

Prince Kailulino

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Illustration:

Prince Kailulino

When I went down to breakfast there was a twinkle in the eye of Himotu, who waited on me at the table, and who always looked very sheepish when he took a tip, contrary to the custom of waiters the rest of the world over. Himotu was a natural gossip of the amiable kind, and I knew something interesting had happened. But I waited until he brought me my roast banana. I like roast banana for breakfast, though I am willing to admit that it is rather cloying, and leaves no

appetite for other things. Himotu was dying to tell, but I did not say anything until I had eaten half the banana. Then, as he prepared me a fresh cup of coffee, I said:

„What is it, Himotu?“

His brown, Japano-Hawaiian face curved into a smile.

„Prince Kailulino has come to town.“

„When?“ I asked.

„Last night,“ he replied. „He come up on the Kinau from Hilo.“

I wished to see the prince. I had considerable curiosity about him. I am willing to confess that, for the desire to see one of whom you have heard much is natural. Still, I had all my democratic pride, and I wasn't willing to run after anybody.

„He is here at the hotel,“ added Himotu, „with his wife and daughters. The table in the corner by the window is prepared for them.“

He pointed to a large table which bore a fine display of silver and china. Fresh lace curtains were drawn back from the window, and beyond was a good view of the lawn, with the strip of city in front of it, and back of all the Pacific, curving up to the horizon. Evidently Prince Kailulino was a favored guest, which meant that he had a long and open pocket.

„I should think the Prince would prefer the private dining-room,“ I said to Himotu.

„Oh, no,“ he replied. „Prince Kailulino not what you call stuck up when we have the monarchy, and he not changed, now that we have the republic.“

It was not necessary to ask any more questions just then, for the head waiter hastened forward to assist at the entry of Prince Kailulino, the princess, his wife, and the princesses, their daughters. Luckily, my chair faced the door, and I could see very well.

Some of my friends who lived on Hawaii had spoken in praise of Prince Kailulino, and my first impressions told me that they were right. I have seldom seen a man of finer or more dignified presence. He was sixty or more, but very tall, very straight, and very robust. His hair was closely cut and white, and his face brown, but unmistakably that of a Caucasian, either American or European. He was one of the few princes who looked it, and I felt that here was a man to whom I could take off my hat, if I wore one, without doing any violence to my democratic principles. The princess, his wife, was seal brown, amiable and fat, like all women of the native Hawaiian blood who have passed their first youth. The princesses, their daughters, were splendid looking girls, though to my taste a trifle dark, which may be due to the prejudice of one born in a Southern State.

I prolonged my breakfast in order to observe more fully the prince and his family. Their manners were of the most approved kind. The prince broke his egg into his egg-cup with a grace and skill that I can never hope to imitate. The princess and the girls showed themselves familiar with all the appliances of a modern breakfast table. Friends or acquaintances came from other parts of the dining room to speak to them and to wish them the health of the morning. The prince received all with a fine dignity. He was easily the best-mannered man in the room. I tried to guess his nationality, but his characteristics were merely those of a cosmopolitan gentleman. Mimotu's confidential remarks did not help me much.

„He come to Honolulu forty, fifty years ago, in the time of the old kings, they say,“ said my Japano-Hawaiian, „and go down on Hawaii, where he marry princess

of the real Kamehameha line, and come into great estates, kingdom almost. Some say he American, some Englishman, some Frenchman. I don't know."

Himotu, I found afterward, had spoken very truthfully, in so far as he knew. The prince had secured his vast property by marrying the princess. In fact, that was the way in which he had become a prince. But he handled the estates like an able man of business, and he owned sugar plantations and cattle ranches and banana fields in such numbers that the very mention of them made avarice turn green.

I saw the prince and his family frequently from a distance. I passed them in the corridors of the hotel. Sometimes we sat upon the lanai at the same time, and when I strolled out late in the afternoon to hear the band play, and all Honolulu did likewise, according to the custom, the prince and the princess would drive up in their carriage, and the young princesses would come on horseback, in neat dark-blue suits, and riding astride, according to the Hawaiian custom. which shocks at first but looks natural later. There was usually a group around the prince's carriage, and he seemed to be very popular alike with Caucasian and Hawaiian. I had wondered at first about his political position, for politics was a very delicate matter just then with the people of Hawaii. But I learned soon that the prince, who had stood well with the old monarchy, was acceptable likewise to the new republic. Either because he recognized the futility of rebellion, or liked the change, he quickly gave his adherence to the republic. and it was said that the leaders would have brought him into their cabinet, but he pleaded the pressure of private affairs and a distaste for public life, which, I think, was a great misfortune, for I am sure Prince Kailulino would have made an admirable Minister of Foreign Affairs or Secretary of the Treasury.

Some evenings later, and to my very great pleasure, I made the acquaintance of the family. The American admiral then on that station gave a big ball at the hotel. I was a favorite with the admiral, not through any particular merit of my own, but he was a veteran of the civil war, and I had called his attention to a very complimentary mention of his name in one of the histories in connection with the passage of the Vicksburg batteries by the fleet; he had never seen it before, and with praiseworthy vanity, made no attempt to conceal his pleasure. So, he invited me to his ball, and in his own most courtly manner, presented me to Prince Kailulino, the princess, his wife, and the young princesses, their daughters. Then the good old admiral turned me over to the eldest daughter.

"Aloha!" I said to the young lady. meaning to be polite or humorous, and to show her that I understood at least one word of her native tongue.

"Comment vous portez-vous?" she replied, and then she proceeded to talk to me in the purest and most elegant Parisian French. My French is limited, and I had to beg her to stop and speak English. I soon learned that she had been educated at Wellesley, and "finished off" in London and Paris. She brought the conversation around to literary topics, and discussed Ibsen and Tolstoi, neither of whom I had ever read, with a fluency and acumen that quite dazed me. When I asked her for the honor of a waltz and the honor was accorded to me, I was really proud and inflated. She was a magnificent girl, almost as tall as myself—and I am of no mean height, I can tell you—with a figure that would have put to shame any of your Greek Aphrodites or Roman Venuses.

I have not forgotten that girl. If it had not been for that bit of the dusk in her complexion—the people in the States are so blessed particular about these things—and then, I was born in the South.

She carried me through the waltz. I was never a graceful dancer, but she made no complaint. When I was compelled to yield my place with her to a smudge of an ensign, I felt aggrieved, but when I heard her a little later give him such a sharp thrust in return for some impertinent remark of his that he behaved like one abashed for the remainder of the evening, I rejoiced that I had not been her target.

I strolled off into a corner of the ball-room with my friend Bolt, the purser of the British gunboat that lay in the harbor, a round, fat, bald-headed little man, who could be very fine company.

„What do you think of him?“ asked Bolt, nodding towards Prince Kailulino, who was one of a group, the others of which were the admiral, the captain of the British gunboat, and the president of the new republic.

„Distinguished man,“ I said. „Seems to have a great head. Worthy to be a prince.“

„They say that he was of royal stock in the beginning,“ said Bolt, who had all an Englishman’s inborn love of blue blood. „I’ve heard that he’s a Frenchman of the house of Bourbon, a long distance from the throne, it’s true, but still of the blood royal. Fled from France in the troubles of ‘48, and has established a house of his own down here.“

This interested me greatly. I had known one prince of the house of Bourbon, who had become the head of a monastery of Trappist brothers in Kentucky, and had lived and died there in obscurity and silence. This prince seemed to me to have chosen the pleasanter, and perhaps the wiser, course.

„He has the manners and presence of a prince born to the place,“ I said. „The noble blood in him shows,“ said Bolt, whose humility in these matters sometimes deserved contempt, and marred his excellent qualities.

The next morning, when I was standing on the steps of the hotel, Prince Kailulino came down. He was drawing on his gloves, and his carriage was waiting at the gate. He spoke to me most pleasantly, and asked me if I would not take a drive with him. I accepted with great promptness, for it was a splendid morning, the mountains seeming very near in the tremulous sunlight, and I had no doubt the prince would prove most excellent company.

The prince dismissed his driver and took the lines himself. „I like to drive,“ he said. „The physical exertion stirs me. It’s a tonic to my blood.“

As for myself, I detest holding the lines, and I was quite content for him to do it all. We took the road around the island, and his fine bay trotters sped along at a gait which must have been high up in the 2.40 class, or thereabouts.

„I imported these horses from California,“ said the prince. „The horse degenerates in the Hawaiian Islands. By the time he has passed through two or three generations here, he becomes a pony with a shaggy coat. I do not know why, but I am making some experiments on the uplands of Hawaii, to see if I cannot improve the breed.“

„Do you go to the States often?“ I asked.

„To California frequently, but seldom farther east,“ he replied. „I go to San Francisco to buy things which I cannot obtain in Hawaii; particularly wines, which

I like in moderation, and for the sake of my daughters, who are fond of the gaieties of the city.“ From the road we had a very fine view of the sea and the mountains, and the prince began to talk about the islands and their future.

„These islands have been called the Key to the Pacific,“ he said, „and it is true, for they are the one important stopping-place between America and Asia. I think that great things are in store for Hawaii.“

Then he gave me descriptions of the group, exhibiting a remarkable perspicacity and amount of knowledge. I listened to him with much interest, but we were interrupted presently by the sight of a crowd on the beach and a dark mass that looked like the remains of a small schooner beating to pieces on the reefs.

„It seems to be a wreck,“ said the prince. “Probably the schooner lost its course last night, and was driven on the rocks. There was a very sharp wind that lasted from midnight until morning. But we can soon see.“

We drove up to the crowd, and calling a Kanaka boy to hold the horses, the prince and I jumped out. We saw at once that his guess was correct. The schooner, a very small vessel from Puget Sound, had been partially wrecked by the storm in the night, and her crew, unable to control her, she had driven on the rocks in the morning. Some of the crew had been saved by the splendid Hawaiian swimmers, and they lay on the sands, surrounded by the Hawaiians, the weakest and the most sympathetic of human beings. There was one, a boy of about seventeen, who had received a gash on the head. He was conscious, and was sitting up, but was pale and weak. Prince Kailulino showed the deepest sympathy for this lad. He gave instructions and money for the care of the others. but he took charge of the boy himself. He put him on the back seat in the carriage, and asked him many questions about himself. He showed so much feeling and solicitude that my opinion of him, already good, rose much higher.

„I think we would better take him to Queen’s Hospital,“ he said to me. „A week or two there will cure that gash in his head and make him all right.“

We drove between the long rows of palms that lead to the hospital, and the prince helped the lad out of the carriage with his own hands. He promised to visit him, and I saw him slip some money into the hands of an attendant for extra attention.

„The forlorn condition of that lad touched me,“ said Prince Kailulino, as we resumed our drive. „It is hard, very hard, for one so young.“

I told of the incident afterward to some of my friends in Honolulu, and described the prince’s show of feeling, with a few extra touches, perhaps.

„*Noblesse oblige*,“ said that fat little Bolt. „It was his princely blood. I don’t like the French, but a nobleman is a nobleman.“

Then Bolt and I quarreled, and did not speak to each other for six hours. But both of us were invited to Prince Kailulino’s dinner three evenings later. It was to be a quiet little affair. and the guests were the American admiral, the American, Japanese, and British consuls, the captain of the British gunboat, a Hawaiian gentleman from Maui, a cabinet minister, Bolt, and my humble self.

The prince, of course, presided, with the admiral opposite him.

The dinner was very much like one you would get in a first-class American city, if you were willing to pay the price, plus a greater amount of sea food, and like all people with good digestion, we foregathered in contentment, and talked much

about many things. When we reached the cigars, the Hawaiian gentleman from Maui—Okaimotu was his name—told us a very remarkable story. Bolt had been speaking of the swimming powers of the natives. Everybody who comes into the harbor sees the brown boys diving for nickels, tossed from the ship's side, and catching them before they touch the bottom of the sea. This led to Okaimotu's story.

A Kanaka man and his wife had gone fishing from Maui. They were eight miles out at sea, and their boat was overturned by a sudden gust of wind, and sank. They undertook to swim to land. The man was the woman's physical inferior, and became exhausted when they had gone less than half the way. The woman then took her husband upon her back and swam with him to land. But when she laid him down on the beach, she found that he was dead of exhaustion. She was ill for a few days, as much from the shock of her husband's death as from her exertions. But she was now as well as ever.

„It looks incredible,“ said the admiral, „and if I did not know you so well, Okaimotu, I would say it is not true.“

Okaimotu smiled amiably. „It is true, and no sea yarn,“ he replied, „and the woman is down in Maui now. I have seen her myself.“

„It's impossible,“ said Bolt, who had drunk a good deal and was a trifle belligerent. „The woman stretched one mile into eight miles. The thing is beyond human endurance.“

„The woman was never known to tell a lie,“ said Okaimotu.

„But you must admit that the performance was most extraordinary,“ said the Japanese consul, a very grave man, „and it may well shake one's credulity.“

„But I believe it is true; in fact, I have no doubt of it,“ said Prince Kailulino.

„Why?“ asked the admiral.

„Because the endurance of man is sometimes surprising,“ replied the prince, „just as his lack of it is also surprising, sometimes. A little blow will kill him or he may endure a hundred very hard ones. Now, I have a case in mind, which, though totally different in character, shows a tenacity of life comparable to that of the Hawaiian woman's.“

„A story! A story! Let us have it, prince; I know it's a good one!“ cried Captain Annesley, of the British gunboat.

„It is a story, and I have no objection to telling it,“ said Prince Kailulino. „The shipwrecked boy that we saw the other day put me in mind of it. I had not thought of the incident before in a long time.“

We lighted fresh cigarettes and waited for him to begin.

„The story is about the endurance of a lank boy whom I saw in Honolulu once,“ said the prince, making himself easy in his chair, „and, coming under my own notice as it did, it particularly impressed itself upon me. I had the tale from his own lips. This boy was from one of the States west of the Mississippi River—Indiana, I think it was—I pronounce the name correctly, do I not?“

This question was addressed to me, and I answered in the affirmative, though he made the „a's“ a little broader than I was in the habit of hearing them called.

„The boy had come out to California,“ continued the prince, „to find his fortune in the mines, and failing to do so, had decided to take ship for Hawaii, where, he had heard in San Francisco, that fortunes grew on trees, just as he had heard in

Indiana that they grew on trees in California. You must pardon his weakness, gentlemen, for much older men have been as credulous. He was only eighteen or thereabouts, and he shipped before the mast on a little schooner, nothing but a rotten tub, which should have been condemned before undertaking the voyage. Pardon me, Okaimotu, but will you not pass the cigarettes to the admiral? He needs a fresh one.“

The admiral lighted a fresh cigarette, and several others did likewise. A cloud of smoke hovered over our heads.

„The lad had a hard time,“ said the prince. „The captain was brutal, as many merchant captains were in those days, and he received blows which he could not return. The ship lagged along. She was becalmed more than once, and when a month had passed, Honolulu was still far away. Then the ship was struck by a tidal wave. The admiral there knows what a tidal wave in the Pacific is.“

„I should think I did,“ said the admiral, speaking from the center of a pillar of smoke. „I was in the old DELAWARE when she was struck by one a hundred miles north of the Marquesas Islands, and only the good Lord saved us from going to the bottom of the sea.“

„This was but a baby wave,“ said the prince, „or the schooner would have been smashed into driftwood. As it was, she was so badly stove that her people had to abandon her and take to the boats. The boy was in the captain’s boat. There were three others in it, and their supply of provisions was very short. The quick sinking of the ship had not allowed them time to take more. Even in the boat, the captain’s brutality toward the boy continued. He thought they could reach Molokai, the nearest Hawaiian land, and they rigged some kind of a sail, but they helped with the oars. The boy was forced to do the hardest work.

„In the night they were separated from the other boats, and in the morning their boat was a lonely dot on the ocean.

„The boy was compelled to toil at an oar all day, like a galley slave. The sun beat upon his head. His whole body ached. Blood-red specks danced before his eyes. He received less food and water than the others. In the afternoon he complained a little and asked to be relieved for awhile. For reply, the captain knocked him down with the blade of an oar. The three sailors laughed. He bound up his head as best he could with an old handkerchief, and took his place again at the oar.“

„Poor lad!“ said Bolt. „That was hard, beastly hard.“

„It was,“ said the prince, „very hard for a raw boy of eighteen, one who knew not the sea and its ways. I think I will take a fresh cigarette myself, if you will kindly pass them.“

The cloud of smoke broadened and deepened, and enveloped us. Bolt’s pudgy, red face showed through it like a fire ball.

„Night came on,“ continued the prince, „and it brought unknown terrors to the boy. He feared the darkness and the sea, for, as I have said, he was a mere landsman. He slept awhile, and when he awoke the moon was shining. The captain and one of the sailors were talking and looking at him. His blood chilled. He had heard stories of men cast away at sea. Perhaps they intended to throw him overboard, and then there would be one less for the food and water. He resolved to sleep no more, so long as he was in that boat, if he could help it.

„There was some wind the next day, and the captain hoped they would sight Molokai by nightfall. He had no way to make a reckoning, but he guessed. The land was not seen, and the captain became very morose and fierce. The boy remained awake all night. He was in the end of the boat, and he determined not to stir from his position. Nor did he allow his hand to leave his oar. In the morning, the last of the food and water was divided among the captain and the three sailors, but the boy got none, though the inside of his throat already felt as if it were scaling off.“

„What a beastly shame!“ exclaimed Bolt. „Those men must have been brutes!“

„So they were,“ said the prince. „At least, I presume the boy thought so. But I will hurry along with his story. After the water and food were gone, he felt a little easier in his mind, for they could not save anything now by throwing him overboard. But when Molokai still remained out of sight, the men began to threaten. A new and more terrible alarm took possession of the boy. He knew that sailors, driven to extremities, had often become cannibals, and he doubted not that he would be chosen as the first victim. There was double need now for vigilance.

„The boat drifted on—how long, he knew not. They paid little attention now to oar or sail. The boy never stirred from his position in the end of the boat, and his bent legs felt as if they were paralyzed under him. He saw things through a mist, and he could not remember which was day and which was night. The sailors and the captain seemed to sleep by turns, but the boy never closed his eyes. At last the sailors and the captain were awake, all at the same time, and talked with each other. Then one of the sailors drew a knife and crept toward his end of the boat. The boy was terribly frightened—“

„And well he had a right to be!“ said the admiral.

„He was terribly frightened,“ resumed the prince, „and he was burnt with thirst and relaxed with hunger, but he retained some strength and more presence of mind. He lifted his oar and struck the man over the head. The fellow fell in the bottom of the boat, and his knife splashed into the sea. He rose bleeding, and the others looked at him in a way the boy did not understand.“

„The madness of blood and thirst,“ murmured Okaimotu.

„The sailor himself seemed to understand,“ said the prince, „for he threw up his hands and exclaimed, ‘Not me, O God, not me, boys!’ They advanced upon him, and he sprang into the sea. Whether he ever came up again, the boy did not know, for the boat was moving fast before the wind. That day the boy saw visions. He saw ships on the sea, which would never come nearer, and islands with green hillsides, down which brooks of beautiful cool water were running. Once he saw the house in which he was born, away back in Indiana, as clearly and distinctly as if it had really been there.“

The prince paused for a moment. I sat only one seat from him. His brown eyes were gleaming through the smoke—fog, and his jaw twitched in a strange, nervous manner.

„Some time after the death of the first sailor, a month at least, it seemed to the boy,“ resumed the prince, „the other two sailors fell to quarreling and drew knives. They hacked until they were covered with blood. Then they flung themselves upon each other like two wild beasts. The boat was narrow, too narrow for a struggle

between two crazed men, and, locked in each other's arms, they rolled over board into the sea. That was the last of them this side of the next world."

"The horrors certainly crowded upon the boy," said Captain Annesley.

"That is not the end of them," said the prince. The smoke-fog cleared away a little, and I noticed that his face was flushed, a very unusual thing for such a self-contained man.

"Then the boy," said the prince, "was left in the boat with a madman. Whether or not he was mad himself he never knew. But the captain was raving, overwhelmed with the madness of the sea. He shouted and cursed and sang and prayed. Then he tried to dance in the boat, but was too weak. He imagined that he was eating the finest meats and drinking the mellowest wines. He was more terrible to the boy than the sailors had been. Sometimes the boy thought he was dead, and this was an evil spirit dancing about him."

"Give me a fresh cigarette!" exclaimed Bolt. "I want to drive the devils away."

"After one of these paroxysms," continued the prince, "the captain fell down in a soft lump in the boat and cried like a baby. Though the man had been a brute to him, the boy felt sorry for him. But what could he do? I ask you, gentlemen, what could he do for him? After awhile, the captain revived again, and then he was wilder than ever. He went through paroxysms with variations. The boy remained in the end of the boat where he had sat so long that he felt as if he had grown to be a part of the wood. He watched the captain, and when his paroxysms grew most violent, tried to keep the boat from being overturned."

"Good blood in that boy," said Bolt. "Blood always tells."

Now, as I have said, I despised this characteristic in Bolt. He was always prating about blood. Barring one or two things, he was a first-class fellow himself, and he had no blood to speak of, for in the beginning he was nothing but a London cockney. But he never seemed to remember it.

"If by good blood you mean blue blood," said the prince, "you are very much mistaken. That boy was the son of a farmer who never had a hundred dollars in his life. He would have been called a peasant in your country. He was born in a log cabin that you could build for fifty dollars."

I rejoiced at this proof of Bolt's dunderheadedness, and rattled an empty glass on the table.

"What was his name?" asked the admiral.

"Hodge, Jabez Hodge. There isn't anything Norman, or classic, or blue-blooded about that, is there?" replied the prince, smiling through the smoke-fog. "But perhaps you want to hear the end of the story. The captain, after one of his paroxysms, as usual, sank down on the bottom of the boat. He lay there motionless so long that the boy thought he was dead. He was thinking of approaching him to see, when the captain sprang to his feet with a scream. He gibbered for a few moments, like the idiot he was, and then threw himself headforemost into the sea. The boy was alone in the boat. He had been without food or drink much longer than the others, but they were gone and he was left. The boat floated on, and he sank into a stupor. He was aroused from it once by a sharp pain in his wrist. His arm had been hanging over the side of the boat, and when he drew it up, the hand was covered with blood. Something—he never knew what it was; a shark, perhaps—had bitten him across the wrist, and made a deep

gash. He retained consciousness long enough to see that he was still alone, with the cruel sea beneath him and the cruel sun above. His throat felt as if it were baked to a coal, and he wondered how the breath came through. He seemed to be rimmed around with fire.

„The boy sank into a stupor again, and when he awoke from it, some brown-faced men were lifting him from the boat and carrying him to the land. They were very kind to him, so kind that he will never forget it. He was ill a long time, but he recovered all his strength, mental and physical, and has never suffered from his hardships, except in recollection.“

„It's impossible, clearly impossible!“ exclaimed Bolt, as belligerent as a bulldog. „The thing's out of the question; for a raw boy, a landsman at that, to pass through so much and to outlive seasoned sailors! The boy simply spun a sea yarn! He was lying!“

„Oh, no, he was not,“ said the prince, placidly lighting another cigarette. „Everything that he said was true.“

„How could he prove it?“ asked Bolt, all bristles.

Illustration:

The proof

The prince placed the cigarette between his teeth, lowered his hand, and pulled up the cuff, disclosing a dull red line, like a scar, across the wrist.

