



Pulelehua and Mamaki

Written by Janice Crowl
Illustrated by Harinani Orme
Bishop Museum Press, 2009, np.
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Deep within the Hawaiian rainforest, Pulelehua, the Kamehameha Butterfly, (*Vanessa Tameamea*), is beckoned by a mamaki tree, (*Pipturus Albidus*). At first Pulelehua does not seem to notice Mamaki but then Pulelehua

recalls how Mamaki had sheltered her as a young caterpillar. When the two reunite, Pulelehua expresses how grateful she is to Mamaki and Pulelehua knows that Mamaki is the best place to leave her newborn egg. The wise and nurturing Mamaki cares for Pulelehua's offspring, Ke Li'i, as he progresses through the stages of metamorphosis by warning him against danger and by providing the sustenance that he needs for growth. When Ke Li'i is transformed into a butterfly he must say aloha (goodbye) to Mamaki. Mamaki is saddened but comforted by the knowledge that she will someday take care of Ke Li'i's keiki (children) too.

In light fantasy form, *Pulelehua and Mamaki* is the simple story of the life cycle of a Kamehameha butterfly. It emphasizes the unique interplay between the butterfly and the mamaki tree, carefully depicting how the plants and animals of the Hawaiian ecosystem are closely intertwined in nature. At the end of the book, the author provides scientific information about the Kamehameha butterfly and the mamaki tree and their rainforest friends using a non-fiction format. This information is followed by a glossary of scientific words presented in the text, a glossary of Hawaiian words, and a reference list.

This book is a wonderful example of the intersection between culture and science. Author Janice Crowl and Illustrator Harinani Orme weave elements of culture in the text and illustrations. Hawaiian words are used throughout the story and the Hawaiian cultural sensitivity to plants and animals is apparent. Readers enjoy the poetic melody of the text, "Hapu`u and palapalai ferns nodded as a cool, moist breeze blew through the forest. 'Ohi`a trees swayed to and fro as if dancing a slow graceful hula" (pg. 9). At the same time they glean scientific facts. "Like all Kamehameha Butterfly caterpillars, he was a leaf roller. First he cut a piece of the leaf. Then he folded the leaf edge over his body. Finally he made silk and used it to close up the leaf around himself" (pg. 14). The author grew up in Hawai'i and is a master gardener who also authored a popular book on container gardening in Hawai'i. To write this story she spent many hours consulting with cultural advisors and with scientists from the Bishop Museum. The publisher of this book, Bishop Museum Press, is particularly committed to scientific and historical accuracy and cultural appropriateness.

Along with Crowl's text, Orme's exquisite illustrations lure readers into the Hawaiian rainforest. Readers can almost hear the whispers of the forest, feel the cool, moist breeze

and at the same time get a guided informational tour of the flora and fauna that live harmoniously within the forest. *Pulelehua and Mamaki* was the 2010 Ka Palapalapo`okela Award Winner for Children's Literature.

This book can be paired with other books on butterfly transformations, such as *Where Butterflies Grow* (Joanne Ryder & Lynne Cherry, 1989). Another possibility is pairing this text with other cultural/science books about Hawai'i that enhance children's understanding the natural and cultural world such as, *Naupaka* (Nona Beamer, 2008).

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