

'Opae E

There was a Mele Hawai'i or Hawaiian Song called 'Opae E that was written by Pilahi Paki and Auntie Irmgard 'Āluli. This Mele Hawai'i was based off of a Mo'olelo or story about the different tiny sea creatures that were asked to help a young boy rescue his sister that he loved dearly. None was brave enough, until he met the tiny 'Opihi. Here is what the mo'olelo says!

There was a young girl from Kahakuloa on the island of Maui. She had a younger brother who she was very close to. One day as the two of them were playing in the ocean, she was kidnapped by a puhi or eel and taken to his cave. Her brother was so intent on saving his sister's life from the grips of the puhi that he was willing to do whatever he could to get his sister back. He went and asked every creature he could to help him!

First, as he was walking, he reached the 'opae (shrimp), and said "'Opae come, come with me! Please! I am going to rescue my sister! Puhi, puhi caught her and he is going to eat her! Can you help me?"

The 'Opae looked at the boy in dismay and said "Puhi! What are you thinking? Puhi is so big and I am so small! There is absolutely no way I can help you." And the 'opae turned and swam away.

The boy was sad, but he had to rescue his sister before it was too late, so he kept going. Soon, he came to the Pupu, or sea shell. The boy told the sea shell "Pupu, come, come with me!! I am going to rescue my sister. Puhi, puhi got her and he is going to eat her! Please, please pupu, can you help me?"

The Pupu looked at the boy and said "Puhi! What's the matter with you? Puhi is so big and I am so small! How can I possibly help you? No, I cannot help." And Pupu turned and floated away.

The boy was so sad that now, two sea creatures had turned him down. But, he would not let that stop him from rescuing his sister from the puhi's cave. The boy kept going.

As he continued on, the boy came to the Pipipi, the tiny mollusk and said "Pipipi, come, come with me! I am going to rescue my sister from Puhi's cave. Puhi got her and he is going to eat her! I went to see 'opae and pipipi, but they would not help. Will you help me? Please!"

Pipipi replied "Are you crazy? You want me to help you rescue your sister from Puhi's cave?!? Puhi! Puhi is so big and I am so small! How could I possibly help you? No. I cannot help!" And Pipipi turned around and a wave swept him away.

As sad as the boy was, he could not allow himself to be discouraged. So he mustered up the courage to continue on. The boy kept going and ran into a Kupe'e, a little marine snail.

The boy cried out and said "Kupe'e, kupe'e! Please come! Please come with me to help rescue my sister from Puhi. Puhi has her and he is going to eat her!! Please help!"

Kupe'e looked at him and said "Puhi!!! Puhi is SO BIG and I am SO SMALL! I cannot help you!" Kupe'e turned and left.

The boy wondered if there was anyone that would help him. It sure didn't feel like he would get ANY help at all. But he also knew that if he gave up, he wouldn't see his sister ever again.

He stopped for a minute to think about what he could possibly do. Just then, he happened to see an 'Opihi or limpet. He ran to the 'opihi and said "'Opihi! Will you come with me? You are my last hope! I am going to rescue my sister from Puhi. Puhi caught her and he is going to eat her. Can you help me? Please say you can."

The 'Opihi, as tiny as he is, looked at the boy and said "Boy, mai maka'u, don't be scared. I know how I can help! I will go with you and cover the eyes of the puhi with my shells. That will make him blind! Then you can get your sister away from him. Together we will rescue your sister from Puhi."

The boy shouted! "Mahalo, 'opihi! Mahalo NUI!" They went on to the puhi's cave. Once they got there, they found puhi and the boy yelled, "Puhi! Stop!" Puhi got angry and came towards the boy ready to capture him. He did not see the 'opihi there with the boy because he was so tiny. As the puhi came towards the boy, 'opihi jumped on him and clamped himself over puhi's eyes. Puhi struggled and struggled, but the 'opihi's grips were so tight that he could not get him off of his eyes.

The boy ran to his sister and rescued her! They each got out safely, including the 'opihi! Once they knew they were safe, the boy looked at 'opihi and said "Mahalo nui, 'opihi! You may be small, but you did something I could never do!" The 'opihi said "Na'u ka hau'oli, it was my pleasure." And clung tightly once again to a nearby rock. The boy and his sister were safe!

Questions:

- 1. The little boy's purpose was to make sure his sister was safe and bring her home to her family. What is your purpose in pursuing higher education?**
- 2. As the little boy wandered through the ocean looking for help, he encountered some setbacks. What are some obstacles that you may face on this journey?**
- 3. Because the little boy loved his sister, he did whatever it took to find someone to help him and he rescued her. With those obstacles stated above, what will it take for you to overcome them?**
- 4. On this journey to rescue his sister, the little boy looked for support from others around them. How big of a role does your family play in your success?**
- 5. Just as the boy was set on saving his sister, how determined are you to succeed and make a difference for yourself and possibly for your family?**