

ALOHA MEANS GOOD-BY

By Robert Carson

ILLUSTRATED BY BEN STAHL

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING INSTALLMENTS

When tall, young RICKY LELAND took his rather shabby person aboard the Genoa Maru at Vancouver, he did not anticipate a great deal in the way of entertainment or light dalliance. Japanese freighters ordinarily do not boast much in the way of passenger lists. What was his surprise and delight, then, to discover, among his fellow travelers to Hawaii, a young Canadian girl,

ALBERTA MARLOW, who turned out to be amusing beyond the promise of her lithe, blond prettiness. The complement of passengers was made up by

DR. ANASTACIO BARCA, a Filipino economic expert who explained that he was to lecture on his subject at the University of Hawaii, and his Japanese manservant, T. OKI.

For several days Ricky amused himself joshing Alberta, who gave as good as she got, until, commencing to realize that she seriously interested him, he brought himself up short. He explained then, to Barca and the girl, that he was an ex-artillery officer who had been discharged dishonorably from the Army, through, he assured them, no fault of his own. The Canadian army had rejected him, he said, and he was returning to Hawaii because he had been born there and could live cheaply. On a rough afternoon,

be able to borrow money. Leaving her to wait for him, he observed that he was being shadowed. He shook off the pursuit and presently called at the office of the Atlas Holding Corporation and reported to Colonel Hart, of the Army Intelligence section. Hart told him that Barca was transmitting information to the Axis through Tokyo and said that he was connected with the Black Dragon, secret Japanese terroristic society from which big trouble was expected in Hawaii. A member of the society, Totsuiko, was expected to board the Genoa Maru before she sailed that night. Neither Ricky nor the colonel was certain of whether or not Alberta was to be suspected, but Ricky was on his guard. Returning to her, he explained that his quest of a loan had been successful. He purchased a new suit, at her suggestion, showed her the town and, at dinner, learned that her purpose in going to Hawaii was to visit a wealthy uncle, the recluse

DAN MARLOW, of Bountiful Island, who had quarreled with her father years before and who had never seen her. Approaching the ship after dark, Ricky saw the outline of an automatic beneath the coat of a tight-suited Filipino. He followed the man aboard and overpowered him just as he fired at Doctor Barca. Explaining that prosecution might delay his voyage, Barca turned the man loose and the ship sailed, this time with a new passenger, glib, Americanized

JOE TOTSUIKO, who enlivened the next few days with his outworn jokes and translations from Japanese poets.

VII

THAT night in the saloon, when Sugi had cleared the dinner dishes away, an order of Doctor Barca's to Oki put Alberta back on the trail. Ricky observed her watching the silent servant go out. A frown of concentration came on her forehead when he returned with cigars for his master. She was very red with sunburn, and it seemed to give her a kind of feverish vivacity.

Captain Higoto's sleepy eyes widened. "Don't you?"

"Of course I do. That was Ricky's joke."

"Ricky?"

"Mr. Leland," Doctor Barca explained.

"Yes," Captain Higoto said.

"Some joke," Ricky said, and the skipper smiled at him blandly.

"You're so calm," Alberta said. "You never show any emotion. Explain that to me."

"We are taught not to," Captain Higoto replied. "It is our way of life. We must not show too much sadness or too much joy. If you praise what we have, we say it is nothing. If you admire our sons, we say they are unworthy."

"You're eloquent tonight," Doctor Barca said.

"Yes," Captain Higoto said, and was silent.

"The Nisei are not so calm," Joe said. "Look at me, kid. I'm a ball of fire!"

"What are Nisei?" Alberta asked.

"Second-generation Japanese. Ones born in the good old U. S. A."

"You represent only a small fraction," Doctor Barca said. "Fortunately."

Joe grinned at him. "I hope there's nothing personal in that, doc."

"Oh, no."

"I wouldn't want to live like the Japanese do," Alberta told them. "I want to parade my emotions. I want to be gay."

Too gay, Ricky informed himself. He slid down in his chair. The conversation swirled around his head, but, fortunately, Alberta had got off on another subject.

Doctor Barca called for a deck of cards. When Sugi brought them, Captain Higoto and Doctor Barca hitched their chairs into position. It was going to be a game of hearts. Doctor Barca asked Ricky to join them.



Ricky jammed a stiff forefinger in Oki's shoulder blade and said loudly, "Stick 'em up!"

when Alberta had retired, seasick, Ricky sat in the lounge with Doctor Barca, drinking large quantities of Scotch-and-soda, purchased by the latter. Pretending that the liquor had loosened his tongue, Ricky expressed violent dissatisfaction with the treatment he'd received at the hands of the military establishment. Then he returned unsteadily to his stateroom, quite sober. The next morning the Genoa Maru put in at San Pedro and Ricky took Alberta to Los Angeles, where, he explained, he hoped to

Ricky saw that her scrutiny of Oki had not escaped Doctor Barca's eyes. "Tell me something, captain," Alberta said. "All you Japanese look alike. How do you tell each other apart?"

"We do," Captain Higoto said. "Very easy. We look alike only to western eyes."

"Not to all western eyes," Doctor Barca remarked. "Miss Marlow doesn't think my Oki looks the same since Los Angeles."

"No, thanks," Ricky said, getting up. "It's past my bedtime."

"Don't leave us."

"I'm too sleepy," Ricky said. He patted Joe on the shoulder. "Here's a live wire for you."

"Give me them pasteboards," Joe said, reaching for the deck. "And hang on to your hats!"

Ricky nodded to everybody and walked out. In his stateroom he got into pajamas and propped



"They can have their war in the Pacific someday, and I'll sit where I am and let the other suckers die. I'm all through, doc."

himself up in bed. He again started through Inspector Jimson's Last Case, hoping he'd missed a corpse or two. He hadn't, and sank into a doze.

Later on there was the sound of people going down the alley. Ricky awoke and stared glumly at the ceiling. A long silence followed. Soft, warm air was pouring through the open portholes. The swishing of water mingled with the faraway drumming of the engines. Then came a knock on the door, and Doctor Barca's voice saying softly, "Are you awake, Leland?"

"Yeah," Ricky said. "Come on in."

Doctor Barca appeared, pushing the door almost shut behind him. Ricky slid out of bed.

"Who won?" he asked.

"Mr. Totsuiko gave me the black queen four times," Doctor Barca said, smiling. "Would you care to join me in the saloon for a drink? It's empty now."

Ricky put on his robe and they walked quietly down the stairs. There were shadows aplenty, and corners; and Ricky felt the flesh rippling coldly across his shoulders. He let Doctor Barca stay ahead of him, and he kept close to the wall, so he could instantly turn and plant his back against it if necessary. But nothing happened.

"Sit down," Doctor Barca said. "I had Sugi load a case of champagne for you while we were in San Pedro."

"You're very thoughtful."

"Not so thoughtful as you—taking care of that gunman."

Sugi brought them chilled glasses that ordinarily served for sea-food cocktails at dinnertime and a bucket full of cracked ice with a champagne bottle in the middle. Doctor Barca expertly removed the cork.

"Do you wish to read the label?" he said.

Ricky shook his head. "I know you wouldn't give me anything but the best, doc."

Doctor Barca poured the pale, sparkling liquid. They took their glasses. Ricky casually changed to another chair in the corner, where he had a clear field of vision. He was aware that the cold, black eyes never left him.

"Let's drink to your health," he said.

"No, to yours," Doctor Barca replied. "Younger men always have more to live for."

"If they're lucky."

"One has to be smart to be lucky."

"I do hope I'll be smart," Ricky said, and took his first swallow.

The wine was good. Doctor Barca refilled his glass and lit a cigar.

"I'm interested in you, Mr. Leland," he said.

"Especially since you saved my life."

"That was an accident."

"You're too modest."

"Look," Ricky said, "if you feel it's worth some dough —"

"I don't, exactly. It might be worth some help."

"Such as?"

"One night you told me something of your trouble in Hawaii," Doctor Barca said. "I'd like to hear more of that. I know a lot of people there. Perhaps I could aid you."

"I'm afraid not."

"What happened?"

Ricky waited while his glass was filled again. "I got to drinking too much. I spent money before I had it. There was a woman. You know the rest of the story."

"Was that enough to justify court-martialing you?"

"I don't think so. They wouldn't give me a chance to straighten myself out."

"Would you have straightened yourself out?"

"What difference does that make now?" Ricky asked.

"None, I suppose," Doctor Barca agreed. "However, that other night we were talking I believe I remember your saying you were accused of something unjustly."

"Of falling down on my job. But I never did. That was the excuse for throwing me out because my private life didn't measure up to their exalted standards. The brass hats

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needed an example, so I was neatly framed, tied up with pink ribbons and thrown to the wolves. To hell with them."

"Take my advice. Don't shout your bitterness when you get back."

"Who's shouting?" Ricky said. "I had a nice little run for my money. I never squawk about bad luck. They can have their war in the Pacific someday, and I'll sit where I am and let the other suckers die. I'm all through, doc."

"But you need money."

"Sure."

The bottle was empty. "There is more on ice," Doctor Barca said. "Another bottle, Sugi."

"I've had enough."

Doctor Barca removed a wallet from his coat. There was a thick wad of bills inside. He divided the wad and shoved half of the money across the table.

"You can have more when you want it," he said. "Within reason, of course."

Ricky left the money untouched. "Let's hear my side of the deal."

"I never discuss being a traitor with a man," Doctor Barca said harshly. "You'll find it's easier if you don't think about it."

"I still want to know," Ricky said.

Doctor Barca stared at him. The money stayed where it was. Ricky knew the champagne had made his face flushed, but he held his breath as much as he could to make his cheeks redder.

"In a day or so," Doctor Barca said, "you'll talk to me about the long-range guns that guard Pearl Harbor. We'll discuss railway guns and anti-aircraft and ammunition dumps. All you have to do is remember accurately."

"How much is that worth?"

"You'll find me quite fair."

Slowly Ricky reached out and picked up the money. He paused to count it. Doctor Barca smiled. Ricky put the bills in his pocket and rose, drawing a long breath.

"See you in the morning," he said.

"You're valuable to me now," Doctor Barca said, smiling a second time. "You don't need to worry."

"Forgive me," Ricky said, "if I do."

They went out of the saloon together and up the stairs. Ricky stopped at his door and fumbled for the knob.

Doctor Barca spoke in a whisper, "I trust you realize, Mr. Leland, that you have committed yourself. I wouldn't want you to change your mind. That might turn out to be most unfortunate."

"All right," Ricky said. "Good night."

"Good night, Mr. Leland."

Ricky closed the door and locked it. As he climbed into bed, he reflected that business was good. He had five hundred dollars that was practically a gift, and his Army pay was going right on. It looked as if he might be able to lay a little by for his old age.

VIII

THE next morning Alberta didn't appear in the saloon for breakfast, and Sugi went up with a tray. Ricky asked him about her when he returned.

"Out in sun all day," Sugi said. "Fried. Should be."

"Poor old Al," Joe said. "Dames can make more mistakes!"

"I hope this isn't as serious as the bread pudding," Doctor Barca said.

In the forenoon, Ricky and Joe paid her a visit. Ricky knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" she called.

"Your boy friends."

"You'll have to wait a minute. I'm rubbing grease on myself."

They leaned against the wall and grinned at each other. Presently the door opened. Alberta was wearing a robe, and her face resembled the color of a stormy sunset.

"I suppose you've come to gloat over me," she said.

"Boy, are you in the pink!" Joe said.

"We're sorry for you," Ricky told her. "Where do you hurt the worst?"

"My back. I had to sleep on my stomach last night."

"Well, you don't look like spring any more," Ricky said. "You look like autumn now."

They came in and Alberta stretched out on her stomach on the bed. Ricky offered to read her some of Inspector Jimson's Last Case, but she didn't want to hear it.

"Who wants to hear of corpses when she's dying?" she said gloomily. "I never knew what suffering was until I took this pleasure trip."

"Ricky told you the sun gets hot down here," Joe said.

Alberta stared at him malevolently. "Would you like a punch in the nose?"

"No," Joe said. "How about me reading you some Haiku?"

"Haiku," Alberta said, "does not relieve pain."

They stayed on a little while longer, listening to her plaintive groans. Then Ricky decided she rather resembled an overdone egg in a frying pan, and said so. Alberta rolled carefully on her side and glared.

"I wish you boys would run along," she said. "I want to check my oil."

After lunch Ricky played shuffleboard with Joe for a while. Then he returned to Alberta's room. She was up and dressed, moving gingerly, her arms startlingly red against the green of her sleeveless dress.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"I'm all right," Alberta replied, "as long as I stand perfectly still and don't breathe."

"You need a little fresh air."

They walked slowly out on the boat deck and stood in the shade of the funnel. Alberta braced herself with one hand to the roll of the boat.

"Why does everything have to happen to me?" she said.

Ricky grinned. "I don't know. Want to wrestle me for a dime?"

She smiled in spite of herself. "Why are you feeling your oats today?"

"Doctor Barca gave me some dough last night for saving his life."

Her eyes widened, gazing at him searchingly. "You're nice, Ricky," she said. "I like you in a disgusted sort of way. But I don't think you're much good."

"Maybe all I need is the love of a fine woman. Have you ever thought of that?"

"Lots of times."

"If you happen to meet one," Ricky said, "tip her off about me."

He suddenly felt very blue. The wonderful azure eyes were full of puzzlement, and he had put it there. He was sick to death of this cat-and-mouse relationship and aching to take her in his arms and make a full report,



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but there was a little thing called duty that might shut his mouth forever. There was also the fact that she might be Doctor Barca's right-hand woman. She turned her head away from him and looked toward the stern. "There's Oki, Ricky."

"So it is," Ricky said.

Oki was standing alone on the poop, his hands thrust in his jacket pockets, rolling easily to the ship's motion with slightly spraddled legs.

"Only it isn't Oki," Alberta said calmly. "He's another man using Oki's name."

"You mean that's not the same man who came down from Vancouver with us?"

"Yes."

"The heat's got you," Ricky said. "They all look alike."

"They don't either," Alberta replied. "Not if you examine them closely. This man hasn't got quite the same face. He isn't as respectful to Doctor Barca. He talks more to the chief engineer when he's in the saloon, and the chief engineer is a little afraid of him. The other Oki used to stand with his head bowed and his shoulders bent. This Oki stands up straight with his shoulders back. The first Oki never put his hands in his pockets. This man keeps his in his coat pockets. Not very many men do that. Most of them put their hands in their pants pockets."

Ricky looked at her respectfully. The mere, golden-haired child was in a fair way of being another Inspector Jimson. Also, if she saw too much, this might be her last case.

"I hope you didn't forget to snap him with your candid camera," he said.

"He's not the same man. I know he isn't."

Ricky put the back of his hand to her cheek. Her skin was parched and fiery.

"You've got a hell of a burn," he said. "Better get in again on your stomach."

"I've got to get a tan," she said. "I don't want to land in Honolulu and be all white."

Her breath-taking jumps from cool and calculating maturity to a pathetic kind of childishness bewildered him. Women, as he had often pointed out to himself, didn't make sense. Simple, savage creatures; pleasant, but not practical. The glare from the deck became blindingly bright for an instant. That way, in those instants, you fell completely in love, and female amateur

detectives on Japanese freighters grew entirely too important to you.

"See you later, gorgeous," he said huskily.

She walked stiff-leggedly into the deckhouse. He went below to the main deck and headed aft. Under the shelter deck was the crew's quarters. A bunch of ragged underclothing hung on a line, drying in the breeze. In the shade of the companionway lounged a couple of little brown men, stripped to the waist. He nodded to them and they sucked in their breath sharply, expressionlessly polite. He climbed up on the poop.

Oki's back was to him and he had apparently not heard Ricky coming. Ricky stepped carefully out of his slippers, his bare feet finching from contact with the hot deck, and noiselessly closed the distance between them. Pausing, he jammed a stiff forefinger in Oki's shoulder blade and said loudly, "Stick 'em up!"

Oki grew rigid and his hands jerked free of his pockets and shot in the air. Ricky began to laugh. Oki turned to him. For an instant his face was stiff with surprise and anger. Then he smiled and bowed choppily, stepping a pace away from Ricky.

"Scared you, didn't I?" Ricky said, grinning widely. "I was only kidding, Oki. Don't get sore." Oki kept on smiling, his eyes blank. "Nice day for practical jokes, huh?"

That got him another bow. He retrieved his slippers and put his feet in them, making a comical grimace at the heat of the deck for Oki's benefit. Oki hissed sympathetically. Ricky laughed and made a whirling motion at one temple to indicate he was crazy. The smile never left Oki's lips. Bowing once more, he respectfully circled Ricky and left the poop.

Ricky watched him go. As far as he could remember, the first Oki had had a landsman's unsteadiness on a ship. This man didn't; he had been on them before. His legs were used to sloping decks. He had an identical face and figure, but he wasn't the same man. And, in professing not to know English, he was a liar. The hands-up business settled that.

One item irritated Ricky. Somehow he could not connect Oki's habit of jamming his hands in his coat with the association that was obscurely in his memory. Suddenly it occurred to him. Naval officers, standing on a windy bridge, usually put their hands in their jacket pockets. Ricky had



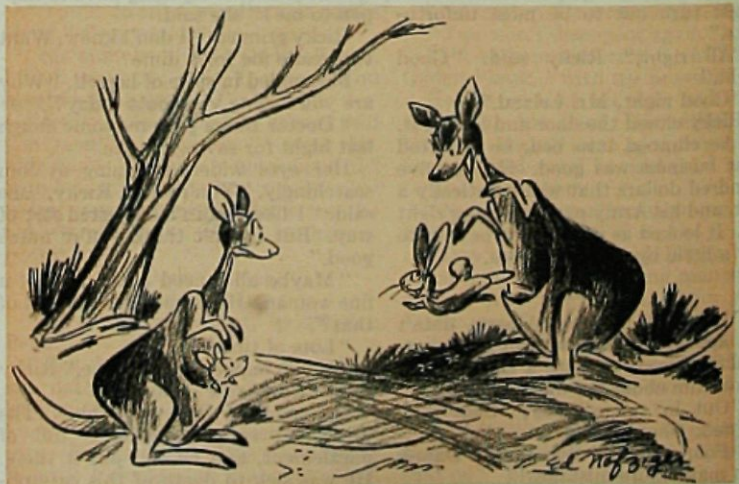
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"Get out—impostor!"

seen a lot of them at various times. The pose was common enough to be familiar even to an artilleryman.

"And that," Ricky told himself, "closes the case of T. Oki. Next case, please."

The next case was that of Alberta Marlow, and it was as wide open as a garden gate. Everyone else was accounted for and neatly ticketed, ready to be dealt with in due time. But she was the queer fish in this kettle of fish, and getting queerer by the minute. And he wanted to know about her more than any of the others.

He started to leave the poop, glancing up as he did. Joe was watching him from the bridge. When he saw Ricky's raised head, he stepped back out of sight.

IX

RICKY was restless in the night, and just before dawn he awoke and got up to have a drink of water. There was a light blinking on the glass of the porthole. He looked out and recognized the beacon on the coast of Molokai. That meant he was getting close to home again, and the knowledge brought a feeling at once of distaste and nostalgia. He had come many times from the mainland to the Islands, from the age of three on up, but never before like this. He gagged slightly on the water he was drinking as he thought of the reception he was going to get. Then he returned to bed, hoping he'd dream of something pleasant—something with Canada's promise of spring in it, for instance.

Much later he opened his eyes and saw sunshine and heard the sound of voices in the alley. He shuffled down to the bathroom for a shower, meeting no one. When he came back to his stateroom, Doctor Barca entered the alley from the deck.

"Where are we?" Ricky asked.

"Diamond Head," Doctor Barca said. "There's always a certain excitement in returning to the Islands, isn't there?"

"This is my most exciting return."

Doctor Barca smiled. "Will you have friends waiting to meet you?"

"If they're waiting to meet me," Ricky said, "they won't be friends, and they'll probably have a rope."

"Oh, I hardly think it's that bad," Doctor Barca said, and started to move on.

"Where'll I get in touch with you in Honolulu?" Ricky asked.

"I haven't decided on a hotel yet."

"I'll be at the Halekahala out at Waikiki, when you want me."

"I've heard of it."

"I know the owner," Ricky said. "Not very many local people go there. It's very respectable and quiet, and I get a cut rate."

"Is it so small that the guests are curious about each other?"

"No," Ricky said. He opened the door of his stateroom and added casually, "See you later, doc."

"Perhaps I'll try the Halekahala," Doctor Barca said.

"I hate to recommend a place. Usually other people don't like it."

"I'm sure our tastes are similar in this case."

Ricky went inside, solemnly knocked on wood so his luck would continue, and then shaved and dressed in a leisurely fashion. He was in no hurry to get out on deck.

When he did, the Genoa Maru was moving slowly into the channel between Fort Armstrong and Sand Island. Alberta and Joe were standing at the rail, and Alberta wore the white slacks and knitted skullcap and canvas

shoes in which he had first seen her in the hotel in Vancouver. She looked as if she, too, had come home, Ricky thought, and experienced a queer twinge deep in his chest. Her eyes were excited against the deep red of her face.

"Look how green it is!" she said. "Just like in the pictures!"

"What's that tower up there?" Joe asked.

"The Aloha Tower," Ricky said. "When liners come in and leave, they play music up on the second floor and fat ladies sing in Hawaiian."

"Where are the boys that dive for coins?" Alberta demanded. "I brought some money with me."

Ricky grinned. "They don't make enough out of freighters."

The Genoa Maru came around in a wide half circle and a tug nosed in against her, engines thumping hard. The air was bright with sunlight and very warm and thick with the smell of tar and damp cordage and Diesel fumes. Ricky saw the houses climbing up the hills and the sudden emerald bulk of the Pali wreathed in its perpetual clouds. He drew a deep, long breath.

Alberta noticed him heading below and said indignantly, "Don't you want to see anything?"

"I've been here before," Ricky told her.

Sugi served him coffee and toast in the saloon. It made Ricky rather happy, as he dunked his toast, to observe First Officer Miyuma appear and methodically wind his watch. Miyuma gave the ship a domestic touch.

"Do you put the cat out at night?" Ricky said.

"Yes?" Miyuma said, puzzled.

"Nice trip," Ricky corrected.

"Thanks for everything. Nice meeting you."

"Yes," Miyuma said. "So happy. Excuse, please."

Ricky called Sugi and gave him a twenty-dollar bill. "That's for the little ones in Nagasaki," he explained.

Sugi bowed and hissed. "Five dollars," he said, a note of disapproval in his voice. "Should be."

"So I'm a spendthrift," Ricky said.

The immigration and customs inspectors came aboard, and all the passengers had to wait in their staterooms. Ricky spread his baggage out and sat down on the bed. A big brown man started to go through his stuff, paused, and took a second squint at Ricky.

"What are you doing back here?" he said.

"Nothing," Ricky replied, smiling.

"Honest, officer."

The man finished the examination and rose. "You ought to have more sense than to come back here again."

"It's a free country, isn't it?"

"It sure is for guys like you," the man said.

Ricky stood in the alley while the others got their going-over. Alberta's voluminous luggage was thoroughly pawed. It didn't please her.

"Listen," she said, "there are a lot more suspicious characters on this boat than me."

"Yes, ma'am," the inspector said, "but it's the innocent-looking ones we have to watch out for."

Noon had come by the time they were ready to go down the gangplank. They filed along the alley solemnly, and Alberta stopped to take a last look at her quarters.

"It was a wonderful trip, Ricky," she said. "Even with you aboard."

Captain Higoto was waiting for them on the main deck, very fancy in white duck, with gold braid on his shoulders.

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He shook hands, and to each one said, "So happy. Hope to see you again. Good-by."

Ricky was the last to appear before him. The captain's sleepy eyes were slitted against the sunlight, but he opened them wide to examine the tall young man.

"So long, skipper," Ricky said.

"I do not know," Captain Higoto said, "but I think I might have saved Doctor Barca some trouble on my boat."

Ricky knew he was no match for them; any of them. The captain's face showed nothing. It could have been carved out of stone. His eyes were blank and disinterested.

"You can still do something, skipper," Ricky said.

"No," Captain Higoto said. "Maybe Doctor Barca will have very bad luck with you. That is his department."

The others had reached the dock and were waiting. Ricky hurried down the gangplank. Behind him came Sugi and Oki, carrying luggage.

"What's the matter, Ricky?" Joe said. "Couldn't the head man bear to part with you?"

"He was asking the way to Japan," Ricky said.

They walked in pleasant shade through a warehouse that was already echoing to the voices of dark-skinned stevedores at work on the *Genoa Maru*. There was dazzling radiance again on the street, which curved away from them, following the contours of the shore. A short distance down was a small and discouraged-looking park. They stopped uncertainly, their voices hushed, awkward at the task of parting. Ricky waved to a taxi. Sugi and Oki caught up to them with the luggage, helped by a boy pushing a handcart.

"Well," Joe said, "I see I ain't got any folks waiting to meet me."

"Can I give you some directions?" Ricky asked.

"No, I'll find my way," Joe said. He shook hands with Alberta and then with Ricky. "Nice knowing you kids. I'll be seeing you one of these days. Keep your dukes up." He nodded to Doctor Barca. "Take it easy, doc."

"Good-by, Mr. Totsuiko," Doctor Barca said.

Oki stepped in front of him and bowed and spoke rapidly in Japanese. Doctor Barca answered him. Oki hissed his thanks. Doctor Barca smiled at the others. "As usual, Oki has relatives here and wants the day off to visit them."

"Come on, Oki-san," Joe said, taking Oki's arm. "I'll buy you a beer, chum."

"Good-by, Joe," Alberta called. "I liked the Haiku poetry."

The cabman and Sugi were waiting expectantly. Ricky looked at Alberta. "Well, Doctor Barca —" she began.

"Wait a minute," Ricky interrupted. "Where are you going, beautiful?"

"To a cheap hotel."

"Doctor Barca and I have decided on the Halekahala at Waikiki. Why don't you come along?"

"Oh, I couldn't afford that," Alberta said. "I've got to go someplace where they have the bath at the end of the hall and a forty-cent lunch."

"No, you don't," Ricky said. "I know the guy that owns the Halekahala. I'll get you a rate. Come on."

"Do come," Doctor Barca said.

Ricky hoisted her into the cab and Doctor Barca followed. Sugi and the cabman piled the luggage in the rear trunk.

"Good-by, Should Be," Ricky said. "Stay in there and pitch that food."

"Yes," Sugi said. "You keep girl. Good girl. Should be."

"If she's a good girl," Ricky said, "then I've made a mistake."

He got in the far side of the cab and settled himself with a sigh. Alberta was glaring at him.

"I heard what you told Sugi," she said. "And I resent it."

"Then I've made a mistake," Ricky said. He leaned forward to the driver. "Ala Moana."

They rolled past the Kewalo Basin where the blue sampans of the Japanese fishermen lay and by the incredible lush green of Ala Moana Park. Alberta was silent, staring first on Ricky's side and then on Doctor Barca's. Distant vistas were dreamlike and tropical and the trade winds that blew on them had the fragrance of spring and there was strangeness in the mixture of races; but the streets were the same as any streets, the buildings uninspired, the traffic very heavy, the hot-dog stands, filling stations and drugstores plentiful. She had a look of disappointment on her face.

"I didn't think it would be like this," she said.

Doctor Barca smiled. "Did you expect grass shakes? They've been gone quite a while."

"No, but I thought there'd be a lot of natives practically undressed, and singing and dancing, and outrigger canoes. Where are the real Hawaiians?"

"Living out on isolated beaches," Doctor Barca said, "or else in town where a garage is handy. They're the smallest part of the population now. The Japanese have the most people here."

Alberta frowned. "I've been thinking about these islands wrong."

"It's a common mistake. The newcomers expect a South Sea paradise dating back two centuries. But Honolulu is a city and the Islands are a great commercial enterprise. The natives have forgotten how to build grass houses, but they know how to drive a car. This is a dream world that makes money."

"I'd like it better the other way," Alberta said.

"I'm afraid the Americans wouldn't," Doctor Barca motioned behind him, in the direction of Pearl Harbor. "They have what is probably the greatest naval base in the world out there."

Ricky patted Alberta on the head in a kindly fashion. "You should've come with Captain Cook," he said, and leaned toward the driver. "Stop at the next drugstore."

They halted in front of an elaborate yellow-fronted establishment that would have done credit to Southern California. Ricky opened the door.

"I need cigarettes," he said. "Excuse me."

He walked deliberately into the drugstore and then started to move fast. A Chinese clerk in a linen smock came up. Ricky tossed him a coin.

"Cigarettes," he said. "Any brand. Where's the phone?"

The clerk pointed to the rear. Ricky sprinted, but the clerk showed no surprise. The booth had a glass window in it, and as Ricky lifted the receiver and dropped his coin he looked out. He could see through the doorway of the store, and there was no sign of Doctor Barca or Alberta. The rear bumper of the cab was barely in view.

He spoke his number and waited. Then a quiet voice answered. "Ricky," he said. "Halekahala. Turn on the

(Continued on Page 84)



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(Continued from Page 82)

heat." He emerged from the booth. His cigarettes and change were waiting for him on the counter.

Ricky was moving without haste when he reached the sidewalk. Doctor Barca and Alberta were still sitting in the car. He climbed in beside them. The driver started on.

"Is the weather always this beautiful?" Alberta asked.

"Most of the time," Doctor Barca replied. "Occasionally they have what they call a kona wind. Then it is quite hot. But you should address your weather questions to Mr. Leland. He's a *kamaaina*."

"A what?" Alberta said.

"Hawaiian for 'old-timer,'" Doctor Barca explained. "They always know what's going to happen next. . . . Are we in for any kona weather soon, Mr. Leland?"

"It should heat up before long," Ricky said cheerfully.

The Halekahala Hotel was screened from Kalakaua Avenue, the main street of Waikiki, by solid walls of green. A winding road led through coconut palms and flowering trees to the three-story building, which stood in the middle of an expanse of lawn. The walls of the Halekahala were of green stucco that seemed to fade into the cool landscape, and topped by a red roof whose radiance had grown dim through the years and was now nearer the pink of old coral. Near by, rising above the trees, were the white battlements of the Royal Palms Hotel, queen of Waikiki.

Over there were noise and confusion and the glamour of luxury; here only silence and flower-scented peace and the trade wind rustling the stiff fronds of the palms.

A couple of Chinese boys came out to get their bags.

Beside the doorway sat an old Hawaiian woman with a basket of ginger *leis*. Ricky bought two and put them around Alberta's neck. She breathed the cloying sweetness of the flowers and smiled at him and caught his hand for an instant.

"Aloha!" he said.

"What does that mean?" she asked.

"Oh, anything you want. Love, welcome, good-by, here's mud in your eye."

Doctor Barca was smiling. "And especially romance."

"Bless your heart, doctor," Ricky said. "I'll get around to that later."

The lobby had rattan furniture and restful shadows, and the walls were of oiled wood that contributed a dry, clean aroma. A grave Chinese clerk watched them sign the register. Another Chinese came up to the desk, elderly, squat, with a wrinkled face and tired, kindly eyes.

"How do?" he said. "Halekahala glad to see you."

His eyelids flicked briefly when Ricky turned and delightedly called his name and playfully punched him in the stomach; otherwise he gave no sign of surprise.

"Miss Marlow," Ricky said, "meet Sam Wing On, sole owner of the Halekahala Hotel."

"Nice, nice," Sam said, looking at her. "Halekahala need beauty."

"Miss Marlow very *ilihune*—very poor, Sam," Ricky explained. "I said I had a pull with you. Can you take care of her cheap?"

"Can do," Sam said.

"You're awfully kind," Alberta said.

"Ricky," Sam replied. He spoke to the clerk in Cantonese and added the

numbers of their rooms in English. "All same floor," he said to them.

Their rooms were on the second floor, facing the sea, and were miniature replicas of the lobby, with oiled-wood walls and rattan furniture and big soft beds and pieces of old tapa cloth for decoration. Ricky and Alberta were close together, and Doctor Barca was down at the end of the hall; an arrangement Ricky attributed to Sam, who never missed a bet, even if he didn't know what he was betting on.

They halted for a moment. "Let's get cleaned up and meet for lunch on the terrace," Ricky suggested.

"I'm afraid I can't," Doctor Barca said. "I have a lot of people to see this afternoon. But perhaps we can dine together."

"Swell," Ricky said. "Carry on, doc."

Doctor Barca disappeared into his room.

Alberta turned to Ricky. "I won't try to thank you," she said.

"It's on the house," Ricky replied.

"I'm almost happy, Ricky."

"Why almost?"

She started to reply and then thought better of it. He looked at her, suddenly aware of a growing tension in her. The big blue eyes were clouded with fear.

"What's the matter?" he said.

"Nothing. I'll see you at lunch."

She went into her room and closed the door. He walked down the hall, his brow corrugated. Angel-face had something on her mind, and she was scared. For a long time he had been sure she was no tourist and that she hadn't come to Hawaii for a tan. But it was hard to believe she was an enemy—an enemy who might be wanting to warn him before he went too far. And there wouldn't be any fun in getting Doctor Barca and her too.

X

COMING down for lunch, Ricky paused on a landing and looked out the window. Below him was the hotel entrance, and he saw Doctor Barca getting into a cab. He wore a linen suit and a Panama hat, and he was the picture of a prosperous dark-skinned economist, big cigar and all. The cab rolled off into the trees. Farther along the driveway a fat and indolent Eurasian got into his battered delivery truck and followed. Ricky continued down the stairs, satisfied. The heat was rising.

As he entered the lobby, Sam padded softly up to him. Sam's manner was querulous. Long years ago, when he was a coolie fresh from Canton, with a skin like smooth brown silk and eyes as bright as buttons, the Lelands had taken him in. They considered him at first as a servant, but Sam soon disabused them of that idea. He worked in the yard, to begin with, and then in the kitchen; and in a year or so he had appropriated the family, lock, stock and barrel. He raised Ricky, he advised his father and he disciplined his mother. They had no choice but to consider Sam a member of the Leland tribe.

Eventually, since he was a Leland by self-adoption, they grew ambitious for him. He opened a restaurant and was successful. The hotel followed, largely financed by Leland money. It had been paid back, of course, but Sam's loyalties were simple and direct. He was still a Leland. He was a Leland now, annoyed by another one who hadn't done the name credit.

"Whassamatta you, Ricky?" he said.

Ricky grinned. "Whassamatta you whassamatta me, Sam? Whassamatta you?"

"You whassamatta big hoopuni-puni."

"Hoopunipuni" meant "lie" in Hawaiian, and Sam was getting angry. Ricky followed him to his little office at the end of a corridor.

They sat down across from each other and Sam glared at Ricky's placid grin until a little answering one curled his own lips.

"Alla time people say you no good, Ricky," Sam said. "Big stink when you go. Whassamatta you come back?"

"It's home."

"No. You through with Hawaii. Pau."

"Not quite pau," Ricky said.

"Army pau," Sam said. "Whassamatta?"

Ricky sat staring at him, wondering what you could know about any man, especially a Chinaman. Years meant nothing and no man's word was good in the final analysis. Secrets were made to be betrayed. But blood was thicker than water and you didn't double-cross your own kind. This was a Leland facing him, whatever the color of his skin. Ricky drew a long breath.

"That was a frame-up," he said. "For a reason."

Sam's expression remained the same, but the irritable benevolence left his eyes. They grew opaque and wary.

"You Army?"

Ricky nodded. There was a long silence. Sam was withdrawn and remote, but Ricky waited patiently, knowing he would have something to say.

"Alla time say you good," Sam said finally.

Ricky smiled his relief. "Thanks, Sam."

"Who you whassamatta?"

"Doctor Barca."

Sam shook his head.

"Much pilikia."

"Much trouble," Ricky agreed.

"But I like trouble."

"Alla time you like trouble. Whassamatta haole wahine?"

"The girl that came with us?" Ricky said. "I think she's all right. I don't know yet."

"She Bountiful Island Marlow?"

"She says she is."

"Much pilikia," Sam said.

There was silence again. Ricky kept quiet, lighting a cigarette. He knew Sam was too wise to be taken in by his air of casualness, but he was content to let the Chinaman deal with things in his own way. Sam liked to observe the proprieties in conversation.

"You don't tell me to waste time," Sam said at last. "Whassamatta?"

"Because you can help me, Sam," Ricky replied. "I need to know all I can about Barca. People tell you things."

"Tell me," Sam said, "because I don't tell. I tell, don't tell me any more. Sam pau."

"This is terribly important."

"Alla time much pilikia," Sam said glumly.

"Don't help me if you don't want to," Ricky said.

"Can do," Sam said.

A Chinese boy rapped on the door and came in. "Missy Marlow on terrace," he informed Ricky.

Ricky got up. Sam watched him, his eyes somber, his wrinkled face as enigmatic as that of an idol.

"Mahalo nui," Ricky said, thanking him in Hawaiian.

"Malama pono," Sam said.

That meant "be careful." Ricky smiled. "You think I ain't?" he asked.

The terrace was paved with coral and shaded by the tangled branches of hau trees arching above. Beyond was a stretch of lawn running to the edge of the Pacific. People were playing bowls there, and ping-pong. Others were at the tables dotting the terrace. Ricky found Alberta seated in a corner drinking a tall glass of pineapple juice. He slid into the chair beside her.

"You add just the right touch to beautiful Hawaii," he said. "With a few more dames like you I could set up in business as an exterior decorator."

"What does 'Halekahala' mean?"

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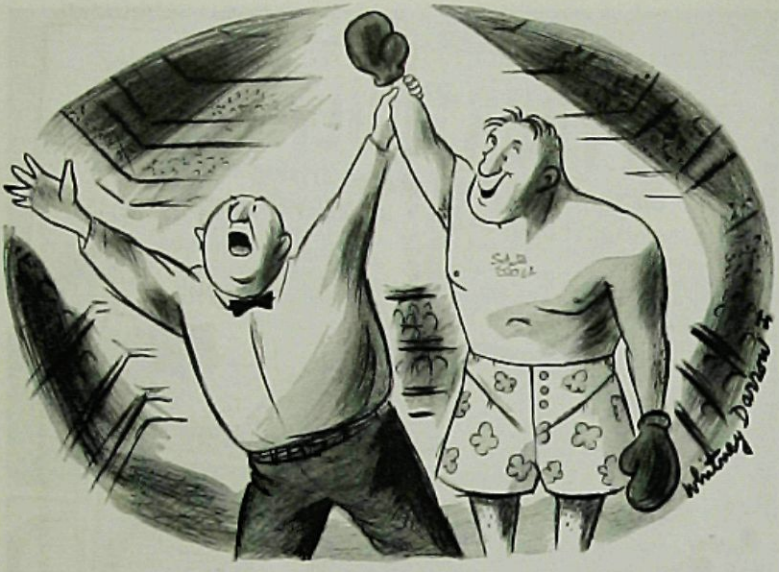
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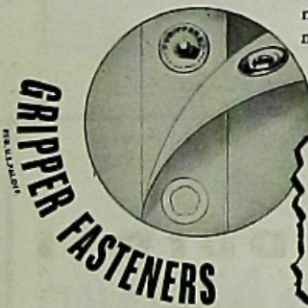
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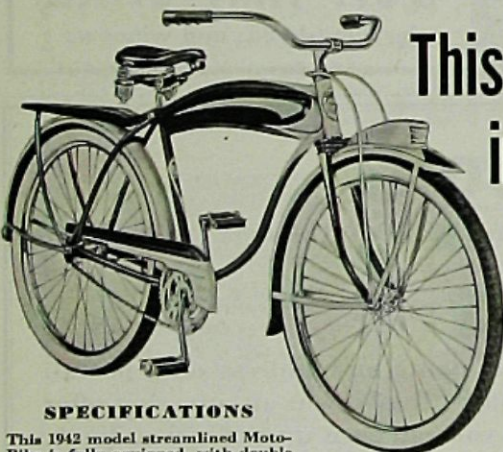
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"House of Amberfish."
"It's like a dream," Alberta said. "I hope I don't wake up."
She was wearing a white dress with scarlet flowers on it and the leis were still around her neck. Her sunburn was fading and, underneath, the creamy glow of her skin was coming through again.
The setting deserved her, Ricky thought, and his heart bumped uncomfortably for an instant. It was hard to be falling for a dame that you couldn't trust, couldn't have and couldn't leave. He groaned.
"What's the matter?" Alberta asked.
"I wish I was in Dixie," Ricky said.
A waiter came and they ordered. Presently quiet, precise little Chinese boys brought delicious food. They ate slowly, watching the ping-pong players, the bowlers, the bathers and an ocean that matched the blue of the sky. The thunder of the surf was in their ears, infinitely restful.
"I feel a nap coming on," Alberta remarked. "Where do they get the peace they have in this island?"
"It's standard equipment," Ricky said. "I suppose that's why the old Hawaiians were such happy people."
"A book I have says they fought all the time."
"They were even happy with their fighting."
"Like us," Alberta said.
"Don't lead me on."
"Why not? Here's the place for it."

"I've got to go downtown," Ricky said, getting up.
She rose, staring at him, her face hardening. Ricky felt a wrench, realizing a wall was coming between them, a wall of misunderstanding and distrust.
"What I like about Hawaii," Alberta said quietly, "is the wonderful romance you find here."
They walked back to the lobby together. Two men came in from the outside and headed for the terrace. They were white and they wore plain dark business suits, which meant they were not tourists. As they passed Ricky they suddenly stared. Ricky grinned.
"Hello, boys," he said. "The prodigal has returned."
Neither of them spoke. There was a second of tense silence. Then they went on. Ricky's cheeks grew very bright.
"Good old Ricky," he said. "Loved by one and all."
Alberta took his hand. "I don't care, Ricky."
"I must be on my way," Ricky said, disengaging his hand. "See you around."
He walked hastily out, taking long strides. He hoped she wasn't what he was afraid she was, but if she was, he was due to get a broken heart in the line of duty. And they didn't give any medals for that.
(TO BE CONTINUED)

A COUPLE OF BLOCKS FROM UTOPIA

(Continued from Page 21)

"Now just a minute," Patty interrupted him. "If you're going to tell about our A.C.D.C. friend, be careful. He's a nice man with a sick child, and I like him."
"If you like him," Gene said, "that's good enough for me."
When Patty began to dance with Gene, a curious lethargy came over her. She had nothing to say. It was sufficient that Gene had an arm around her, and she was relaxed against him. She kept warning herself not to give way. It would make her position insecure. But then, she reasoned, it wasn't really important; she was at a party, and nothing that happened should be taken seriously.
They took a Fifth Avenue bus home. An open one came along, and they sat on top. The air was brisk and cold. Gene had his arm about her and turned her head so that he might kiss her. It was a long, bumpy kiss.
"Like it or not," Gene said, "we're in love."
There was no joyous answer to that; she knew it was true.
"What are we going to do?" he asked.
She shook her head. The lightness and inconsequence of the evening were gone.
"The wisest thing would be nothing," she said. "We'll be in love. We'll go about our business for two days, and in time we'll get over it."
"What makes you think that's so wise?"
"Because we both have a chance at security. You saw those kids at the party. Half of them don't stand the chance that we do."
"But there are two kinds of security. I swear that I didn't know what would become of me until I got that offer of a job. But now if I go on that job and you stay here on yours, we'll have an empty security. We'll have no dig-

nity. It'll be the security of cowards who are safe as long as they don't move."
"If you can say that, then you're the one who doesn't read the papers."
"I read the papers all right, and I know that what you're talking about doesn't mean a thing. Listen, Patty, do you know that you're the only person who cares what happens to me? Six months of being alone does funny things, and I'm afraid to give you up."
She kissed him then.
"Let's not talk about it now," she said. "Whether I love you or not, I don't know; but, right now, this is what I want to do."
"There isn't much time to talk," he replied. His voice had taken on an excitement as though he were suddenly trapped in a small cubic cell in which he could neither stand nor lie. "Tomorrow night I have to go to Washington for instructions. The day after tomorrow, it'll be all over."
She said nothing, but kissed him again.
When they stood at her door, he held her hand to prevent her leaving. "Patty darling, is it really as easy for you as it seems?"
It's easy to lie when there's no pain, when all the emotions are neatly tied; but when they're confused and turbulent the truth is a mechanical release.
"Of course it's not easy," she said unhappily. "But let's be sensible, Gene."
"I don't know what you mean when you say 'be sensible.' I can't feel it. It's that you really don't love me."
"But how can I know? This is the first day I've ever really spoken to you."
"I know," he said. His voice was quiet and considered. "It's just that six months alone, looking for a job, blows the myth to pieces. Today you

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