what have you done that would displease me?"

He kept on his way, she following, till they came to a large stone in Aihualama, when he turned abruptly and, facing the young girl, looked at her with an expression of mingled longing and hate. At last, with a deep sigh, he said, "You are beautiful, my betrothed, but, as you have been false, you must die."

The young girl looked up in surprise at these strange words, but saw only hatred and a deadly purpose in Kauhi's eyes; so she said: "If I have to die,

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why did you not kill me at home, so that my people could have buried my bones; but you brought me to the wild woods, and who will bury me? If you think I have been false to you, why not seek proof before believing it?"

But Kauhi would not listen to her appeal. Perhaps it only served to remind him of what he considered was his great loss. He struck her across the temple with the heavy bunch of hala nuts he had broken off at Mahinauli, and which he had been holding all the time. The blow killed the girl instantly, and Kauhi hastily dug a hole under the side of the rock and buried her; then he started down the valley toward Waikiki.

As soon as he was gone, a large owl, who was a god, and a relative of Kahalaopuna, and had followed her from home, immediately set to digging the body out; which done, it brushed the dirt carefully off with its wings and, breathing into the girl's nostrils, restored her to life. It rubbed its face against the bruise on the temple, and healed it immediately. Kauhi had not advanced very far on his way when he heard the voice of Kahalaopuna singing a lament for his unkindness, and beseeching him to believe her, or, at least, prove his accusation.

Hearing her voice, Kauhi returned, and, seeing the owl flying above her, recognized the means of her resurrection; and, going up to the girl, ordered her to follow him. They went up the side of the ridge which divides Manoa Valley from Nuuanu. It was hard work for the tenderly nurtured maiden to climb

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the steep mountain ridge, at one time through a thorny tangle of underbrush, and at another clinging against the bare face of the rocks, holding on to swinging vines for support. Kauhi never

offered to assist her, but kept on ahead, only looking back occasionally to see that she followed. When they arrived at the summit of the divide she was all scratched and bruised, and *pa-u* (skirt) in tatters. Seating herself on a stone to regain her breath, she asked Kauhi where they were going. He never answered, but struck her again with the hala branch, killing her instantly, as before. He then dug a hole near where she lay, and buried her, and started for Waikiki by way of the Kakea ridge. He was no sooner out of sight than the owl again scratched the dirt away and restored the girl, as before. Again she followed and sang a song of love and regret for her lover's anger, and pleaded with him to lay aside his unjust suspicions. On hearing her voice again, Kauhi returned and ordered her to follow him. They descended into Nuuanu Valley, at Kaniakapupu, and crossed over to Waolani ridge, where he again killed and buried the faithful girl, who was again restored by the owl. When he was on his way back, as before, she sang a song, describing the perils and difficulties of the way traversed by them, and ended by pleading for pardon for the unknown fault. The wretched man, on hearing her voice again, was very angry; and his repeated acts of cruelty and the suffering endured by the girl, far from softening his heart, only served to render him more brutal, and to extinguish what little spark of kindly feeling he might

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have had originally. His only thought was to kill her for good, and thus obtain some satisfaction for his wasted poi and fish. He returned to her and ordered her, as before, to follow him, and started for Kilohana, at the head of Kalihi Valley, where he again killed her. She was again restored by the owl, and made her resurrection known by singing to her cruel lover. He this time took her across gulches, ravines, and plains, until they arrived at Pohakea, on the Ewa slope of the Kaala Mountains, where he killed her and buried her under a large *koa* (*Acacia koa*) tree. The faithful owl tried to scrape the dirt away, so as to get at the body of the girl, but his claws became entangled in the numerous roots and rootlets which Kauhi had been careful not to cut away. The more the owl scratched, the more deeply tangled he got, and, finally, with bruised claws and ruffled feathers, he had to give up the idea of rescuing the girl; and perhaps he thought it useless, as she would be sure to make her resurrection known to Kauhi. So the owl left, and followed Kauhi on his return to Waikiki.

There had been another witness to Kauhi's cruelties, and that was Elepaio (*Chasiempis sandwichensis*), a little green bird, a cousin to Kahalaopuna. As soon as this bird saw that the owl had deserted the body of Kahalaopuna, it flew straight to Kahaukani and Kauakuahine, and told them of all that had happened. The girl had been missed, but, as some of the servants had recognized Kauhi, and had seen them leave together for what they supposed was a ramble in the adjoining woods, no great anxiety had been felt, as yet. But

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when the little bird told his tale, there was great consternation, and even positive disbelief; for, how could any one in his senses, they argued, be guilty of such, cruelty to such a lovely, innocent being, and one, too, belonging entirely to himself.

In the meantime, the spirit of the murdered girl discovered itself to a party who were passing by; and one of them, a young man, moved with compassion, went to the tree indicated by the spirit, and, removing the dirt and roots, found the body, still warm. He wrapped it in his *kihei* (shoulder

scarf), and then covered it entirely with maile, ferns, and ginger, and, making a *haawe*, or back-load, of it, carried it to his home at Kamoiliili. There, he submitted the body to his elder brother, who called upon two spirit sisters of theirs, with whose aid they finally succeeded in restoring it to life. In the course of the treatment she was frequently taken to an underground water-cave, called Mauoki, for the *Kakelekele* (hydropathic cure). The water-cave has ever since been known as the "Water of Kahalaopuna."

The young man who had rescued her from the grave naturally wanted her to become his bride; but the girl refused, saying that as long as Kauhi lived she was his, and none other's, as her very body was, as it were, nourished on his food, and was as much his property as the food had been.

The elder brother then counselled the younger to seek, in some way, the death of Kauhi. To this end they conspired with the parents of Kahalaopuna to keep her last resurrection secret. The young man

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then set to work to learn all the meles Kahalaopuna had sung to her lover during that fatal journey. When he knew these songs well, he sought the *kilu* (play, or game) houses of the King and high chiefs, where Kauhi was sure to be found.

One day, when Kauhi was playing, this young man placed himself on the opposite side, and as Kauhi ceased, took up the kilu and chanted the first of Kahalaopuna's meles.

Kauhi was very much surprised, and contrary to the etiquette of the game of kilu, stopped him in his play to ask him where he had learned that song. The young man answered he had learned it from Kahalaopuna, the famous Manoa beauty, who was a friend of his sister's and who was now on a visit at their house. Kauhi, knowing the owl had deserted the body of the girl, felt certain that she was really dead, and accused the other of telling a lie. This led to an angry and stormy scene, when the antagonists were parted by orders of the King.

The next night found them both at the kilu house, when the second of Kahalaopuna's songs was sung, and another angry discussion took place. Again they were separated by others. On the third night, the third song having been sung, the dispute between the young men became so violent that Kauhi told the young man that the Kahalaopuna he knew must be an impostor, as the real person of that name was dead, to his certain knowledge. He dared him to produce the young woman whom he had been representing as Kahalaopuna; and should she not prove to be the

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genuine one then his life should be the forfeit, and on the other hand, if it should be the real one, then he, Kauhi, should be declared the liar and pay for his insults to the other with his life.

This was just what the young man had been scheming to compass, and he quickly assented to the challenge, calling on the King and chiefs to take notice of the terms of agreement, and to see that they were enforced.

On the appointed day Kahalaopuna went to Waikiki, attended by her parents, relatives, servants, and the two spirit sisters, who had assumed human form for that day so as to accompany their friend and advise her in case of necessity. Akaaka, the grandfather, who had been residing in Waikiki some little time previous to the dispute between the young men, was appointed one of the judges at the approaching trial.

Kauhi had consulted the priests and sorcerers of his family as to the possibility of the murdered girl having assumed human shape for the purpose of working him some injury. Kaea, a famous priest and seer of his family, told him to have the large leaves of the a-pe (*Calladium costatum*) spread where Kahalaopuna and party were to be seated. If she was a spirit, she would not be able to tear the a-pe leaf on which she would be seated, but if human, the leaf or leaves would be torn. With the permission of the King, this was done. The latter, surrounded by the highest chiefs and a vast assemblage from all parts of the island, was there to witness the test.

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When Kahalaopuna and party were on the road to the scene of the test, her spirit friends informed her of the a-pe leaves, and advised her to trample on them so as to tear them as much as possible, as they, being spirits, would be unable to tear the leaves on which they should be seated, and if any one's attention were drawn to them, they would be found out and killed by the *poe po-i uhane* (spirit catchers).

The young girl faithfully performed what was required of her. Kaea, on seeing the torn leaves, remarked that she was evidently human, but that he felt the presence of spirits, and would watch for them, feeling sure they were in some way connected with the girl. Akaaka then told him to look in a calabash of water, when he would in all probability see the spirits. The seer, in his eagerness to unravel the mystery, forgot his usual caution and ordered a vessel of water to be brought, and, looking in, he saw only his own reflection. Akaaka at that moment caught the reflection of the seer (which was his spirit), and crushed it between his palms, and at that moment the seer dropped down dead. Akaaka now turned around and opened his arms and embraced Kahalaopuna, thus acknowledging her as his own beloved granddaughter.

The King now demanded of the girl and of Kauhi an account of all that had happened between them, and of the reported death of the maiden. They both told their stories, Kauhi ascribing his anger to hearing the assertions of the two disfigured men, Kumauna and Keawaa. These two, on being confronted with

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the girl, acknowledged never having seen her before, and that all their words had been idle boastings. The King then said: "As your fun has cost this innocent girl so much suffering, it is my will that you two and Kauhi suffer death at once, as a matter of justice; and if your gods are powerful enough to restore you, so much the better for you."

Two large *imus* (ground ovens) had been heated by the followers of the young men, in anticipation of the possible fate of either, and Kauhi, with the two mischief-makers and such of their respective followers and retainers as preferred to die with their chiefs, were baked therein.

The greater number of Kauhi's people were so incensed with his cruelty to the lovely young girl that they transferred their allegiance to her, offering themselves for her vassals as restitution, in a measure, for the undeserved sufferings borne by her at the hands of their cruel chief.

The King gave her for a bride to the young man who had not only saved her, but had been the means of avenging her wrongs.

The imus in which Kauhi and his companions were baked were on the side of the stream of Apuakehau, in the famous Ulukou grove, and very near the sea. The night following, a great tidal wave, sent in by a powerful old shark god, a relative of Kauhi's, swept over the site of the two ovens, and in the morning it was seen that their contents had disappeared. The bones had been taken by the old shark into the sea. The chiefs, Kumauna and Keawaa, were, through the

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power of their family gods, transformed into the two mountain peaks on the eastern corner of Manoa Valley, while Kauhi and his followers were turned into sharks.

Kahalaopuna lived happily with her husband for about two years. Her grandfather, knowing of Kauhi's transformation, and aware of his vindictive nature, strictly forbade her from ever going into the sea. She remembered and heeded the warning during those years, but one day, her husband and all their men having gone to Manoa to cultivate kalo (*Colocasia antiquorum*), she was left alone with her maid servants.

The surf on that day was in fine sporting condition, and a number of young women were surf-riding, and Kahalaopuna longed to be with them. Forgetting the warning, as soon as her mother fell asleep she slipped out with one of her maids and swam out on a surf-board. This was Kauhi's opportunity, and as soon as she was fairly outside the reef he bit her in two and held the upper half of the body up out of the water, so that all the surf-bathers would see and know that he had at last obtained his revenge.

Immediately on her death the spirit of the young woman went back and told her sleeping mother of what had befallen her. The latter woke up, and, missing her, gave the alarm. This was soon confirmed by the terrified surf-bathers, who had all fled ashore at seeing the terrible fate of Kahalaopuna. Canoes were launched and manned, and chase given to the shark and his prey, which could be easily tracked by the blood.

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He swam just far enough below the surface of the water to be visible, and yet too far to be reached with effect by the fishing-spears of the pursuers. He led them a long chase to Waianae; then, in a sandy opening in the bottom of the sea, where everything was visible to the pursuers, he ate up the young woman, so that she could never again be restored to this life.

Her parents, on hearing of her end, retired to Manoa Valley, and gave up their human life, resolving themselves into their supernatural elements. Kahaukani, the father, is known as the Manoa wind, but his usual and visible form is the grove of ha-u (*hibiscus*) trees, below

Kahaiamano. Kauakuahine, the mother, assumed her rain form, and is very often to be met with about the former home of her beloved child.

The grandparents also gave up their human forms, and returned, the one to his mountain form, and the other into the lehua bushes still to be met with on the very brow of the hill, where they keep watch over the old home of their petted and adored grandchild.