

SERIAL STORY

LADY BY REQUEST

BY HELEN R. WOODWARD

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goodbye that morning at the airport? "Then perhaps it will make it easier," Phil said slowly. "If I told you that he loved you with all the strength of his being. But he thought there was something keeping you apart—"

Her voice came on a whisper. "How—how do you know?"

"He spoke to me about it that last day. We were alone for a moment at Evalyn's, you remember, while you and she went upstairs together to get your wraps. He said, 'Phil—if anything should happen to me, you'll look out for Diana, won't you? I've discovered that I love her very much, but I won't say anything until I return. It wouldn't be fair to her.'"

"But Evalyn—it was Evalyn he loved—always!"

Phil spoke with quiet conviction. "Loving Evalyn is like worshipping a dim, far-off statue. You're flesh and blood, Diana—a man could not live in the same house with you long and resist you!"

SHE was too preoccupied to think of Phil might be also speaking for himself. She stared straight at the road before her until it became blurred with her tears. Then she began to weep quietly, as if the sobs were coming from her very soul. She cried for a long time and Phil was silent, busy with his driving and his own brooding thoughts. At last she laid her hand on his arm. She was smiling through her tears.

"Thank you for telling me that, Phil," she said. "And now—I shall never stop waiting for him to come back!"

A little later Phil left her at the door, drove off wondering, Diana seemed so sure that Stephen was alive. And yet, the evidence of his death was so conclusive—conclusive enough to satisfy an insurance company!

In the hallway Larkin told Diana that Adela was waiting to see her in the drawing room. Diana drew a deep breath. Well, it was inevitable, of course. She and Adela must have an understanding. But she had hoped it might be delayed a little longer.

Adela was pacing nervously back and forth before the fire, while Aunt Christie occupied the big, white leather chair. Richard Thorpe's profile was clear-cut against the darkening window. So Aunt Christie knew and approved of Adela's affair with Richard. She was the type who would, Diana reflected scornfully.

Ever since the night she had visited Richard's hunting lodge in

search of Adela, she had sensed in him a mounting intensity of dislike, born of the fact that he had revealed Diana's attraction for him only to be coldly rebuffed. Such repulsion his ego could not tolerate and so his desire to hurt Diana had played eagerly into Adela's hands.

"You wanted to see me, Adela?"

Three pairs of hostile eyes raised to meet hers. Adela came forward, trembling a little. "Yes. We all know the arrangement my brother made with you about becoming his wife. We know the marriage was a farce from beginning to end. And now we want to know when you are leaving this house!"

Diana took a deep breath and steadied herself. "I'm not leaving," she said quite clearly. "Stephen asked me to carry on until his return—and that's exactly what I'm going to do!"

SHE awakened early one morning, just as dawn was poking fingers of light into her bedroom. Outside the mists of night had not entirely dissolved. She arose and went to kneel at the open window, looking out into the garden. Great waves of fog swept back as if by an unseen hand, and a faint pinkness in the east gave assurance of a bright, new day. Diana felt a great peace descend upon her, as if for a moment out of eternity all thought and time was arrested while she knelt there and drank in the promise of the dawn.

And then Stephen's voice, as clear as she had ever heard it, spoke quietly and tenderly. "Diana, my beloved—we shall soon be together again—in just a little while—"

Trembling, the tears streaming down her face, lifted entirely out of herself, she rose and, as complete joy flooded her being, she found herself in the hallway, knocking frantically at Adela's door, calling: "Adela! Adela! Please come—"

Adela opened the door to stare in amazement. "What's happened? You look as if you'd seen—"

"Stephen spoke to me—there in my room! Oh, you must believe me. Please believe I'm telling the truth! He's alive, Adela! Oh, be glad with me! I know it surely. He said, 'Diana, my beloved—in just a little while—'"

She was surprised at Adela's gentleness. "It was a dream, Diana—nothing more. I'm sorry. Come, let me take you back to bed."

(To Be Continued)

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HERALDS COAST AT-TACK—Brig. Gen. William Ord Ryan of the Fourth Interceptor Command at San Francisco, who made the official statement of the appearance of "hostile" planes over the Pacific coast, causing partial blackout of San Francisco and other cities.

SIDE GLANCES



Jones suggests table tennis, be sure and don't that I've bought a set and practiced every night for three weeks!"

WAIKIKI BEACH, and Diamond Head in Danger Lines of Japanese—Air photo shows Waikiki's famed Waikiki Beach, and in the background, Diamond Head, a landmark seen at sea. In foreground, Royal Hawaiian hotel.