

THE CAPTIVE KING

Two weeks out from Kealakekua Bay, nerves aboard the *HMS Revolution* continued to fray. A small horde of rats had inexplicably materialized in the hold, breaching food stores and spoiling most of the hard cheeses and dried meats. A sailor lost his grip while scaling the high rigging, dashing his brains against the mizzenmast. Enormous waves battered the ship for days on end, with swells that turned even the hardest sailor's stomach to jelly.

Talk of curses began to spread amongst the crew. By abducting the king of Owhyee, they were certain they'd angered vengeful island gods. Banks relayed this gossip to Captain Cook earlier in the afternoon, but Cook waved it off as mere sailor superstition. Now, as Banks stood against the wall in the lurching cabin, fighting back nausea, he wished he shared the captain's confidence. Cook leaned over the table, studying their prisoner's hand-drawn maps under his magnifying glass. Kalani'ōpu'u' sat calmly on the cabin's berth, his manacled hands clasped together almost in prayer.

A shockingly loud thunderclap rolled across the sky. Panicked shouts began to filter through the door. Cook stood from the table, frowning, and strode out the cabin to investigate the commotion. Banks followed, but as he reached the door, he felt the prisoner's eyes boring into his back. Banks turned and locked eyes with Kalani'ōpu'u's. The captive king stared back; his brown eyes impassive. Then, the unmistakable RIIIIIP of the main sail. Another thunderclap. Kalani'ōpu'u' gave Banks a wry smile and a wink.