

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

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After being forcibly annexed by the U.S., the Hawaiian people turn to the young Princess Kaiulani in the hopes that their toppled monarchy can be restored.

Ellen Emerson White's contribution to the fictionalized Royal Diaries series portrays the short life of Hawaiian princess Kaiulani Cleghorn. The daughter of a European merchant and a Hawaiian princess, Kaiulani was a direct heir to the Kalakaua dynasty, and third in line for the Hawaiian throne. In her diary, she details her lavish wardrobe, her pet peacocks, and her unusual friendship with the shy, sweet writer Robert Louis Stevenson. When she leaves her beloved islands to attend boarding school in 1889, Kaiulani makes the best of it, noting: "I go off not for myself, but for all of the Hawaiians I will someday lead." Sadly, that was never to be. While Kaiulani was overseas, the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown by American Reformers, mostly businessmen interested in cashing in on Hawaii's sugarcane and teak industries. Kaiulani immediately left Europe to plead her country's case to President Cleveland and other American dignitaries. But her efforts were in vain--Hawaii was annexed to the United States by 1898. Kaiulani died a year later at the age of 23, many believe of a broken heart. This tragic chapter in American history is relatively unknown, and while the origins of Hawaii's statehood will no doubt intrigue many young readers, it is Kaiulani's determined and hopeful voice that will stay with them long after the last page is turned. Emerson White concludes the diary with an epilogue, historical notes, a diagram of the Kalakaua family tree, six pages of photographs, and a glossary of Hawaiian words. (Ages 9 to 14) --Jennifer Hubert

Gr 4-8-This fictional journal covers a period of four years in the short life of Princess Victoria Kaiulani of Hawaii. Beginning in 1889, the 13-year-old starts recording her thoughts before she is sent to school in England. As heir to the royal Hawaiian throne, she must learn the poise and composure befitting a future monarch, a role she takes very seriously. In the earlier years of the journal, the overall tone is lighthearted, but Kaiulani frequently alludes to the political difficulties confronting the monarchy, which is plagued by exploitative American business interests. As the problems mount, the diary entries become sparse and filled with the princess's personal worries, with mentions of her failing health. The quotidian writing style is often self-conscious and frivolous, maturing along with the teen. The easy-to-read diary format will appeal to young audiences. The epilogue and historical notes that follow are essential for understanding the historical context of the story. The final sections of the book have several pages of photos and a glossary of Hawaiian words that appear in the text. This book provides an effective way of spreading the story of a dignified and courageous young woman. While it is not as well written as some other titles in this series, it is still a worthy addition to collections carrying the "Royal Diaries."-Be Astengo, Alachua County Library, Gainesville, FL

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#### Other Books

Memories of Hawaii and Hawaiian Correspondence.

“ “ “ “ “ . He said , &quot; Kaiulani , we must go , you must go ; &quot; the girl refused , hesitated , then added , " But what shall I say when I return to my native land , and the people come around me and say to me , ' Kaiulani , we have lost our country ..."