

DEEP WATER ISLAND
by ALAN LEMAY

INSTALLMENT TWELVE

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, comes with him to Honolulu and meets Tonga Dick or Richard Wayne, a member of the Wayne family which has been in control of the property since her grandfather's disappearance. Dick's uncle, James Wayne, manager of this island, Alakoa, dies from overwork and Dick attempts to work out a compromise settlement of Karen's claim. This is refused. Meantime Karen has learned that both Colt and Dick are in love with her. Dick reveals that Karen is not heiress at all, as Garrett Waterson is alive and on his way to Alakoa. Dick and Karen leave the island together and some distance out find that Lilua, a native house-girl, has stowed away in the boat. Dick questions her regarding her actions. Now continue with the story.



The girl let the sway of the ship take her then. She swayed against the doorway's stanchion, and stayed there.

"I want to know how you got onto my boat," Dick said.

"I swam," Lilua tossed at him in a quick, almost contemptuous aside. She went on talking to Karen, levelly, her face quiet except for the flame in her eyes, and her body quiet except for that easy, unconscious sway that balanced her to the lift of the sea.

"You have nothing to give him," Lilua said in that inexorable, steady voice. "You can only think of position, and land, and money. Would you want him if you had first seen him sick, and helpless, and alone? You know your eyes would not have seen him at all. This is my man. If he were dead, I would make myself die. Would you?"

Suddenly Dick was unable to speak. He stood weaponless, humble, and—without any particular recourse or hope. Diffidently he turned his eyes to Karen.

Karen Waterson had gone perfectly white—whiter than sea foam, whiter than the knit linen of the little hat she wore. Her mouth was oddly distorted, but her eyes were blank. She seemed to have lost all power of motion exactly where she stood. Then the reel of the little ship unbalanced her, and by its very unkindness seemed to return her the gift of movement. Karen turned, literally fled. At the foot of the ladder she flung Dick one irrational, unreadable glance; then ran away from them into the upper night.

CHAPTER XI

Dick Wayne was left facing Lilua alone. For a moment Lilua's eyes remained fixed upon the companionway where Karen had disappeared. Then her eyes turned to Dick, and for a moment they looked at each other.

"Lilu, Lilu," Dick said, "what have you done to me?"

For one brief moment the sharp, spear-like flames in the eyes of Lilua broke down; she looked at Tonga Dick pathetically, pitifully, with no defense behind her eyes, no barriers at all.

Dick's voice was cool, definite as a stroke. "Stop it, you hear me? Forget it—cut it out!"

The girl let the sway of the ship take her, then. She swayed against the doorway's stanchion, and stayed there.

Dick took the ladder in long, reluctant strides. A glance told him that Karen was in the point of the bow.

He stood a minute by the swaying mainmast, trying to gather himself, but without any effect. Then he walked forward to the rail where Karen stood. Close to her at the rail, he drew her close against his side, easily and naturally; it had always seemed to him that she belonged nowhere else but there.

"Karen—"

She took herself away from him sharply—out of the curve of his arm, out of contact with him in more ways than one; and they stood alone, as individuals as the unrelated stars.

"Karen," Dick said, "I guess you are right; I don't know how you knew, but you knew. In a way, you foretold this, Karen."

"Perhaps," Karen said, "it's better for both of us that this happened just as it did."

That stopped him for a moment but he came on again. "What are you saying? In God's name, up helm! Do I mean so little to you—"

"Whatever you may mean to me, it seems that you have made yourself mean more to this—this Kanaka."

"Karen, it's grotesque that a native brat—"

"A brat is a child, Dick. This girl is anything but a child."

"What does it matter what she is? If you and I—"

"Perhaps it matters everything what she is. Perhaps—she's what you made her. I don't know how old she is. But that's a woman, Dick. If you've made her your own, as it seems you have—"

Her words died in her throat; but she had said enough.

For a moment then Tonga Dick Wayne faltered. The cool, shimmering lines of Karen Waterson seemed infinitely far away. For a moment he was able to hope—even to believe—that he could put her out of his mind, out of his heart. For a little while this girl had become to him like a dream of the stars—but a dream that he would have been glad to forget.

Partly he could see her as she literally was—there was no doubt about that. He could see her as a

thin-bodied, thin-faced San Francisco stenographer, sharp-edged in mind and manner because any girl needs to be, making her own way. He could see her in the light of the reason that she was here—a short-cutting little adventuress, willingly lending herself to the predacious brain of John Colt in the hunt for unearned fortune. A girl proud without background, arrogant without attainment.

But still behind that, like a mist-figure seen beyond steel cogs and wheels, hovered persistently his own conception of what this girl might have been—perhaps still could be. He was obsessed by the haunting belief that if what he had hunted for always was not in this girl, then it was somehow lost out of the world.

"And now," Karen said, "I think you might put back to Alakoa—don't you? Because you said—"

"No," Dick answered.

"I ask you to turn back."

"I'm not going to put back. At least not yet. Not until you come to your senses, Karen."

He didn't know why he told her that. The impulse was jerking at him to do as she said, and take himself well out of this thing forever; to turn back to John Colt, and be rid of her once and for all. He could see Lilua's steady eyes—and no man could ever forget what she had said. He honestly supposed that it would have been better for him to relax into the world of Lilua—to lose himself by day in the casual adventures of the warm sea, and by night in the arms of an island woman who doubted nothing, asked nothing—could be well-content with food and a man. But—something stubborn within him held on.

Karen said incisively, "You promised you'd turn back if I asked."

"Not yet. Later, if you want. Not yet."

He had given up ever hearing any expression from her again, before she spoke.

"I guess—" she said—"I guess, Dick, I don't blame you."

Of all things on earth, he had least expected to hear that. Inane-ly he said, "Again, please?"

"Men are what they are," Karen said, her voice somehow distant, yet not unfriendly—"and women are what they are. People who hunt for the absolute are fools."

"Always?"

"Oh, yes; always. But maybe I'm a fool, too. I think—" Her tone wavered, but steadied again. "I wonder—maybe you'd better go on. Go on to Hilo—and give me a little time. We'll still come out, Dick, I think."

"Listen," Dick said, "I want you to have this decently straight. I give you my word—and I wouldn't offer proof if I could—I never made love to this girl in my life, nor so much as laid a hand on her."

"No?"

He didn't even bother to answer that; he knew what to expect from this girl by now. He held on still because to him only one adventure was conceivable, and that adventure was Karen—literally, for she was more than an epitome: she was the adventure itself.

"I don't see why—" Karen began. The rushing sound of the Holokai through the uneven sea seemed to come between them again, so that he never knew what she had started to say.

Suddenly he turned, and shouted for Inyashi; the little Japanese came running along the deck.

"Get—get ready to put about."

"Yes, Captain."

Almost at once the voice of the ship altered, slackening off and quieting.

"So," Karen said, "it was you who changed your mind, after all!"

Dick said thickly, "You're going to have to believe the truth when I tell it to you."

"Either," she said, "I'll take you as you really are, or I'll never take you at all."

"You'll never take me, or I you," Dick said harshly, "on the basis of any such lie as is in your mind."

"The Polynesians are known everywhere as a mild, easygoing race. Am I supposed to think that this Kanaka woman, without any encouragement or any past relationship with you, suddenly runs wild, and goes to passionate, extreme lengths—"

"Lilua is not all Polynesian, Karen."

"I have no doubt she's a little of everything."

"I don't think you're so very charitable, either to her or to me. Not even to yourself."

"To myself?"

He was silent. "She's beautiful, Dick," Karen said. "I can see that. But I hate her, Dick. When I look at the dark, coppery color of her skin, and think of you touching her—it seems to me that I can never look at a brown skin again without—"

"Stop it! You don't know what you're saying."

"Well, she is of a different color."

"Karen—that girl is your cousin."

A few seconds passed while she comprehended that; then she whirled sharply toward him. "You mean to tell me—"

"You wondered why Lilu' has charge of the whole house on Alakoa? You wondered if there wasn't a special answer to that? Well, now you know the right answer. Lilu' is Garrett Waterson's granddaughter—just the same as you."

He faced her squarely. Her whole body seemed to have gone tense, but for the moment she was unable to speak; and he never found out what she would have asked him first.

From within the ship issued a thin, small, and somehow distant sound—unrecognizable and inarticulate, but so thoroughly unaccountable in the ordinary world of reality that every figure upon the deck of the Holokai was instantly struck motionless. Even the perpetually trotting Inyashi stopped, and stood frozen on the swaying deck. They were waiting to hear if that sound should come again, once more cutting through the laboring of the little ship, and the great, persistent rush and wallop of the sea.

It did not come again; but after a moment Dick knew that what he had heard was a woman's terrified scream.

It was Dick himself who burst into action. He raced aft, sprang into the ladder well, and in a second more was in the main cabin, where he, and Karen, and Lilua had faced each other such a little while ago; and here he stood, for a moment balancing to the sea.

He didn't see her at first. That cabin, deep, but narrow as the little ship, seemed strangely empty; he had paced alone here a thousand times, without ever sensing the utter vacancy that was here now. The door of his little cabin, wedged into the stern, was flapping loosely against its latch—swinging half open, then banging shut again without catching, with the perversity of all doors. He sprang the length of the cabin with a furious activity; and booted that door into its wall-catch, once and for all; but there was no one in the camped stall where he usually slept.

Then, turning, he saw her; and was instantly by her side. Lilua lay in a little crumpled heap at the end of the table, and half under it. He had seen death many times; but it seemed to him now that he had never seen anyone so utterly lifeless, so completely slumped into an unutterable oblivion, as Lilua's form seemed there, dropped like seaweed left on the beach.

He picked her up in his arms—gently as he could, but so hand-capped by the Holokai's roll that he cursed the helmsman for not holding the vessel steadier into the seas.

He got her down onto his own bunk at last. He kissed her mouth as he laid her down, then sought the source of the blood that was staining his shirt, and the bunk upon which he had placed her. There was a knife wound under Lilua's left breast—how deep he could not tell. He snatched cotton from an emergency cabinet nailed to the wall, and crammed it deep into the wound. She stiffened convulsively when he did that. It was his first intimation that she was alive.

He tucked a blanket over her tightly, so that she would not be rolled by the Holokai's pitch, and stepped to the door. The Chinese mess boy had appeared uncertainly from the pantry; Dick seized him, and pulled him into the bunk room.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Smile Awhile

Wouldn't Chance It
Seaman (third enlistment)—Seasick, buddy?
Seaman (first enlistment)—No, but I'd hate to yawn.

When little Willie was asked why he got such low marks in history, he replied: "Aw, teacher's always asking me about something that happened before I was born."

Pot Luck
Missionary—Poor man! So you know nothing of religion?
Cannibal—Oh, yes, we got a taste of it when the last missionary was here.

Another Crow
Recruit—How far is it to camp?
Sergeant—About ten miles as the crow flies.
Recruit—How far is it if the crow had to walk and carry a pack and rifle?

In Conversation
Mr. McPherson gave some advice to his wife when they were expecting friends to tea. "Just mind, Jeannie," he said, "to put the sugar-tongs in the basin, an' not a spoon."
"But we have no lump sugar in the house," she expostulated. "We've only granulated."
"I was mindin' that!" said McPherson.

Perhaps So
Teacher—In what battle did General Wolfe cry: "I die happy?"
Johnny—I think it was his last battle.

A reformer wants to let his conscience be your guide.

No Trouble
George—I'm going to have a hard time meeting expenses these days. How about you?
Joe—Not at all. I meet 'em at every turn.

Dr. Goose
The prefix "Dr." would be appropriate before the name of a Canada goose. He is an astonishing surgeon. One of these birds was recently seen in a refuge with a broken leg. He straightened out the leg with his beak and then held it in position for hours at a time. When he had to move, he used his wings in hopping along the ground. In a few weeks the broken leg was completely healed!

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