



Kaiulani: The People's Princess, Hawaii, 1889

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In their hope to restore Hawaii's toppled monarchy and the Hawaiian way of life the people of Hawaii turn to Princess Kaiulani, who is only a young girl. Acclaimed author Ellen Emerson White makes her debut on the Royal Diaries list with this compelling narrative of the tumultuous years following Hawaii's forced annexation to the United States, skillfully rendering the voice of the young princess and the unrest of a people.

Kaiulani: The People's Princess, Hawaii, 1889 Details

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Author : Ellen Emerson White

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Jill says

I don't know why this was so different from Ellen E. White's Titanic story, but this one really stinks. It was so dull I couldn't even finish it. *yawwwwn* Don't read it unless your CD player broke, can't play you a lullaby and you need something to put you to sleep. This'll do it, I swear.

Jinny says

Another Royal Diaries read for me! The Royal Diaries books can be a hit or miss since they all have different authors; I'm happy to report that this one is definitely a hit, for me. This one is on Kaiulani, the last princess of Hawaii. I had no idea Hawaii used to have a monarchy, so this book was very interesting and a big eye opener for me. I don't know much about Hawaii, I never even been there before, so this book has been the most educational experience for me.

Fourteen year old Kaiulani is a princess of Hawaii, second in line to the throne (her uncle is the king, and next in line is her aunt (the king's sister), then her). Kaiulani is half Hawaiian and half Scottish, actually (on her father's side), but she considers herself very much a Hawaiian person all around. Knowing her destiny is to sit on the Hawaiian throne, her family sends her to be educated in England for a year or two. Kaiulani is a dutiful and obedient girl so she does as she is told, even though it breaks her heart to be away from her family and her beautiful Hawaiian nation.

Even though England is often chilly and nowhere as colorful and vibrant as Hawaii, Kaiulani enjoys her time at boarding school, applying herself so that she may become a properly educated princess. However, bad news travels to Kaiulani about her beloved country back home — the Reformers from America are illegally taking over their nation and forcing the monarchy to dissolve. Kaiulani desperately wants to save her country, but she is on the other side of the world, what can she do?

I really enjoyed this book. I love learning about Hawaii and its sad history. This book is a children's book so it doesn't dive into the nitty-gritty political details too much but you get the big picture — Hawaii is full of profitable natural resources which the Reformers want to take advantage of. The Reformers want to annex the nation to the USA, but of course, the monarchy does not want that to happen. Obviously, you know what ends up happening to Hawaii due to its present day situation as the US's 50th state, so you know the book is not going to have a happy ending for Kaiulani, making her efforts to save her country seem even more tragic.

Kaiulani herself is an admirable young girl. Even though she is only fourteen when the book begins, you sense an air of maturity around the young lady. She loves Hawaii dearly and you can tell it breaks her heart to be far away from her nation and her family. She is also very much in control of her emotions and appearance, as evident when the reporters swarm around her in America and in England. She knows her role, she is a princess, and she acts accordingly. I think Kaiulani would have made an amazing queen for Hawaii if she hadn't fallen ill and died shortly after Hawaii fell to America. Romantically, many like to believe she died of a broken heart.

This is definitely one of The Royal Diaries books that I highly recommend. She's not a very well known

princess, admittedly, but this book does a great job providing an introduction to Kaiulani. As with all of the books in this series, it is a middle-school book but even for adults, an interesting (and short) read.

Robin says

It was a good book as all the books in this series. My daughter was the one who borrowed it and I wanted to see what the authors take of Kaiulani was. She was young when she died. It is a sad story, she was friends with Robert Louis Stevenson who wrote Treasure Island. I think he wrote a poem for the princess as well.

Forever Young Adult says

Graded By: Maria

Cover Story: NBC

BFF Charm: Yay!

Swoonworthy Scale: 0.5

Talky Talk: Dear Diary

Bonus Factors: Robert Louis Stevenson, Hawaii, Boarding School, Grand Tour

Relationship Status: Bosom Friends

Read the full book report [here](#).

Amanda says

Kaiulani lived an influential, albeit tragic life. This was, admittedly, my first real exposure to the Hawaiian monarchy. It has definitely piqued my interest in the period. It blows my mind that it was only seventy years between Christian missionaries settling in Hawaii, to the annexation of the country by the U.S.

I found Kaiulani's cultural mixture fascinating. Born of a (royal) Hawaiian mother, and a Scottish father, young Kaiulani strives to quell her Hawaiian side in favor of her British. She follows Western trends, speaks European languages, and disparages Native Hawaiians fairly often. I can't even begin to understand the amount of brainwashing that must have taken. However, Kaiulani is a very likable character. She is bright, and has a refreshing amount of agency for the time period.

While I knew it was coming, it broke my heart when the monarchy was overthrown. I never thought I'd be supporting a monarchy, but when a (at least nominally) Native system of government is illegally abolished by the U.S., it is easy to side with the oppressed. I feel guilty that I've thought so much of America's subjugation of Native Americans, but I've paid little thought to Native Hawaiians. What is now a cherished American travel destination was once a sovereign nation. The U.S. was fully founded on domination, and although it's hard to reconcile with, as an American, it is vital to remember.

Kimberley says

Not one of my favourites. But I guess that's cos I don't know much about Hawaii.

Emma says

I felt so sad for her throughout the entire book. I much prefer reading about monarchies much further in the past than this.

Kelsey Hanson says

This book was really good, but had a very somber ending. You know going in that Hawaii is ultimately going to get annexed by the United States (it's one of the 50 states after all), but Kaiulani, who seems to be a very dedicated leader who strives to do what is best for her people, has such hope of restoring the monarchy. It's very sad to read the epilogue (I have noticed that many of the books in these series focus on the bright spots of these girls' tragic lives). Still it was very interesting, especially Kaiulani's friendship with the writer Robert Louis Stevenson. I also enjoyed the many descriptions of Hawaii (I live in Wisconsin and it is December).

Sheila says

Both I and my daughter really enjoyed this fictionalized 'diary' of Victoria Kaiulani, one of the last members of the Hawaiian Royal family. Told through the eyes of Kaiulani, in a diary format, this book gave us an interesting look at what Hawaii was like in the 1890's, including the politics of that time that led to Hawaii being annexed by the United States.

I was especially interested to learn that this girl, who was to become Queen of Hawaii (she was next in line after her Aunt, the Queen) was born of a Hawaiian mother and a Scottish father, Archibald Scott Cleghorn, who married into the Hawaiian royal family. Kaiulani was the only child of their union, though she did have 3 older Scottish half sister's from Cleghorn's first marriage.

It was also interesting to learn of Kaiulani's friendship with the author Robert Louis Stevenson, whom she met when he traveled to Hawaii for health reasons, and whom she developed a long term friendship with.

Anna says

not super interesting

Baylie Giek says

This book surprised me. I didn't think I would enjoy it, as it was a recommendation from my friend who has very different tastes in literature than I! However, historical fiction is a fun genre. Through reading the diaries, I felt connected with the young princess! Great book and great for upper elementary readers.

Paige says

I've had this book sitting on my shelf since I was a little girl. I'm not really sure why I never finished reading it, but I thought, after finishing Alan Brennert's "Moloka'i," the time was right to give "Kaiulani" another try.

Ellen Emerson White's "Kaiulani: The People's Princess, Hawaii, 1889" is a tale following the life of a princess that could have been queen. This story, told in the form of Kaiulani's diary, is rich with historical facts and interspersed with both real and fictional characters. The diary spans a few years, its story following the historical events of the annexation of Hawai'i.

As a historical novel, I enjoyed the historical research evident throughout the novel. White used the Hawaiian language well--there weren't so many foreign words that the reader could get confused, but when she did throw in Hawaiian words, she explained them well without dumping too much information on the reader. A lot of the Hawaiian words I learned (and re-learned) in "Moloka'i" were echoed in this novel, which is evidence of good research on the part of both White and Brennert since the Hawaiian words and their definitions matched up in both books. Honestly, the parts I enjoyed most were at the back of the book: the historical note, the photographs, and the Hawaiian language index (which would come in handy if I were to ever write a story about Hawai'i!). As far as reading this book for purely educational purposes, it's a great read.

However, I didn't enjoy this book as a novel. As a work of fiction, the story line didn't work for me. Even though Kaiulani had a goal, her goal wasn't accomplished (I feel comfortable giving this away since these facts are written in history). And if there's anything I've learned from my professional writing class, it's that most readers want a complete and happy ending. Sometimes I'm the exception to this rule--I love vague and ambiguous endings (especially in film!). But I was not the exception this time--I was very disappointed with the ending. I felt shorted on the story. I do respect White's decision to end the story on a historically accurate note, but I think I would have enjoyed a happy, fictional ending better.

Moreover, since the story is told through the eyes of a teenage girl, there was bound to be a little bit of angst and whiny-ness involved. After all--no matter the year or the place, a teenage girl is always a teenage girl. But to me, this account of Kaiulani's character came across as overwhelmingly whiny and spoiled. Because of this, she just wasn't a very sympathetic character, in my opinion. (But what average American girl can relate to a princess?)

Even though Kaiulani didn't exactly accomplish her goal in the story, at least she learned a lot in the process--she traveled to many places, received a superior education, and maintained loving relationships. I feel as though this a story that truly reflects how life is sometimes--we may not achieve our dreams, but we can keep learning and loving. And maybe that's all we can ask for sometimes.

I would recommend "Kaiulani" to children who want to learn about Hawai'i. The read goes by quickly, and

it's entertaining enough to keep the reader interested long enough to learn a lot about Hawai'i's history. I would also recommend this to elementary school teachers who might present this book as a part of their history curriculum.

Amalie says

I found this book very interesting and enjoyable despite its sad end. This book was my door-opener to the history of Hawaii. I found the history of this monarchy is fascinating. The book is about the life of Hawaii's last princess, Victoria Kaiulani.

When she was 13, her world is shattered when she is forced to go to school in England. She becomes more accepting towards her fate as time goes by, yet she still misses her beloved Hawaii. The story starts in the year 1889 and continues till 1893 in the form of diary entries. Her story is sad and touching, the losses of her loved ones and her country seem to have driven her in to a forlorn existence by the end of the book and it is sad her dreams for her country did not come true.

I found, Kaiulani heart-warming friendship with author Robert Louis Stevenson, fascinating. They share a great deal of wisdom and insight in their literary discussions. Kaiulani struggles bravely with her intense homesickness, having been sent halfway around the world, into a new culture and a new climate, and strives to excel in her studies in spite of the turmoil that dwells within her. The book carries a fascinating view of Hawaiian culture, the language, and the people, as Kaiulani learns the ways of her people and their beliefs and dreams.

This poem written by Robert Louis Stevenson to her, still lingers in my head...

Her Island here in the southern sun
Shall mourn their Kaiulani gone,
And I, in her dear banyan's shade,
Look vainly for my little maid.

Anna says

This entry in the Royal Diaries series is extremely rich in detail, both in the day-to-day activities of Princess Kaiulani's life and in the historical information regarding the overthrow of the monarchy and the annexation of Hawaii by the United States. I especially loved that Kaiulani was real-life friends with Robert Louis Stevenson, and enjoyed his portrayal here very much. The author also makes Kaiulani's voice engaging and interesting. The first 2/3 were pretty stellar as far as this series goes.

Losing the full five stars perhaps isn't its fault - it's just that the last 40 or so pages and the epilogue/historical note are SUCH a downer deluge. I completely understand why this is - Kaiulani is not only losing her birthright as a princess with the annexation, but her people are losing control of their country and their way of life without their consent. It's extremely sad, topped by the fact that Kaiulani died at only age 23. You gotta tell the history as it happened, I get that totally. I just feel that for readers in the 10-12 age range that this series is meant for, there was probably a better way to present this ending. Toward the end it's many journal entries of Kaiulani saying she feels very sad and depressed and has headaches and feels intense grief

for herself and her people. The last entry ends with her hope that in her efforts to appeal to the American President she has done something to help her country. Then the epilogue is like "Nnnnnnnope, her dreams for her people never came true, bad things happened and Kaiulani never really recovered from her grief, then she died." The historical note is like "Eventually in 1993 the US realized what jerkwads they had been and issued an official apology but TOO BAD, IT CAME WAY TOO LATE FOR THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII". End of book. Like... kinda harsh for a 10-year-old who wanted to read about a pretty Hawaiian princess and maybe learn something; ya know?

Carlyn Brody says

This book is a fictional diary of the last princess of Hawaii Victoria Kaiulani (1875-1899). I knew that Hawaii once had a monarchy but I didn't know the circumstances to why it dissolved or when Hawaii became a state of America. So I learnt a little bit about Hawaiian history from this book.

The diary starts from 1889 when Kaiulani is 13 years old and ends in 1893 when she is 17. The book is about when she was educated in England. She was the heir to throne as her uncle, King David Kalakaua didn't have any biological children and when he died, he was succeeded by Kaiulani's aunt Lydia Liliuokalani (David Kalakaua's sister) who also didn't have any children.

Kaiulani's family wanted her to go to England so that she would have a classical education and would become a refined young woman. It was particularly important as Hawaiians were perceived as uncivilised and the Americans wanted Hawaii to become an American state.

Kaiulani was a mature young woman. She never complained about her royal duties and was always well behaved and gracious when she had to do public appearances. She knew that her actions reflected on the Hawaiian monarchy.

In the book, she has a good time in England and in Europe as she got to travel during the school holidays. She had a guardian named Mr Theo Davies and her step sister Annie Cleghorn was with her for some time in England too. Although Kaiulani did miss her life back home and her friends and family. She was concerned about the politics at home because of the threat of Hawaii becoming an American state.

I thought the book would be a boarding school story, where it would be about girls getting up to mischief at school, dealing with bullies and fitting in. While the book does mention the subjects she took, her school friends and teachers, it doesn't dwell into the everyday school experience.

The book covers four years of Kaiulani's life, her travelling and meeting people, her school life and what's happening in Hawaii but it doesn't feel rushed. The book reaches a dramatic point when Kaiulani finds out that the Hawaiian monarchy gets overthrown and becomes an American state. She travels to America to plead her case but unfortunately for her, she is not successful.

I enjoyed reading about Kaiulani. She always carried herself with dignity yet she was a down to earth girl and had the normal worries of a young woman such as what to wear and making a good impression on people. I learned more about the 18th century and it was fun reading about her marvelling the different places she got to visit and the people she met. She was good friends with Robert Louis Stevenson who was the author of Treasure Islands and other such classics. She also met Grover Cleveland, the president of America at the time.

I think this book would appeal to middle school girls who like to read books about girls in the olden days such as Little Women, Anne of Green Gables, Pollyanna.