

“Meeting the Kahuna”

In 2013, my husband surprised me with a trip to the island of Kauai in Hawaii. I had been dreaming of Hawaii, so it meant a lot to me. Shortly before we left, on New Year's Day, we went hiking on a local trail in the snow to a peak called Figueroa Mountain. At the top of the mountain, two miles from our car, I sprained my ankle. Great. I learned what my favorite cuss word is, which always needs to be repeated three times in a row, like an incantation. Fashioning a stick into a crutch, with my husband's help we very, very, very slowly made our way down the mountain back to the car. At one point along the way, I had the strangest sensation that I was being carried. A week later, we boarded the plane and began a very strange ten days on what I can only say was a very magical trip.

We stayed in a small bungalow surrounded by trees and dripping rain that shone brightly when the sun shone upon them, and attempted to salvage plans that would no longer include adventure tours or long hikes. I felt like I had ruined our big vacation (insert cuss word and repeat three times here), but I was also very aware of the magic taking place. We had visited Maui years before and I had especially loved Hana, but there was something about the island of Kauai that called to me. I heeded the call through a daily meditation practice on the porch of our bungalow. My first meditation began the journey of meeting the kahuna. I thought every day about kahunas. I kept encountering a little plant here and there I swore was a verbena. One day, while watching a film at a museum on traditional Hawaiian culture, there were the kahunas on film. They were doing a demonstration healing and, what was it needing healing? Well, their patient had sprained their ankle! And, what did they use to heal it? Verbena! Yes! They made a verbena poultice and wrapped it in banana leaves. I knew then the kahunas were offering to heal me. I accepted their offer and stayed in tune for further messages.

Being a rural island, there are plenty of places to drive and, of course, places to eat and shop, which we did that as well. Wherever we were not meant to go, I felt a bit off, we argued, my ankle hurt more. Wherever we were meant to go, I felt happy and we got along just fine, in the flow of things. We drove to Hanalei, which reminded me of when I was a little girl. I loved the Puff the Magic Dragon song. On days I stayed home from school, I would sit in one room upstairs that was very sunny and, with all my heart, sing Puff the Magic Dragon or Somewhere Over the Rainbow. Either one, I loved them both. Another special day, we went to eat someplace and, feeling out of sorts, I said, no, not this place. I remember sitting outside and a group of women had gathered around a table. What were they talking about? Kahunas, of course! Somehow, though, it all came to a head in one forgotten little town where we discovered my favorite bookstore, Talk Story. I had no idea what book to look for, but I found what I was looking for, books on kahunas, the Rainbow people, which Hawaiians call themselves. Somewhere over the

rainbow, I found my way home. It was evening and they were having a Friday night art and music scene. It was time to go, but I didn't want to leave. I wanted to stay. Everything came together there at Talk Story on a musical night on the magical island of Kauai.

Our last day there, we attended a craft faire/quasi festival/farmer's market and, since I couldn't walk too far, my husband dropped me off and I stood in line at the pie booth (excellent pie, by the way) while a band nearby set up their gear. I didn't know what was taking my husband so long parking the car, so I pouted and felt sorry for my poor, wounded self, when the first song the band played was Izzy's signature tune, "Over the Rainbow." How could I not bust into tears right then and there? Let me tell you, I sobbed. After we returned home, my sprained ankle was not healing. I felt disappointed, but other health issues became more pressing. I talked to a nurse over the phone and, for some reason, my story about Kauai spilled out to this perfect stranger. She said, "I think there's someone you need to talk to," and gave me her phone number. I called that woman and, guess what? She was from Kauai and had trained to be a healer with a kahuna! We set up an appointment and, over the phone, she healed my sprained ankle. From that moment on, there was no more pain. Thank you, Big Kahuna! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I love you, Kauai!