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ON THE way to the movies, the lights were bright and the narrow streets crowded. Past the low, shuttered buildings with second-story balconies filled with ferns and potted flowers as in Canton went sailors and Filipinos and Chinese women in black trousers. On the corners were bars and cheap restaurants, and down the dim alleys men were making brooms by hand and molding candles. The slow thud of a gong in a Buddhist temple mingled with the music of an orchestra playing in a taxi dance hall. There was a smell of fish in the air, and incense, and the bitter odor from tubs of sour horse-radish called *daikon*, that the Japanese love.

Ricky paused in front of the Japanese movie on Aaala Street. His eyes roved up and down the street. In the journey from Waikiki he had used a cab and a bus successively, and walked around a couple of blocks. As far as he could tell, he wasn't being tailed.

He bought a ticket and went inside. The show was already on. He picked a seat in the middle of an empty row toward the rear and sat down. On the screen, things were pretty bad. The hero of the picture wore a kimono and a derby hat, and the heroine had on glasses. The sound was bad and the smell from the customers awful. People were eating rice cakes and blowing their noses. A couple of rows away a woman nursed a baby.

Ricky sat for a long time, occasionally shifting position; the automatic in his hip pocket gouged him. Japanese dialogue rattled endlessly on the sound track. Then a small man rose from across the aisle and took the next seat to him. Ricky stole a glance at him. In the light reflected from the screen, his profile was Asiatic. He remained quiet for a couple of minutes, watching the picture. Ricky kept his eyes straight ahead. Suddenly he was aware that the man had turned. His lips were almost brushing Ricky's ear.

"What you want at Bountiful Island," he whispered. "More better you get there before morning with many men."

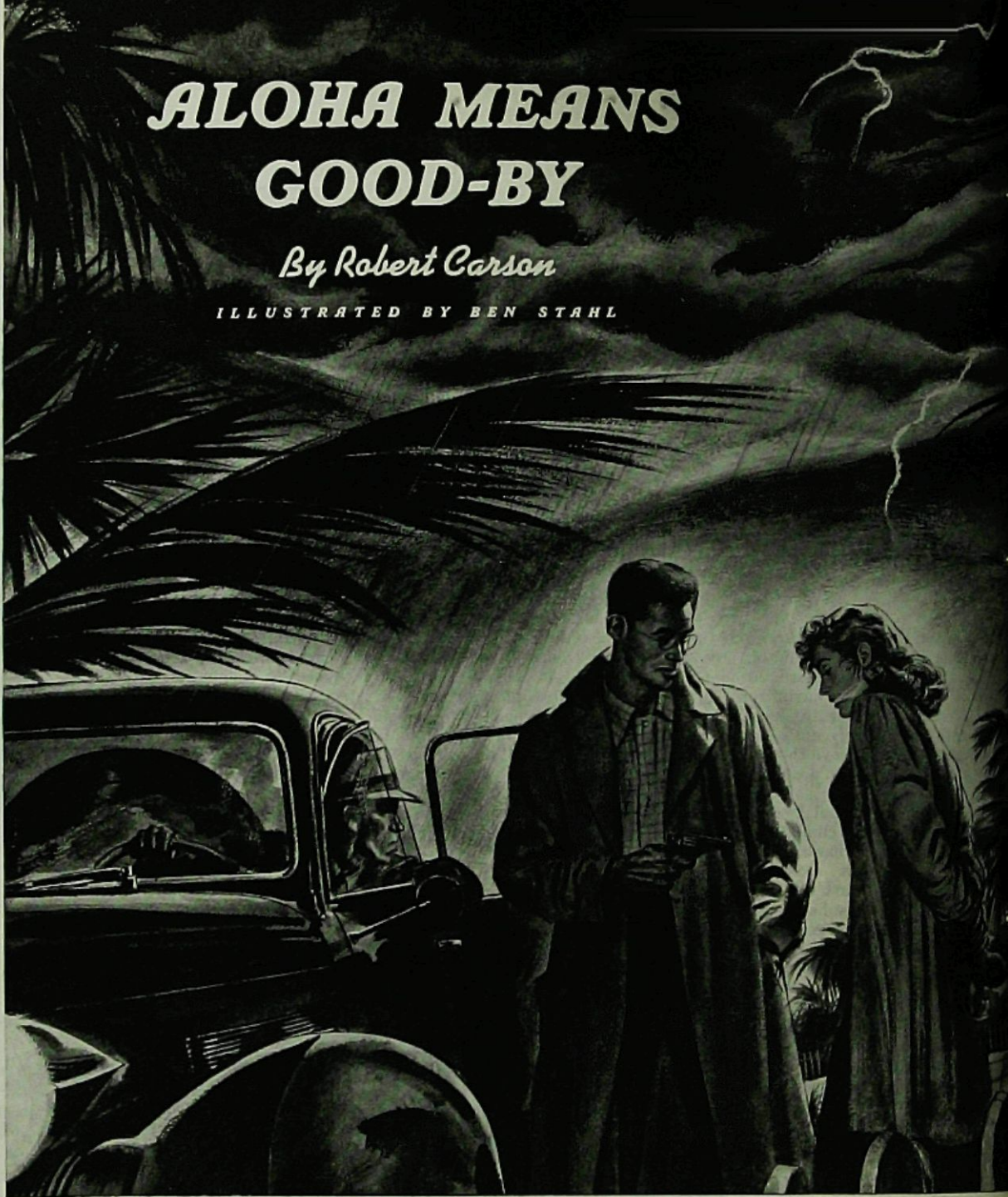
Ricky did not move, but his heart was leaping. All the tension, uncertainty and confusion in his mind was miraculously dissolved. The jumble of Doctor Barca, Oki and Joe, Alberta and Dan Marlow, sorted itself out. Bountiful Island was the key, and A. V. Smith had been wrong. Everything fitted. Where could the ring have wanted a better place to work from? Where could they have more secrecy and the protection of an unimpeachable name? What was going to happen would start from there. Dan Marlow was a traitor. So was Alberta. But Ricky couldn't think of her now. His thoughts were racing ahead to the things he had to do and the surprise he would presently spring on A. V. Smith.

The man beside him was watching the picture again. He said no more. Presently he got up and walked slowly out. Ricky fought down the impulse to follow him and ask questions. He let five minutes pass, trying to focus his attention on the picture. When he left, it was without haste, his hands in his pockets.

ALOHA MEANS GOOD-BY

By Robert Carson

ILLUSTRATED BY BEN STAHL



They filed out one at a time, Joe and Alberta in the lead. In the dark

He stopped on the sidewalk to light a cigarette, apparently aimless and unconcerned. What abruptly bothered him, he couldn't tell; there was a faint prickling on his shoulders and some long-dormant sixth sense flashed obscure danger signals. No stars showed in the black and humid sky and a fine spray of rain was falling.

He walked warily along the block and rounded the corner. A cab was handy. He got in and gave the address of the house in Nuuanu Valley.

"Turn a lot of corners," he said. "Wikiwiki!"

The driver stepped on it. As they followed a devious way into the valley, Ricky unraveled a few more threads. Dan Marlow's visit to the Halekalahala had been for his benefit. The queer coldness between him and his niece was designed to throw Ricky off the scent. For a second, Alberta's image floated before him, rain and tears on it, and the familiar sick feeling lodged in the pit of his stomach. He banished the vision impatiently. He had been a traitor himself in giving her a fair chance. If she had sense enough to heed his warning, she'd be safe.

The skin on Ricky's face was burning and his jaw muscles tightened. He shifted the automatic from his hip to his right-hand coat pocket. Vision was difficult through the rain-smearred windows of the

cab, but he was sure no trailing headlights gleamed behind them. His fingers wrapped themselves around the butt of the pistol as he settled low in the seat. Barca's boys were too late anyhow.

He thought with growing excitement of the island in the photograph he had found in Alberta's room—squat and dark and ominous, surrounded by a slate-colored sea. Then the cab lurched to a stop.

Ricky climbed out into the soft rain and paid the driver. The cab whirled and went off down the deserted road. Ricky headed for the house. The night was very deep in the banyan grove, but a light shone at the rear of the house in A. V. Smith's bedroom. Ricky stepped up on the porch and knocked lightly. He heard the shuffle of feet inside, and a key turning in the lock. The door opened.

He walked quickly in. The room was pitch-black. As he stopped uncertainly, the door shut behind him. A little metal circle bored into his back.

"Stick 'em up," a voice said.

He hesitated. He could hear other men close to him, moving softly. His hands climbed into the air.

The man behind him spoke in Japanese. A bridge lamp clicked on, partially illuminating the room. Ricky blinked in the light, looking at the Japanese standing three or four feet to his left with a pistol in



grove was a big sedan.

his hand. The man who had switched on the lamp was to his right, another Japanese. The man in his rear removed the muzzle from his back and circled him cautiously. He was smiling faintly.

"I imagine you recognize the phrase I used," he said.

"Hello, Oki," Ricky said, remembering Doctor Barca's servant.

"You were quite clever that day on the boat."

"You're quite clever tonight."

Oki hissed politely at the compliment. "I'm familiar with your saying: 'He who laughs last laughs best.' . . . Please don't attempt to seize me when I search you, Mr. Leland. My men would have no compunctions about shooting both of us if necessary." He stepped forward, running his left hand expertly over Ricky's body. The automatic was duly extracted from Ricky's coat pocket. Oki took three steps backward. "Thank you. You may lower your hands now, but remain where you are."

Ricky's eyes shifted, looking for an opening, when he dropped his arms. The breath caught in his throat. The three brown men around him stood like blank-faced statues.

In the hall doorway lay A. V. Smith, crumpled on his face, his legs doubled under him as though drawn

up in a last agony. A broad red stain had spread across the uncarpeted floor. There was still a revolver clutched in his right hand. He looked little and infinitely pitiful in death, and entirely out of place; a strange, bald bookkeeper in old-fashioned clothing who had died incomprehensibly with a gun in his hand instead of in bed.

Cold anger filled Ricky, and sudden hope as he thought of A. V. Smith's Chinese housekeeper. Then he recalled that she had a family down the road and went home at night. He glanced at Oki and saw his head cocked in a listening attitude.

A car was coming. Oki moved behind Ricky and the pistol barrel jammed into his back again. The lamp went off.

"Don't speak," Oki said, "and stand perfectly still."

The sound of the car ended in front of the house. A door banged and then there was silence. Rain water gurgled softly in a spout. Ricky felt sweat seeping down his face. Feet shuffled on the porch. A voice spoke quiet Japanese.

The lamp went on once more. The gun muzzle left Ricky's body as Oki went to open the door. Ricky wheeled.

Alberta came in first, followed by Sam Wing On. Behind them were Joe Totsuiko and another Japanese. Sam's eyes were lowered and his face expressionless. Ricky stared from him to Alberta, who wore her short white coat and a pair of slacks. Her cheeks were as white as her coat, and her eyes looked bigger than usual. They went past him to A. V. Smith's body and he heard her sickened gasp.

"Nice line of work you're in," Ricky said harshly. He noticed Sam being prodded with a gun by the man with Joe. Sam was a prisoner like himself. He hadn't sold him out.

Joe closed the door and turned to Ricky, showing an expanse of

big, gleaming teeth. The light glinted on his spectacles. "Hello, chum," he said. Then he saw A. V. Smith. "Oh-oh!"

"Unfortunately, Mr. Leland's superior resisted," Oki said.

"I hope you didn't make too much noise."

"It was a knife."

"Swell," Joe said. "I guess the party's all together. We might as well go on the tour." He pocketed his gun and took a silk cord from his pocket. "Stick your hands behind your back, Ricky."

Ricky did as he was told. Alberta's eyes were on him. They seemed to be trying to tell him something. He looked away. The cord tightened on his wrists.

"You, too, Sam," Joe said.

They all waited while Sam was tied. The old Chinaman kept patiently looking at the floor.

"I hope any of you don't start hollering on the trip," Joe said. "What you'll get for it will hurt."

A man shoved Ricky forward. Sam fell in behind him. Alberta put a hand on a chair to steady herself. She appeared on the verge of fainting.

"You can come the way you are," Joe told her. "Let's have the light out before we go."

Ricky's head jerked in Alberta's direction. At that moment the room went dark. He could hear the blood singing in his ears. A gun nudged his ribs and he scarcely felt it. It was nice to be happy for a change.

There was a scrambling in the darkness and the noise of a piece of furniture going over. A hammer clicked back at Ricky's side and he froze. Joe called urgently for light.

"It's the girl," he said. "Don't shoot."

Her feet were pounding along the hallway as the lamp flashed on. Joe sprang after her. Ricky realized she'd be trapped in the bedroom. He knew the layout of the house.

The running feet stopped. Ricky listened to her cry out sharply and his fists clenched, fingernails biting into palms. They came back from the hallway, stepping over A. V. Smith's body. Alberta was panting and color had come in her cheeks. She tried to wrench away from Joe when he pulled her hands behind her, and he twisted her wrists. She bit her lips to keep from crying. Joe knotted a cord. Then he jammed a handkerchief in her mouth and tied it.

"Next time I'll get rough, Al," he said.

The light snapped off. They filed out one at a time, Joe and Alberta in the lead.

In the darkness of the banyan grove was a big sedan. Joe and Oki got in front, the latter at the wheel. The rest of them piled in the rear. Joe twisted around in the seat so he could watch them, a gun in his lap.

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"Don't make me go with you!" Marlow gasped. "I've got to get away! They'll kill me!"



ALOHA MEANS GOOD-BY

(Continued from Page 25)

They went up the twisting Nuuanu Valley, climbing fast on a sparsely traveled road. At the crest of the Pali, where the warriors of King Kamehameha had pushed the Oahuans over a thousand-foot cliff long ago, the wind was roaring in strong gusts, hammering the rain ahead of it. The car's headlights poked twin white fingers into the blurry dark. Far below, Ricky could glimpse the flickering lights of Kaneohe. Then they dipped down, grinding in second gear around abrupt curves.

Ricky was sitting on a jump seat, turned sidewise to ease his bound hands. Behind him was Alberta. One of her feet slipped forward and for an instant pressed on his. He smiled in the darkness.

They turned left at the foot of the Pali and raced along a road that ran beside the water, the tires whining on the many turns. On the landward side the tall, precipitous, monolithic mountains marched against the black sky. Joe turned on the radio. Music came from the dining room of the Royal Palms Hotel, soft and languorous.

After a while they ran out of the rain, and Oki increased speed. Little houses elevated from the damp ground flashed by, and papaya groves and occasionally a small settlement. Joe switched off the radio. Ricky had been working his bonds against the steel frame of the jump seat, but they wouldn't come loose.

Rain began falling again, and Ricky caught a flash of white in a grove of trees and recognized the Mormon temple. They were at Laie. The car roared through one end of the village where the Samoans lived.

Oki slackened speed, looking for an opening in the trees on the seaward side. He spun the wheel suddenly, going down a narrow paved road. It ended on a wooden pier. The car lurched to a stop.

They got out stiffly, and Ricky saw that Alberta had somehow managed to rid herself of the gag. Joe couldn't have tied it as carefully as he had the cords about his wrists, Ricky thought. Oki backed the car into a big garage which stood among the trees.

The whole party marched out to the end of the pier, where there was a small house. They huddled inside, steaming and damp. Joe picked up a phone and rang the island. He spoke briefly in Japanese.

Ricky stared through a streaky pane, listening to the beat of the storm. Sam stood beside him. The old man's shoulders were slumped and his eyes slits, but he seemed entirely unconcerned.

"I'm sorry, Sam," Ricky said.

"Waste time," Sam said.

Red and green lights appeared, and a searchlight glowed on the water. They heard the muffled drumming of a motorboat. Ricky looked at a squat black mass against the lighter sky. In two or three places there were glows of illumination.

That was Bountiful Island. The name rang like a gong in his mind.

XVII

THE launch pounded through the wind-chopped sea, plowing up showers of spray. Ahead, the searchlight picked up the buoys that marked the way through the reefs.

Ricky sat behind the Japanese at the wheel, wriggling his numbed fingers to keep the circulation going. The boat

was moving very fast, and it gave a sickening lurch when they swung in toward the island. Ricky remembered that Dan Marlow was noted for his fast boats. He was reputed to have two cabin cruisers that would do better than thirty-five miles an hour.

The helmsman closed the throttle and then reversed. Ricky peered out. They were entering a narrow channel, with a big wooden dock on the left and boat sheds and ways on the right. Two blue sampans were tied up at the dock, big fifty-five-footers which Dan Marlow used for his offshore fishing expeditions. Pulled up on the ways were a couple of cabin cruisers, pretty thoroughly taken apart. Ricky saw the chains and pulleys above them and knew why. The engines had been removed.

he knew. The torpedoes had been fired in practice by American ships, lost, and picked up by members of the Japanese fishing fleet, as they often were. These had not been returned for the usual reward. The war heads must have been fitted by Oki, who probably was an expert at that. The tubes were various castings undoubtedly bought from a variety of foundries and assembled on the island.

"Turn left," Joe said.

They ascended a curving asphalt driveway, flanked on either side by dense shrubbery. The lowering sky pressed down, shedding fine rain, and the air was moist and breathless and sticky.

Figuring out the rest was simple, Ricky thought. At dawn the sampans would be on their way, passing the

when they entered, his brown face turning the color of old parchment. The clinking of the ice in his glass told how his hands were shaking. He stared at Alberta, wetting his lips with his tongue.

"Hello, Dan," Alberta said, but he did not reply. There was stark terror in his eyes.

Standing in a corner was a Japanese in the short white coat of a houseboy. Around his waist was a belt and holster.

Joe removed Alberta's bonds, then Sam's and Ricky's. "I hope you appreciate this," he said to Ricky.

"Thanks," Ricky said, rubbing his tingling hands.

"Just sit down and rest easy, boys and girls," Joe said. "We have some work to do right now, but we'll be back." He indicated the houseboy. "Kano here'll take care of you. It will be with a bullet if you move around too much. And I wouldn't make a run for it and try to swim if I were you. The reefs are full of sharks."

"What happens to us?" Ricky asked.

Joe grinned. "What do you think, sweetheart?"

"Alberta can't hurt you any," Ricky said.

"She'd make Doctor Barca nervous."

Ricky looked at Joe. He was no longer the brash schoolboy with the funny face. His features had set in the immemorial way of his fathers, and his eyes were blank and implacable.

"You must have seen a lot of gangster pictures," Ricky said.

Joe grinned again. "No hard feelings, Ricky."

"None with me. I think you're nuts. You'll be blown out of the water before you ever get close to them."

"Maybe."

"Even if you don't, you'll never live to see what happens."

"I know it," Joe replied quietly. "But I belong to the Black Dragon Society. We don't expect to live."

Ricky took a cigarette from a box and lit it. "Why do you have to start a war?"

"You're standing in our way. You always have. We must destroy you. The old men sit in Tokyo and talk, but they haven't the courage to fight. We'll make them fight!"

"I'll bet," Ricky said, "that a lot of guys in Japan won't like you by tomorrow night."

"By tomorrow night there will be two less big ships in your fleet."

"I suppose you got Mori," Dan Marlow said. His voice was unsteady.

"We got him," Joe said. "He was good at moving around dark alleys. He's in a very dark one now."

"Mori?" Ricky said. "Anybody I should know?"

"The man who talked to you in the theater. He was with Marlow for a long time before we came here. Doctor Barca thought he'd be a good man for us. That was Doctor Barca's mistake. Mori was a Korean. He smuggled out the letter from Marlow that brought Alberta, and he talked to you. Anything else you want to know, Ricky?"

"That's all."

Oki spoke to Joe in Japanese, and Joe nodded. Then he turned to the houseboy and addressed him in the same language. The man answered smartly.

Joe paused in the doorway and grinned at Alberta.

"Why not bring that biscuit dough in here? My feet aren't doing anything."



MEL SODER-LUNDA

Silent yellow men on the dock caught the line Oki threw to them and pulled the launch against the pilings. Joe stood up, wiping the salt spray off his glasses.

"All ashore that's going ashore," he said.

They climbed out one by one, assisted by the men on the dock. Lights glared down, glittering in the rain. A compressed-air pump was thumping inside a building on the dock. Hoses ran from it to both the sampans.

Ricky was still asking himself why they were running air into the boats when he got his answer. The foredeck of the first sampan was covered by a pile of nets which rose in a mound, but the second was bare as yet. Ricky swallowed hard as he looked. A crude, homemade torpedo tube was bolted to the deck, and lying beneath it, not yet put in its cradle, was the long outline of a torpedo. He could see the markings on the cigar-shaped engine of death as he passed the second sampan, and they were American. But its war head was foreign.

Ricky's mind raced, fitting the pieces together, almost with elation, now that

fleet. They'd look innocent and slow, chugging along, flying Dan Marlow's well-known flag. And then suddenly the sampans would wheel, the powerful motors roaring, and dash for the warships—with a good chance of getting in at close enough range to fire their torpedoes before guns could be brought to bear. That close they couldn't miss.

His forehead was wet, not only from rain, and he took a deep breath. They entered a gateway of flowering shrubs, and before them was the long, low white house with a patio enclosed on three sides. The walls were inset with glass tanks housing strange and rare fish. Part of the patio was roofed over, and tables were there, and chairs and a huge couch. A wide door led into the living room. Joe walked in advance and opened it for them.

The room was startlingly handsome, all in white, with splashes of vivid red. French doors revealed a vista of closely cropped lawn on the far side. Against one wall was a huge cabinet containing a collection of carved ivory that represented a fortune.

Dan Marlow was sitting in a chair with a glass in his hand. He stood up

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"Remember the Haiku, Al?" he said. "Moritake had a good one for all of us. It's called the death verse:

*"Alas, my lifetime may appear
A morning-glory's hour today!"*

Alberta watched him steadily. "Very pretty," she said.

Joe and Oki went out. There was silence for a while. They sat listening to the soft murmur of the rain. Ricky crushed his cigarette in an ash tray and glanced at his watch. It was one o'clock. He did a little rapid calculating. To get to where the fleet units were anchored off Waikiki at the crack of dawn without hitting a suspiciously fast clip would take a good two hours. That meant they'd have to leave by two-thirty; three at the latest. Not more than two hours yet. He yawned and flexed his arms.

"Can this guy who's with us understand English?" he asked Marlow.

"I don't know."

Ricky's words woke them up. They were all looking at him, even Sam. Marlow gulped the rest of his drink.

"How did this happen to you?" Ricky said.

"I was making improvements on the island, and I hired a good many men. Somehow they all turned out to be Japanese. And I was drinking a great deal and needed somebody to take care of me. I wouldn't allow my friends to visit. Suddenly I discovered that my help were running my life. I got scared and tried to leave the island, but they wouldn't let me."

"When did you send the letter to Alberta?"

"After I first grew worried," Marlow said. "The letter wasn't very clear because I didn't realize then what was really up. I never had a chance to send another. Mori wouldn't take the risk."

"You should have made a break for it when you came to the Halekahala."

"They were with me all the time. They'd have killed me."

"I don't think this guy with us can understand English," Ricky said. "I've been watching him while we talked. Is he your regular houseboy, Marlow?"

"No, he came only a couple of days ago—but they never show anything."

"Can understand," Sam said.

"I'll find out," Ricky said. "Watch him." He continued in a low voice, "In a minute I'm going to jump for the door. Throw something at the guard when I do."

The man in the white jacket stood stolidly, his face uninterested. His hand did not move toward the gun in his holster.

"I'll always think he didn't understand," Ricky said, "even if he shoots me."

"It's no use," Marlow said. "What could you do if you did get out of here? They're all armed and there's no place for you to go. They'd hunt you down."

"I'm going to try it. Give me a hand if I need one."

"Don't, Ricky," Alberta said. "Please. He can understand."

Ricky shook his head and rose, his hands in his pockets. He strolled up and down the room, working nearer the guard, who paid no attention to him. Sam gazed at the floor and Marlow nervously averted his head. Only Alberta kept her eyes on Ricky.

It took quite a while, but finally he was in striking distance. Then the man in the white coat looked at him. His hand dropped to the butt of his gun.

"Sit down," he said.

Ricky walked back and sat down. There was a long period of quiet—the ponderous, threatening quiet that filled their ears like the roaring of the sea. Marlow gazed at Alberta with weak tears brimming in his eyes.

"Why did I get you into this?" he said.

"Don't think about it," Alberta said. "I'm trying not to."

Then, abruptly, she began to cry. She rose and walked blindly toward the guard, wringing her hands. Dan Marlow stretched out his arms and let them drop helplessly. Ricky got up quickly and headed her off. He caught her and shook her.

"Hey," he said, "this isn't like you. Take it easy!"

She dropped her head on his chest, sobbing. He patted her shoulder.

"I can't help it," she said. "I'm afraid, Ricky. . . . Put your arms around me."

He circled her with his arms, murmuring, "I love you. I'll get you out of this."

"Hold me tighter."

His arms tightened and a queer expression came on his face as he felt the revolver tucked in the waistband at the back of her slacks. She lifted her face to him and he gazed deep into the big, tear-stained blue eyes. It was like gazing into the Elysian fields. He beamed at her, raising his hands underneath her white coat.

"Why, bless your heart, child," he said, "there's not a thing to worry about."

She shifted obligingly, so that her back was to the guard, and he eased the gun up, careful that the front sight didn't hook on her waistband.

Then Alberta wailed again, "I don't want to die, Ricky! Save me!"

He flashed the revolver, his thumb whipping the hammer up, and sprang at the guard. The man stepped away from him, sensing he wouldn't shoot. Ricky hit him very hard with his left hand high on the side of the head and the man dropped to the floor, clawing at his holster. Something shot past Ricky, sailing on soundless feet. It was Sam, and he had a heavy ash tray in his hand. He finished the job.

For a moment none of them moved. They listened with aching ears. There was no sound but the falling rain.

Behind Ricky, Alberta said unsteadily, "Is—is that what you wanted, Ricky?"

No one paid any attention to her. Sam stooped and took the guard's gun. Dan Marlow reared up from his chair. Ricky was looking around. He spotted the silk cords Joe had taken off them and tossed them to Sam. His handkerchief followed.

"Tie him up, Sam," Ricky said.

"Gag him."

"Maybe we can make a raft," Dan Marlow said. "There's some lumber down by —"

"Where'd you get the gun?" Ricky asked Alberta. "From the dead man in the house?"

Alberta leaned against a table. Her face was as white as the walls of the room. "Yes. I thought you might need it."

"You're the kind of a girl," Ricky said, "I always wanted to bring home to mother. Listen, you deserve to get away from here. I wish I could take you, but I can't. Those boats are going out in a little while to blow up our warships. I've got to stop them if I can. Do you understand?"

"I understand."

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They stared at each other for a second, the unspoken words they had to say to each other in their eyes. Sam had finished with the guard and rolled him in a corner.

"The first thing to do," Ricky said, "is to put the lights out on this island for keeps." He turned to Dan Marlow. "Does your electricity come from Oahu or do you have your own generator?"

"My own generator."

"Where?"

"Near the greenhouses."

"That doesn't mean anything to me," Ricky said. "You'll have to come with me. . . . Sam, you go with Alberta. Head for the far end of the island and hide. . . . No, wait a minute. I'll have to try to get a boat and pick you up. . . . Where's another place on the island I can come close in-shore, Marlow?" The man was looking at him, licking his lips. He seemed as flaccid as warm butter. "Answer me!"

Marlow's voice shook. "On the east end there's a point. I was planning to build a sea-water swimming pool, and I dredged. It's deep."

"Tell Sam how to get there."

He looked at Alberta. Marlow's uneven voice was beginning to explain to Sam how to reach the point.

"I'm glad you weren't one of them, Ricky," Alberta said. "I had to lie to you because I didn't know what I was getting into. I was playing simple-minded so nobody would suspect me. It's been a long time since I was in Medicine Hat. I'm a fashion designer from Montreal and —"

"I know, darling. We'll be all right."

"I don't mind. I'm sorry I couldn't have seen more of Hawaii, that's all."

"If I don't show up inside of a half hour," Ricky said, "you and Sam find something that will float. Be careful not to head out to sea."

"If you didn't get killed," Alberta said hopefully, "maybe we could get married."

Ricky moved quickly away from her. He saw a flashlight in the hip pocket of the guard, got it and gave it to Sam, who had digested Marlow's instructions.

"When I come by the point in my boat," Ricky said, "signal me. Three short flashes. Then I won't be surprised by some of these guys on the island." He cleared his throat, avoiding Sam's calm brown eyes. "It's Sam Leland from now on. I'll adopt you in court, so help me."

"Waste time," Sam said gruffly. "Wikiwiki."

"We'll leave by the French doors," Ricky said. "Alberta and Sam first. Go on your hands and knees. The minute you're outside, hug the wall of the house until you get in the bushes. If somebody is out there, let me shoot him."

They all knelt by the door. Ricky opened it a crack and took a look. A fine spray of rain blew in on them.

"Come on," Ricky said.

Sam went out first, then Alberta. She glanced over her shoulder for an instant at Ricky and Marlow. "Good luck, Dan," she whispered. "Aloha." She disappeared.

Marlow started to follow. Clutching his shoulder, Ricky jerked him back. "Give 'em a chance to break loose," he said.

There was livid fear in Marlow's face and he was panting. Ricky realized panic was not far off in him. He remembered the bottle of brandy on the table beside the chair Marlow had occupied. Watching him, he got it.

"Here," he said, handing him the bottle. "What're you worried about?"

Marlow held the bottle in both his shaking hands and pried out the cork with his teeth. He took a long drink. Then he set the bottle down and nodded to Ricky.

"You first," Ricky said.

Marlow crawled through the doorway.

XVIII

THEY traversed seemingly endless areas of shrubbery, part of the time bent double and the rest on all fours. The soggy earth covered them with mud, and wet branches whipped in their faces. The occasional open spaces they negotiated on their bellies.

Minute by minute the beat of the gasoline engine in the power-plant shed grew louder. They passed the long bulk of the greenhouses, their glass roofs gleaming with the diamonds of the rain. Then, in a quick dash, they were inside the shed, standing in pitch blackness and smelling the oil fumes.

Ricky rubbed his hands dry on his pants and found a packet of matches in his coat. He handed them to Marlow.

"Give me some light," he said.

"Hold it below the level of the window."

The tiny wavering flame sent shadows dancing on the walls. Ricky saw a pile of tools on a shelf and picked out a heavy pipe wrench. The match went out. Another one flared. Ricky searched for a vital point and struck it, so hard that pain shot from his wrist to his shoulder. As darkness came again, the motor coughed and died.

"Now," Ricky said. But Dan Marlow wasn't there. He plunged out the door. Marlow was heading into the bushes. Ricky caught him, grabbed him by the collar and forced him to his knees. He bent over him fiercely.

"Don't make me go with you!" Marlow gasped. "I've got to get away! They'll kill me!"

Ricky shook him, rocking his head. "You're going to take me to the dock, a back way. I'll shoot you as quickly as any of them will. See?"

Marlow nodded.

Ricky let him up. "Get going," he said.

They cut across the breadth of the island, faster this time, because Ricky forced Marlow to remain upright. Men's voices sounded thinly in the night. They saw the slender beams of flashlights poking in the dark. After they had crossed a paved driveway, Ricky caught a glimpse of the house. Lights were flickering in it. Their break had been discovered.

Marlow led him down a precipitous incline. Both of them lost their footing and ended up on the seats of their pants. They crawled under dense bushes, by wide concrete pools where live fish were kept. A storehouse with overhanging eaves afforded them momentary shelter. A man ran by them there, his heels ringing on the pavement, bound for the house. Ricky watched him disappear, his finger curled around the trigger of the revolver.

They weaved through boxes and bales and piles of lumber. Ahead of them was a black patch of a building. Marlow hoisted himself up where the pier began and turned to lend a hand to Ricky.

"You're a good guide," Ricky said.

It was tricky work finding the rear entrance to the dock building. They fell repeatedly. Finally a door creaked under Marlow's hands. Ricky smelled fish and dried salt and the wet pungency of nets. He held Marlow's trouser leg as they crawled across the floor of the big room.

The moment he was in the doorway, he forgot Marlow. Searchlights from the two sampans and the launch were shining. A man held a lantern high. Somebody was calling in shrill Japanese from the driveway, and several men started up toward the house.

Ricky stared at the scene, dry-throated. He discarded the idea of trying to get the launch. It had to be one of the sampans. He dared not think any farther ahead. He'd strain his luck.

Marlow was whispering in his ear, "There's a fire ax above the door. Which boat do you want?"

"Are you willing to help me?"

"I'm all right now."

"Get the fire ax."

Marlow rose, fumbled in the darkness, unfastened the ax and crouched beside him again. Ricky looked at the second sampan. The torpedo was in the tube now, but the covering of fish nets wasn't on yet. There were men on the boat, and a light was gleaming in the pilothouse.

"I want the sampan nearest us," Ricky said.

"Wouldn't the launch be better?"

Marlow asked, his voice steady.

"I need the sampan. Can you start the engine and handle it?"

"Yes."

"Sure you want to?"

"Yes," Marlow said.

"All right," Ricky said. "I'll make a run for it and start a commotion. When I'm on the boat, you cut the cables. She's moored bow and stern. I'll cover you." He tried to see Marlow's face. "I'm a dead duck if you don't follow me out there."

"I'll follow you."

Ricky rose. "See you in a minute."

Unnoticed in the dark confusion, he reached the edge of the dock and sprang aboard the sampan. A man was on the foredeck, bending over, a flashlight in his hand. Ricky lunged into him, blocking low. The man went over the side. He let out a startled yell as he hit the water. Ricky ran toward the stern.

A second man blundered from the shadow of the pilothouse. Ricky smashed him into the water while he was still off balance. Then he turned and raced to the port side of the boat. There was a thumping noise from the direction of the bow. The sampan ground against the dock, slowly swinging with the current. Marlow had already severed the bow line.

Men stumbled through the wet darkness, calling to one another in Japanese. The ax was thumping again. A pencil of light flashed on the blade as it rose in the air. The searchlight of the first sampan swiveled down on the dock. In its white glare Ricky saw Oki running with a pistol in his hand toward where Marlow worked. He made a perfect target.

The revolver leaped in Ricky's hand and Oki spun part way around and sprawled awkwardly. Ricky fired twice at the searchlight, and there was darkness again except for the feeble probing fingers of the hand torches. He emptied the pistol at random on the dock. The stern cable twanged as it parted and the sampan moved.

A man landed on the deck and rose, panting hard. "Marlow?" Ricky said. "Yes!"

"Get the engine started. Reverse. Bring us past the other sampan."

Marlow dove for the pilothouse. Dropping his useless revolver, Ricky ran forward. The light from the launch swung on them and there were jets of

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bright flame on the dock. Reports from the guns merged with the grinding of the starter on Ricky's sampan. The engine backfired, caught and roared with blasting power. The boat shook as the propeller bit the water.

Ricky pushed with all his strength on the torpedo tube, swinging it. Then he fumbled frantically in the darkness, searching for the air-release valve. The guns still lashed from the blackness of the dock. A bullet ricocheted off the smooth metal above him and tiny particles of lead pocked his face. He heard the pilothouse windows shatter.

The searchlight from their sampan skewered the launch and he saw Joe crouching on the bow with a rifle in his hands. Men were jumping aboard it. The line had already been cast off. The sampan was moving faster now, and in a moment it would be too late. And then Ricky found the valve.

Air hissed from the mouth of the tube. Ricky caught a flash of the torpedo glittering in flight, free of the sampan and falling flatly. Spray flew as it hit the water.

The next instant there was a towering red wall of flame where the other sampan had been. A gigantic thunderclap of nearly intolerable sound seemed to shatter the night to bits. In a whirling hell of disintegrating wood, metal, flesh and water melted the sampan, the launch and most of the dock. Ricky bowed and shielded his face with his hands. He clutched a hatch cover as the deck beneath him tilted so sharply he thought the boat was going to capsize.

Debris rained down and he felt sea water foaming over him. He hung on instinctively, dazed and blinded.

The column of fire vanished and there was night again. The thunder of the explosion faded more slowly, traveling off into the distance, leaving the roiled air to subside. On land a man was screaming his agony.

The sampan cleared the channel and the bow swung. The motor drummed into forward speed. The searchlight raked the white lace of waves breaking on a reef and went off.

Ricky staggered to his feet and walked aft, feeling the roll of the boat. His ears rang and his eyeballs burned. His feet crunched on broken glass as he entered the pilothouse. Marlow had his back to him, standing at the wheel.

"You did all right, Dan," Ricky said.

"Take the wheel," Marlow said. "Don't drive her. I think that explosion sprung her seams."

Ricky took his place. "Tell me where to go."

Marlow backed against the wall of the pilothouse. "Use the light if you have to," he said, his breath rasping out of him. "You can come in pretty close. These sampans don't draw much water."

Suddenly he crumpled and slid to the floor. "Are you hit?" Ricky asked.

"Leave me alone!" Marlow said. "Get around to the point!"

"If you're bleeding —"

"Leave me alone!"

Ricky opened the throttle wider. "Don't push her too much," Marlow whispered. Ricky's ears were still ringing, but he could hear Marlow's harsh breathing.

The point loomed ahead, a tracery of black shrubbery against the lighter shade of the night sky. A warm wind was blowing into the pilothouse and the rain had stopped. Ricky reduced speed until the sampan barely had

steerageway and crept toward the island. The hull scraped on coral and he swung hard over and then back again, gunning the motor briefly; and the obstruction fell behind.

He reversed, the propeller churning up a white wake under the stern. There was a dull ache in his chest, but he kept straining his eyes into the darkness of the island, trying not to hope too much or to think that if they'd got her nothing would matter a great deal ever again. The strength went out of him and his hands trembled as they rested sweatily on the spokes of the wheel.

Three spots of white flicked close to the ground. Sam and Alberta rose from the dim void and splashed into the sea. Ricky hastened to the side of the boat, his heart hammering, waiting for the rattle of gunfire. It never came.

They swam up to the side and he pulled them aboard, Alberta first. She went into his arms. For an instant time stopped, and Ricky knew he had never been so glad before. He kissed her, tasting sea water on her lips; they were bittersweet, as always.

"E hele kuaa!" Sam said. He crouched, the gun in his hand. Ricky released Alberta, and Sam pulled her down beside him.

"Where's my uncle?" Alberta said. "He was a very brave guy," Ricky said. "Don't come in the wheelhouse."

When he was clear of the island, Ricky considered making the run to Kaneohe Bay and the yacht club there, but the sampan was steering badly now and getting lopy. He decided not to take a chance and continued on around, using the searchlight to hunt for the buoys which marked the way through the reefs.

Finally he picked them up, and the rest was easy. Sam walked forward when the pier came in view. He leaped with what was left of the cable and cinched it around a bight. The engine stopped.

Ricky took off his coat, dropped on one knee and gently covered Dan Marlow. When he rose, he noticed Alberta standing in the doorway of the wheelhouse. A sob choked in her throat and she turned. Ricky swept her into his arms and jumped to the pier. She held him tightly, like a child, her wet cheek against his. He set her carefully on her feet. She stood bravely, her shoulders thrown back. But her head was down. Out in the Pacific, the eastern sky was beginning to lighten.

"I think I can get Honolulu on the phone in there," Ricky said. "Wait a minute."

He went in the little house at the end of the pier and began ringing. After a moment an operator answered. While he waited, and then talked, Ricky looked toward Bountiful Island. It was as dark and silent as a tomb, still a squat, sable mass, inert and helpless in the path of the coming dawn. Ricky wondered if he had been dreaming.

He left the telephone with a grim smile, and the other two looked at him as they tramped along the pier.

"The Manila Clipper didn't leave tonight," Ricky said.

There was a car coming down the road. They flattened themselves in the deep darkness beside the garage and Sam handed Ricky his pistol. The car screeched to a quick stop and the left-hand front door was flung open. A man climbed hastily up. Ricky moved up to him and jammed the gun in his ribs.

"Aloha, doc," he said. "Welcome home!"

(THE END)

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