

## NAUPAKA, THE HALF FLOWER OF HAWAI'I

THERE WAS ONCE a beautiful Hawaiian princess. Her name was *Naupaka*. She lived on a lovely coral island in the Pacific Ocean. Everyone loved the princess because she was just as kind as she was beautiful. People came from miles around to hear her sweet, soft voice and to see her beautiful smile. She always seemed to be very happy; but one day the villagers noticed that she was not smiling.

"What is the matter?", they whispered to each other.

"Why is the princess *Naupaka* looking so sad?"

Words reached the king and queen. They hurried to the princess and found her sitting by a mountain pool. Indeed, the face reflected in the water was a very sad face.

"My child," said the King, "what makes you so sad? Why has the smile left your face?"

Her parents listened quietly as *Naupaka* told of a handsome young man, *Kau'i*, with whom she had fallen deeply in love. He was not only handsome of face and stature; he had a beautiful, kind, and loving heart. Above all his virtues, the princess cherished his gentle heart the most.

"Is this the young man of whom you speak, a man of noble birth?" asked the Queen. *Naupaka* shook her head. "No, he is not," she answered.

The social order of *Hawai'i*, in those days, did not allow members of the royal family to marry those of lower rank. *Naupaka* knew that this was the law of the land. The King gently put his arm around his lovely daughter.

"My child, because we love you so dearly, we wish only for your happiness. We shall consult the wise elders of the kingdom. Perhaps they will know what we should do."



Days passed; the elders met in council. They could offer no solution for the princess. Their advice was that *Naupaka* and her loved one should journey to a faraway *heiau*. There they would kneel at the entrance to the temple, and, in the shadows of the high lava walls, they would chant their story of love to the high priest.

For many days the two lovers journeyed over mountains and through forests. Each night at setting sun, *Kauai* would prepare a comfortable resting place of soft ferns where *Naupaka* would sleep.

Finally, travel weary but hopeful of heart, the young couple arrived at the temple. The priest listened kindly, shook his head very sadly, and in low gentle tones spoke to the couple kneeling at his feet.

“My children, it does not lie within my power to grant you your wish. It is a matter for the Hawaiian gods to decide.” After praying quietly with the lovers, the venerable old man turned and slowly walked back into the temple.

*Naupaka* and *Kauai*, with their hands clasped tightly together, waited silently with their heads bowed. The sky began to darken and a wind rose through the trees. Suddenly, there was a torrent of rain, a loud clap of thunder and a flash of lightening. The lovers rose and, looking sadly into each other’s eyes, embraced. The gods had given the sign. They had been told that they were not to marry.

*Naupaka* took the white blossom from her hair, tore it in half, and put the half flower in *Kauai*’s hand.

“I shall go to the mountains to live my life alone; you return to the seashore. Never again will we meet.”

To this day, the *Naupaka* flowers bloom in halves. When the mountain variety and the seashore variety are placed together, they form a perfect flower.

Who knows, but that someday the flowers will again bloom in whole, perfectly shaped blossoms and that the

young lovers may be together in the Hawaiian heaven.

Today, when the beautiful song of *Naupaka* is sung, many of us are remembering this romantic story.

