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KAUA'I NEWSMAKER *Jo Ann Lordahl*

The Story Of Heroic Princess Ruth

Kaua'i author Jo Ann Lordahl's latest book brings the amazing story of Hawaii's Princess Ruth to life for modern readers

By **COCO ZICKOS**

Jo Ann Lordahl's book, *Princess Ruth: Love and Tragedy in Hawai'i*, mixes fact with fiction through a modern-day tale that lets readers peek into Hawai'i's rich history.

It took the Kalaheo resident four years of intense research and carefully crafted writing to bring her published work to fruition.

Her hope is for readers to gain a deeper appreciation for the Islands.

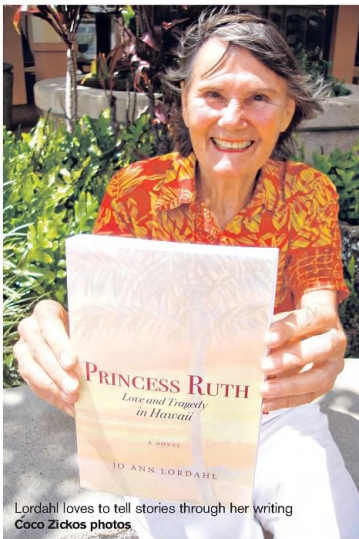
"And particularly the wrongs that were done

here," she says.

Told through the fictional eyes of the main character, Samantha — a Mainland native who moves to Kaua'i after her husband dies in a car accident — the story is infused with the factual history of Princess Ruth as Samantha becomes fascinated with Hawai'i's past.

"Princess Ruth was unbelievable, and she didn't get a fair deal," says Lordahl, noting the princess' struggles in the 1800s, particularly with the arrival of missionaries.

Throughout the book, Lordahl footnotes exactly



Lordahl loves to tell stories through her writing
Coco Zickos photos

where she discovered her historical information.

"If you really want to learn more, there it is, there is the documented place to find it," she says.

The most impressive story about Princess Ruth, according to Lordahl, was her ability to stop a Kilauea lava flow from reaching Hilo in the 1800s, by interceding with Madame Pele. "It was going to destroy Hilo," says Lordahl.

The ali'i's task at the time was to care for the people and that is just what Princess Ruth did through capabilities few may be unable to understand today, she says.

"I really want people to recognize what was here," says Lordahl.

Her original motivation was to write the book to help inform her friends on

the Mainland about Hawaiian history.

"But one of the things I'm finding is some of my most appreciative audience has been people here," she says. "I didn't expect that at all."

Lordahl has lived on the island almost 10 years and continues to be in awe of its beauty.

"I love it here. I'd never leave," she says.

Prior to moving to Hawai'i, Lordahl lived in Florida and before she became a full-time writer she worked at the Florida Atlantic University's counseling center.

"I realized that if I could write a book that could really help people, I could do a lot more than I could ever do in one-on-one counseling," she says.

She penned *Money*

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The Princess Who Saved Hilo From Lava



Meditations for Women in the early 1990s after leaving her job at the college.

"It's a way for women to really connect with money because I saw so

many women make messes of their lives and also I wanted to learn about it myself," she says.

The book helps women get their financial situations in order and teaches them how to better manage their money.

"I used to tell people if they don't get \$10 worth of value, let me know and I'll give you your money back, and I never had anyone say they wanted their money back," she says, adding that she made the proclamation on television and radio.

Lordahl has published many works, including sev-

eral romance novels, poems and a book journaling a personal healing process she took while overcoming a health crisis.

Being a writer is not an easy job, she says.

Though she enjoys not having a boss and the capability of managing her own time, Lordahl explains that it takes a lot of discipline to sit down and work.

To help improve her craft, Lordahl has always chronicled her life and is currently on her 87th journal.

"It's really nice not to throw anything out. Everything becomes useful, every struggle that you had to learn from," she says.

"I've used everything I

possibly knew or ever thought about in writing *Princess Ruth*."

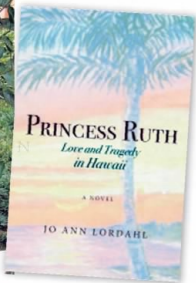
The main message she really wants readers to take with them from her latest book is to recognize the privilege of living on Kaua'i.

"We're living in paradise, we just have to keep that in mind," she says.

Princess Ruth: Love and Tragedy in Hawai'i is available for purchase at the Kaua'i Museum, National Tropical Botanical Garden Gift Shop, Aloha-n-Paradise, Small Town Coffee and Talk Story Bookstore.

Visit joannlordahl.com for more information.

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Lordahl has been journaling all her life