

DEEP WATER ISLAND

by ALAN LEMAY

INSTALLMENT EIGHT
 THE STORY SO FAR: Karen Waterson, convinced by her lawyer, John Colt, that she has a claim to the island estate of her grandfather, Garrett Waterson, has come to Honolulu to attempt getting the property. In an effort to find out something about the Wayne family, now in control of Alakoa, the island, she accepts a date to go sailing with Richard (Tonga Dick) Wayne. Against her wishes he takes her to Alakoa. Arriving there, they find James Wayne, Dick's uncle and manager of the property, very ill. During the night of their visit he is found dead. Dick and Karen leave for Honolulu the next day. On the way back Dick tells Karen he loves her, but they quarrel over disposing of her claim to the island. Later Dick meets John Colt and tells him he has news for him. Now continue with the story.



I imagine, Wayne," said John Colt smoothly, "that you are lying."

"Difficult to imagine," John Colt murmured.

"Many things that actually happen are difficult to imagine. Who would have imagined, for example, that the granddaughter of Garrett Waterson would turn up on my boat wearing false whiskers? Yet I give you my word, John, that is exactly what she did."

Neither Karen nor John Colt seemed entertained.

"I see the American ambassador to Japan," Dick said; "and some tobacco company boys, going out to their stations in China; and quite a sprinkling of movie stars from Hollywood; and a gentleman who cut a throat in Singapore, to my positive knowledge."

"You are pretty well acquainted," John Colt inquired suavely, "among cutthroats?"

"Only among those indigenous to the Pacific. I also see here half a dozen gentlemen that I cannot quite place. A few years ago I would have said that they were American financiers of the hit-loot-and-run type. I had understood that conditions on the mainland were no longer favorable to those types."

"You seem well informed."

"This is a crossroads," Dick said. "You get a perspective upon both sides of the Pacific from here. But I still can't make out those wandering financiers. Oh—I get it now. Since they have been smoked out of the mainland, naturally quite a few of them would come here, of course. Fugitive empire builders, by God! John, I see you are not alone."

"I?"

"Naturally," Dick said pleasantly, "quite a few of your type are here already, looking around to see if anything is lying loose. I must say, John, that your plans seem better thought out than most. I'm afraid that you are the type that thinks things through. Your prospects look excellent, John, from the outside."

"I'm inclined to think so myself," John Colt said.

"Would you say that your chances are worth one hundred thousand dollars, John?"

Only the faintest suggestion of contempt showed in John Colt's eyes as he smiled. "Have your brothers authorized you to make that offer?"

"I haven't seen them," Dick admitted; "they have already gone back to Alakoa. However, I think you will find it necessary to deal with me. I'm afraid I can't let you dicker with my brothers. They're much too easy to cheat."

"And I am afraid," John Colt said, his voice so modulated that in the general din of the lanai Dick had almost to read his lips, "that I'm not interested in dicking with either you or your brothers."

"You definitely refuse one hundred thousand?"

"I'm sorry."

"Perhaps you'd care to make a counter offer?"

"I'm sorry," Colt said again.

Tonga Dick Wayne looked at Karen Waterson for a full minute, and his frivolous manner dropped away. Twice Karen met his eyes, but both times dropped hers again. Dick Wayne was looking at her with a real and unfeigned regret.

"One proposition more, Colt," he said, "and this is my last. One hundred thousand dollars to you, and one-third share in Alakoa to Miss Waterson."

"Miss Waterson," Colt said, "is not interested in any proposition at all."

"Karen," Tonga Dick said, "you have just heard the end of your Pacific adventure."

John Colt's face was hard and serious, but there was a glint of intense satisfaction in his eyes which he could not repress.

"Don't let him worry you," he said softly to Karen. "He's shown his hand—and it's just as I said. The Waynes haven't a hope in the world. That's exactly why there has never been any reason for compromise, from the first. Unless they knew they were beaten, they would offer no compromise at all."

Dick Wayne emptied his glass, snapped it down upon the table, and pushed back his chair. "I'll see you in a couple of days," he said to Karen, "on Alakoa."

That surprised an answer out of her. "Alakoa? We're not coming to Alakoa."

"Oh, yes, you are. Or at least he is. He'll probably want to bring you along." He turned to John Colt. "The offers I made, I made on my own hook," he said. "They are now withdrawn. But I'll tell you why I made them—it may interest you very much."

"Not particularly," John Colt drawled. "You have a lost case, Wayne."

"I'm going to kill your case," Dick said tonelessly. "No, I'm going to do worse to you than that—I'm going to give my brothers the means with which to kill your case. To do that will cost me a great deal, in some very obscure ways. It will, in fact, cost me more than my share of Alakoa is worth. That is why I offered to settle with you. For Miss Waterson's sake, but principally for my own, I'm sorry that you refused. But you're finished, Colt—through—washed up—done."

"I get what you mean," John Colt smiled.

"If you think a little further," Tonga Dick said, "you'll see even more clearly what I mean. Your case has one hole in it. Ask yourself what that hole is."

Karen Waterson, watching John Colt's face, saw a curious thing happen then. The faint, tired smile on Colt's face lingered there still, but after a moment Karen saw that it was only the form of it that remained. Colt's eyes were fixed hard on Tonga Dick, and Karen thought she had never seen anything like the intensity of that unwinking stare. If ever a man tried to look into another man's mind and take it apart, Colt was trying it now.

Dick Wayne was filling his pipe. The very fact that he was smoking a pipe at all at a tea dansant made him look more at ease thereby, as if he alone, of all the people on that broad lanai, was completely at home.

"You're thinking of exactly the same thing I am, John," Dick assured him softly.

Once more the eyes of the two men met and held.

"I imagine, Wayne," said John Colt smoothly, "that you are lying."

Steadily, unhurried, controlled—there was nothing in John Colt's voice to indicate that he knew what it was to doubt. Yet, somehow, Karen knew with utter certainty that Colt was shaken—more deeply shaken perhaps than he would have admitted even to himself; and when Karen saw that, she was oppressed by a gray conviction that John Colt, gambling for Alakoa, in her behalf, had irrevocably lost.

It was late in the evening when Dick dropped anchor in Alakoa's little bay, and immediately was driven up to the old house high in the gorges.

His brothers, as he might have expected, had already retired. It was surprising in how many superficial ways they imitated the virtues of James Wayne—without ever seeming to accomplish anything thereby. Dick did not cause them to be roused, at once. Instead he sent for Charles Wong, and with the assistance of the efficient Chinese set about a brief survey of the condition of Alakoa's books.

A careful audit would have been necessary in order to check through, with any accuracy, that great array of his uncle's books which recorded the financial transactions of Alakoa. Dick knew what he was looking for, however; he steamed rapidly through such of the summaries as interested him.

The story that those books told should have pleased anybody, but it did not please Dick Wayne. He was hunting for something else, the existence of which he only suspected, and to which he was perfectly certain his brothers had no clue at all.

When he had hunted a long time without result it became apparent to him that Charles Wong, under guise of assistance, was in subtle ways managing to confuse his search, and bring it to nothing. As this became definitely evident, Dick Wayne went back and searched again, and this time found what he sought. It was an inconspicuous item for the year 1930, easily brushed over, and obscure in meaning when found. It consisted of nothing more than an entry, under miscellaneous operating expense: "Old debts, \$25,000."

The entry was posted where it did not belong—a practice untypical of either James Wayne or Charles Wong, and Dick turned sharply upon the Chinese.

"What debt was this?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You posted this entry?"

"Yes, I did."

"Well, did you pay out this money?"

"No, sir; Mr. Wayne always handled that item himself."

"Always? What do you mean by that?"

Wong fell silent; but now Dick Wayne knew where to look for what he wanted. Hurriedly he checked back through the books for previous years. Every year for seventeen years that same vague item was to be found, sometimes small, sometimes enormous, according to the way the year had gone. Over that period of seventeen years almost \$200,000 stood against that single vague phrase—"Old Debts." A curious thing in a way; for, as far as Dick's perfunctory survey of the records could make out, there had never been any old debts at all, other than those meticulously funded and otherwise disposed.

For the space of a minute Tonga Dick stared hard at Charles Wong; and was able to convince himself that the Chinese knew no more than he did—and perhaps considerably less.

Dick dismissed Wong and planted himself at his uncle's desk. He ordered coffee, and while Tsuru was getting it for him he sat for a time thinking hard, his eyes covered by his hands. By the time his coffee appeared he had made up his mind.

"Bring my brothers here," he told the Japanese girl.

Tsuru looked at him in a startled way. His brothers were his elders, and senior to him in the control of Alakoa; but he had commanded that they appear in the same curt tone that he had ordered coffee.

"Yes, Mister Dick." She whisked out of the room. Perhaps the Japanese girl was a little afraid of the room itself, since the death of James Wayne; judging it to be an appropriate hangout for devils.

Dick was finishing a second cup of coffee before his brothers came.

"Good of you to show up," Ernest Wayne said sardonically.

"I understand," said Willard Wayne, "that through your generous courtesy, Miss Waterson has been a house guest here—in fact slept here the night Uncle Jim died."

"True," Tonga Dick agreed.

"Tsuru, bring two more coffee cups."

"We don't want any coffee," Ernest said for them both.

"Bring them anyway. Sit down, you two."

Willard, who had started to lower himself into a chair, hesitated in some annoyance, but gave in. Somewhere, early in their childhood, there must have been a time when the two elder brothers had dominated Dick by main force of age and size; and although Dick could not even remember that time, Ernest and Willard had never been able to accustom themselves to the change in their relationship. He would always seem to them an unjustifiable rebel, scandalous in manner, and wrong-headed in his pursuits.

Ernest, who was shivering a little, maintained his self assertion by remaining on his feet. "I would certainly like to know," he said with asperity, "what your purpose was in bringing that—that woman here."

"No purpose at all," Dick grumbled.

They looked at each other meaningfully, and Dick noticed again the extreme nervous irritability which he had seen in them whenever they had met since his return to Hawaii. That nervousness looked compatible enough in the tall, thin Ernest, who never seemed to feel entirely well; but it was incongruous in the thick-set Willard Wayne, with his smooth, firmly padded cheeks and his slow moving eyes; for this nervousness was that of men haunted by an inescapable fear.

Dick knew that he had enough dynamite in his hands to blow their whole situation apart, and he had decided that he was willing to accept the cost to himself of using it. But there was something else he wanted to find out first. There was a shadow of wicked mischief in his mood now as he set out to prod it out of them.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

A raw potato put in soup that has too much salt in it and boiled for 10 minutes will remove the salty taste.

Always store baking powder in a tightly covered container. If it is exposed to the air some of the strength will be lost.

Store dried fruits in their original packages, tightly covered, or place them in covered fruit jars. It is best not to wash them until time to use.

The unsightly ring left by cleaning fluids, when used to remove spots, may be avoided by placing under the spot a pad made of thick absorbent cotton.

Always cut toast in small squares when making cream toast. It is much easier served cut in this way.

Apply paint remover with a brush. When paint begins to curl remove with a putty knife. Remover takes time and cannot be hurried.

To remove brown stains from light-colored ranges, dip a cloth in turpentine and apply to stains. With a little pressure the stains will come off.

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 You may enter as many last lines as you wish, if they are all written on separate Raleigh package wrappers (or facsimiles). Prizes will be awarded on the originality and aptness of the line you write. Judges' decisions must be accepted as final. In case of ties, duplicate prizes will be awarded. Winners will be notified by mail.
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