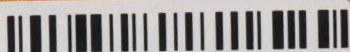


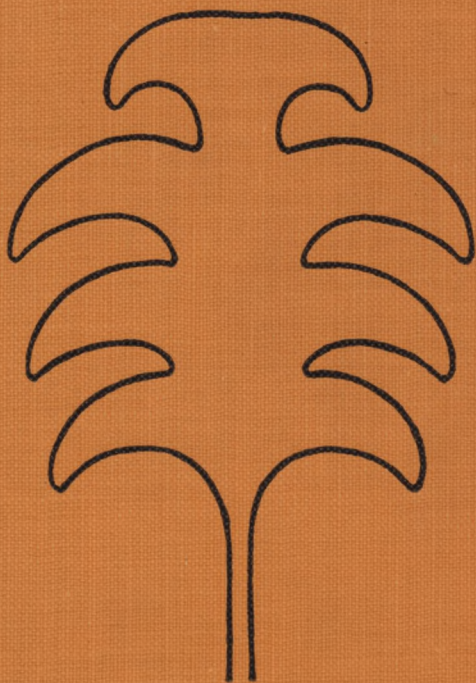
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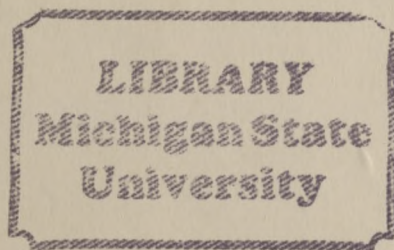
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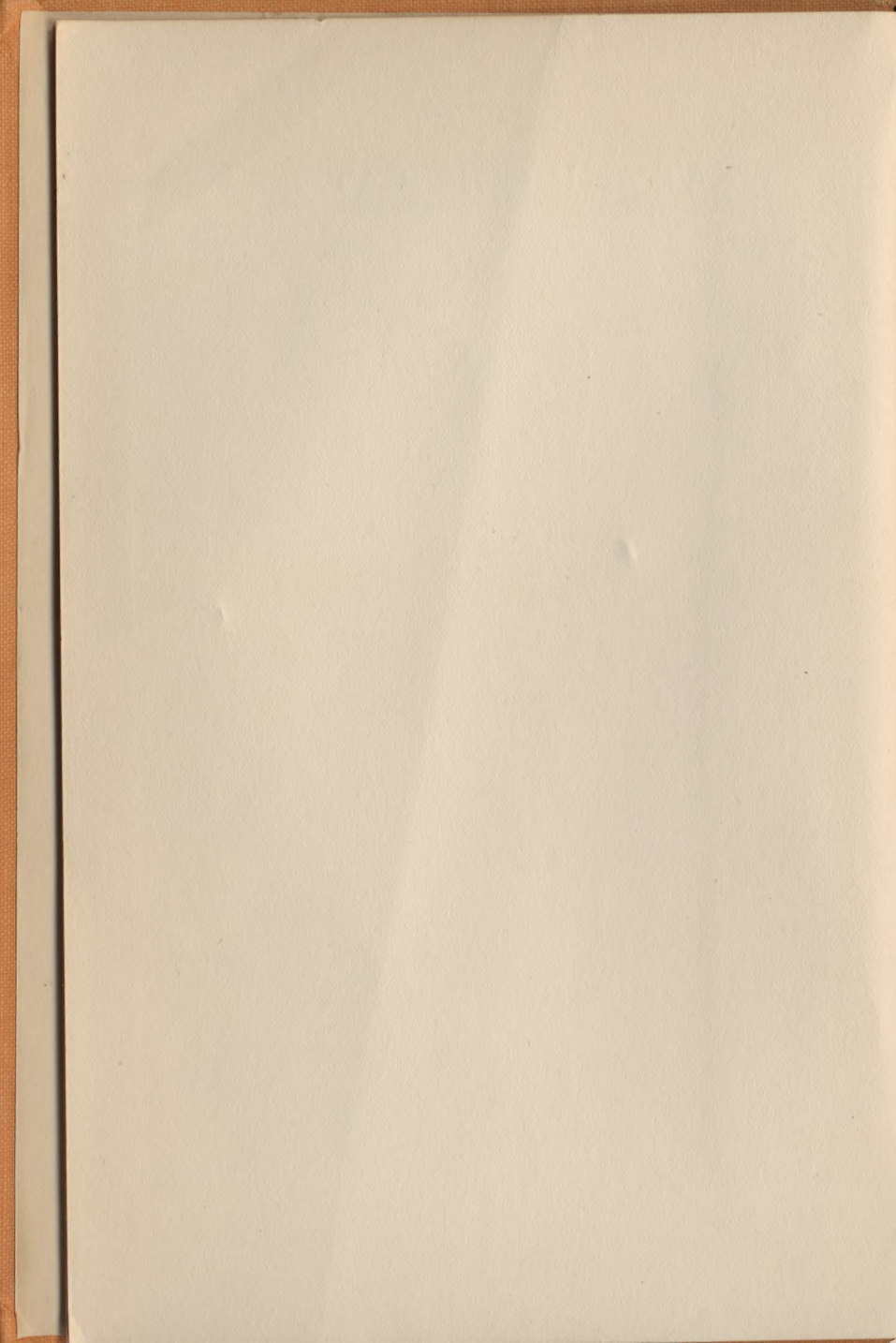
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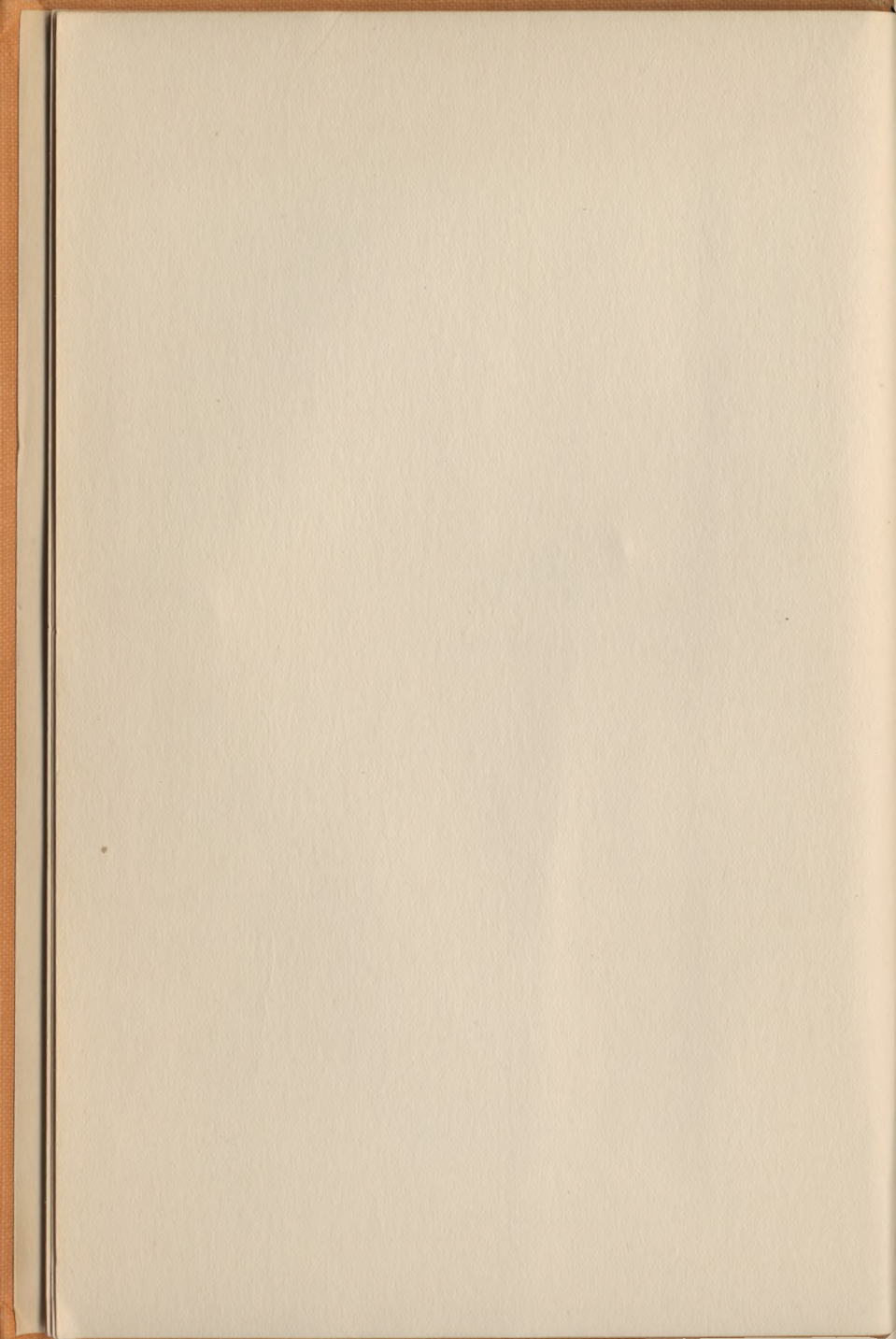
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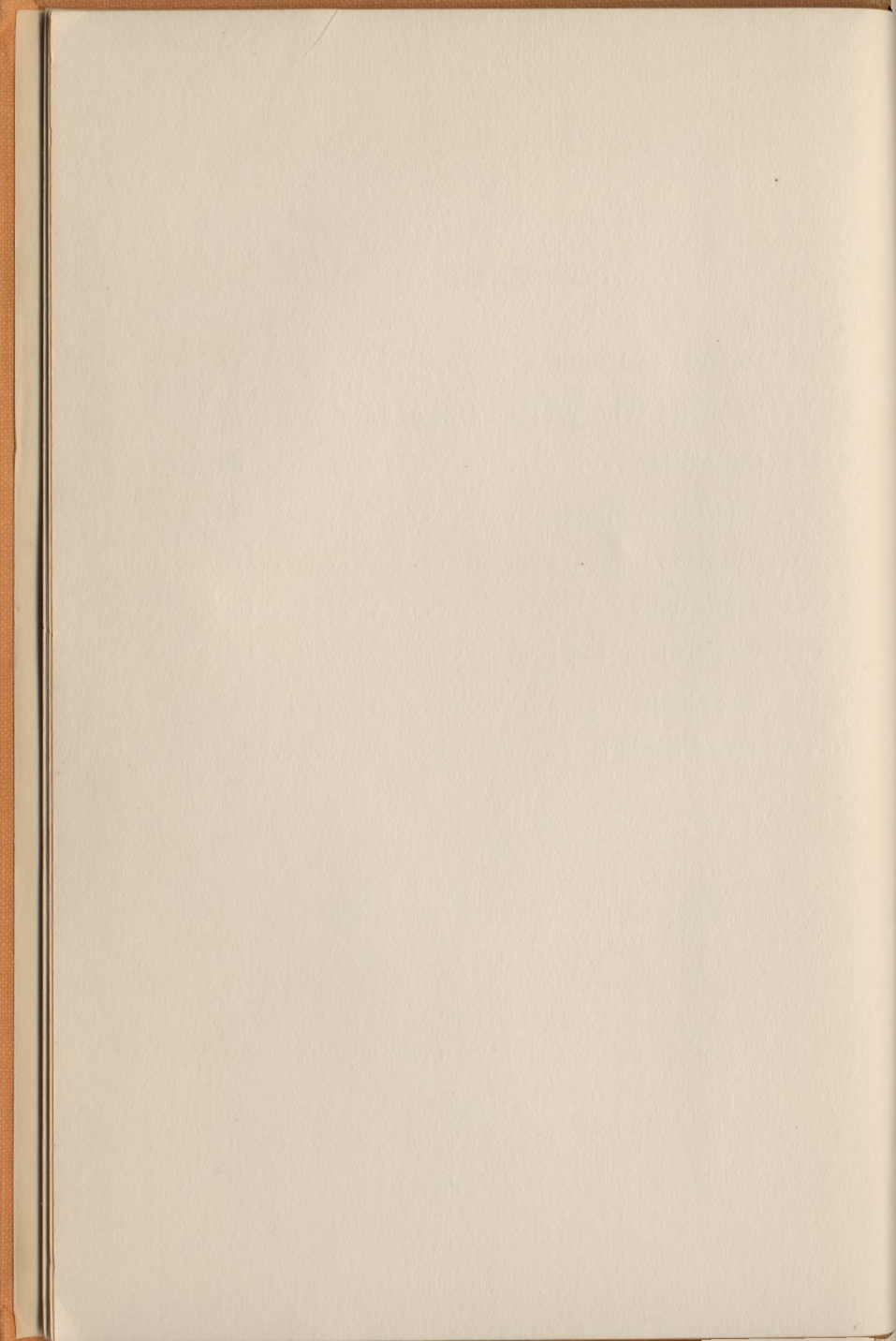
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L. A. F. K.
with aloha nui.

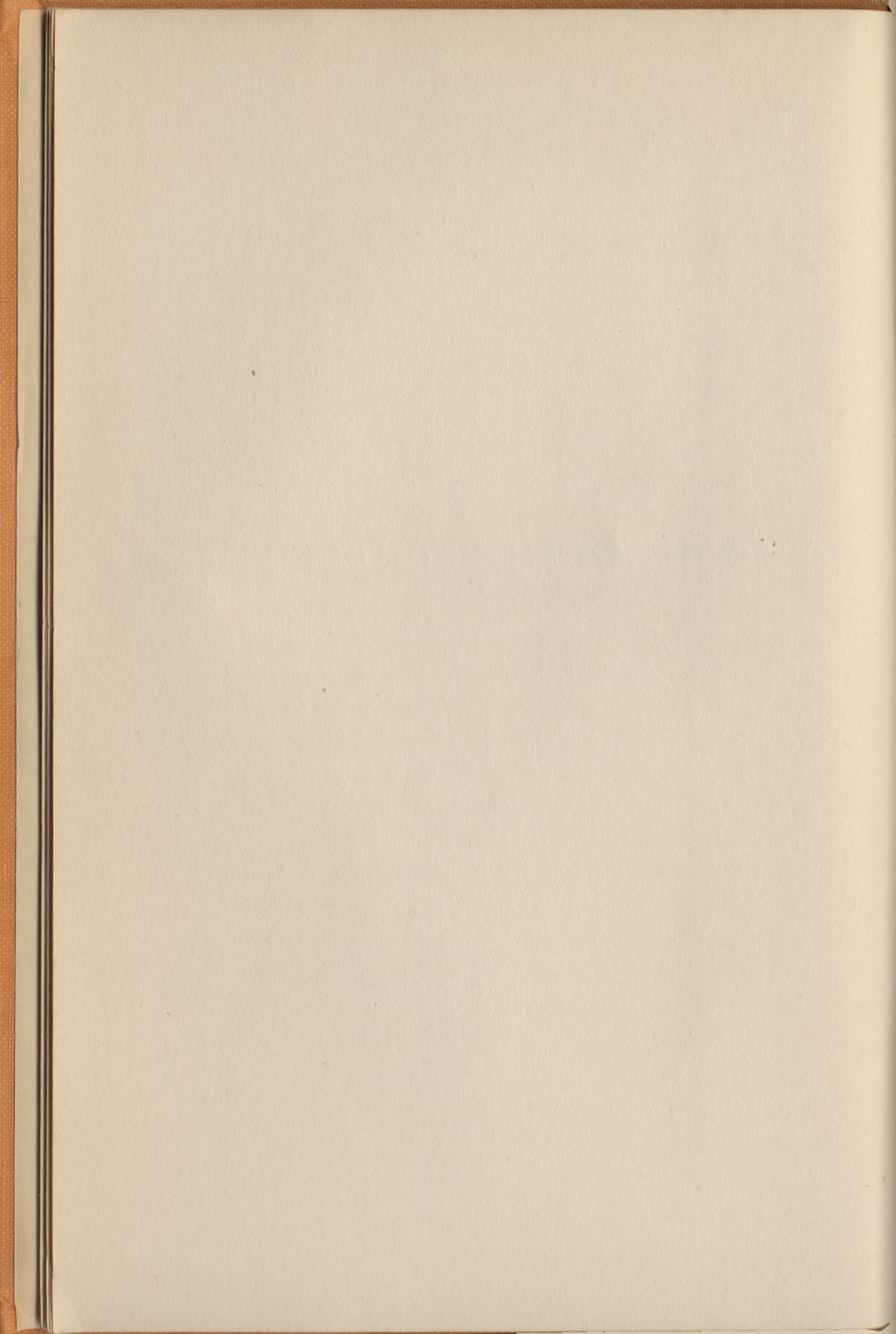


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*All of the characters and incidents in this book
are purely fictitious.*



Kat and Copy-Cat

CHAPTER I

PUPU-LE AND LOLO

IT WAS about a week after Dick Harris moved into his new quarters on Tantalus, that the first *kona* arrived. That is, *his* first *kona*. He had never heard of one before because the *kona*, or south wind, is as much a taboo topic in Hawaii as earthquakes are in California. Naturally the real estate man wasn't mentioning it when he was showing Dick around. Tantalus is the big green mountain which rises some two thousand feet, upon the very outskirts of Honolulu; and when the agent's car stopped before the break in the hedge in front of one of the only two houses upon a certain narrow ridge of the mountain, Dick was immediately positive that he had found exactly the right spot in which to settle down, "far from the madding crowd," and finish some articles which were overdue and concerning which he was being periodically jacked up by various editors. He gave the place a hasty once-over, closed the deal on the spot and moved in the next day. Dick usually did things that way.

The first week was ideal. Big winds came down

from the higher peaks, swept across his lanai and swished away through the row of ironwoods which stood sentinel between his house and the one next door. Out upon this lanai, or veranda, he had his typewriter, and under the inspiration of the winds and the dark blue-green coloring of the mountains and the silence, broken only by the birds and the swishing of the trees and the gentle sounds of the Japanese boy in the kitchen, concocting delectable dishes to be spread before him shortly here on this same lanai—his work slid out from under his typewriter with a swiftness and lucidity which made him “rejoice as a strong man to run a race.”

And then suddenly everything stopped. The trade wind dropped, his grey matter refused to function—the only papers which came from the typewriter were wadded into unseemly balls and cast in the direction of the waste-basket with varying degrees of accuracy but much vehemence. A *kona* never lasts more than a few days, and comes only two or three times a year; but while it is on, the thermometer goes up, the barometer goes down, and profanity is the general order of conversation.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of the second day, Dick appeared in the kitchen doorway, mopping a very red face and nursing two vertical lines between his brows. “Moto,” he said tersely, “go and get the hammer.”

The Japanese turned inquiringly from the care-

ful dissecting of an alligator pear.

"The hammer!" repeated Dick impatiently; "Where is it? In the garage? Well, go and get it."

The Japanese laid down his knife and turned dutifully toward the exit, and Dick walked back across the lanai to the rail and glared savagely down at the Manoa Valley spread out something like a thousand feet below him. The outer edge of the lanai overhung the precipitous mountain side so that the drop was almost sheer, although the steep descent was clothed with a softly swaying garment of vines, ti plants and clambering grasses which masked its harsh and rocky lines. Far down on the lower slopes were guava and lantana thickets, and then houses and winding black roads and the square green panels of rice and taro fields. Opposite, a mile or two away as the crow flies, was another mountain side exactly like the one upon which he stood; and to the left, as an extension of his own mountain and imperiously close at hand towered the high, sharply serrated peaks of the Koolau Range, covered with dark blue-green jungle and mottled in all of the draws with the whitey-green of kukui trees. Leaning over the rail of the lanai he could see some scraggly koa trees beneath him swaying in the breath of the south wind passing just below, but not a whiff of it came to him. An ironwood tree, which had been the last one of the row between his house and that of his neighbor, had

washed down some six feet below the level and was growing bravely there, out of a handful of soil and some cracks in the rocks. This moved gently and swayed its long locks, but such breeze as reached it, failed to pass through so effectual a wind-break, though Dick leaned forward hoping to intercept a breath of it.

Moto returned at last with the hammer and stood looking doubtfully about to divine its purpose. "Pull out those nails," ordered Dick, indicating the canvas curtain which hung at the south end of the lanai, its bottom weighted with a heavy wooden pole.

"I think no good, —" began Moto uneasily.

"Pull them out! Pull them out!" commanded Dick. "I'm going to have that curtain up if it costs a leg. What the deuce have they got it nailed down for, anyhow?"

Moto examined the row of nails which had been driven through the canvas and into the wood of the lanai, just above the pole. "I think they like keep it down, maybe," he said.

"I don't care a hang what they like!" fumed Dick. "I'm going to have some air here. They've shut off the whole seaward side of this place; not a window in my room on that side, this canvas nailed down and that ironwood tree out there shutting off all of the wind and all of the view, right up to the

mountain side opposite. I won't stand for anything like this."

Moto fingered the hammer. "I think no good—" he began again.

"Go ahead and pull out the nails, I told you. Never mind what you think, you do what I say!" And Moto went to work upon the nails.

Dick returned to a contemplation of the offending ironwood tree. "I'll have that thing cut down," he chafed; "There's no sense to it. What's the idea of a whole row of trees in between two houses that are only three or four feet apart? It's idiotic."

"I think," said Moto, turning from his nails, "ironwood make windbreak before she make this house. Just one house here before; then she make this house and she leave trees all same."

"But what's the sense of having the houses so close together?" fussed Dick. "Not another building on this ridge, and these two jammed up against each other like a city street."

"I think," said Moto, patiently; "she make this house for old Mamma, when she marry with that man; then when Malua he die, old Mamma she go back and take care of baby."

"I don't care anything about their family history!" sputtered Dick. "Go ahead with those nails, can't you!"

Moto went back to the nails and at last they were all drawn and Dick came forward to help raise the

curtain. Curtains of the same sort were rolled above the openings of the lanai on the side toward the valley and the end toward the mountain, and could be manipulated with heavy cords and pulleys; but when it came to lifting the one just released, he found that the cords and pulleys had been removed. "That's a darned nice note!" he grumbled. "Well, roll it up anyway. When we get it up we'll nail it. It won't be our fault if it tears out the canvas. Go ahead and roll it up. I'll help you if it gets too heavy."

Resignedly Moto began to roll the big pole and Dick stood back and watched as gradually the space widened between the pole and the floor. Up and up went the pole, to the level of the top of the rail, then higher and higher; and then came an exclamation from Dick. "Well, I'll be damned!" he said. For as the pole rolled higher, instead of an opening above the rail appearing, there was only a tight wall of tongue and groove boards, freshly painted and beautifully clean.

Moto stopped with the pole on his shoulder. "Thas what I say before," he remarked; "I say no good."

"My Lord!" ejaculated Dick; "Did you know that was a solid wall?"

"Ye-es," said Moto; "I say before—"

"You idiot! Drop that thing and go back to the kitchen!" and Dick flung across the lanai and out

through the garden and into the road which wound its way past the house and on up the mountain.

There was some slight breeze here, although it was a warm one, and Dick loitered along the road for some distance, still fuming. However, presently he found himself halting now and then to examine some of the interesting wild growths, and his naturally good nature began to reassert itself until he had actually reached the point of laughing over the curtain episode, when he had occasion to step out of the way of a passing automobile, and immediately was hailed from within the vehicle. "Have a lift?" called a genial voice.

Dick turned to the car and found that the voice belonged to a man whom he had met a few days before at the Country Club, but whose name he was absolutely unable to recall. Feeling in a mood for companionship, however, he jumped in and they drove along, the man indicating various points of interest from their high vantage ground, as they went. However, after a short distance, the man backed and turned the car. "Just taking a run up the hill," he said, "while my wife finishes some bridge at one of the houses below. I came up after her, but couldn't stand for the crowd, so I'm marking time. Are you out for a hike? Where are you stopping?"

"Up here on Tantalus," said Dick. "I wanted to be quiet while I turn out a certain line of work, and

the real estate people brought me up here and showed me a place that looked so good that I took it on the spot. It's all right, only it is a bit hot when the wind is in this direction."

"It's hot everywhere when there's a *kona*," observed the man. "That is, it feels hot because the air is humid; but the mercury doesn't go so very high, at that. But it is so rare that we forget that there is such a thing, until one of them strikes us. Show me where you belong, when we get there, and I'll let you out."

Very shortly they came to the bungalow, which was well set back in a tropical garden full of tree-ferns, gay hibiscus bushes and blossoming vines, and divided from its neighbor by the swaying line of tall ironwood trees. "Here are my quarters," said Dick.

"Where?" asked the man, looking about.

"Here," said Dick, indicating the house.

"There?" exclaimed the man, incredulously. "You are living there? Well, I'll be darned!" And then he laughed.

Dick was climbing out of the car. Once on the ground, he turned rather sharply. "Why not?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing!" said the man, and laughed again. "How did you happen to land on this?"

"Through the real estate office. Why? What's the matter with it?"

"Oh, nothing!" repeated the man. "Nothing's the matter with it. Don't see much of your neighbors, do you?"

"No," said Dick, puzzled; "I don't want to. The reason that I came up here was because I wanted to get away from all social life while I put through this work. The agent said that the people were Hawaiians but that they wouldn't bother me."

"I'll wager they won't bother you," said the other, still with a broad grin on his face. "The only social life that you'll get out of them will be by absent treatment, you can bet on that."

"But who lives in the other house?" asked Dick, his curiosity piqued by the other's manner; "Who are they?"

"Do you mean to say that the agent didn't tell you anything about them? Oh, well, all right; as long as you came up here to be quiet, it doesn't matter. You won't see anything of them, so *you* should worry!" And the man started up his engine.

"But wait!" protested Dick, "Who are they? Who lives there?"

"Who lives there?" the man laughed back at him as he got under way; "Well, I believe they call them Pupu-le and Lolo;" and Dick heard him laughing still as the car rolled away.

He went into the house in a rather bad humor again, and stalked out onto the lanai. "Funny sort of names!" he thought. "Wonder what's the matter

with them."

Moto had set the dinner table close to the edge of the lanai overhanging the valley, and the tints of sunset were beginning to show on the opposite mountain side. The slight breeze in the ironwoods had died down and the atmosphere seemed more sultry than ever. It lacked half an hour until dinner time, and Dick wandered about trying to find a cool place and at last headed toward his own room for a shower. The arrangement of the house was very simple. A *T* shaped open lanai with the front entrance at the base of the *T*. On the left was the kitchen and a small room probably intended for a servant's chamber but now used merely as a trunk room, since Moto slept in the loft over the garage in a front corner of the garden. On the right was Dick's bed room and bath, the latter supplied with water from a tank farther up the mountain. As the master entered the room he looked about protestingly. It was absolutely airless. The wall toward the other house was without a window; there was one window into the garden, but that was so overgrown with vines and so overhung with shrubbery that not a breath of air could enter. The window on the opposite end opened onto the lanai. "There'll be a great chance to sleep tonight!" he grumbled, as he twisted his head to loosen his necktie.

And therewith his upturned eyes rested upon a trap-door in the ceiling. He dropped his hands and

gazed at it. "Escape!" he thought. "The roof is flat. I see myself climbing out to fresh air and zephyrs!" And dropping the scarf he instantly posted out in quest of a ladder which he had seen in the garden, evidently used for gathering papaias.

As he came back with the ladder on his shoulder, Moto came out of the kitchen with a plate of bread. He stared dubiously. "What you make now?" he inquired.

"Wait and you'll see," answered Dick, and went on into the bedroom with the ladder. He set it up against the frame of the skylight and went up with all of the enthusiasm of a small boy who has succeeded in circumventing someone and gotten his own way after all. However, as he reached the hatch, there came a pause. The thing was fastened down with a hasp and a padlock, both rusty from long disuse. Dick climbed down with gritted teeth and a set chin. Out he went to the store-room and routed out a number of rusty keys and returned to try them out without success.

Presently he appeared in the kitchen door again. "Moto, have you any flat keys anywhere?" he asked.

Moto shook his head. "No. No more key. House key, garage key, thas all."

"Well," said Dick firmly; "you go over next door and tell them that I want the key to the skylight in my room."

Moto hesitated and looked anxiously at the stove.

"Potato mos done," he said; "Lamb chop now sizzle. Pretty soon too much cook."

"Never mind," said Dick impatiently; "I'll take the consequences. Go ahead."

The man wiped his hands but still hesitated. "I think bime-by all right?" he questioned.

"No! Right now!" asseverated Dick. "Go on, do as I say."

The man continued to rub the towel through his hands. "Over there," he said, "they got plenty big police dog."

"Nonsense!" said Dick. "It's chained up. It must be; it always barks from the same place."

"Ye-es," said Moto solemnly; "and hook right here by kitchen door;" and he put his hand on his own door-frame.

"Well, nobody'd let it loose."

"No? You don't know that pa-ke Fong. I think he let loose all right."

"Are you afraid?" asked Dick scathingly.

"Also," went on the Japanese, "you hear something now?" and he lifted his finger.

"Just a little pounding. What then?"

"Pa-ke he make chop-chop, this way;" and Moto picked up two knives and beat a tattoo upon the table with them alternately. "But he got more big knife, very big knife. I know."

Dick flung away from the door and out into the garden, down the walk and through the break in the

hedge and approached the next house. The garden was larger than his own and even more tropical, being a very wilderness of shrubs, vines, ferns and overhanging mango and pear trees, interspersed, after the Hawaiian fashion, with curious blocks of stone of strange and weird shapes. Upon turning in through the hedge, Dick was greeted by a volley of barks from the great police dog which strained and wrenched at his chain in a manner which was somewhat disconcerting, even though the chain was probably dependable. Dick stopped at a safe distance, just as the kitchen door opened and a gaunt Chinaman emerged upon the steps and laid one hand upon the hook of the dog's chain. In the other hand he still held one of the knives with which he had been making his chop-chop, and it certainly was a big one. "What you want?" he called shrilly.

Dick kept his distance, but the greeting had not served to soothe his irate mood. "I want the key to the skylight in the bedroom next door," he demanded brusquely.

"No key," said the Chinaman sullenly. "No go top-side."

"I'll go top-side if I want to," said Dick, belligerently; "Get me the key!"

"No key." repeated the Chinaman stubbornly.

"All right, then I'll come into the house and talk to somebody else. I want that key."

The Chinaman's hand moved upon the hook of the

dog's chain, and the dog strained and tugged more violently than ever. "I say no have got key," snarled the man. "Key lost somehow. You go 'way!" and the hook slipped from the staple, leaving the dog's chain in his hand, while the strength of the enraged animal jerked the thin old body most disturbingly.

Dick turned away in wrath. The Chinaman held all of the cards. There was no use in forcing his hand, either the one holding the dog's chain or the one holding the knife; and therefore retreat was the only course possible. Also, the visitor was subtly conscious that eyes were watching from behind the screened windows and he was not of a notion to furnish entertainment for unsympathetic on-lookers, especially with the game belonging to the other fellow. And so, without a backward glance, he went through the hedge and back to his own domicile.

As he entered, Moto courteously refrained from looking at him, but merely announced that dinner would be ready in five minutes, and Dick went on to cool off in his shower to such extent as he might.

However, Dick was of a type not to be discouraged by opposition, but which, rather, rises even more determinedly upon the meeting of obstacles; and therefore throughout dinner he was intently engaged upon figuring out a means for reaching the forbidden roof. It would be practically impossible

to reach it from outside because the front and the only accessible side were surmounted by a frail trellis supporting tangled vines of many years' growth; another side overhung the valley, while the space between the two houses was within the precincts of the next door grounds and presided over by the dog and the Chinaman. Nevertheless, he was resolved that he was going to get out upon that roof before he slept, if only to show the damned Chinaman who was master.

After dinner, while Moto was rattling the dishes in the kitchen and Dick was sitting in the dusk smoking and planning his attack upon the skylight, he heard a slight sound at the entrance of the lanai. He turned his head, but at first could distinguish nothing in the deeper darkness behind. Then, although he heard nothing more, he saw a dark figure gliding softly toward the door of his room. Just as it reached the door, Dick suddenly switched on the reading lamp beside him, revealing the old Chinaman, who had stopped in his tracks at the flaring up of the light.

"What do you want?" demanded Dick, springing up. "What are you doing here?"

The Chinaman cringed and rubbed his hands, in a very different attitude from that which he had assumed a little while before. He bowed sidewise and smiled rather ingratiatingly. "I think maybe I find key for you," he said. "You like go top-side,

—maybe I get key all right. I look-see,” and he turned toward the bedroom door again.

“No you don’t!” said Dick, barring the way. “You turn around and go back home just as fast as you can; and don’t you ever step your foot inside of this house again while I’m here. Do you get that? Now light out, and do it quick!”

The Chinaman’s lip lifted in a snarl, but he did not speak; only turned on his soft-soled shoes and slid out of the house like a slinking shadow, and Dick returned to his chair, somewhat appeased at having had the opportunity of getting back at the man in a measure, at least. “Fat chance!” he soliloquized. “If he had found the key it would have gone back home with him, that’s sure. I wouldn’t have gotten it. And that means,” he continued, “that they don’t know where the key is, and the man thought that probably he could find it over here and cabbage it. Well, if there was a chance that he could find it, then there is the same chance that I can find it. Such being the case, here goes!” And throwing down the remains of his cigar he rose up and turned again toward the bedroom.

Once, there, he mounted the ladder and began feeling around the groove in the frame of the skylight, experiencing various qualms lest he should rout out a centipede or a scorpion in the process. Nothing of the kind happened, however, and nothing was forthcoming; and reaching up he gave the

offending skylight a vicious punch by way of relieving his feelings; whereupon a little loop of string dropped down from the crack between the frame and the fitted cover. Tentatively Dick drew it out and with it a rusty, flat little key, and stood grinning at it like a Cheshire cat. "So!" he said, "We've got you, in spite of the Chinaman and the knife and the puppy-dog. Now here is where we solve the mystery of why the roof-garden is so strictly *kapu*."

The key proving recalcitrant in the rusty lock, he brought his typewriter oil-can and lubricated it well; and then, having coaxed it to its duty, he removed the padlock, undid the hasp and, mindful of the wisdom of discretion, he softly lifted the hatch and climbed out onto the roof.

His first thought was that he had never before seen such marvelous stars, and he stared for a moment at the heavens, and then turned to inspect his newly achieved territory. As he looked it over, he could see no possible reason why it should be forbidden ground. There seemed to be nothing up there but the stars, and he walked softly near to the edge of the roof and looked off and down into the valley. It was much cooler up here. The breeze from the sea came swishing through the thin upper branches of the ironwoods, which still made an effectual screen between the two houses, and rustled the leaves of the vines upon the trellises bringing

forth a heavy scent of stephanotis and jasmine, mingled with the fragrance of the gardenias and the mulang in the garden. The inward corner of the roof, toward the adjoining house, was in the denser shadows of the ironwoods; and after he had surveyed the rest of the space, he turned to this point and stumbling against something which rattled slightly, he put out his hand and discovered that it was a small iron cot which was set back close to the trellis. "Good!" he thought, "No more suffocation down below. Here is where the victorious hero sleeps tonight."

And forthwith he descended and gathered together his blankets, pillows and sheets and then called Moto, who came from the kitchen distrustfully. "What you make now?" he inquired, and then stopped to stare up at the open skylight.

Dick grinned. "I've got a new bedroom up there," he said. "I want you to hand me up my mattress and sheets," and he turned to ascend the ladder.

The man shook his head protestingly. "I think more better—" he began.

But Dick interrupted; "Moto, you think too much. Don't do it. Some day you'll over-think yourself, and then there'll be the dickens to pay. Come on, hand up that mattress and stop thinking."

And Moto laboriously shouldered the mattress and, ascending the ladder, passed it resignedly through the opening. The sheets and pillows fol-

lowed, and then the man slid away shaking his head lugubriously, while Dick arranged his bed and went below to prepare for the night, determined to retire early and lie awake and watch the stars and plan out his work for the following day.

However, things did not seem to go along according to schedule; for no sooner had he bestowed himself upon the bed, than the heavy sense of airless oppression descended upon him once more. The corner where his bed was, seemed to be the most shut in portion of the roof, and he arose and attempted to draw the couch forward to a more open part of the space. Perversely, the couch refused to budge, seeming to be anchored to its particular position, and investigation revealed that it was tied to the posts of the trellis by heavy cords. He went below and got his knife and severed the cords; but when he would have moved it, the castors gave forth a protesting screech which sent shivers up his spine and dispatched him below again for the typewriter oil. Then, after due lubrication, the wheels did move and he drew the bed out to a satisfactory point, stretched his length upon it and immediately went off into a deep and dreamless sleep.

That is, for many hours it was dreamless, but eventually it became troubled;—someone was fanning him, and fanning him too hard; he could feel his hair fluttering and his clothing flapping about him; also, the breeze created was too cool. He pro-

tested, but to no effect; the person continued to fan with a great fan, and he began vaguely wondering if he were being winnowed, and whether he would turn out to be wheat or chaff, and was quite anxious about it when suddenly his eyes popped open and he made a grab for his sheet which was just in the act of sailing away upon the wings of a great wind tearing down from the top of Konahuanui, up above on the skyline. The back of the *kona* was broken, the trade wind had come; and Dick reefed in the sheet and greeted the change with joy. However, the sheet refused to stay reefed, but kept flicking loose and flapping up between him and the stars; and so at last he got up and wrapped it about him as if he were a mummy and lay down again, lifting his feet and catching the bottom of the rolled sheet under them as they came down. It couldn't flop loose now, and he lay there in a delightful state of satisfaction, feeling his grey matter coming alive again under the stimulus of the more vital air, and responding to his calls upon it for data for tomorrow's work. Or rather, today's work, for already a faint, a very faint light was beginning to grow over the shoulder of the ridge opposite.

He concentrated upon the prospective article and became deeply interested, at the same time enjoying to the full the splendid great gusts of wind which came sweeping down the mountains, roaring through the trees above, sweeping around his bed

and shaking and tearing at it, and thrashing away through the now turbulent locks of the ironwoods. As the light grew, he flopped over so that he could watch the course of the wind as it came tearing down the mountain, with the trees bending before it and swaying writhing arms and flinging vines high in the air from their tossing branches. Then he turned back to find if it were light enough for him to catch a glimpse of the sea beyond the valley. But it was not, and it seemed that he had just closed his eyes for an instant, when he heard the roaring of a particularly heavy blast come booming down the mountain, and he opened them against just as the blast reached him and flapped loose a corner of his sheet. He made a quick jerk to grab it; and then suddenly the ironwoods began to slide past him most bewilderingly, his bed lurched in the teeth of the blast, he attempted to spring from it, but his feet were too well enswathed in the folds of the sheet;—the last ironwood, the one standing below the level of the ridge, pitched itself up toward him, his couch dipped and banked like a biplane on a curve; he flung out both arms, his sheet soared away upon the blast, he gathered to his bosom a great armful of ironwood boughs,—and suddenly glimpsed himself as a small boy on a platform reciting *Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight*. “Out she swung, far out. The city seemed a tiny speck below!” And then, from that far distance be-

neath came up the faint, hollow echo of metal upon stone, bouncing and crashing, and then silence. His bed was undoubtedly in the Manoa Valley.

The gust had gone on out to sea; and Dick, in a somewhat hectic suit of vari-colored pajamas, was swinging among the branches of the slumped iron-wood tree, overhanging something like a thousand feet of atmosphere, and with its roots held gingerly in a crack of the crumbling rocks and a bit of shallow soil. For a moment he was not sure but that he was still dreaming, the situation was so sudden and impossible; but his hold was precarious, and self-preservation immediately took up the work of directing his incredulous arms and legs toward a very gentle and reverent approach to the main trunk of the tree. At last his arms clasped it, pitifully thin and inadequate though it seemed, and he clung there and tried to gather together his scattered senses and get them into working order again. At the particular point to which he was so strenuously attached, the branches happened to be exceedingly slim, probably from some dry season or from age, and the ones below seemed for the most part dead and ready to drop off of their own weight; so he managed to hitch himself a little higher and wrap himself about the trunk of the tree somewhat after the manner of a damp blanket. Having thus reached the acme of comfort to be contrived in the existing

situation, he turned his thought to the possibilities of escape.

He was not able to see sufficiently through the branches below to determine what the chances were by that route, but as he remembered it, there was a drop-off of some six feet from the ridge to the spot where the tree had found lodgment; so even if he got down there, there would be no way of climbing up to the level of his house without assistance. There was no use in his calling for help, for Moto slept out in the garage, and only his unknown neighbors were available, and among them the Chinaman whom he had flouted the night before. The other members of the household must be women; at least the names, Pupu-le and Lolo, would seem to indicate that; and he was of no mind to appear before ladies in his present predicament and the exotic pajamas. Moreover, Moto was always up betimes and would be on the lanai with his broom at a reasonably early hour. If he could only hold on until then, he could get the man's help and manage somehow to reach safety, of course taking the large chances of following the couch down into the valley below. He was too high up for the people in the neighboring house to see him unless they came quite to the rail, even should they also arise early; and so he festooned himself as well as he could over the desperately inadequate branches of his tree and settled himself to hold on as long as nature might

give him the strength.

Slowly the time dragged. The tree, being that member of the evergreen family sometimes known as the Australian pine, sported only the slenderest of branches; also, it being of spare habit, each returning gust of wind from up the mountains bent it and its quivering burden far, far over the abyss and, as the light in the valley grew, gave Dick a chance to study minutely the lay of the land below, and also to review his past life and plan upon all sorts of changes of course and character, should Moto arrive upon the scene before either his arms or the roots of the tree let go their sustaining hold.

At last some long streamers of brilliant light came up over the ridge opposite and Dick hailed them with thanksgiving. One of his arms was asleep, both of his ankles were skinned, a lock of ironwood was tickling his ear maddeningly and he couldn't let go anywhere so as to go after it; also, some sort of a crawling object, not very large, but neither very attractive in appearance, was gradually drawing near along the branch upon which he occasionally rested his chin while shifting his weight a little. He shifted it now, before the insect should arrive; and in doing so, he found that he was in a position to command an excellent view of the roof of the house next door; and now that it was fairly light, this proved quite interesting. It appeared that the space was frequently occupied, and

as he was within only a few feet of the edge of the roof, all of the appurtenances of its occupation were plainly visible. In the corner opposite him, only a narrow space removed from where he had first had his couch, was a canvas awning, backed upon one side by the front trellis and on the other by the ironwood trees and a row of brilliant crotons in tubs. The crotons also extended out at right angles for some distance, and just beyond them was a low wicker lounging chair with a bright Roman blanket flung across it. A woven lauhala mat was on the floor, and a little farther on was another tall group of crotons, bending and swaying in the wind. Near the center of the roof was a railed opening, evidently a stairway which gave down to the lower regions. It was a very attractive and habitable little out-of-door sitting-room, and Dick came to the conclusion that it was because of the presence of this, that there had been such rooted objection to his taking possession of his own roof for a like purpose.

Behind the first group of crotons, the ones which shut off the invisible corner, something thin and palely tinted occasionally fluttered forth in a gust of wind. Dick shifted his position again and turned his attention to his own lanai below, hoping that Moto would soon arrive; but he could see only the narrow outer edge of it, and the man did not appear. Soon he had to shift again. His muscles were becoming unbearably stiff and the coat of his pa-

jamas had attached itself to a branch behind him, while said branch punctured his spine, and there was no way to reach it. Again his weary eyes took in the details of the roof-garden before him; and then, as he looked, he started in horror, for just beside the flicker of pink which he had before noticed fluttering in the wind, he saw something which made his heart stand still. It was a woman's foot.

It was a rather small brown foot, but Dick had no time to study it, for almost immediately it moved, seemed to stretch itself out and curl its toes most comfortably. Then it was joined by its mate and in another instant a young Hawaiian girl suddenly stood in the middle of the mat, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.

Dick flattened himself against the tree like a sand dab, giving thanks that the hectic pajamas were in parts green, and therefore served as more or less protective coloring.

The wind fluttered the girl's short dark hair and the flimsy pink night garment which she wore, as she held out both arms for the wind to bathe them, and then stretched them above her head and yawned luxuriously. She was a remarkably pretty girl of about twenty, with the bronze skin and oval face of the Hawaiians, together with the queenly bearing of the women of that race. In spite of his predicament, Dick could not help thinking that he had never seen anything so perfect as the slender neck

and the poise of the small head and the grace of the slender body. At the same time he was inwardly praying that she would quickly go down the stairway or back to her corner, so that he might at least shift his position enough to turn his head in another direction before she saw him. He was sure that she must soon discover him if she remained, for she was so near that the long locks of his tree actually swept the edge of the roof, though the branches were too slender for him to venture away from the trunk itself. Still, those long locks kept up a constant swaying,—perhaps she would not notice.

However, the girl seemed to be in no haste whatever; but instead came forward to within a few feet of where he was clinging, and stood looking off and up at the higher mountains and watching the thrashing of the trees as the blasts of wind came tearing down, and held forth her arms again in a sort of ecstasy as each blast enwrapped her and fluttered her hair and her one garment. Her eyes were shining and the warm color showed in her cheeks as she stood drinking in the early morning vitality. And then her body began to sway gently and her arms and hands to take on the soft, relaxed, weaving motions of the hula. And there, as the sun came up over the ridge, she greeted it with her dance and the soft, plaintive chant of a Hawaiian mele.

And the unwilling observer so close at hand

cursed his evil fortune and dug in his finger and toe nails and wondered if he could continue to hold on until she got through with her tomfoolery!

At last, with a parting salute to the sun, she turned and ran back, not toward the stairway, as Dick had hoped, but in the direction of the corner from which she had appeared; and approaching the row of tall crotons at the left of the canvas awning, flung up her hand, and in an instant there flickered into sight the bright rain of a shower-bath, transformed into a rainbow by the brilliant rays of the sun. Then her hands went up and began to lift the shoulders of the pink night robe.

The sweat stood out upon Dick's brow. The moment was appalling. There was no alternative. He clutched the trunk of the tree to his bosom and called wildly, "Help!"

He had intended the sound to be loud and enlightening; but he was cramped and he was hoarse and he was deeply perturbed, and as a consequence the sound which issued from his throat was decidedly weak and somewhat creaky. However, it reached the girl's ears, and she started and turned incredulously in his general direction, but apparently seeing nothing from which such a strange squawk could have emanated.

Exasperated, he once more essayed the call, this time purposely lower, being of no mind to have it reach the ears of the old Chinaman.

At this, the girl slowly and warily approached nearer, evidently having located the sound in the tree, but still unable to distinguish what manner of being had emitted it and being urged on by something between curiosity and fear. Presently she reached a point very near at hand, where her eyes glimpsed a view of that particular portion of the tree which served as a precarious perch for the man in the pajamas. As she saw him, at first her eyes rounded in astonishment, and then her head went up to a pose of lofty indignation. "What are you doing there?" she demanded.

"Holding on," said Dick meekly, finding no words at hand to explain his equivocal position.

The girl's eyes flashed. "How dare you?" she flamed.

"The alternative," he said solemnly, "is a long way down," and he craned his neck a little in the direction of the valley.

The girl glanced from his position in the tree to the edge of the roof of his house and back again uncomprehendingly. "How did you get there?" she demanded.

"I was shunted, catapulted so to speak, by a run-away bed. It was a case of catch-as-catch-can. This is where I caught."

"Your bed?" repeated the girl, bending forward for another view of the edge of his roof. "Where is it now?"

"Down in a rice field in Manoa Valley."

The girl peered downward as if trying to verify the statement. Then she looked back at the clinging figure in the hectic pajamas and the corners of her mouth began to quiver and she caught her lower lip between her teeth. "How long have you been there?" she asked, less combatively.

"It seems like centuries," he said, "but it is probably only about an hour, I suppose. Also, both of my feet are asleep and I have numerous and sundry abrasions, and more cramps than there are places to put them."

The girl turned away, still biting her lip. "I'll call Fong," she said with dignity.

"I'd much rather you wouldn't," said Dick appealingly. "Fong and I don't seem to harmonize so's you could notice; and if I were to see the gloating enjoyment which would enliven his face, I should probably let go and drop into Manoa and oblivion—and I hate to."

The girl turned back, and now she was laughing openly. "Wait a minute," she said, "Perhaps I can help you." Returning to her corner she slipped into the gay kimono and then came forward dragging a canvas steamer chair. This she folded into stretcher shape, and coming as near to the edge of the roof as she dared, she insinuated the end of it between the swaying branches; and Dick, hugging the trunk with one arm, reached out the other hand

and essayed to guide the tip of the wavering life-raft to some more or less stable foundation. It was no easy matter, for the end slipped and slid and refused to come to anchor, and the girl at last was forced to sit down on the roof cross-legged, in order to retain her balance and still keep the swaying stretcher in place when the gusts of wind came down the mountain and threatened to tear it from their grasp and send it after the bed, far down in the valley below.

At last, after much labor and heart-breaking experiment, the end of the chair became wedged among the branches and braced fairly firmly; and Dick, having tried it tentatively, expressed himself as ready to undertake the perilous passage. It was only a few feet horizontally, but a thousand feet perpendicularly, and he was both cramped and dizzy, but it was now or never. Waiting for a moment when a gust had just passed them by, he stood up on the frail raft, grasped a swaying branch of ironwood, and made the fateful dash for safety or destruction.

It proved to be safety, and in a moment he was standing upon the firm roof, while the chair went careening down over the precipice and landed in the branches of a kukui tree far below.

The girl rose to her feet as soon as he had landed upon the roof beside her, and there was no longer laughter in her face. "Now," she said coolly, "you

may go home."

Dick stood still, the gay pajamas fluttering about him. "I am sorry to have put you to so much trouble," he said with some dignity; "but you must realize that it was wholly inadvertent upon my part. The roof slopes somewhat and I had oiled the castors of the cot; and the wind did the rest."

"We will not discuss it," said the girl; "We will consider the incident as closed," and she turned toward the stairway. "You may use the wooden grill under the shower, to cross to your own roof, and then slide it back again. I think that will be all."

Dick was anxious to get home, considering his garb, or lack of it; but his natural stubbornness refused to accept such a peremptory dismissal without protest. "You mean," he said indignantly, "that now that you have saved my life, I may go hang!"

"Certainly," said the girl distinctly, putting up her head.

"And suppose that I have other ideas?"

"That does not matter in the least," said the girl, looking at him icily.

Dick decided to try another tack. "I think you must be Pupu-le," he said.

The girl stepped back and stared at him, her head high in the air. "You are impertinent," she said biting.

"But all the same, I think that you *are* Pupu-le," he insisted with determination.

"I might more fittingly call you Pupu-le!" she flashed back at him.

"A silly answer," thought Dick; but ignoring the inapt retort, he went on cheerfully: "Well, if you are not Pupu-le, then you must certainly be Lolo," he said.

The girl pressed her lips tightly together. "Will you kindly go home!" she said definitely.

"Well," said Dick confidently, turning to go; "you are either Pupu-le or Lolo, one or the other, that's sure; but I don't know which." And then he added, "He didn't mention how to tell you apart."

The girl suddenly put up her hand. "Wait! Who said anything like that?" she demanded.

"An acquaintance of mine, I don't know his name, someone I met at the Country Club."

The girl's lips tightened. "Just what did he say?" she asked, her eyes narrowing: "What were his exact words?"

Dick began to feel uncomfortable and to wish that he had gone home when she invited him to.

"Go on! What did he say?" she commanded.

"Why," said Dick, "I merely asked who my neighbors were, and he said that Pupu-le and Lolo lived here."

"And what else?"

"That was all."

"Who was the man?"

"I don't know his name, I told you. He was

passing and we drove a little way together. Is it—is it a mistake or anything?"

A crooked little smile twisted the girl's mouth though her lips seemed to tremble. "No," she said, "I guess that it isn't any mistake," and she turned toward the stairway.

"Please wait," he said contritely; "I've said something that has hurt you. Won't you tell me—"

But the girl only shook her head and disappeared down the stairway.

Two hours afterward Moto appeared at the side of Dick's typewriter with eyes as round as a Jap can compass. "Where your bed up top-side?"

"Down in the Manoa Valley," replied Dick casually, without looking up from his work.

"What come?" inquired the man apprehensively.

Dick got up obligingly and pointed at the iron-wood tree at the corner of his lanai. "Do you see that tree?" he asked. "Well, I spent the latter part of the night roosting in the branches of that."

The Jap's mouth fell open. "How you get out?" he asked, awestruck.

"The young lady next door ladled me out with a steamer chair."

"She!" exclaimed the Jap incredulously. "You see that lady?"

"Yes, I saw her," said Dick indifferently.

"You talk with her?" asked the man, with unbe-

lieving eyes.

"Yes," said Dick carelessly; "We had some conversation."

"What you say to her?" asked the Jap confidently.

"Why, I asked her if she was Pupu-le."

"You ask her *what*?"

"I asked her if she was Pupu-le."

"You say that to her?"

"Sure I did."

"And what she say?"

"She sort of indicated that she objected to being called that."

"And what you say then?"

"Well, I said that then she must be Lolo."

"You say she must be Lolo?"

"Yes. Why not?"

The Jap started aghast. "I think you make joke with me," he said deprecatingly.

"No," said Dick, "A man told me that Pupu-le and Lolo lived there; and so I just asked her which she was. What's the matter with that?"

A sudden enlightenment came over the Jap's face. "Oh, my golly!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my golly! And you say that to her!"

Dick stopped in front of him, exasperated. "Why not? Why shouldn't I ask her that? What's the matter with you, anyway?"

The Jap leaned forward and put one finger on

Dick's arm. "You no savvy what that mean?" he asked breathlessly.

"What *what* means?" snapped Dick.

"Pupu-le and Lolo?"

"What it means? What it means? Why, what *should* it mean?"

"You listen!" breathed the Jap; "Pupu-le mean all same crazy. And lolo—how you say?—idiot, maybe. You ask her is she crazy! You say she must be idiot!"

"Oh, my God!" said Dick, and slumped into a chair.

CHAPTER II

THE GIRL WHO WALKED OUT OF LIFE

FOR SEVERAL days Dick found it practically impossible to concentrate upon his work. At every natural interval, and sometimes between, he would find his mind reverting to his brief conversation with the Hawaiian girl. Over and over again it would recur, and gradually intersperse itself throughout his train of thought, until eventually it had taken entire possession, and he would find himself sitting idly before his machine and reviewing word by word the dialogue, each time finding it more egregious than before. It was horrible. No matter what excuses he made to himself, the fact remained that after the girl had veritably risked her life to save him, he had asked her flatly if she was crazy! And when she had seemed to resent the imputation, he had then asserted confidently that otherwise she certainly must be an idiot! And at that point his jaw always dropped, though in spite of the egregiousness of it all, the corners of his mouth would immediately twitch up again in an unregenerate grin. Dreadful as it was, it was still funny, and occasionally he would chuckle to him-

self as he recalled the indignant and incredulous expression of the girl's face when he had made these awful statements. Why hadn't the fool girl a sense of humor? She had seen eventually that he had been innocent of any intentional rudeness or of any other crime than ignorance; why couldn't she have laughed and told him of his blunder, and let it go at that? But under it all he was conscious that what he had said, had bitterly hurt,—that the wound had been unbearable when he admitted that someone had said that Pupu-le and Lolo lived there;—that someone had actually told him that two who were gibingly called Crazy and Idiot, lived there. God, it was terrible! It was unforgivable. He had blundered horribly. But he had not meant to. And then, when she had turned to go, she had said, in that heartbreaking way, that she guessed that it wasn't any mistake. Oh, damn it all, anyway! And then he would attack his typewriter once more, with vicious energy; only to find himself again going over and over the circumstances and swearing copiously at himself and at the man who had lightly passed on the villainous phrase to him and involved him in all this mess.

Also, it must be admitted that his thought, in his more relaxed moments, occasionally slid back to his first glimpse of the girl and to the few minutes there on the roof, before she saw him, when she stood bathing her arms in the splendid wind which was

sweeping down from the mountains, and then to the exquisite abandon of her exultant dancing in the first rays of the morning sun. When he recalled this, leaning back in his big Morris chair in the starlight, his feet on the rail of the lanai and his cigar smoke wavering off over the valley, he did not indulge in any swearing.

On the second day, he went to town and selected and dispatched to her a new steamer chair to take the place of the lost life raft, and also some slender stemmed amber colored roses with delicate apricot shadings, which somehow reminded him of the sunlight upon her skin; but he forbore to add anything more than his name to the cards accompanying the packages. He was in no way surprised when the offerings brought no response. He had expected none.

On the third day, however, he began to concoct letters to her. Letters of apology, letters of explanation, all sorts of letters; but not one which could be formulated, could in any manner explain away the bitter hurt which he had planted in her soul when he told her so inadvertently of the jeering epithet which the world was applying to her and to some unknown person who must be living with her. A letter was impossible and he abandoned the effort. Of course he now had natural curiosity concerning his neighbors, but although it was evident that Moto knew something of them, yet

he could not bring himself to question a servant; also, Moto had very discreetly forborne to remember anything whatever of the revelations of that unfortunate morning, or even to comment when the delivery man brought up a new cot to take the place of the one which had catapulted into the Manoa Valley. However, he took the new cot up to the roof and put it in the place of the missing one, and also carried up, with admirable intuition, a new steamer chair which Dick had bought for himself. The roof-garden had been formally opened, there was no reason why it should not continue to be occupied if such were the pleasure of the master of the house. But for the present, at least, the master abstained from going back to the scene of his discomfiture. But meanwhile, in spite of the cool trade winds, Dick's work was not progressing favorably at all.

It was on the afternoon of the fourth day, when Dick was sitting before his typewriter absently lighting cigarettes and leaving them to burn out on the edge of the ash-tray, and watching idly the bit of curved roadway which was visible from his lanai; that he saw a certain little grey roadster come around the bend and slide out of sight behind the foliage of his garden. He sprang to his feet and dashed out of his front door and through the break in the tall hedge, almost colliding with a person who had been upon the point of passing through

said opening in the direction of said front door.

"Help! Help!" cried the young woman, dodging out of his way; "Is it a fire or thieves or has the solitude turned your brain and made you run amok like a blithering savage?"

"All! Everything! Only for Heaven's sake come in!"

"Come in! Isn't that what I was trying to do when you came dashing out, brandishing your arms like a wind-mill and all but capsizing me into that bush of thimbleberries with a million thorns on every branch!"

"I was afraid that you would get by before I could stop you," explained Dick contritely.

"I had no intention of getting by. Here is right where I was headed for. Lead on; I want to see your quarters and then to talk serious-like with you about something. Jack's gone tuna fishing, so I'm playing around on my own."

Dick led the way back to his lanai, stopping for a moment to give Moto orders for tea. He was particularly glad, just at this juncture, of an opportunity for a confab with Mrs. Sands, as well as being much in need of the tonic of her vivid personality. Alberta Sands, or Bert, as she was better known, was not more than twenty, agile of brain and venturesome of spirit. A few months before, she had come to Honolulu for a bit of capricious research; and Jack Sands, temporarily interested in the same

matter, had married her and carried her off to Japan for a honeymoon. It was upon the return voyage that Dick had met them, and the three had found each other remarkably congenial and had struck up a friendship which had proved particularly delightful to Dick who now made their home at Waikiki his regular town rendezvous. Bert Sands somehow gave the impression of a rather tall boy and was possessed of all of the energy and vitality of one. Her small round head with its curly black hair was carried at an imperious angle which was very like boyish arrogance, though this effect was toned somewhat by the whimsical expression of the exceedingly clear and level grey eyes and the up-curving corners of her very red mouth. She was quick and confident and to Dick she epitomized the true spirit of camaraderie.

When he followed her out onto the lanai, he found her perched boyishly upon the rail and peering eagerly down into the abyss below. She turned as he approached. "Isn't it gorgeous here!" she exclaimed. "You surely did find the most perfect spot on the Island. You must be turning out scads of work;" and she glanced toward the typewriter.

"No," said Dick, "I'm not. I'm having a hell of a time."

"Yes?" said Mrs. Sands, grinning inquiringly. "What's the matter?" And she left the rail for a wicker chair and took an attitude of attention. "A

serpent in the Eden already? Well, come on, tell the doctor all about it and then you'll feel better."

Dick sat forward in his chair to start the narration; but when he would have begun, the words failed to come and he only moistened his lips and shoved his hands deeper into his pockets and looked uncomfortable.

"What's the pilikia?" asked Mrs. Sands, grinning again her boyish grin. "You look as if you had been caught in the watermelon patch."

"Oh, Gee!" said Dick, "I can't tell you. It's so perfectly ridiculous that you'll laugh, you'll howl with glee; and that'll make me so mad that I'll want to chuck you over the rail into kingdom come."

"Well, if it's funny — —" began Bert Sands.

"Of course it's funny!" fumed Dick; "That is, the most of it is funny, but—but at the end it's got an awful hurt in it. A hurt that just turns around in your mind like something with a barb to it, so that it's unbearable—it's *unbearable*!"

Mrs. Sands' face sobered. "Well now listen," she said; "Suppose that we forget it just for the moment, and talk over the matter that I came to see you about; and by that time perhaps we'll get a clue as to how to handle the thing with a barb, without scratching ourselves. I came to ask a favor of you."

"It's granted already," said Dick. "I'd rather do a favor for you than for anybody else that I know.

What's it about? Jack need reforming, or anything?"

"Nope," said Mrs. Sands, "Jack's perfect. It's an entirely different matter. Do you remember some people by the name of Walters who came over on the boat with us from Japan?"

"Sure!" said Dick. "Elderly sheik, frail little blond wife and two sleek daughters with voices like 'sucking doves.' I remember them all right."

"Not daughters, nieces," corrected Mrs. Sands. "The name of the girls is Morton, not Walters."

"Let me see," said Dick, wrinkling his brows; "What was it they called the girls aboard ship?"

Mrs. Sands laughed. "Kat and Copy-cat. Their names are Katisha and Calista; but I'll have to admit, much as I hate nicknames, that those certainly were fitting. Actually, they are the very cattiest humans that I ever knew. Smooth as butter, and with claws an inch long and hooked at the ends. Ugh!"

"You bet I hate nicknames!" said Dick, with feeling.

"Well," said Mrs. Sands, "it isn't the girls that I came to talk about, it's Mrs. Walters. That poor woman is just fretting herself away to a shadow, fairly crying her heart out the most of the time; and I thought that maybe we might help her."

"We? How? What's the matter with her? What is there that I can do?"

Mrs. Sands leaned forward in her chair. "I'll tell you. You are living next door to the one girl in the world, probably, who can tell some little comforting thing about her daughter who disappeared four years ago. I want you to make friends with the girl and —"

But Dick slumped back in his chair with his hands up protestingly. "Me make friends with that girl!" he ejaculated; "Me? My Lord!"

Mrs. Sands shrugged her shoulders rather coolly. "Well," she said, "of course I know that you are too much occupied with your work to spend any period socially; but you could be quite sure that she would not trespass upon your time, as she, herself, seems to prefer isolation; but if you could make her acquaintance, you might be able to turn her over to me, by some careful management, and I might be able to persuade her to talk to Mrs. Walters just once."

"No, no, you don't understand!" cried Dick, helplessly; "I mean that I couldn't make friends with her. I'm the last man on earth who could make friends with her. Why, if I tried to make friends with that girl, she'd set the police dog on me, and probably the Chinaman with his knife as well. My Lord, no! She'd rather see me in Tophet."

Mrs. Sands was staring at him wide-eyed. "What have you been doing?" she asked, tersely. "Have you met her already? I thought that she

didn't see people."

"She saw me, all right," stated Dick; "and she conversed with me, though I'll admit that I did the most of the talking."

"What did you say to her?" Mrs. Sands was sorely puzzled.

"What did I say? I merely asked her if she was pupu-le, that was all."

Mrs. Sands' eyes grew rounder. "Why, what for? What did she answer you?"

"She objected to being called that, and so I cheerfully told her that if she wasn't pupu-le, then she certainly must be lolo."

"Why how awful! What on earth do you mean?"

"Oh, some damned man told me that Pupu-le and Lolo lived there, and so when I saw her, I tried to be agreeable and asked her which she was. Now laugh!"

And Mrs. Sands did laugh. She laughed with a thoroughness and abandon which eventually broke down even Dick's bitter self-recrimination and he laughed with her, ruefully at first; and later, with a momentary forgetfulness of the sorry side of the episode in the absurdity of the contretemps, he laughed with a fervor and appreciation which somewhat relieved the stress of the past few days.

But in another moment, for Mrs. Sands, the pitiful side of it arose and submerged the humor of the situation. "Oh!" she said, her laughter quickly

checked, "It really was dreadful, wasn't it? Of course it hurt her desperately. You will understand better when I have told you the story. It is the saddest thing that ever happened. I have heard those awful nicknames. I think that the Kat Mortons began that. They got their own nicknames because they are always thinking up nasty ones for other people and starting them, and then you know it is almost impossible to live them down. Now listen, Mr. Harris, I'm going to tell you the story, and it's a long one; but you really ought to know it, since you live here so closely; and even though you have managed to get such a bad start, yet something might work out while you are here, so that you could fix things up to help Mrs. Walters. One never knows what opportunities may develop. Anyway, here's the story as Mrs. Walters told it to me.

"Virginia Walters disappeared four years ago. She was about seventeen then and was the Walters's only child and her mother fairly worshipped her. That little woman used to take pride in stating that she wanted her daughter to grow up to be able to say that she had never wanted anything in her life that she could not have. Of course you know that the Walters are rich and their home beautiful; and Jean, as she was called, was a sort of 'monarch of all she surveyed.' When she was sixteen she went to the mainland to school; but she was miserable away from Hawaii, and of course when she insisted

upon coming home again, home she came, and didn't go back. She was easily the prettiest girl in town, they say; looked like her father, with the same dark eyes and heavy, tawny hair, but with her mother's clear, fair coloring and fine skin. A very unusual combination, and I gather that even at seventeen she must have been a very fascinating sort of a girl; but independent and headstrong from the spoiling which she had experienced from babyhood. Of course she had a whole raft of boys in her train, considering her beauty and her father's wealth; but none of them were in any sort of luck.

"And then she met David Malua, a Hawaiian. Or rather, he was a half-Hawaiian, and of some of the best blood in the Islands. Anyway, from that first night when she met him, her life simply revolved around him like a planet around a sun. She couldn't see anyone else or think of anyone else. He was absolutely the whole thing to her, and she didn't care who knew it.

"Of course her parents were horrified; but parents weren't counting in that particular case;—and she had always had everything that she wanted, and now she wanted David Malua, and David she was going to have, and that was all there was to it. And so her parents threw up their hands and Jean went her own way as she always had.

"But David was another factor to be reckoned with. David was *kanelua* (*doubtful*) and although

he went about with her and seemed very fond of her, yet he failed to bring matters to a head, and Jean was consequently anxious and impatient. Her mother says that she was desperately nervous and unhappy during that period, and never seemed to have a moment of rest from the distress of uncertainty, but was always on tiptoe with excitement, and either on the top of the wave with joy when David had shown some bit of feeling, or in the depths of despair when he had been indifferent or had failed to come to see her for a day or so.

“And then at last, by some means, she managed to bring him down to a discussion of the situation, and David was frank. He said that he cared for her more than for any other girl that he had ever known; that if he would let himself, he would love her desperately;— but that *he was not going to let himself*. And the reason was that he wanted to keep Hawaiian blood in his descendants. He loved his race. It was dying out, being attenuated by intermarriage with aliens. He was half white, to be sure; but if he married a white woman, his children would be only one-fourth Hawaiian, and he wouldn't have it that way. His mind was made up to marry a Hawaiian girl, or at least one who was not more than half white;—but an all white girl—no, absolutely! Not even though he loved her to distraction! He simply would not do it, and that was that.

“Of course Jean went down into the depths of torment. She was that kind of a girl. She wanted David, and unless she got David, life was an empty fizzle and the world a complete failure. Her mother was sympathetic and tried to comfort her; but there was no comfort anywhere and she continued to kick against the pricks and suffer intolerably. But she was wise enough to hide her wretchedness from David, in order to keep her hold upon him, hoping that the continued contact would eventually break down his determination and that in some moment of temptation he might abandon his dogged course and sacrifice race for love.

“And at last it really began to look as if she were going to be successful; for he came oftener, seeming to be unable to keep away from the fascination of the forbidden companionship; and when he did come, he more and more often gave way to moments of feeling and flashes of tenderness too compelling to be controlled. Jean was in a fever of excitement and so sure of her victory that she believed that each succeeding evening would bring the breaking down of his defenses and his acknowledgment that even his pride of race was well lost for love of her, and she lived from day to day upon her eager anticipations.

“And that was where things stood when one day, while they were out driving, up here on Tantalus, they ran across Evalani Hookano and took her in

for a lift. That was Jean's undoing. David had not seen Evalani since they were kiddies in school, and, just at this stage, she was a revelation to him. She had all of Jean's personality and fascination, and with it she had one-half good Hawaiian blood, the one thing to be desired in David's mate. There were no two ways about it, she was his ideal made real; and Jean no longer existed, so far as he was concerned."

"Evalani Hookano?" questioned Dick; "Is that the name of my neighbor?"

"It was," said Mrs. Sands. "I suppose that I may as well tell you about her now as any time. It's awkward, you see; but she was Jean's half sister."

Dick looked puzzled. Then his face lightened. "Oh," he said, "I see. I suppose that it was another case of the lax morals of the—"

"Of the white man," interpolated Mrs. Sands crisply. "When an educated, well-bred, wealthy white man, more than thirty years old and married, seduces an innocent little sixteen-year-old child, it is scarcely to be considered an indication of lax morals on the part of the race producing the little girl;—not to any person of the slightest intelligence, at least."

"Properly squelched," said Dick, meekly.

"Oh, well, it makes me tired!" protested Mrs. Sands. "These Hawaiian people were isolated for centuries; didn't know, excepting through a few

doubtful legends, that there was any place in the world other than these Islands. Why on earth should they have been expected to have developed a system of morals identical with our own? It's idiotic. Systems of morals grow up as the crystallization of the wisest thought of a group of people and are adapted to the conditions in which they find themselves. It isn't common sense to suppose that they would be identical, in a group utterly isolated, with such as has been evolved under absolutely different conditions and among absolutely different natures. And who is to label the various systems 'good' and 'evil'? Who is sufficiently disinterested and unprejudiced to pass upon the question? We white folks think that we are the enlightened ones; but when the enlightened product of our system, mature and supposedly highly civilized, comes out here and with amused contempt takes advantage of the difference (and I do not say the lower grade) of morals worked out by these people through centuries of observation of their own conditions and what was best adapted to them;—when our self-dubbed superior products turn these differences to the gratification of their own selfish lust—whose then is the low grade of character? Who then, ought to wear the garment of contempt?" Mrs. Sands was sitting very straight and her small chin was up and her breath coming with indignant rapidity.

Dick leaned back and regarded steadfastly the

end of his cigarette. "Well," he said, "the case is yours without further argument. You have put into very vital words a thought which has raised its head in my mind a dozen times since I have been here. You are absolutely right; also, I thank you for setting it forth so deftly. You have saved me a lot of trouble in working it out for myself."

"Good!" said Mrs. Sands; "Just keep it in mind the next time that you are inclined to talk about lax morals, and be sure that you put the shoe upon the foot that it fits. Well, to go on with the story. Evalani's mother was only sixteen when the house next door was given to her, together with the ground upon which this one stands, and she and her mother, old Mrs. Hookano, came up here on Tantalus to live. A few months after that, Evalani was born and the young mother died, leaving the little one to grow up with the old grandmother, here alone on the ridge of the mountain.

"They were comfortably provided for, apparently; and when Evalani was old enough to go to school, she went down to Honolulu and made her home with an aunt who lived in town. Everyone knew who she was, and in the course of time she, herself, came to know; but Hookano means *proud*, and she never lost her pride or gave any apparent concern to such innuendo as marked her, but always remained as high-spirited and clean-cut as Jean herself.

When she was about fourteen she went into Puna-hou School, and Jean was in the same school and the same classes, for they were of nearly the same age. By this time she was so much like her father that even if Mrs. Grundy had not kept on her trail all her life, there could have been no doubt as to her parentage. Excepting that she was dark skinned, she was her father all over again, feature for feature; but with the bronze Hawaiian coloring and wavy black hair."

"I know," said Dick, "I saw her."

"I never did," said Mrs. Sands; "but Jean's mother told me all about it. She said that at school Jean was, at first, desperately humiliated and rebellious. Poor little Mrs. Walters! She has been so wrapped up in her daughter's feelings for so many years, that she has forgotten to have any feelings for herself, and said absolutely nothing about her own humiliation and bitterness, though she was desperately sympathetic for Jean's unhappiness. But fifteen years is a romantic stage and at that age Jean seemed suddenly to have a revulsion of feeling. She went to Evalani and had it out with her; and then came home to announce that Evalani was thenceforth her bosom friend. In answer to protest, she would only say: 'She is my sister,' and that settled all argument. However, Mr. Walters was adamant upon one point, Evalani was never permitted to come to the home. Jean might see her

as much as she chose, give her whatever she pleased; but he had manhood enough to spare his wife the humiliation of having to come in contact with her in any manner. Away from home the girls were inseparable, but the gate of the Walters grounds was closed to any encroachment upon 'the sanctity of home' as he virtuously termed it."

"A little late to stage anything like that," commented Dick, briefly.

"Well," went on Mrs. Sands, "as I told you, Jean went to the mainland to school for a short time, and when she came home, Evalani was up here with her grandmother again, and they saw each other less often; and also, Jean's time and thought were taken up with David Malua and she had no leisure for any other type of romance. And then came the day when she and David picked up Evalani on the Tantalus road, and tragedy began to stalk their trail.

"Here was the implacable triangle. Jean's life was bound up in David; David, as I told you, immediately became possessed with the idea that he must have Evalani; while Evalani, as it happened, would have absolutely nothing to do with David. Whether this was out of loyalty to her half sister, or whether it was because of another interest, the fact remained that she would not even permit David to become acquainted with her. She flouted him upon every occasion, eluded him at every turn, was scarcely civil to him when he managed to compass

a brief interview; but it made not the slightest difference to David. He didn't have to know her in order to love her, he loved her already; and nothing whatever that she could do and no amount of cold water could discourage his ardor. She was his woman, and he was going to have her.

"As I said before, it may not have been entirely loyalty to Jean which caused Evalani to be so utterly indifferent; for there was another factor in the case, a young civil engineer by the name of Jim McKnight. He was apparently an easy-going, good-looking, blue-eyed youth who enjoyed love-making and didn't worry about ethics. He was supposed to be engaged to Kat Morton, but he used also to try to play around with Jean when David was out of the way. McKnight had been doing some surveying up on one of the Tantalus roads and he had met Evalani out on the trail somewhere, and had haunted the Tantalus bungalow from that time on. Whether Evalani really cared for him or not, is still an open question; but it may have been that he was a factor in her apathy toward David.

"Of course as soon as David showed his preference for Evalani, Jean went all to pieces. The tragedy of the situation tore her romantic soul to rags. Her father's sin was being visited upon her own head, and the injustice of it rankled maddeningly. She had scene after scene with her father, bitterly denouncing him and then rushing off to her

room to cry for hours or to rage over the thought that David might even then be with Evalani up on Tantalus, this big mountain which she could see from her window. She would not go near Evalani nor even read a letter which the girl sent to her, but tore it up in a passion and went off into a spasm of weeping and recrimination.

"I think that Mrs. Walters must have suffered as much as her daughter did; for when she told me, she was broken to her very soul with the memory. And so, when she heard that a film company which had been on location in Hawaii had offered Evalani a chance to go with them to the mainland, she went at once to Jean with the story. Jean grasped at the straw. Evalani would make good on the screen, she knew; for the girl was clever, and a wonderful dancer."

"She still is," commented Dick, with conviction.

"—And in school dramatics, she had been top-notch. Unquestionably she might have a career; but the main point was that with her out of the way, David might return to his attendance upon Jean, and in time she might still win his love and overcome his obsession of race.

"Jean got into her roadster and dashed up Tantalus in a daze of hope and eagerness. What took place between the two girls, no one knows; but Jean came back home in a frenzy of joy. Evalani was going. She had promised to go. The company

would pay her general expenses, but Evalani must furnish her own outfit, and Jean was going to attend to that. The troupe was going in two weeks, and the following were busy days; Jean buying everything to the extent of her generous allowance, and Mrs. Walters putting in all that she dared draw from her account without exciting comment; for Jean had demanded secrecy from her father, for fear that he might object and in some way prevent Evalani from going. And also secrecy from David, lest he might try to make some move to hinder the carrying out of the project. Jean herself worked madly and impetuously, planning and bringing into being a wonderful outfit, and becoming almost her old self in the enthusiasm of the occupation and the new hope which the event had brought to her.

“But, careful as they were, the secret in some way leaked out; and David, learning of it just two days before the troupe sailed, and unable to compass an interview with Evalani, came as a last resort to Jean to beg of her to intercede for him and to try to, in some way, prevent Evalani from going and to withdraw any assistance which she might be giving to further the project.

“Jean took a firm stand. She would do nothing of the kind. It was Evalani’s problem, not hers. If Evalani wanted a career, and she always had wanted to go on the stage, she certainly was not going to do anything to hinder or discourage her; and

David was selfish to try to circumvent the girl's ambitions, and ought to be ashamed of himself; especially since he scarcely knew the girl and she cared nothing whatever about him.

"But David was blind and deaf to any argument, and nothing that she said made the slightest difference. Evalani he wanted, and Evalani he must have. If she went to the mainland, then he should follow her. He would throw up his position,—he didn't care if he went to the dogs,—he would follow her to the ends of the earth. Opposition and indifference had only made his infatuation more fervid, and the question of race and progeny was entirely submerged in the one all-absorbing fact that Evalani was his woman and he would have her or die. And with that he flung away out of the house and left Jean to her misery.

"Long into the night Jean still sat there in the darkness on the lanai, silent and white, neither weeping nor moving from the chair where he had left her. Twice her mother came to the door and asked if she could do anything for her; but she only said, 'No, Mother. Please just let me be;' and the mother went back to her room to grieve alone.

"The next morning early Jean got out the roadster and went up Tantalus, her face white and her eyes strange looking and wide with suffering. About noon she came back, and her face had changed. The set look had given place to a queer little smile, more

pathetic than any tears, and her lips quivered whenever her mother glanced at her; but she was perfectly calm and all of the stress and strain had gone out of her manner. In answer to her mother's inquiry, she said: 'No, Evalani is not going to the Coast. She is going to stay here. Tomorrow night she will be married to David Malua.' And then she turned and went to her room and closed the door; and did not appear again that day.

"The following morning she had her breakfast in her room and later came out in tramping togs. 'I'm going for a walk,' she said; and when her mother tried to ask her some questions, she only shook her head, with her eyes full of tears, and kissed her mother and went out. Went out like a candle. No one has ever seen her from that day to this."

"She disappeared like that?" exclaimed Dick.

"Just like that. When she didn't come home that night, they started a search for her,—and they are searching yet, now, after four years; for whenever anyone is out on the mountain trails, he always has his eye out for Jean's yellow sweater, down in some gorge or over some precipice; but she has never been found."

Dick looked up at the dark blue-green of the near mountain peaks. "Could anyone be accidentally lost up there?" he asked.

"Oh, indeed yes!" said Mrs. Sands. "Ever so many have been. The jungle is dense; the stag-horn

fern grows to anywhere between three and thirty feet, according to what it has to climb on; and the ledges are steep and are masked clear to the very edge by wild growths; and if one loses the trail and follows down a water course instead of keeping to the top of a ridge, he may get into a rock pocket in one of the palis,— and stay there until the winter rains wash down what is left of him. And the worst of it is that he would be able to see the roads and the people passing below, out through the curtain of foliage, but they could not see him and he could not get out of the pocket to wave a signal. Oh, it is ghastly, the things that have happened to unwary trampers who would not keep to the trails!"

"And you think that she may have been lost up there?"

"No," said Mrs. Sands, "I don't. I think that she had come to the end of her trail, and she knew how to cover her take-off; that was all. Of course the mountains were searched in every direction, citizens, soldiers, boy scouts who were familiar with the trails; but no sign of her was brought up. Naturally there were reports of her being seen in all sorts of directions; on the way to the Pali, on the Tantalus road, on the Konahuanui trail, out Palolo Valley, in the water at Waikiki; but no clue ever led to anything. The sailings of all boats were watched, and those under way were searched at their first port of call, without result. Reports of

her having been seen on other Islands of the group were run down and petered out to nothing. She simply had dropped out of the world, and that was the end of it.

“And meanwhile David and Evalani were married that same night, knowing nothing of Jean’s disappearance. When they did learn of it, David went out on the search like a wild man; but Evalani only stayed in the little home here, with the old grandmother, and refused to see anyone. To be sure she had to be interviewed by the police, but she absolutely refused to be questioned by anyone else, and the police were unable to obtain the slightest clue or suggestion from her. Of course the house was searched, since they knew that the two girls had been close friends and that Jean had been there only the day before, from bottom to top, including the roof, but not a sign of the girl was to be found; and Evalani would only reiterate that she knew absolutely nothing, had not seen Jean since the day before her disappearance; and beg to be spared talking about the matters which were now common property, although of course garbled into a hundred different shapes and forms. In fact, the notoriety seemed to have made her morbid, for she shut herself up at home and scarcely went out at all; and eventually, because of being so hounded by curiosity-seekers who came into the grounds and even peered into the windows, David brought home the grim

Chinaman who, from then on, guarded the door as well as cooked and grumbled. And so at last the two newly-weds settled down to try to enjoy their interrupted honeymoon.

"Report says that they were very happy. David was adoring and Evalani gave every evidence of being a deeply devoted wife; and those who now and then met them wandering along the trail in the dusk, always reported David's arm as being about her, and Evalani nestling close to him, exactly as she should.

"Then, as usual, gossip got busy again. David began building this little house for the old grandmother and it was suggested that perhaps things were not quite smooth in the family. Then this was contradicted on the score that the new house was building only because more room was needed, since a newcomer was expected. And interspersed with this were hints that Jim McKnight had not even yet ceased his attentions. People mentioned seeing him on the Tantalus road while David was in town, and one even reported seeing him in the vicinity of the bungalow upon occasion; but as he had another job up here, that was not so much to be wondered at.

"But all of this culminated one day when the men painting the interior of the new house heard angry voices on the next lanai and then a woman's scream, and then a shot; and a moment after, David

appeared with McKnight by the scruff of his neck, propelling him down the walk and out onto the road; and for some period thereafter McKnight walked very lame and sported a very elaborate black eye. Who had fired the shot, nobody knew; and as no one appeared to have been injured further than McKnight's rather broken-up condition, the matter was allowed to drop; although there was much speculation and quite a fever of curiosity. However, travelers upon the Tantalus road reported that still when the pair walked in the dusk, his arm held her as close as ever, and she nestled as confidently; and so they came to the conclusion that McKnight had been entirely unwanted and that he had probably gotten only his just deserts. Also, David then bought the big police dog, and McKnight seemed thereafter to avoid the premises.

“Nevertheless, it soon came out that Evalani had been badly frightened, quite terribly so, whatever its occasion; for although she continued to go out a little with David, in the dusk, she seemed very weak; and shortly she ceased to go out at all. Of course, there were curious ones, with nothing else to do, who found it interesting to follow the course of events, when they went out with their cars in the evening;—and then they regaled Mrs. Grundy with the results.

“And then the little one came. No one was there but the grandmother and a Japanese maid in the

kitchen to help out, and the old Chinaman. The maid never saw the child, but she told afterward what happened. She said that when David came home, the grandmother told him that the child was a boy, but that Evalani was too ill to see him until tomorrow. And the next day, Evalani was still too ill to see him; and he chafed and demanded to see his son; but the old woman refused, said that the baby was too little and must not be brought out, and that Evalani must not be disturbed. For four days the old woman stood between him and his wife and child; and then one evening he came home and strode into the house and shoved roughly past the old woman and into his wife's room.

"He stayed for only a moment, and while he was there, he never spoke a word. The walls are thin and the maid could have heard; but not one word did he speak. And then he strode out of the room again, and his face was like iron. He went straight out through the garden, through the break in the hedge and on up the Tantalus road. When he reached the road-makers' camp, he went to McKnight's tent. McKnight came to the flap just as David came into the camp. David walked straight up to him, looked him in the eye for a moment, and then drew a gun and shot him through the heart. Then he turned the gun upon himself and blew out his own brains."

Dick's hands clenched. "God!" he said, "What a man!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Sands, "Dreadful as it was, it was somehow splendid. David had longed for his child, for his Hawaiian son, and the son was—an idiot—because of this man's evilness. With that direct mind of his, he went straight to the source of the trouble, wiped it out; and then, to finish up clean and save himself and Evalani from the torture and publicity of trial, he took himself off with the same breath. I think that I should have adored David Malua."

"And what happened then?" asked Dick.

"Well, that is about all. There was no one to punish for David's crime; nothing to do but to put the matter on record, bury the dead, and then turn attention to other things, as is the way of the world. Evalani stayed right here, her grandmother moved back into the house with her, and no one has ever yet seen the poor baby, though it must be three years old now. The dog and the Chinaman keep guard of the house, the old grandmother is always there and Evalani never goes down to town, and only rarely ventures out on the mountain trails, and then always takes the dog with her and no one ever tries to talk to her now. The few who dared to pass the time of day, were answered with only a cold stare or else utterly ignored. And so that is why the Kat sisters gave them the names of Pupu-le

and Lolo, the crazy and the idiot. Pathetic, isn't it, now that you know?"

"Yes," said Dick, gravely, "Very pathetic. It makes my blunder all the more ghastly and unforgivable. I wonder how they ever happened to rent this house, since they are so anxious for isolation."

"Well," said Mrs. Sands, "they do say that Mr. Walters has had some bad reverses lately, and probably he has not been supplying sufficient funds, and I suppose that they are close run and need the money which it brings in. They have never rented it before, and I don't think that it is generally known that they have done so now. I was going to mention it casually before Mr. Walters, in the hope that it might induce him to be a little more generous; but when Mrs. Walters begged me to try to get you to help her toward learning some little comforting word about her daughter, I hadn't the heart to refuse; and unless they needed the money, they would probably withdraw the house. You see, at first Mrs. Walters didn't want to see the girl; but now she has grieved so long and so hopelessly that I think that if we could manage to arrange an interview between them, it would mean a very great deal to the mother. They both loved Jean, you know."

"But," objected Dick, "If the girl is crazy—"

"I don't believe she's crazy at all," protested Mrs. Sands; "And the reason I don't, is because she is

acting exactly as I would have acted in the same circumstances. I would have hated people who wanted to come prying into my sorrow; I would have stared at them as if I were a stone image; and I would have shut up my little child, away from the curious eyes of the world, exactly as she has done. No, I don't see a single crazy thing about her. And I know, too, that if I were in the same situation and could be made to understand what an interview would mean to Jean's mother, I certainly would see her, no matter what it cost me; and so I believe that if we, either you or I or both of us together, can make her understand that, she will really see her. Surely, Mr. Harris, it is worth trying. We have nothing to lose and the poor mother has everything to gain. Won't you help me?"

Dick stood up and folded his arms. "Mrs. Sands, I will," he said. "I don't know how I can manage it or where I can begin; but if there is any way that I can bring about such an interview, I give you my word of honor that I will do it."

Mrs. Sands stood up also and held out her hand, her boyish grin broadly in evidence and her small head thrown back at a spirited angle. "Good!" she said. "Mr. Harris, we're partners. Now, you give the ground a careful going over and figure out what the best mode of action will be and I'll come up again before long and we'll see what our grey matter has evolved by that time. You're starting with

a handicap, but that only adds zest, and you have the advantage of propinquity."

"Propinquity!" gibed Dick. "You have propinquity with a girl when you're dancing with her and walking all over her corns, don't you? But it doesn't get you anywhere!"

Bert Sands laughed as she slid into the seat of the grey roadster. "Well, you and the girl are not strangers, anyhow, and that's something."

"It remains to be seen whether we are strangers or not," stated Dick grimly; and Bert laughed again as she drove away.

CHAPTER III

CAT CALLS

AND STILL Dick's important work refused to progress. His mind seemed to be absolutely out of commission for anything excepting the reviewing and revolving of the story of his neighbor and his promise to Bert Sands. The Hawaiian girl's life was tragic, the mystery of the disappearance of Jean Walters was also tragic; though the mystery seemed to resolve itself into the mere question of the whereabouts of the girl's body; for there could be little doubt that she had done away with herself somewhere among the gorges of those dark blue-green mountains. But was it likely that the Hawaiian girl knew anything about it more than had been discovered at the time of the disappearance? Still, he could understand that an interview with her might do something toward softening Mrs. Walter's grief, if only because the woman had been nursing the idea that it was something to be desired. Naturally the girl would dread such an interview with a woman from whose home she had been incontinently barred throughout her intimacy with the woman's daughter. Not that she would ever

have wished to go there, he felt sure; there was too much pride in the girl's whole bearing and in her eyes to permit the suggestion that she would ever accept any patronage, especially from such a source; but nevertheless, any contact with Mrs. Walters must necessarily be humiliating to a girl of her spirit; and to compass such an interview looked to be about the most unlikely task which could possibly be conceived.

However, he set his wits to the problem of trying to evolve some suggestion of a first step in the desired direction, but nothing in the way of a plausible course could he work out. Obviously, the first move should be to establish some sort of an acquaintance, or at least, an exchange of courtesies, with the girl; but how to bring it about seemed to be entirely beyond the scope of his thinking apparatus. There was no place to begin. He could not even start with a clean slate; for in the light of the revelations of Mrs. Sands, his blunder had been even more egregious than he could possibly have dreamed. Unintentional though it so manifestly was, yet the memory of it would serve as a barrier between them, which was beyond all likelihood of breaking down. Still, he had promised to make the effort, and therefore he was going to be alert for every smallest opportunity; but he was not at all sanguine of success.

And meantime his typewriter made inconsequent

marks upon inconsequent pages while a number of days went by, and involuntarily his ears inclined themselves in the direction of the neighboring lanai; although the ironwood wind-break with swishing branches, the boarded-up end of his own lanai and the prevailing wind from the mountains, all conspired to afford him the complete isolation which, in any other circumstances, he would have coveted.

And then one morning, as he sat before the unresponsive typewriter and his eyes wandered to the curve of the road, beyond the garden; he caught a glimpse of the slender figure in a swirling yellow frock and with bare head, facing the wind, with her hand twisted in the chain of the great grey police dog which was eagerly forging ahead, as if he sniffed game in the wilds beyond.

Dick sprang up and dashed out in her wake. He could at least meet or pass her, and say good morning; she could scarcely set the dog on him for that, especially if the encounter were obviously accidental. Outside of his hedge, he could see the curve of the road around which she had been going, but she was already out of sight; so he hurried along, nearly running, almost to the bend; and then suddenly slowed down to a nonchalant gait in order to saunter around the curve in the most ingenuous manner possible,—evidently merely out for a casual stroll. However, when he turned the bend,

there lay a long stretch of empty road in front of him, without a sign of human being or dog upon it. He stopped, incredulous. She couldn't have gotten out of sight so quickly. He stared about and then back; and just behind him, only a yard or so, he saw her coming down onto the road from a slight eminence where she had evidently stood when he passed, with every opportunity to observe his rapid approach, his sudden careful assumption of casual indifference, and then his discomfiture at finding the road empty. Mercifully, her face was set homeward when he turned his head and saw her; and muttering imprecations between his teeth, he strode on up the road, perfectly conscious that she must be laughing at him for a preposterous idiot.

When he was sure that she must have reached home and entered her own compound, he turned back and eventually stalked up the path to his own door, not at all sure but that she might be still laughing at him through the screening vines and foliage of her garden. Once within, he attacked his typewriter with vicious energy; but had no more than begun when the honk of an automobile brought him to his feet, recognizing Bert Sands's particular play upon the key.

Before he could reach the door, the young woman was standing in the entrance with the usual shining eyes and wind-blown rings of black hair, her hands in the pockets of a pair of grey knickers.

"Hello!" she called; "I came up Tantalus to get some violets of the Jap down below here, and ran across a visitation headed your way and thought that I'd come on up and warn you. Haven't a minute to spare, really; needed the violets for company tea. You see, I like to get them up here, nice and fresh and blue and white, all done up in ti leaves in the good old-fashioned way."

"But wait! Don't be in such a rush!" protested Dick. "Tell me who's coming. Thank you for giving me time to take to the woods."

"No! No!" exclaimed Bert Sands, seriously; "I don't want you to take to the woods. When the Kat Mortons come clear up Tantalus just to casually drop in to see somebody, that means that they have a deep and profound reason for doing it. Take it from me, the Kat Mortons want to use you some way; and it will be much better to find out what they are after."

"But what for?" objected Dick. "Why not just avoid them and let it go at that? I don't want to be bothered with them, or with having to refuse to be made some sort of a convenience. I'd rather light out."

Bert shook her head. "I'd rather you'd stay, if you don't mind," she said. "You see, they have Carter McKnight with them, and they are ostensibly coming up for a picnic and are going to drop in on you merely because they happened to be passing. I

know how they'll do it. Kat looked a whole cutlery shop at the Copy when she blurted out they were coming here. She'll get it when she gets home. She's not supposed ever to say anything that her sister hasn't platted out for her; and when she does, there's usually the dickens to pay."

"But who's Carter McKnight?" questioned Dick, puzzled; "And what could they want of me?"

Bert stepped a little closer. "Carter McKnight," she said, "is Jim McKnight's brother. He came out here at the time that Jim was killed, and took the body home. Now he's here again, came a week ago, and seems to be trying to take his brother's place with Kat Morton. And now, when those two inert pieces of fur, along with him, take a trip up Tantalus and picnic out among the little bugs and ants and things, it isn't because they are doing it to have a good time. And when they have it all planned out that they are going to make an impromptu call upon a gentleman who lives next door to their dusky cousin-by-chance (asking Mrs. Grundy's pardon for mentioning the kinship), it isn't one of those things which just happen to happen, you can take it from me."

"Oh, I see," said Dick, speculatively; "So you think that's the active principle in their sudden interest in me. All right, then, I'll stay on and find out what's in the wind. But give me some pointers as to how to handle things. I don't remember them

well enough to have any sort of a line on them. They simply weren't my kind aboard ship, and so I didn't pay any attention."

"Don't do a thing, just watch them," said Bert; "and try to make out what they are up to. They are both of them just soft, sweet, ultra-feminine girls, the kind that go in for lacy, diaphanous effects;—picnicking today, both of them have on white skirts and dainty little pink and blue sweaters as thin as cobwebs; and their voices caress you and admire you and—oh, you know, they are the poor-little-me kind. And even then, they are sort of sleek. Kat rolls cream on her tongue all the time. It makes her words slide as if they were greased, and her eyes are unctuous and fawning, and she purrs and purrs. Say, you know how a cat will work her claws softly in and out and positively drool her affection for you; and then suddenly dig those claws in clear to the bone;—and then look up into your face with perfect adoration and purr with tender ingenuousness; and with streaks of cat nature flicking across her eyes all the time. Well, that's Kat Morton; and her sister is a rather fair imitation; but not quite such a finished product."

"Sounds nice" commented Dick, cheerfully. "And what about McKnight?"

"H'm. Rather poor stuff," she said. "Gives an impressions of being underbred and conscious of it, and so he carries a line of immobility and stiff re-

pression to cover it up. He has an enameled exterior, and while what is underneath doesn't seem to break through, the odor oozes out just the same."

"Sort of a whited sepulcher," suggested Dick.

"I don't know," said Bert. "He may be bad, or he may be only ill-bred. He has the lid on to hide something, but what it is—far be it from me to do any guessing. And now I've got to go. Haven't made any progress yet in the main issue, have you?"

"Yes," said Dick, "Progress crab-fashion."

"Howcum?" inquired Bert, her ready grin flashing into evidence. And Dick retailed his morning experience, not sparing himself when he came to the ignominious collapse of his carefully prepared dramatics.

Bert laughed hilariously. "How beautiful!" she cried. "You surely have the faculty for messing things up, haven't you! Well, never mind; if she has a sense of humor, she will begin to love you for the entertainment you afford her. Now good-bye. I leave you to your visitation. They'll probably be in about tea-time, but don't have anything prepared, or they will guess that you have been put wise. Oh, wait a minute! Help me to move this table," and she grasped the edge of the heavy dining table which stood in the middle of the lanai.

Dick rushed to her assistance. "But where? and what for?" he demanded.

"Right over into the corner there, next to your

neighbor's lanai. That is only about three feet away, I gather."

"Yes," said Dick; "But that end of my lanai is boarded up, and the ironwoods make a thick screen outside. What's the idea?"

"Well," said Bert, engineering the rolling of the table, "You don't know the Kats. They are prying, peering, listening creatures, and there's no knowing what they might try to put over. There!" as she shoved the table up as tightly as possible into the corner, "I feel better with that there, anyway."

Dick walked with her to the door. "There is very little sound comes through," he said, "unless some of them come very close to the corner of their lanai. Once in a while I hear the kiddie crying a little, or laughing a little, but that is all."

"Poor baby!" said Bert, pityingly.

"It laughs and cries like any other kiddie," said Dick. "Is it absolutely idiotic?"

"Why, I suppose so," said Bert. "That's what everybody says, though I don't know of anyone who has actually seen it. It must be an awful thing for the poor mother. Think what a life she's leading; and just a young girl, too. She's not more than twenty-one or two, now."

"No," agreed Dick, reminiscently, "She looked to be about twenty, I should say. Well, good-bye, if you must go. I suppose that I have got to stay and face the music."

"Yes, and face the Kat calls," laughed Bert. "Sorry you haven't a telephone, but I'll be up soon to hear about what happens. And oh, by the way, be sure that your skylight is closed and the ladder down;—those girls will nose about everywhere. Good-bye." And Dick went back in to tell Moto to attend to the sky-light and the ladder and to have something ready for tea, but to make it seem extemporaneous, just the same.

It was about four o'clock when the visitors arrived. The girls were deliciously sweet and gushing and so interested in his quarters and peering into all of the rooms with kittenish ingenuousness; and posing before his typewriter and wondering what it would be like to write splendid articles and see them actually in print, and to really have one's name in "*Who's Who!*" Wasn't it just marvelous to be so brilliant as that; and doing it all out of his own head, too!

Carter McKnight proved to be an excellent recommendation for Mrs. Sand's descriptive powers. A wooden man, silent with a hard silence; watchful of others and of himself; absolutely a stranger to spontaneity. Ordinarily Dick would not have found him worth considering.

Eventually Dick got them herded to the far end of the lanai, on the promise of tea, and began a disquisition upon the clever habits of the mynah birds, by way of entertainment; but very shortly Kat grew

restive and showed an inclination to take the conversation into her own hands; and Dick agreeably acquiesced, watching interestedly to see what its trend would be. At first it was all eulogistic of the view and the coolness of the air and his cleverness in hunting out so perfect a place to carry on his work; and then she turned to McKnight with condolences that he had been less fortunate in finding a satisfactory place to stay during his sojourn in the Islands. He suffered so dreadfully from the heat, she explained to Dick, being accustomed to a cooler climate. It was such a pity; and there was not another house to be had on Tantalus, not one; they had been inquiring today.

Dick sympathized, and suggested a period at the Volcano, where the altitude makes for cooler weather; but that would not do at all; for, as Kat said, he had matters to attend to in Honolulu, and could not go farther away. No, Tantalus was the only possible place; and really was tantalizing because of being so near, and yet without so much as a bunk where he could put up for a couple of weeks, until he could finish what he had to do here. And then she waited for Dick's hospitable impulses to produce the desired response.

However, the response was not forthcoming. Dick sympathized some more and then turned the subject; but Kat brought it back with the attack direct. Couldn't he take a friend in for just that

long? It would be *such* a favor. McKnight had a roadster and could run back and forth to town,— wouldn't have to trespass for anything but a bed; and it would be such a perfectly wonderful thing, and so lovely and generous of Dick if he would do it, as of course he would, seeing that it wouldn't discommode him the least bit in the world.

Dick protested that he had only one bed-room. Was sorry, certainly; but that disposed of the matter, of course.

But it didn't. Kat assured him that McKnight wouldn't mind sleeping right out there on the lanai on the couch; and if Dick were short of bedding for an extra; why they, the Mortons, would be glad to supply anything that was needed. Of course that settled it conclusively, and Kat began to express her appreciation of Dick's hospitality in the creamiest sort of a way, and McKnight, hitherto silent, appeared now to be waiting to get in a word edge-wise by way of gratitude.

But Dick interrupted rather tersely. It was absolutely out of the question. His work required the isolation which he had sought in coming up here; and the work must be considered paramount. He was sorry; but the idea was utterly impracticable.

Kat was very sweet and creamy about it. She understood. Of course she understood. Genius must have its quietude in which to blossom. It was an imposition for them to have even suggested that so

small a matter as the health of a stranger within their gates should be considered at all. Life and death were small affairs indeed compared to the permanence of literary masterpieces—and the dollars which they brought. It all slid forth suavely and sweetly and without a hint of acridity in the tone; but only the most humble admiration and adulation; and Dick possessed his soul with such patience as he could and devoutly wished that he had a bag and a brick and a tub of water handy.

And then, Kat having smiled appreciatively at Dick, she arose and went over to the corner of the lanai where the heavy table stood, close against the nearest approach to the neighboring house. She tried to move the table aside but it proved too heavy, and as Dick did not offer to assist and McKnight was too lacking in self-confidence to do so, she gave a soft little laugh and crawled under it, popping up in the little corner made by the rail and the curve of the round table. "Oh," she cried, "the view is lovely from here!" and she bent far out over the rail and grasped some of the branches of the ironwood and tried to swing them aside. "I am sure that I can catch a glimpse of the sea if I can swing these branches far enough." But her face was turned toward the angle of the adjoining house.

Dick sat silent. "Why don't you roll up the canvas curtain on this end of the lanai?" she called. And her voice, soft though it was, still had a pene-

trating quality when she so chose. And before Dick could answer, she went on, still leaning out over the rail with her face turned in the direction of the neighboring lanai; "But I don't wonder that you keep it down, considering the sort of neighbors that you have."

Dick stood up. "Tea is just coming, Miss Morton," he said. "I will move the table so that you may come out;" and he approached.

"Oh, no!" cried Kat, "I'm not coming yet. I love it over here. Of course you know the story of these people," she went on. "I'm horribly ashamed of it myself because you know, in a way, it reflects upon our family. And think what my darling aunt has suffered! I just simply never could understand how my cousin could run after that vulgar half-white man. It was absolutely incredible."

Dick stood beside the table controlling himself with an effort, perfectly conscious that her words must carry through the screen and to the next lanai, and praying that the Hawaiian girl might not be within hearing distance. "I had not understood," he said, with difficult repression, "that David Malua was vulgar. I have been told that he had some of the best Hawaiian blood in the Islands."

"Of course he was vulgar! All kanakas are vulgar. They're niggers. My cousin must have gotten her taste from her father; it certainly didn't come from our side of the house."

Dick was seething. "Miss Morton," he said crisply, "if souls were worn on the outside of the skin instead of inside, the general run of Hawaiians would make the most of us look as if we came out of the blackest part of Africa. Now suppose we have tea." And he drew the table aside to permit her to pass.

But Kat was not to be coerced and stood still in her chosen corner, leaning as far as possible toward the ironwoods, and she turned her eyes, big and reproving, upon Dick. "Why, Mr. Harris!" she cried, "what a dreadful thing to say! Why, I think that's awful. Wait until I tell you a few things. Come on, let's have tea over here on this table, and I'll sit right here on the rail. Come on over, Calista, we're going to have tea over here! Oh, yes, Mr. Harris, and I want to ask you something else. Listen, do you ever hear or see anything of that awful child? I'd like to see what it really looks like;" and she bent farther through the ironwoods. "They say that it is horribly deformed and is just like an animal,—has no mind at all. Isn't that shocking? Why——"

But Dick interrupted her desperately, at the same time waving the others back. "Miss Morton," he said, "I had that table put there as a guard. The supports under that corner of the lanai are undermined and there is danger of it going down into the valley; and the rail is loose in consequence of the sinking. I didn't want to frighten you, but I have

tried by every other means to get you away from there." But before he had finished speaking Kat had scrambled from the rail and was standing gasping in the middle of the floor.

"Oh, how terrible!" she cried. "Why, I might have plunged down into that awful depth! Oh, Callista, get me something quick; I believe I'm going to faint. Let's get out of this dangerous place; the whole house may go over the pali."

"No, there's nothing to fear," said Dick, gravely. "It is only the support at that corner that is weakened. It is all right over here. Now come and have some hot tea and you will be all right. Here it is, all ready for you."

And Kat permitted herself to be gently assisted by Carter McKnight, and accepted the tea and a sandwich; but the flow of her conversation was broken, and as soon as they had finished the refreshment they made their adieux, gushingly and sweetly, and thanked him for his charming entertainment; and Kat added that she was sure that the world would be much richer for the delightful isolation with which he had surrounded himself, in such close proximity with just one neighbor, of the race for which he possessed such a remarkable predilection.

And then they entered their car and drove away.

Dick went back into the house and swore. Never in his life had he been so thoroughly exasperated

and so absolutely without recourse in the way of defense. If the Hawaiian girl had been upon her lanai, she must necessarily have heard every word of Kat's venomous diatribe, and must have known that it was intended for her ears, as well; which made it all the more despicable. He walked the floor in a rage. What would his neighbor think of him? She would not have been able to hear his defense of her race, of that he was certain; and how could she have been sure that he was not in perfect agreement with Kat's arraignment? And then the heartless comments upon the little child! It was unendurable! And then his mind reverted to the object of their call. Unquestionably their purpose had been to induce him to take in Carter McKnight as a guest. That was self-evident, but what lay back of it? He had no confidence in the man; but, granted that he was unprincipled, what object could he possibly have in coming to live next door to the woman who had been indirectly the cause of his brother's death, and why should the Morton girls try to further the project? The matter seemed absolutely without reason, and yet he was positively convinced that the man's object in desiring to come, was in some way connected with the girl next door. Well, perhaps Mrs. Sands could evolve a solution. He must see her as soon as possible. At any rate, it was perfectly evident that Kat's horrible behavior must have put another effectual nail in the coffin

of his hopes of amity with Mrs. Malua and any influence which he might exert toward inducing her to see the mother of Jean Walters.

He got into his car and drove down to town to talk it over with Bert Sands; but she and her husband were out on some sort of a hike of exploration, and so he dined in town and drove back up the mountain in anything but a happy frame of mind.

The next morning was no better. Work was impossible, since his mind persisted in continually revolving and rehearsing the events of the past few days and in trying to fit some reasonable and logical hypothesis to account for the designs of his yesterday's guests. Nevertheless, from mere force of habit, he sat before his typewriter, rolling cigarettes and thinking and puzzling as he looked off across the valley at the steep ridge opposite, with its ledges of rock and its clambering green vines, ti plants and wild mango and kukui trees. The top of the ridge was fairly clear of tall growth, but there were no houses high up on that side of the valley, and probably no trails, as he had never seen the movement of any living thing upon it.

However, as his eyes rested there idly this morning he, for the first time, saw moving forms making their way along from the direction of the distant slope toward the town. He watched them indolently, wondering what should have taken people to that isolated ridge and how they got up there, to

begin with. And then he remembered that Bert Sands had said that she and Jack were planning to do some exploring on the Manoa ridges, and on the chance that it might be they, he reached to his desk for his field glasses which he had on hand for bird study.

At first he could not make out much, as the trampers were going through some tangles of vines and scrub growths; but presently they came more into the open and he saw that there were three in the party and Bert evidently not among them, as she always wore knickers when she hiked, and the two women of this group both wore skirts, and the other member was undoubtedly a man. Listlessly he watched their progress, through the glass, as they came nearer along the top of the ridge. Occasionally they stopped and appeared to reconnoiter, and then came on over the rough way until they were nearly opposite his own lanai. Here they stopped and sat down, evidently to rest, facing in his direction. Then both of the women lifted off their broad-brimmed hats, and something in the movement made Dick suddenly sit up and quickly turn his glasses to better focus. They were good glasses and it took but a glance to tell him that the group opposite him consisted of the two Morton girls and Carter McKnight. But what the deuce were they doing there? If what Bert Sands had said about the girls' inert habits was true, then why

this incredible exertion of climbing to such a hopelessly inaccessible spot, through guava, klu and lantana thickets and over steep and rough lava-strewn mountain sides? If they could possibly have come to spy upon his neighbor, how could they hope to observe anything at that distance;— unless — and closer he screwed the glass, and then he sprang to his feet with an imprecation, overturning his chair and making a dash for the door and out through the hedge, shouting sharply for Fong.

The police dog set up a wild clamor and the Chinaman appeared at the kitchen door like a jack-in-the-box. "Quick!" shouted Dick, "Make down front curtain, quick! Both curtain, quick!"

"Wassmatter?" inquired the scowling Chinaman.

"Don't wait!" shouted Dick; "Go and do it or I'll do it myself. Wiki-wiki!"

The Chinaman slid away and Dick stood still at the opening of the hedge while he heard the banging of the poles as first one and then the other of the heavy curtains dropped. Then the Chinaman appeared at the door again and repeated aggressively "Wassmatter?"

At the same moment the Hawaiian girl came to the other entrance. Her eyes were big and startled. "What is the trouble?" she asked, breathlessly.

Dick approached a little nearer, up the walk. "There are people on the ridge opposite," he said.

"Well," she said, coolly; "Occasionally trampers

go up there."

"But," hesitated Dick; "These are not trampers."

"Who are they?" asked the girl, quickly.

"The Morton girls and McKnight."

"And *who*?" The girl's voice was like a gasp.

"Carter McKnight. They were here yesterday."

"But what is he doing in Hawaii?" There was a note of terror in her tone.

"He came only a week or so ago," said Dick. "He says that he has business affairs here to attend to."

"And he was *here*,—here in your house yesterday?"

"Yes. The Morton girls brought him up. I never saw him before."

The girl bit her lip. "I knew that they were there," she said; "But I didn't know who was with them. What did they come for?"

Dick was frank. "It appeared that the object was to get me to take McKnight as a guest for a week or so."

"Oh!" cried the girl; "You're not going to? You wouldn't do that?"

"No, no!" said Dick, soothingly. "I told them that it wasn't possible, and that rather upset Kat's disposition, as perhaps you know. But don't worry, they'll never get into my place again."

The girl's brow wrinkled. "And now they are up on the ridge opposite?" she said. "But do you sup-

pose that they could see anything at all at that distance?"

"Yes," said Dick, quietly, "They had a spy-glass."

"Oh!" cried the girl, clasping her hands. "Do you suppose that we got the curtain down in time?"

"I don't know," said Dick, "At first I didn't see what they were up to; but just as soon as I did, I tore over here. I didn't bother to focus my glasses much at first, not until I guessed who they were; but it takes longer to adjust the sort of a glass that they have, so perhaps they didn't get much. Anyway, they can't see now," he added, comfortingly.

"But I can't keep the curtain down all the time," protested the girl.

"Oh!" said Dick, "Don't worry. They will never make a trip like that again. Still, I wouldn't roll it up until you are sure that they are gone. They may have thought that you put it down just to shut out the sun, and they might wait for it to come up again when the sun gets around farther. Here, you'd better take my glasses, and keep them in sight through the space between the two curtains; and then when you see them go, you'll be all right."

The girl took the glasses dubiously. "But won't you need them?" she asked.

"No," said Dick, "I have another pair. I only use those to catch mynah birds with. Keep them as long as you choose; I can use the others just as well."

The girl turned the glasses in her fingers anxiously. "I wonder—" she said; "Oh, I do wonder if we were in time."

"We'll hope so," said Dick, cheerfully.

"Thank you," said the girl, and turned toward the door; and then suddenly she turned back and her eyes were wide. She came quite near to him. "Are you—" she almost whispered, "—are you sure that it was a spy-glass that they had?"

"Why, yes," said Dick; "Certainly it was a spy-glass. What else should it be?"

"You are sure?" her breath was coming rapidly and her hands clenched; "You are sure that it wasn't a—a gun?"

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Dick. "Of course I'm sure. I could see perfectly plainly that it was a spy-glass. Now don't worry about anything like that. It certainly was a spy-glass;—and anyway, a gun couldn't shoot any such distance as that. You know that, yourself."

The girl relaxed somewhat. "I'm sorry," she said, "to seem foolish; but the thought frightened me so. Thank you so much for everything," and she turned again and went back into the house.

And Dick returned to his lanai and sat down once more before his typewriter. "Now I wonder," he said to himself, "I wonder if she really is not—pupu-le."

CHAPTER IV

THE LITTLE MONSTER

DURING the several days which followed, Dick found himself contemplating with some satisfaction the fact that Fate, with very little assistance upon his part, had established his standing with his neighbor upon a somewhat more pacific footing. To be sure, he had not seen the girl again; but in their last interview she had at least treated him a little less like an insect, and there was some encouragement in this. Perhaps in time he might work up to the status of her dog, and possibly she might eventually come to recognize him as almost a human being. In fact, his satisfaction had reached a point of banishing his former phase of humiliation over the untoward situations of their first contacts; and now his sense of humor had come to the rescue and substituted a grin at each remembrance, in place of the qualms of self-abasement. He now began to feel a touch of real enthusiasm in the task which Bert Sands had set for him and to take a definite interest in the developments; and also to put considerable thought upon ways and means of discovering and circumventing whatever

machinations the Morton girls and McKnight might have in mind. He found that Mrs. Sands and her husband had gone to Kauai for a week or so, and therefore he had to possess his soul in patience, having no one with whom to speculate upon the meaning of recent events.

The only thing that worried him was that last remark of Evalani's. She had asked him, evidently in great fear, if he was sure that the observers upon the other ridge had not a gun instead of a spy-glass. This must mean one of two things; either the girl really was partly mad, or else that she actually had some reason to fear either the girls or McKnight. Putting aside the first theory, and also her perhaps natural ignorance that a gun could not carry so far, what reason could there be for the second theory? It was not rational to suppose that McKnight would try to revenge himself upon her for her indirect part in the death of his brother; though of course such an idea might be consistent in a morbid mind, upon learning of his return. Nor had the Morton girls, supposedly, any reason to connect her with the disappearance of their cousin, any further than that she might possibly know something of the girl's heart during those last hours. Of course they might feel that had Evalani not married Malua, their cousin might perhaps have won him in time; but from Kat's vituperative remarks a few days ago, it would seem that they would not have been

any too greatly pleased with such an alliance, even though it made for their cousin's happiness. And still, on the other hand, there was certainly something in the wind in their direction. It was perfectly evident that they had made their call for the express purpose of trying to inveigle him into taking McKnight into his home; and what would be the object other than that he might, for some purpose, be in the vicinity of his neighbor? And also, it was plainly evident that they had some reason for invading the ridge opposite; and surely Kat's cruel curiosity merely to see a pitifully malformed and idiotic child, would not make girls of their type undertake so difficult a feat as the scaling of that rugged mountain side.

Under the spur of Dick's enlivened spirits and more vital outlook, his work began once more to move along at its accustomed pace; until again it occupied the center of the stage during his working day, and the problems of his neighbor were relegated to his more relaxed hours. Also, he had betaken himself to the practice of a noontime walk down the trail after luncheon, before going back to tackle the afternoon's work. And it was upon his return from such a walk one day that he noticed, in passing his neighbor's garden, that the old grandmother was out in the yard superintending the transplanting of some large ferns from the ground into baskets for the lanai, and that Fong was grum-

blingly doing the work. He went on to his desk and was soon deeply absorbed, being vaguely conscious of a feeling of satisfaction that the kiddie next door was probably having a nap, since he was not running a newly acquired kiddie-car back and forth over their lanai and bumping into the rail at each end with a delighted squeal. For several days he had found himself waiting periodically for the bump and the squeal, and this temporary hiatus in the entertainment was very much to his taste. However, the peace did not last long; for in a few moments there came a series of bumps and clatters which would seem to indicate that the youngster was riding the car down the stairway; but as it continued for some moments, instead of ending in a crash and a scream, he decided that Fong was probably taking some soy pails of fresh crotons up to the roof sitting-room, and turned again to his work.

And as he turned, he caught a glimpse of a wind-swirled yellow frock, such as his neighbor always wore, disappearing around the curve of the road up the mountain. But no sooner had he attacked the keys of his typewriter, than the trundling of the kiddie-car began again, sounding even louder than usual. However, he took himself in hand to counteract it,—to convince himself that it was really too small a matter to be irritating, especially since it couldn't be helped; and besides, until this new steed had arrived, he had scarcely ever heard a sound

from next door, so why let this bother him? But nevertheless, bother him it did, for the rumbling sounded so much louder and more hollow than it ever had before, and he yanked page after page from his typewriter, wapsed it into a ball of harassed injury and cast it into his waste-basket, and inserted a fresh sheet. At one point, as he raised his eyes for aim at the basket, they rested for a satisfied moment upon Evalani, just coming around the curve of the road, the wind swishing her thin frock about her and the dog tugging at the leash. But in another instant she had stopped short in her tracks and a sharp scream broke from her and she dropped the dog's chain and started upon a wild run in the direction of home.

Dick sprang to his feet, his senses instantly alert and tense. The direction of her face when she screamed and the sounds which had been coming to his ears, suddenly revealed the situation. He made a dash for his bed-room and up the ladder and through the sky-light with incredible speed, and snatching the folded steamer chair which lay against the edge of his cot, he flung it through the ironwood branches and across the space between the two roofs; and almost as soon as it touched the other side, he was upon it, clutching the heavy green locks of the trees, sliding himself between the trunks and springing upon the roof and then darting after the small figure upon the trundling kiddie-

car which was careening gaily along on a deadly slant within a few feet of the edge of the roof and the appalling depths below. In fact, so narrow was the margin that when he grasped the child, he must needs fling himself back upon the roof to keep from being carried over the edge by his own impetus, while the kiddie-car shot bravely off into space and not even a clatter came up from the grim abyss.

In a moment he was struggling to his feet, clutching the frightened child in his arms; but he was scarcely upright before the girl's figure dashed from the stairway out upon the roof, her eyes mad with fear and her arms reaching wildly forward.

Dick, holding the child, placed himself in the way of her blind rush. "It's all right," he said, bracing himself against the impact. "It's all over and no harm done;" and he released the little one to her arms.

She dropped upon the mat, drawing the child to her breast and bowing her head over him and sobbing great, heavy, tearing sobs; while the child, too frightened at the stranger and the quick action, even to cry, lay still in her arms and stared at the tall man beside them.

For only a moment Dick stood there, looking down at the pair; and then, as the sobs continued, he turned softly and went back to the point from which he had entered, negotiated his passage back to his own roof, drew over the chair and descended

to his own lanai.

But instead of returning to his typewriter, he sat down in a wicker chair and took his face in his hands and sat for a long time quietly, with his face hidden. Something had happened to his life,—something appalling; and he sat contemplating it almost with incredulity. It was as if some crushing calamity had fallen and he was at first too dazed even to take in its full import, and yet was conscious that it spelled chaos for him. And as he sat there the sight of the child's frightened face looking up from its mother's breast, seemed burned into the very fabric of his brain and the hiding of his own face could not shut it out. For the little face, instead of being that of a gross, malformed monster, mindless and bestial, had the beautifully clear-cut features and fair skin of an Anglo-Saxon child, with wide, intelligent blue eyes and the tow hair of so many American three-year-olds.

And as Dick sat there, with the light shut out by his sheltering hands, he tore his soul wide open and gazed at it. In the light of this revelation there was only one thing to think, only one thing that was positive, only one great petrifying verity which overtopped everything else in his life. Heretofore he had pitied the girl as an innocent sufferer from a tragedy in which she had become involved without being in any way to blame; but here suddenly he saw her now as the moving cause of the whole ca-

tastrophe. Instead of being innocent, she was black with guilt. Instead of hiding from the world the pitiful evidence of her unearned disaster, she was, instead, hiding the dreadful proof of her sin and her guilt. No wonder that when David Malua saw the child for which he had longed, he went forth and killed the author of his disgrace and then wiped out the score with his own blood.

And it was here that Dick Harris faced his own soul and cringed. It was no use to say "Well, what then! What is it to me? Why should I care?" The plain fact of the matter was that he did care. He cared desperately. He cared so damnably that the world was black to him and nothing existed but this awful revelation and the fact that, in spite of the horrible reality, he loved the girl with every fibre of his being; and that even with that, he hated her for having brought into his life so frightful a complication.

And now he began to wonder how much Carter McKnight knew or suspected. This might be the secret of the interest which he and the Morton girls evinced in Evalani and her child. Perhaps McKnight's brother had written him of his affair with the Hawaiian girl, and he was trying to find out about the child. Probably this was the reason that the girl was afraid of him. What the purpose of his interest in the child might be, since it obviously could not inherit, was hard to surmise; but that he

was interested was beyond question; and it was likely that the Morton girls were helping him merely because he was going to marry Kat, which gave them common concern. And then his mind reverted again to his own position in the matter, and abysmal gloom once more enveloped him.

It was while he still sat there with his face in his hands, that a quiet voice spoke to him, and he raised his head to see the Hawaiian girl standing before him, her hands clasped nervously and her eyes dark and anxious. "I'm so sorry," she said, with a wan little smile; "We seem to make you a lot of trouble. I want to apologize for not thanking you,—for going all to pieces about my baby,—but—but you see, he is all that I have," and her voice broke a little.

Dick had come to his feet instantly, though he was conscious that his face was still drawn and haggard. He tried to smile naturally. "It's all right," he said; "I'm only too glad that I got there in time. It was a mighty close call for the little fellow. That certainly isn't a very safe place to ride hobby-horses. Won't you sit down?"

"No, no!" said the girl; "I must go right back; but I wanted you to know that I appreciate what you did, and how tremendously much your instant action meant to me. It was wonderful, the way that you got up there so quickly. And I wanted—" she stood looking at him, clasping and unclasping

her hands; "—I wanted to ask you—please—" she stopped.

"Go on," he said, gently.

She continued, still looking straight at him. "You saw my child," she said; "No one else has ever seen him excepting just ourselves. You—you will keep my secret—please?"

Dick bowed gravely, "I would have kept it without your speaking," he said. "What I have learned inadvertently, is as if it had never come to me. You may be perfectly at rest about that."

"I thank you," she said. "Of course you will not understand, but—"

"It is not necessary that I should understand," said Dick. "Your life is yours to live, your secrets are yours to keep. You may still consider that only your own little household and the dead know your secret."

The girl's eyes grew wider. "I wonder—" she said softly, "—I wonder if the dead do know."

Dick smiled down at her. "I think," he said, "that their sight is clearer than ours; and they see not only what appears, but also what lies beneath. If they know our temptations, then surely they must more easily forgive our deflections."

The girl nodded her head gravely. "Perhaps that is so. It helps, anyway, to think that it might be like that. I believe that the idea will sort of rest me. I am so, so tired of thinking and wondering,"

she added, with a sorry little smile that was sadder than tears. And then she turned to go.

Dick walked with her to the door. "You are too much alone," he said; "You should have more companionship."

But the girl only shook her head. "It is the only way," she said, "The only way now. Perhaps later I shall find some means to take my little boy to the Coast; but I cannot do it now." And then she added: "You have been very kind, Mr. Harris. I am glad that you came up here to live;" and with a brighter smile she stepped through the break in the hedge;—stepped through almost into the face of a passing automobile containing the Morton sisters and McKnight.

The Kat sisters giggled audibly and McKnight almost ran the car off of the road, in his eagerness to lean out and look well at the girl who had been the cause of his brother's death; and they could see the sisters looking out through the back glass after the car had passed.

Dick gritted his teeth. "Awkward!" he commented.

The girl was breathing rapidly. "Who was the man?" she asked.

"That was McKnight," answered Dick.

"Oh!" cried the girl, desperately; "Am I to be hounded my whole life long? Oh, why didn't David take me with him, too? Oh, why didn't he?" And

she turned and fled through the hedge and into her own home.

And that afternoon Bert Sands, having returned from her wanderings, drove her little car up the mountain and called upon Dick, to learn of his progress.

"Well?" she inquired, ensconced behind the tea-tray; "What is the report? Are you getting anywhere?"

And Dick Harris looked her fairly in the face and replied: "Yes, Mrs. Sands—but I can't tell you anything about it." And then he amended the statement; "I can't tell you *all* about it," he corrected.

Bert smiled across at him. "That's all right," she said. "If we happen upon anything that isn't our own, we can't tell it; that's sure. That is a sort of a house of secrets over there, anyway," and she inclined her head in the direction of the neighboring lanai; "and we don't want to pry or to learn anything that isn't any of our business. All that we want is to help one sad little old lady; and anything that is not meat in that direction, is kapu, and never happened, so far as we are concerned."

"Fine!" said Dick, gratefully, and then went on; "There have been some curious happenings which I don't entirely understand and I can't tell you all about them; but they have to do with the call of the Morton girls that day when you warned me of their

descent upon me;" and he forthwith detailed the events of that appalling afternoon.

Bert listened with interest. "H'm!" she said, "That's curious. I wonder what they are up to. Have you any idea?"

"I know a little," Dick hesitated; "but it is involved in the matter which cannot be told. You see, I had to let you in on this much, because they are not through yet, and I may need the help of your grey matter if it gets too much for me." And then he went on to retail the story of the trio's visit to the top of the ridge opposite.

Bert set down her teacup and folded her arms on the table and stared across at Dick. "It waxes interesting," she said. "We start in to do a little good turn, and we suddenly find ourselves in the middle of a mystery where somebody may need our help in good earnest. I'll tell you what, Dick Harris, I wouldn't trust that McKnight man for three minutes, if he had any interest at stake. I can't see what interest he can have, but that doesn't belie the fact that he has one. And as for the Kats, they have about as much soul as a jaguar, and would hesitate no longer to do an ill turn if they were sure they wouldn't be found out and they had the least thing to gain. Now listen, do you mind telling me whether what you have learned furnishes any motive for McKnight's interest?"

"Yes, and no," said Dick, guardedly. "It gives a

possible clue to the cause for a certain amount of interest, but none whatever as to what sort of a purpose might be attached. I wish that I could tell you, for that agile brain of yours might work it out; but I just can't," and he shook his head ruefully.

Bert pondered. "He's engaged to Kat, I suppose," she said, slowly; "and it might be that they are afraid that Mr. Morton might leave something to Evalani's child and cut them out of a few thousands. I don't know. I'll mull this much over in my mind for a while, anyway. One thing more, can you tell me whether you have made any headway in the direction of leading the girl toward a talk with Mrs. Walters?"

"Well," said Dick, more cheerfully; "I've somewhat overcome her prejudice against me for the time being. It is possible that I might sometime be able to bring up a question which would tend toward some such suggestion,—but not yet. It is a pitifully sore subject, of course, considering all of the relationships involved, and it won't be easy to bring matters around to such a point; but I'll do my best."

Bert rose to go. "Well," she said; "if the way ever opens for you to put me into touch with the girl, don't let the opportunity slip. The poor child is living a dreadful life, alone with that tragic baby and the old Hawaiian grandmother. I have a lot of sympathy for her and I believe that if I could just

get into touch with her once, I could get her out of that dreadful morbid condition which makes her shut herself up like this. Just keep it in mind, Dick. And meanwhile I'll keep an eye on the Morton cats and see if I can land anything to explain their doings."

And again, as they passed out through the hedge, an automobile was being driven slowly by, and in the car the Morton girls and, as usual, Carter McKnight. The car stopped and Kat Morton leaned out. "Well, well, Mr. Harris!" she called; "Is this your vaunted isolation? I begin to see method in the very exclusive life which you have chosen to lead."

Dick's head went up and he stepped close to the car. "The Fates were unkind to me, Miss Morton," he said, evenly, "when they made you a woman instead of a man." And then, with a bow, he turned away to see Bert to her car.

Bert's eyes were blazing and her knuckles clinched white. "Oh!" she said, "Please good Lady Fortune put it into my hands to get back at her some day. I'll never be happy until I see her eating crow! Never, never!"

Dick laughed. "A crow is a bird, and birds is birds and cats is cats; maybe she'd like it."

"Nope!" said Bert, with conviction; "This crow is going to be a different kind of a bird. It is going to be doctored, and doctored to a finish, and it will

be the very bitterest bit of eating that she ever tackled. Just wait, there'll be a beautiful reckoning some day!" and she deftly turned her car and drove away down the road, while Dick returned to the house to contemplate the fact of two trips of the trio up the mountain in one day, clearly indicating that they were, for some reason keeping a close watch upon his lonely neighbor; but for what possible reason he was unable to hazard even the most remote guess.

However, his suggestion to Evalani that she was too much alone, seemed to have borne fruit; for about the middle of the next morning he was astonished to hear her voice calling his name, just beyond the ironwood windbreak. He sprang to his feet and in an instant was bending over the rail of that corner of his lanai and brushing aside the swaying branches. The girl stood leaning forward, with an armful of the long green tassels gathered against her breast, and her face looked gayer and her eyes brighter than he had ever seen them excepting upon that first morning when she danced to the rising sun. She peered over at him, smiling and holding out his field-glasses. "Here are your glasses," she said; "If you reach a long, long way, I am sure that you can get them;" and she leaned farther out toward him.

"But," he protested, "don't you want to keep them longer?" You can just as well as not; for, as I

told you, I have another pair."

"No," she said, "I don't think that I shall need them any more. The girls will never take that climb again. I can imagine how that one trip must have laid them up with listerine and cold creme. I am surprised they got about again as soon as they did. I've been up there, and it's no joke of a climb, I can tell you."

Dick leaned forward and took the glasses from her hand. "All right," he said; "I shall be keeping my eye out for them, anyway."

The girl still stood clasping the ironwood tassels, her face looking like that of a dryad peering through. "I was going to say," she offered, hesitatingly, "that if you really would be more comfortable with those boards taken down from this end of your lanai, I don't mind—now. You see," she added, with a rueful smile and a tiny catch in her breath, "I haven't anything to hide from you any more."

Dick's face was glowing. "That's fine of you," he said; "I'll have Moto take them down right away. It will make a lot of difference to me." And this in spite of the fact that ever since that one disastrous *kona* period, the trade wind had been sweeping clear and sweet the full length of his lanai every day and all day and all night.

"You are sure," she asked, "that little David's noise will not disturb you?"

"Not the least bit in the world. Not the very

least. I shall love to hear him." But at the same time he was conscious of a qualm of thankfulness that the rumbling kiddie-car was in the bottom of the Manoa Valley. But even that ungenerous thought he instantly put aside. "And by the way," he said; "he must be missing his kiddie-car; if you would like me to, I'll bring one up from town."

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed; "Oh, he shall never have another one, never! That was too terrible. It seems just impossible that it could have happened, careful as we are; but you see, Grandma was out in the garden with Fong and I had just put David to sleep and he always sleeps for an hour at least, and so I thought nothing of going out for a little walk. But there's a gate at the foot of the stairs and Fong had left it unlatched when he came down after taking some ferns up to my sitting-room; and David waked up and took his kiddie-car and went to find me. I don't see how he ever got the thing up to the roof; but the stairs are shallow and he is such a strong little fellow. But, oh, when I saw him up there—!" And she hid her face for a moment in the green tassels.

"Well," said Dick, "he's all right now, thank Heaven; and we don't have to worry about what didn't happen. I'm going to have Moto fix these boards right away; and then we can both leave our curtains up, for the ironwoods make an effective screen; and if anybody comes, mine will go down

pronto. It certainly will make it a lot cooler and pleasanter."

And so, while Dick went down to town for his mail, Moto worked strenuously with hammer and chisel, and by the time that he returned, the heavy canvas curtain had been rolled up, and in its place was a wide and high opening across which swung the fragrant green tassels, and from beyond which came the soft strains of a steel guitar and a sweet voice singing *Imi Au*, with all of its plaintive Hawaiian tones and cadences.

Thus, almost without his furtherance, the bars were suddenly down, and during the fortnight which followed, Dick lived in a sort of radiant Land O'Dreams; and all of the radiance emanated from one piquant face with shining eyes and gracious lips and a voice which laughed to him through the ironwoods, or crooned lullabys to the little one, or sang old Hawaiian songs to the sliding whimper of the steel guitar. He was conscious that it was only a Land O'Dreams,—that he dared not make it a land of reality; but the dream was sweet and he shut away from him zealously the bitter moment of awakening. Soon he was spending all of his evenings on the other lanai. She had let him swing across the intervening space one evening when he had brought David a huge, gaily-colored rubber ball to take the place of the lost kiddie-car, and it was only fair that he should see the child's astonish-

ment and delight. And again, the next evening, he had brought a parcel of magazines and books; and after that it was California fruits or some fresh lichis which he had found in market at an exorbitant price. And so it became a settled thing for him to call to her after dinner and ask if he might come for a moment with a new offering, or a bit of news;—and the moment lengthened to the entire evening while they talked or she sang;— and the wrinkled old Hawaiian grandmother sat in the shadow at the far end of the lanai, silent and watchful.

Also, he and the small David became great chums. David's circle of acquaintance had been so very limited that the advent of this tall, strong-armed man who could swing him about in wonderful circles and gyrations, and whose pockets were perfect treasure-houses of marvels, was a miracle of the Gods, and his joy in the friendship was unbounded. Heretofore his only playmates had been his mother and a tame mynah bird called Kuli-kuli, which means shut up, and was a remarkably utilitarian name, since it covered address and the constant necessary admonition in the same breath. The bird had been brought in as a tiny fellow, by Fong, when he had fallen out of his nest; and after a period during which it took all of one person's time merely to stand by and fill the widely stretched mouth so full that it couldn't squawk eternally, the sprawling bird eventually evolved into a properly developed

and proportioned mynah of dignified mien and buffalo disposition; and he and David became inseparable comrades. It has been said that mynah birds have a language of their own, and also that they can be taught to speak the human language; but in this case the reverse took place, and Evalani insisted that the bird taught David to speak its own language. At any rate, they would sit on the floor by the hour, playing and chatting away with each other, and David always insisted upon telling them of the various things that Kuli-kuli had said; and the remarks certainly were well adapted to what might be expected from such a source. And so, in this game, the little boy reached a point of being able to mimic the mynah's chatter with marvelous accuracy, even to the queer, plaintive little whine with a rising inflection which is the bird's note of inquiry and is always followed by flight. Their favorite sport was a sort of peek-a-boo, done with a newspaper folded to a stiff, tent-like peak, through which the bird would dash and peer out at his friend, and then David, lying flat upon his stomach, would grab at him and he would dart back and come slithering around on the outside, only to dash away again, squawking, when the small hand would make another grab. And then he would come stepping softly down through the tent again and the tip of his sharp bill would come poking out of the opening, followed by a shining black and yellow

eye; only to dart back again as soon as David scrambled for him; and then he would flop up and settle on the youngster's head and give his hair a great wooling with claws and bill, and be off again before the boy could get a hand upon him. Great games they had, and Dick and Evalani would sit and watch them and laugh hilariously. And so the days and the weeks slid by and the Land O'Dreams was a beautiful land, and the land of stern reality did not exist, because they shut their eyes to the fact that their mountain was called *Tantalus*; but they only looked at its beauty and felt its breezes and called it good;—and for the moment, were happy.

CHAPTER V

PUZZLES

Thus more than two weeks passed and Dick had become even more noticeably a stay-at-home. Several times when Bert Sands had come up for a conference, she had found the front door locked, and Moto blankly ignorant as to the whereabouts of his employer. In fact, Dick had formed the habit of keeping the front door locked, so that in case of anyone happening about, he would at least have a chance to drop the curtain upon his Land O'Dreams before opening it.

However, eventually he awakened to the fact that unless he were to see Bert Sands, she would certainly begin to wonder; and as he would much prefer to see her in her own home in Waikiki, rather than have her alert mind observing him upon his own lanai under the present conditions, he decided that it would be good medicine to drop in upon her occasionally, just by way of making things look natural. But when he did drop in, quite early one forenoon, he immediately wished that he hadn't; for Bert pounced upon him with the demand that

he go and make a call upon the Kat Mortons forthwith.

"Why, I certainly can't do that!" he exclaimed; "After what I said to Kat that day on Tantalus. Lord, they wouldn't let me in the house! And anyway, why should I?"

But Bert was insistent. "It's this way," she said; "Those girls are trying to get their aunt, Mrs. Walters, to take them to Europe. They are dead set on it. Their mother, Mrs. Walter's sister, died four or five years ago, and they live with their father, a sort of a nonentity and shyster lawyer, in the old home out Nuuanu, and the aunt is the fairy godmother and does everything for them. She has quite a fortune of her own. She had them over in the Orient and was just bringing them back loaded with plunder, when we met them on the boat. I go to see her often because she is so lonely and seems to have taken a fancy to me and begs me to come. The Kats only go there when they want something, and she knows it; and so it helps a little when I drop in to cheer her up. She has been telling me about their manoeuvres to get her away. In fact, they are so persistent that even she is suspicious of their motives and wants me to try to find out what's on their minds. And I can't do a thing because they know that I go to see Mrs. Walters so often, and they would be regular clams if I tried to pry anything out of them."

"But what can *I* do?" argued Dick, unhappily. "You know they wouldn't receive me after what I said."

Bert only laughed. "Don't you ever believe it, young man. Remember, you are something of a lion about here. Only the other day I heard Kat say that you were so clever that she did wish that you wouldn't make such a hermit of yourself, because she would like to exhibit you at one of her teas."

"And you want me to be exhibited?" glowered Dick.

"No," grinned Bert, "I only want you to appear to be of a possible disposition. Merely give her cause to hope, for this one occasion while you sound her, and then you can drop out of sight again, and no harm done. Surely you can do that much in a good cause."

"But what excuse can I make for going there?" he protested. "I can't go and just blankly call."

"All thought up," announced Bert, amiably. "You told me on the boat that you had made some study of the ruins at Pompeii. Well, Kat has Pompeii on the brain just now, as an excuse for inveigling Mrs. Walters to the other side. I told her that you had been all over the ground and were up on all of the new excavations; and she asked if I supposed that you would forgive poor little her for hurting your feelings that day on Tantalus,—said that she knew of course that *I* understood that it was only a silly

little joke of hers, but that she was afraid that you were offended, and she was quite woebegone over it. And so I told her that I would ask you if you would give her a little direct information about the ruins. And so, you see, the train is already laid. She will greet you with encomiums on your kindness, because she will think that she can use you. Next, she will ask you to talk to Auntie and interest her in the wonders of Pompeii; but—you will have had a chance to sound her and—you will be too busy. Pau. See? And meanwhile you may have been able to get a line on their object, if you really are clever," and she grinned engagingly.

Dick made a wry face. "Do you really think that it is as important as all that?" he asked dubiously.

"I certainly do," asserted Bert, seriously. "They are born schemers, like their shyster father; and whatever they are working, it carries some kind of a plum for the Kat sisters, you may be right down sure of that. Oh, run along, like a good little boy, and find out what their game is, and then we'll take a hand in it ourselves, if it is crooked. We've both of us some scores to settle, and if we can do a good turn to the old lady, in the process, so much the more to our credit."

So Dick got into his car, and in a mood anything but affable, he attended to his errands in town and then drove out Nuuanu to the old Morton home. He parked his car outside of the grounds and

walked up the driveway to the spacious front lanai—a double-decked lanai with vines clambering in wild profusion over both stories. As he stood waiting for an answer to his ring, he was reminded of the youngster at home, by the persistent chatter of a mynah bird among the vines above his head, and was about to step back in order to see what had aroused its excitement, when the trim little Japanese maid appeared at the door and he asked for Miss Katisha Morton and gave his card, and then set down in a wicker chair on the lanai to await her arrival. Immediately, from somewhere within he heard an impatient exclamation, evidently when the maid's message was delivered, and he felt strongly inclined to rise up and depart without performing his errand. However, in a moment the screen door opened and Katisha appeared, looking particularly creamy.

“Oh, Mr. Harris, how very sweet of you to come!” she exclaimed, gliding forward with one of her most caressing smiles and taking his hand in both of hers. “You are so good to take such a lot of trouble just for us. And,” she went on, “I am just broken-hearted because you have come at such an unfortunate moment. You see, we are absolutely swamped today. Some dear old friends came this morning on the *President Cleveland*, and are going on to the Orient tonight; and so the day is booked up full with all of the things that we have got mapped out

in order to try to show them the Island in such a little bit of time. We got up early this morning and went down to the docks to meet them, and they are here now and will stay to luncheon, and then we are going to take them just *everywhere* before the boat sails. And we have so much to talk about that my head is positively buzzing. I am so sorry! Won't you come some other time? I'm just crazy to hear the wonderful things that you told Mrs. Sands about Pompeii. You will come and tell us about it, won't you?"

Dick accepted his dismissal with actual gratitude and turned to go, after promising to keep the matter in mind and drop in "some day next week," hoping ardently that something would happen before that time to distract Bert Sands' mind from the project.

Miss Morton followed him to the steps and then suddenly looked up with an exclamation. "Those atrocious mynah birds!" she cried. "They're back again! I've driven them out and had their nests torn down and their eggs smashed, and done everything that I could to rid the place of them, and we haven't had one around for more than a year; and here they are back again, squawking, as usual. But I'll get them this time before they have a foothold. I won't have the dirty pests around!" And then her creamy smile came again. "Oh, I'm so sorry, Mr. Harris, to have let my distress lead me to say such horrid

things before you. Poor little fellows! I suppose that they have as much right to their tiny lives as we have to ours; but they do mess things up dreadfully, though of course I really don't mind. Do forgive me, and the next time that you come I'll be so nice to you that you'll forget all about my bad disposition. Now good-bye, and be sure that you come soon," and she stood shedding sunshine upon him all the way down the steps.

As he drove back through town, it occurred to him that he had called at the post office rather early, probably before the mail had been distributed from the incoming boat; and so he turned in again, only to find his box as empty as he had left it. He stopped at one of the windows. "Has the mail from the *Cleveland* all been distributed?" he asked.

"The *Cleveland*? She isn't in yet." said the clerk.

"The *President Cleveland* didn't come in this morning?" he asked in bewilderment.

"No. She hasn't docked yet. We expected her at eight o'clock this morning, but she got held up by bad weather and is probably just about docking now. Anyway, they thought they'd make it about noon."

Dick turned away from the window and went back to his car. "That's a pretty note!" he said to himself. "A complete fabrication with all of the trimmings, the young lady concocted, to escape an unwelcome call; and she hadn't thought of the pos-

sible contingency of the boat not having arrived on schedule time. That was some slip. Not that it matters, though," he thought contentedly; "for I'll have a pretty protest for Bert Sands on the score of going there at her orders and getting thrown down like this. Wish I had time to go out there now and rub it in;" and he laughed at the conceit. However, he really did not have time, as he was behind on his work and had planned for a full afternoon at his typewriter. And so he turned his car up the mountain and was soon humming along towards home, feeling in a rather peaceful frame of mind.

However, when he came in sight of the tall hedge behind which nestled his home and that of his neighbor, he was surprised to see Moto outside of the opening, evidently watching for him. As he was keeping on to the garage, the man held up his hand, indicating that he wanted to speak to him first, and Dick drew up alongside.

Moto came close to the car. "Man come see you this morning," he said.

"Who?" asked Dick, quickly.

"All same man come before along two lady."

"McKnight!" said Dick, clenching his teeth. "You didn't let him in, did you?"

"No-o. No-o. I say you go down to town. Don' know when you come back, I say."

"And did he go then?" asked Dick.

"No-o. He no go. He stay round l-o-n-g, long

time. Then when fire come—”

“When what?” cried Dick.

“Fire come Missi Malua house, —he stay ’round then.”

Dick started to spring from his car, but the man motioned him back. “No,” he said, “You wait! You go back to town, Missi Malua say.”

“What for? Where is Mrs. Malua?”

Moto shook his head and gesticulated broadly to take in the entire horizon; “Somewhere,” he said, inclusively; “She look for baby.”

“For baby? For God’s sake, man, what’s the matter with you? Where is the baby? What do you mean?”

But Moto held up both hands. “Wait. When fire all pau, then baby gone; no can find. Missi Malua she mos’ pupu-le all right. She go look-see a-l-l about. She say when you come back you go Honolulu an’ look-see. You go?”

Dick’s face was white, but his voice was cool and crisp. “Where are Fong and Mrs. Hookano?” he asked.

“All go look for baby. She say you go *too*-quick, please. You go all right?”

“Yes,” said Dick, “I go now. You say Mrs. Malua I’ll find baby and bring him home. You tell her no pilikia—I find him all right;” and turning his car, he started back down the mountain at top speed. And all the way down, he was saying to himself,

over and over; "She said there were no mynah birds, and there was one. There was one." His mind seemed unable to take up any other thought, but only revolved around and around that one idea, the relating facts keeping up but a vague undercurrent. Carter McKnight had been up the mountain that morning, had hung around his house until the fire,—a fire occurring in Evalani's home—probably of his setting—and then, when they were all working to put out the fire, the baby had disappeared and the man also was gone. But overtopping and transcending all else was the fact of the unwonted mynah bird at Kat Morton's home, the one whose voice had reminded him of Evalani's baby. That was the clue, and thank God for that much of a clue;—and as soon as he reached town he headed for Nuuanu Avenue and spun out the smooth road toward the Morton home.

When he reached the place, he swerved the car into the driveway and around the curve of the lawn and up to the lanai, springing out almost before it had come to a stop, and dashed up the steps and to the bell.

The front door was closed now, instead of being only screened, as it had been, and it was some moments before it was opened by the little Japanese maid. In answer to his demand to see Miss Morton, the maid shook her head and smiled. "Missi Morton go 'way," she said.

"Where she go?" asked Dick.

Again she shook her head. "Don' know," she said; "She no say where she go."

"When will she be back?"

"No can tell."

"She come today—tomorrow?" asked Dick, impatiently.

"Don' know. Maybe one day—maybe two day. She no say."

"Did her sister go, too?"

"Ye-es. All gone," and the little maid smiled delectably.

Dick swore under his breath and turned to go, totally at sea as to what direction to take. Then, with a sudden thought, he turned back and smiled genially at the girl. "Baby go too?" he asked, cheerfully.

"Ye-es, Baby go too," bowed the girl, still smiling; "All go, nobody stop home now;" and she turned back into the house.

Dick flung himself down the steps and into the car. Here was the confirmation of his first guess; but where had they gone? And how was he to find them? Where should he go first? He swung his car around the driveway and out into the avenue and back toward the center of town, his mind striving vainly for some idea to start him upon his chase. He knew practically none of the Morton girls acquaintances from whom he might inquire as to their

possible movements or to what haunts they might have recourse. McKnight had evidently taken the child directly to them; probably with the idea of hiding it for the moment and then escaping to the Coast with it upon the first available boat. There would be no sailing for two days, excepting the *Cleveland* to the Orient that night; and meanwhile, to give the matter to the police was to bring about unbearable publicity for Evalani. They must have viciously counted upon that. It was plain now as to why they wanted to see the child. They had suspected that it was Jim McKnight's child, probably he had written to his brother something of the situation, and they had guessed the real cause of the tragedy and were trying to verify their theory that the boy was not a monstrosity, but only an evidence of disgrace. Quite likely the spy-glass had revealed the truth of their surmise; and that was why Evalani had been so anxious as to whether the curtain was down in time; but why had she had the absurd fear that it might have been a gun? And why did Carter McKnight want the baby, anyway?

All of these thoughts churned through Dick's mind as he guided his car back through the busy streets, subconsciously intent upon the only possible course—to call up Bert Sands and get her help. If it involved her knowing the truth about the baby, well, so be it; for she was his only resource. At the first drug-store he went in and telephoned;

but the maid who answered the 'phone, told him that Mrs. Sands had gone to town and had left no word as to when she would return. Bert never did have a schedule for her movements. And so he went back to his car and headed for Waikiki, hoping to find her in her home by the time that he might reach there; for without some suggestion from her, he had not the faintest clue as to which way to turn.

But the Fates were good to him; for only a short distance out King street, he saw Bert's little grey car ahead in the traffic, and began a series of eager cut-ins in an effort to catch up with her. At last, as traffic slowed down for a disgorging street-car, he drew in beside her. "Bert!" he called; "They've stolen Evalani's baby!"

Bert leaned out of her car. "Who? The Mortons?"

"Yes. Haven't they a place at Kailua?"

"They're not there. They're at Kahala, at the Walter's place. Mrs. Walters loaned it to them for a few days. She told me this morning. Get out there quick! Go Waialae Road way. Step on it!"

And Dick shot past the street-car, slithered his way through the traffic and sped on out toward Kahala Beach, some seven miles from town.

Waialae Road is a busy street and crowded with traffic; but Dick saw no cars except the immediate ones which he had to dodge, slewing here and there, in front, behind, on this side and on that; and hearing now and then from behind the touch of Bert's

horn to tell him that she was close in his wake. And then, from farther back came the dreaded sound of the syren of a "speed-cop." In an instant Bert's car shot up beside his. She leaned out. "Go on. Mix with the traffic and slow down. I'll stall him and cover your number if I can. Go to it!" And she dropped back.

Dick cut in desperately between two autos, shot in front of a street-car, slid along beside an army truck, slowed down to normal speed and was trundling along nonchalantly though as rapidly as was safe when, some few moments later, the "speed-cop" dashed past, intent upon the reckless driver whom he supposed that he was chasing.

When he was well out of the way, Dick put on top speed again and swung around into the road leading to Kahala, where, fortunately, there were for the moment but few cars, and nothing to hinder his dash for the place which Bert had named. Once at the little settlement, he had to stop for a moment to ask which was the Walter's bungalow; and then on again, swirling into a gate and across to the lanai at a most unholy speed.

By the time that he was out of the car, Kat Morton stood in the doorway, looking rather pale but cheerfully self-possessed. "Why, Mr. Harris!" she exclaimed, artlessly, "What a whirlwind person you are. And so you've found our little nest, have you?"

"Yes, I have," said Dick, brusquely, "and I would like to come in and have a talk with you."

But Kat barred the way, standing upon the threshold and gripping the knob of the screen door in her hand. "We are having such a busy day today," she said sweetly; "Really you will have to excuse us."

Dick looked about. The house was placed with its long side toward the beach, and the space between it and the hedges dividing the property from that adjoining, was filled with a close growth of hibiscus and crotons, so that there was no apparent access to the rear excepting through the front door. However, through the wide space of these double front doors, there was a vista of the sea, seen across a stretch of grass, and a bit of sandy beach up which the rising tide was sweeping with a very pretty surf.

Dick stood facing the woman, uncertain what to do. If Bert were only here, she would know in an instant how to tackle the situation; but he felt helpless in the face of this smiling woman with the cat gleams in her eyes and her steel grip upon the door, apparently waiting quietly for him to go. The only way seemed to be to temporize and to hope for Bert's speedy arrival, and pray that she had not been held up a second time. Kat must certainly know why he had come, and therefore she must know that he would not go away again without the child. Evidently she, also, was temporizing; but for

what purpose? Anyway, it was playing into his hand, and so he carried it on. "Is Mr. McKnight here?" he asked.

"No," said Kat. "He is not."

"I am sorry," said Dick. "I would much rather deal with a man than with a woman, in this matter."

Kat's lips became somewhat thin, though still smiling. "To what matter do you refer, Mr. Harris?" she inquired coolly. "Really, it seems to me that your conduct today is exceedingly peculiar. I have told you repeatedly that we are too much occupied to receive you. Your persistence is positively beyond accounting for."

Dick leaned a little forward toward the door, and, with ears alert, suddenly called loudly, "David!"

But there came no answer, and a flash of amusement passed over the woman's face, only to drop instantly beyond the suave mask. "We have no one here by the name of David," she said. "Our chauffeur's name is Tagami."

Just here Dick's eyes widened a little and the woman, catching the expression, made a half movement to turn and look behind her, but, restraining the impulse, stood her ground as imperturbably as before. But Dick immediately masked his own interest and turned his eyes nonchalantly away from the vista through the open doorway. For what he

had seen had been the forms of two bathers in the water, well out in the surf, coming into his range on their way toward deeper water. It appeared that the two were walking very close together, evidently holding on to each other, for their heads seemed to be almost touching, and now and then, as they veered in their course, the heads would seem to merge into one, and then would appear to separate as a wave would for the moment wash against them.

Dick let his gaze wander casually, though still keeping them in range, and continued his conversation with Kat; trying, in the face of a lowering sun, to follow their movements and discern whether they might be Calista and McKnight; for he felt a positive itching to meet McKnight at close quarters; and if he was in the water, he certainly had him corralled; and, if the child was not there, as he now feared that he was not, since he had not answered to the calling of his name, then he would face the kidnapper and find out where he was, in short order.

However, he found some difficulty in keeping up the conversation with the lady who seemed so intent upon dismissing him; and so he turned away with a little shrug of his shoulders. "I think that I will go out on the beach for a little while," he said. "The surf looks very pretty this afternoon;" and, with a courteous and somewhat satirical bow, he

turned toward the close-set shrubbery.

But Kat's voice followed him. "You can't go that way," she said decisively. "You'll spoil the garden."

Dick kept grimly on, brushing aside branches and pushing through the shrubbery; but she came to the end of the lanai and called after him again, with considerable asperity: "I say you can't go that way, Mr. Harris. There is barbed wire."

"Never mind," called Dick, "I'll keep on until I come to it;" and he continued to crowd through the dense growth. However, no barbed wire came into evidence, and in a moment he had passed through the screen of foliage and come out upon the narrow stretch of lawn reaching down to the white sand of the beach. Instantly his eyes sought the two forms which he had seen in the surf, finding it difficult for a moment to accustom his eyes to the glare upon the water; and when he did, all that he saw was one person, coming as rapidly as possible toward the shore.

He walked quickly across the lawn, shading his eyes with his hands and searching the water for the other bather, to no purpose; but the one was now coming into fairly shallow water and forging ahead, evidently under the stress of some excitement, and when she saw Dick she began waving her arms wildly and staggering, and Dick heard a faint, a very faint, cry of "Help!"

He rushed forward, just as Calista stumbled into

Have You Read

**Kat and
Copy-
● Cat
?**

**IT MAKES
YOU LAUGH
AND KEEPS
YOU
GUESSING**

They are Honolulu Girls

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ankle-deep water and slumped down with a splash and with another guarded cry for help, which seemed intended for his ears alone and not to attract the attention of the inhabitants of other cottages, none of which were very near. And there she lay, panting and gasping and keeping her head carefully above water; but otherwise giving a very fair imitation of an exhausted swimmer.

But Dick's eyes were fixed upon the flashing water beyond, and suddenly it seemed to him that he caught a glimpse of something other than foam among the breakers, and he made a frantic dash out through the surf toward the spot. As he passed Calista she called vehemently but not too loudly: "Help me, Mr. Harris, quick! Help me! I'm drowning!"

But Dick was headed toward the breakers beyond, pounding through the water in mad haste and leaving the maiden to drown in four inches of water, if she could. He had not even turned his head to see what had become of Kat.

The water was nearly to his shoulders when he reached the point for which he was aiming, and he stood for an instant, gazing about and down into the depths in a panic of doubt and fear. And then suddenly he splashed in and dived forward and rose out of the water clutching a limp little form clad only in a tiny thin undergarment, and with dank hair and waxen face. Claspings the child to his

breast, he turned and dashed back toward the shore, panting and gasping and moving through the water like some engine of destruction.

As he reached the beach, Kat was bending over Calista, who was now lying well up on the sand and perfectly quiet. "Oh, help me, help me, Mr. Harris!" called Kat. "My sister is drowned. She is drowned! Oh, come quick!"

But Dick was heedlessly sprinting across the lawn toward the rear lanai, where he laid the baby form upon a couch and began a frantic effort to bring the little one back to life. From where he stood he called to Kat, across the lawn: "Come in here and get me a blanket!" he shouted. "Hurry up!"

Kat left her pseudo-drowned sister and came running across the grass, not to get the blanket, but only to throw herself upon the step and go into a very pretty fit of hysterics, calling upon him to help her because she was dying; she knew that she was. But even this failed to arouse Dick's chivalry sufficiently to draw him away from the task which now appeared to be all but hopeless. And then came the welcome honk of Bert's horn and the little grey car dashed into the grounds and Bert was on the front lanai.

Kat recovered instantly and made a rush to guard the front door; but already Dick's voice had reached Bert, and she slid past Kat and out to where he

was working madly over the unconscious child. "Get me a blanket!" he called, "and some bath-towels, quick!" and Bert fled to the task.

When she came back she set to work with him, asking no questions, but doing first aid work like a Trojan, while Kat stood at a distance and looked on with tight lips. At last Bert turned upon her. "Why don't you do something?" she cried. "What are you standing there like a post for? Why weren't you helping when I came?"

Kat's chin set stubbornly. "Well, I guess when my own sister was drowning I had to take care of her, didn't I? Mr. Harris wouldn't do a thing. He just let her drown. There she is lying unconscious out on the sand now."

"Well, why aren't you with her then?" asked Bert, with some sarcasm. "She isn't unconscious so's anyone could notice. She was alive enough to put up her head and look at me when I came, all right. Well, run along, cheer her last moments; we don't need you." For the child was beginning to gasp and show brave signs of returning to life.

But Kat stood her ground. "Well, it's no credit to Mr. Harris that she isn't dead now. He passed her right by, when she begged him to help her, just to go out and bring in that—brat!"

Dick kept steadily on with his work. Bert turned to him. "What really did happen?" she asked.

But before he could answer, Kat broke in.

"Why," she said, "my sister went out for a little dip, and that child was playing in the edge of the water, and the surf was rather high and a wave rolled him over and carried him into the backwash. And then my sister rushed after him to save him, and the waves washed them both out farther and carried the child away from her; and it was all that she could do to get back to shore at all, herself. Oh, it was dreadful! She nearly lost her life for that—young one!" The last word was brought out spitefully.

"Where did you get all that?" asked Dick, without turning from his work. "You were at the front door talking to me when it happened."

"Well, my sister——" Kat hesitated, "——she had a lucid moment just before I came in, and she told me. Yes, that was when she told me all about it."

"H'm!" said Dick. "She's worse hurt than I thought. Her mind's wandering. It so happened that I was watching her through the open door and I saw her with the boy in her arms, carrying him out."

"Well, that was when she was saving him."

"Saving him, nothing!" blurted Dick. "I saw her carry him straight out from shallow water to where it was deep enough to drown him; and then she left him there, and came in shore by herself. I tell you I was watching."

Bert looked up quickly. "Whose child is it?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Kat, venomously. "Just some brat that was playing on the beach;—and to think that my own sister risked her precious life for anyone like that! It is outrageous!" And Kat turned to go back to her still prostrate sister.

Bert turned inquiring eyes to Dick.

"It is Evalani Malua's child," he said, quietly, without looking at her.

"Oh-h!" Bert's tone was expressive of sudden and startled enlightenment; but she made no added comment, merely continued her work, and presently took the now nearly recovered child close into her arms and carried him out upon the lawn and sat down in the sunshine, Dick following and continuing to chafe the cold little feet.

In a few moments Kat helped her sister to rise and the two girls came up from the sand on the way to the house, and would have passed them without notice, but Dick intercepted them. "What do you expect me to do about this?" he asked, crisply.

Both of the girls looked frightened and Calista slumped down upon a canvas lawn chair and Kat stopped close beside her, on guard. "I—I don't know what you mean," said Calista; but Kat's clutch upon her shoulder was so sharp that she winced visibly. She was never expected to talk without a cue. It was Kat who answered.

"What are you planning to do?" she asked, colorlessly, though her eyes were alert.

"Well," said Dick, "I'm planning to get McKnight for this, for one thing, and I can't get McKnight without involving you, that is plain enough. You may have been merely his tools all right; but that won't help you in the long run. You've compounded a felony and you are responsible for your parts in the matter, even though you had no direct object of personal gain."

The feline glints suddenly flicked through Kat's eyes. "No," she said, ingenuously; "we had no personal gain in sight, we were only trying to help a friend." She was watching Dick as closely as Bert was watching her.

"Well," went on Dick; "as McKnight has no possible claim upon a child which might be accounted his brother's, the kidnapping is without excuse, either legally or ethically—"

Kat seemed to relax somewhat and a sad, deprecating little smile came about her mouth and it quivered pathetically. "Oh, Mr. Harris," she said, "you are so hard—so adamant hard. You have no feeling, no understanding for a woman's heart—for her sympathies. All that we can do is to confess to you and throw ourselves upon your mercy."

"Yes—" began Calista; but again she winced under the grip of her sister's caressing and sustaining hand upon her shoulder.

Kat went on. "You see, Calista and I are so tender-hearted, so sympathetic with the sorrows of others; and perhaps we went too far in our effort to bring a little consolation into the life of a pitiful old woman."

Bert was watching her through narrowed eyes, but taking no part in the conversation.

"You see," continued Kat, plaintively, "when Mr. McKnight told us of his mother's hopeless grief and sorrow, it just cut us to the soul. His brother, who was murdered here, was her youngest son, her baby; and her life just almost went out when that awful tragedy occurred. She has been only a grief-stricken wreck ever since. And so, at last, to try to take her mind away from her brooding sorrow, her older son, Carter, told her about the child, in the hope that the thought might in some measure assuage her grief.

"How did he know about it?" asked Bert now, tersely.

"Why—why—" said Kat, hesitating; "—his brother had—had written him about the—about the situation; and so when the tragedy happened," she was going more smoothly now, "he knew of course what had been the real cause. That was the way of it," she added, with a sort of satisfied conviction.

Bert made no comment and Kat went on; "But instead of the knowledge satisfying his mother; the thought of a grandchild of her own, away off here

in the Islands, being brought up among—among Kanakas—it only made her more unhappy. And of course you can see what a dreadful idea it must be for a refined, lovely woman who adored her lost son;” Kat was enlarging with much pathos; but her hearers seeming unresponsive, she went on again. “For all these years she has brooded over her poor murdered boy and the unforunate little grandson; and at last she became desperately ill and begged Carter to come here and by some means get possession of the little boy and bring him to her, for her to love and bring up and educate as is befitting for a child of their family.” Kat was leaning on the back of Calista’s chair now and evidently very much enjoying the narration of her tale.

Nevertheless, her hearers proved uncommonly cold to her artistry, and so she hastened somewhat to the finis. “Well, that is about all. Carter came here upon that errand, and knowing that we were dear friends of his brother, he came and told us the truth of the tragedy and pled with us, in the name of his grief-stricken old mother, to help him to get the child. Of course we knew that it would be useless to approach that dreadful woman, his mother; and besides, we naturally had delicacy, considering—everything—” Kat hesitated, evidently embarrassed. “And so the only way seemed to be to take the child quietly and escape to the Coast with it; and we agreed to help him and to take care of

the little one for a few days, until his boat sails—just for the sake of his poor old mother.”

“And why did you try to drown him?” asked Bert, acidly.

“Oh!” cried Kat, “What a dreadful thing to say! No, no, you don’t understand. My sister just took him out for a little dip, because she thought that he would enjoy it so, and she adores children.”

“I thought that you said that he was washed from the beach.”

Kat smiled deprecatingly. “Well, of course,” she said, “we didn’t want to be connected with it, or let anyone know that the child was with us; and so I just said that upon the spur of the moment; but the real facts are just as I am telling you. And, you see, while she was out there with him in her arms, and the tide coming in, a big wave upset her and washed him away from her, and she couldn’t find him again in all that water, and she was so frightened that she started to run back to shore for help. And then good Mr. Harris came so opportunely to the rescue; isn’t that so, Calista? And now everything is all right and there is nothing further to worry about;” and her creamy smile came into evidence once more, smooth and satiny.

Bert got up with the child in her arms. “Good afternoon,” she said; and quietly walked through the house and out to the front lawn where their cars were standing, and stepped into Dick’s Cad-

illac. And he, after running her car out of the grounds and parking it a little farther down the road, returned and getting in beside her, swerved out of the yard and scudded away toward town, without any further farewell to the Morton sisters.

For a long time after they were under way neither of them spoke, and after several quick glances at Dick's set countenance, Bert turned her attention to the sleepy little face against her bosom and sat looking down at it and smiling softly. "It's all easier to understand now, isn't it?" she said at last.

"Yes," said Dick, broodingly, "I'm sorry that they know."

Bert looked up at him from under her lashes. "That was a great story, wasn't it?" she said.

"Yes," said Dick. "She put it on all right; but I suppose that it isn't so far wrong, at that. It's a fair enough reason for the kidnapping."

"But," said Bert, "it's no reason for the attempted murder."

Dick shook his head doubtfully. "I don't know. I don't know," he said. "Of course I didn't actually see her abandon him. I was coming through the shrubbery. She might have become confused out there in the breakers, I suppose."

Bert screwed up her eyes. "Yes," she said, "she might; but just the same I don't think that she did."

"But," said Dick, "there always has to be a motive for a crime—and there wasn't any motive in

this case. Absolutely no reason why she should try to drown the little fellow, especially when her sister is running after Carter McKnight, and he wanted to take the kiddie home. And yet—”

“Well?” questioned Bert.

“I suppose it might be that he was afraid that his mother had some intention of adopting the child, and that it might cut him out of a bit of property. Of course that would account for Kat’s interest, naturally. What do you think?”

And Bert held the little boy closer still in her arms and looked down into the round blue eyes which now and then opened sleepily and then softly closed again in quiet slumber, but she said nothing, only smiled and laid her cheek against his little tow head.

It was dusk when the car swung around the curve before the two small bungalows on Tantalus; but Evalani had heard the honk of Dick’s horn before they came into sight, and was out in the road, holding out both hands in a sort of supplication. And when Dick shouted, “I’ve got him! He’s all right!” she was upon the running board, and she had the baby in her arms before Bert had time to quite release him. And then, without a word she turned back through the hedge with her face bowed over him; and Dick wheeled his car and he and Bert drove back down to town to retrieve Bert’s roadster; but they did not speak for a long time, and when they did, they talked of other matters.

CHAPTER VI

TANTALUS

Dick had barely finished breakfast on the following morning when Evalani called to him through the ironwood screen, and he sprang to answer, knowing how anxious she would be to know exactly what had happened and where he had found the little boy; and sweeping aside the boughs he made his usual quick transit between his own lanai and that of his neighbor.

Evalani had already returned to her chair, where she was sitting with the little boy in her arms. When she looked up, he was shocked at the change which the terrible anxiety and suffering had brought into her face. She somehow looked more frail and slight than he had ever seen her before, and her eyes were startlingly wide and dark circled. She looked up at him with a smile that was full of half tearful happiness. "Oh," she said, "how good you were! How shall I ever thank you? How shall I ever make you understand what you have done for me?" And she drew the child even closer to her bosom.

Dick stood before her trying to look as noncha-

lant and matter-of-fact as possible, with the intention of making as light as might be of the incidents of his recovery of the child, in order to lighten the grip of fear which possessed her. "I understand perfectly," he said. "It was a terrible experience for you; but it has all come out right now, so we have not a thing to worry about. He is quite all right this morning, isn't he?"

"Yes," she said, touching with her fingers the little flushed cheek; "he's perfectly all right. But, please, will you sit down and tell me exactly what happened. Of course he is too little for me to get anything definite from him at all."

And so Dick sat down and told his story, trying to make as light as possible of the occurrences and avoiding any mention whatever of the drowning episode until Evalani put the question directly to him. The boy had told her enough so that the point could not be evaded. However, Dick did not suggest that there might have been a real purpose back of the accident, but merely repeated Kat's explanation of how it happened.

When he had finished, an added terror seemed to have come into Evalani's eyes. "She did it on purpose!" she cried, passionately; "She tried to drown him! Oh, my God, how could she? How *could* she? A little helpless baby like this. It was Kat that made her do it. Kat always makes her do the dirty work. Oh, how terrible! And she knew that she

was safe because I am helpless!" and the girl clasped her hands in agony.

Dick drew his chair close to hers. "Now listen, little girl," he said soothingly; "You mustn't let go like this. The danger is past for the present, and we have got to keep our heads if we don't want anything to happen in the future. I really do not think that Calista actually tried to drown him. It very probably came about just as Kat said; that she took him out just for fun, and a wave washed him away from her."

"No, no!" The girl shook her head in violent protest. "No, I say! She did it on purpose."

"But listen, child," he said, pleadingly; "We must use judgment here, and not let fear magnify things out of all proportion. Can't you see that there was no reason, no purpose in anything like that, when all that McKnight wanted of the baby was to take him home to his mother? The girls would, obviously, have done nothing to circumvent that, when they were trying to help him. You must use your own judgment here, and not imagine unreasonable and baseless things."

"Did Kat say that was what they wanted him for?" asked Evalani, leaning forward tensely.

"Yes, she told us all about it, and made a very pathetic little story of it, by the way."

"And you believed it?"

"Why yes. There doesn't seem to be anything

else to believe. That is the only possible motive for his stealing the child, unless it was merely for revenge for what he might term an indirect injury received through you, and that is rather too far-fetched a theory to be really considered. But, anyway, there is no use in speculating about it, now that it is all over. He won't try it again, this turned out too much of a fiasco. And, besides, I'm going to take better care of you both from now on, and there is going to be absolutely no more pilikia;" and he leaned forward and smiled at her reassuringly.

The girl drew a long breath and released the youngster who had become weary of her confining arms; and they both sat looking at him silently as he raced about the lanai, chasing the great, brilliantly colored rubber ball and laughing hilariously.

At last Evalani turned to Dick again. "You said that Mrs. Sands was with you, that she helped you. What does she think? What does she know?"

Dick remained silent for a moment. "I am sorry," he said; "but I had no other choice than to tell her what had happened. There was no way to find out where the Morton girls had gone, without her help. I was absolutely at sea. But you may depend upon her silence. She will be a veritable closed book."

The girl sat contemplating her small brown hands. "But what does she know? What does she think—after seeing my child?" she persisted.

Dick hesitated. "Well—" he said, "We discussed

it very little."

"It was all so self-evident," said the girl, somewhat bitterly.

Dick's eyes followed the child. There seemed no answer to make.

The girl's mouth twitched into her pathetic little smile as she looked at the romping, tow-headed baby. "Yes," she said; "the conclusive evidence is there, isn't it? There is only one thing to think. Please, Mr. Harris, do you mind if I go to my room now? I—I'm afraid that I didn't sleep much last night. Will you come again this evening? And then I will not be such hopelessly poor company." And Dick rose obligingly and returned to his own lanai, where he tried to gather together the loose ends of his work and bring them into some semblance of order.

When Moto came in, he questioned him about the fire of the day before; only to find, as he had expected, that its origin was a mystery. It had started under the farther end of Evalani's lanai, in a position which was difficult of access. The old grandmother remembered afterward that she had heard sounds under that portion, but had supposed that it was a mongoose and had paid no attention. As soon as the smoke warned them, they had all rushed out to assist in extinguishing it, and the two women and Fong and Moto had formed a sort of bucket brigade and worked madly until it was out.

Moto had called to the man who had been waiting for Dick, to come and help them; but he, supposedly, had gone, and there was no time to think more about him just then. The dog had remained chained, and very naturally had barked wildly throughout the excitement. Later, when the women went into the house and found that the little boy was missing, Moto remembered about the man, and when he told Mrs. Malua, it had frightened her desperately, because she was at once sure that he had taken the boy; though Moto could not imagine why she should think that, when it was more likely that the youngster had wandered out and got lost or fallen over the pali. Anyway, Mrs. Malua and Fong and the old grandmother had gone out to look for him and left Moto to guard both houses and to give the message to Dick as soon as he should arrive; as there was no other way of having the search taken up in Honolulu, since Fong and his old Ford car would be of little use in making the necessary investigations and search.

And that evening, when Dick went over with some new magazines, the subject of the kidnapping was tacitly avoided; and in a few days their association had slipped comfortably back into the old groove; and although Evalani still showed a tendency to be always watching and listening for some ominous event, yet her old poise soon came back and

even her merry moods returned and she seemed almost like her old self.

Occasionally, when Dick went to town, he ran his car out to Waikiki to have a little visit with Bert Sands; but these visits became fewer and farther between as he realized Bert's scarcely veiled impatience that he had as yet done nothing toward bringing about an interview between Mrs. Walters and Evalani. Bert averred that the Morton girls were still working their hardest to get their aunt's promise to take them upon the European trip, and that she feared, every time that she went there, to hear the announcement that they had won out and that the trip was a settled affair.

"Well, why not?" argued Dick. Why wouldn't it be a good idea for her to go, and get away from the associations which constantly recalled her sorrow and her loss? Furthermore, this would take the Morton girls away, as well; which was certainly to be desired, since they seemed to hold a bitter grudge against the Hawaiian girl and her child; and whatever its cause, with them out of the way, there would certainly be less worry and trouble for all concerned.

Whereupon, Bert quite lost her temper. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "The dumb stupidity of men! Can't you see that those two girls are after her fortune and nothing else? She does everything for them now, because their father isn't worth shucks; and

if they once get her over there alone, away from everybody, who knows what will happen to her, or what will happen here before she gets back? Can't you see—" Here Bert stopped in utter exasperation. "Oh, what's the use!" she cried; "I can't get it over to you; and meanwhile, with every opportunity, you just play around like a moke and don't do a thing! —And that poor old woman just grieving her heart out day and night! It's abominable!"

Dick rose up more puzzled and worried than angry. "Well," he said, "I can't for the life of me see what Evalani can tell her that will help any. If the girl's dead, she's dead, and I should think that it would be a lot better for the mother to try to put it out of her mind; than to rake it all up again now, by talking over how it happened and all that sort of thing."

"Put it out of her mind! A lot you know about mothers!" sniffed Bert. "Can't you see what it means to have a child walk right out of your life like that, and you never to know one thing of what happened from the last moment that you saw her? Where she went, what she thought, what she suffered!"

"But," said Dick, "what would Evalani know about all that? She saw her the day before, but not on the day that she disappeared."

"Well, even then," persisted Bert, "she talked over with her—she must have—the whole situation.

Perhaps she even begged Evalani to marry David, since he had sworn never to give her up; for it was after this talk that she came down and told her mother that Evalani was to marry him the next evening. If that were so, wouldn't the mother want to be told of the self-sacrifice of her child, who could give up the man whom she loved, for his happiness; and then die herself because she could not bear to live and see that happiness? Hasn't the mother a right to the bit of pride which might come to her when she could say to herself, of her daughter, 'Greater love hath no man—'?"

"Do you think that is what happened?" asked Dick, gravely.

Bert tightened her lips. "How does anybody know what happened?" she returned; "But whatever it was, the girl's mother has a right to know absolutely all that there is to be known. Evalani will not answer her letters, and every time that I go there the poor woman asks me if you have done anything—and what can I tell her? And there you are, with all the chance in the world, and you do absolutely nothing."

Dick turned soberly toward the door. "I'll try my best," he said, dubiously, and went out to his car.

Bert followed him. "Don't think that I'm a regular grouch," she pleaded; "Only if you knew what that dear woman suffers, you would understand

that I have to take up cudgels for her, or I never can go back and face her; and I have to go back because she needs me. Do make just one try, and then I won't bother you any more."

"All right," said Dick, "I'll do what I can; but somehow I haven't much hope;" and he drove away, turning over in his mind possible methods of approach to the subject, and what he could say to Evalani in mitigation of what seemed to him to be unwarranted interference with her affairs.

And so, that evening, as they sat in the dusk, he spoke casually of having seen Bert Sands that day; dwelling upon her bright and crisp personality and repeating an amusing little incident which she had told him. Then he purposely let the conversation lapse without changing the subject.

Naturally Evalani's thought continued to run along the same channel, and presently she spoke: "Was she very much surprised," she asked, "—the day when she helped you with little David—was she very much surprised—when she saw him?"

"Yes," said Dick. "That was to be expected, of course, when you know what people generally think."

"What did she say?"

"Nothing, that I remember. She just hugged him."

Evalani smiled.

"I wish that you wanted to know Bert Sands,"

ventured Dick.

But Evalani shook her head quickly. "No, no!" she said; "I do not meet people—not anyone." And then she went on; "I suppose you think that it is rather dreadful that I should shield myself behind little David, at the cost of everyone thinking that he is—something shocking, when he is so beautiful."

Dick did not speak, and she continued. "It was a long time before I knew what they thought. I had only kept him to myself, as was my right. And when I found out what they were saying, at first it was dreadful and I felt like taking him out and showing him to everyone, so that they would know. But I couldn't. There wasn't any way that I could do it."

"You felt, I suppose," said Dick, "that the other blot would be harder for him to bear."

She looked over at him and sighed heavily. "What a queer, complicated world it is, isn't it?" she said.

"But I wonder if you have thought," Dick went on, "that you cannot keep him here this way always. That justice to him will require that he go and live in the world eventually, not always alone here upon a mountain."

"You wonder if I have thought of that?" she asked. "Have I thought of anything else all these years? I would go tomorrow if I could, but I cannot. The way isn't open yet. Just as soon as I can find some possible chance, I shall take him to the

Coast and we will live like other people, where no one will ever know us. Oh, sometimes it seems to me that I cannot wait until the time comes. When he is just a little older, I can put him in school and earn my own living and his; but he is too little now, for me to leave, and so I have to wait. But it is hard, hard!" and she clasped her hands tightly.

"Could you not—" Dick hesitated, "—Would not your income go on just the same if you went to the Coast?"

"No," Evalani shook her head. "David left nothing, and—and—Mr. Walters—" She said the name with a bit of difficulty which Dick understood, "He has lost a great deal of money in the last few years, and here our expenses are very small. It would cost a great deal more if we lived anywhere else. And besides—" she halted for a moment, "he feels differently about me since—since Jean went. I suppose that he feels that I was some way to blame and he resents me and—and my baby. Oh, I will be so, so unspeakably glad when I can go to work for myself and my boy."

"But," said Dick, "how can he resent that little boy? Surely no one could see him and not love him."

"Oh," said Evalani, "Mr. Walters has never seen him. He has never been here since my mother died. He doesn't care for me. He probably thinks about my baby what every one else thinks."

"The Morton girls know differently," averred Dick.

"Yes," said Evalani quietly, "They know now. They only suspected before. But they will never tell."

"Are you sure that they will not?" questioned Dick.

"Yes, I am sure," said Evalani, with a bitter little laugh. "I can safely trust them not to tell it, much as they would like to blacken my name with such a story."

"But why?" asked Dick.

Evalani only shook her head. "It would not work in with their plans and schemes," she said, "So you may surely trust them."

"Speaking of plans and schemes," rejoined Dick, grasping at the opening; "Bert Sands says that they are trying to get Mrs. Walters to take them to Europe for a year or so."

Evalani turned and looked at him, her eyes wide and gleaming in the dusk. "They are trying to get her to go to Europe with them?" she repeated slowly; "Oh, I hope not! Oh, she will not go, will she?"

"I don't know," said Dick; "Bert is afraid that she will."

"Afraid?" she questioned; "Mrs. Sands is *afraid*? What difference does it make to Mrs. Sands?"

"Only that she is so inordinately fond of Mrs.

Walters, I suppose, and has so much sympathy for the poor lady. And, besides, she knows the Morton girls and their schemes, and she feels that it would scarcely be safe, perhaps."

"No," said Evalani, gravely, "it would not be safe. Tell Mrs. Sands to use all of her influence to keep her from going. Oh, *don't* let her go!" she burst out suddenly.

"Bert thinks that perhaps you are the only person who can influence her against it," said Dick, tentatively.

"I?" questioned Evalani, leaning forward tensely; "Mrs. Sands thought that *I* could influence her?"

"Yes," said Dick; "Mrs. Walters is so desperately anxious to talk with you about her daughter. It has grown into a positive obsession with her. Bert says that it is the only thing that she can think of or talk of. She seems to have a feeling that you can tell her something about her daughter's last hours, something that would be of comfort to her; and—and Bert said to tell you how the poor mother is still suffering, day and night, crying and praying; and that if you could tell her just some little thing, some little last intimate thing, about what Jean said on that interview before she went—something of her attitude, her feelings, something human for the mother to cling to, instead of that dreadful blank wall of utter blotting out; it seemed that it

might help her. It might even help her to get back her grip upon herself and face life again."

"You mean," asked Evalani in a hushed voice, "that she is not quite herself now?"

"Not exactly that," said Dick; "But she is in a condition verging upon melancholia, from dwelling always upon that dreadful uncertainty as to what actually happened. If she could be given just a shred of something definite—if you could see her and tell her something about that last interview with her daughter, the day before you were married—"

But the girl threw up both hands as if to ward off something. "No, no, I cannot!" she cried; "Oh, I cannot do it!"

Dick bent nearer. "Not even for the sake of that poor, grieving woman?"

"I cannot!" cried Evalani, again. "You would not have me break my faith?"

Dick spoke gravely. "If there was a promise between you and one who has gone on, can you be sure that she would not gladly release you, if she could know how her mother is suffering, and how she will continue to suffer as long as she lives, unless she has some word to relieve the awful uncertainty?"

"But I cannot! I tell you I cannot! Oh, you don't understand!"

From the farther corner of the lanai, where the shade lay deepest and where the old grandmother

always sat, came a long, low wail.

Evalani started and turned, and Dick strained his eyes into the gloom.

Again came the wail, long and eerie and broken by chanted words, like the Hawaiian wail for the dead. And out of the corner came the gaunt, dark form of the old woman, in her long black holoku, her arms waving back and forth over her head. Her voice raised to a higher pitched wail and she advanced menacingly toward Evalani, her words coming with catchings of breath and breaking of tone, as of one weeping and chanting at the same time. Evalani shrank away, her hands to her breast and the woman came and stood over her, continuing her chant, sometimes as if pleading, and again as if calling down maledictions upon the girl's head. For several moments the old woman stood above her, seemingly threatening, appealing, pouring forth a flood of rapid, wailing syllables; but the girl only shrank away and reiterated "I cannot! Oh, I cannot! There is no way! There is no way!"

Presently the old woman fell silent and stood staring down at the cowering girl. Then she shook her head slowly and taking up her wail again, she turned back to her corner and melted into the shadows. And the girl only sat with her face in her hands, sobbing heavily.

Dick rose up to go. "I am sorry," he said "I am afraid that I have precipitated something difficult

for you. I didn't mean to interfere; but it was only that I thought perhaps you did not realize how much it might mean to the mother. I'll say no more, and we will forget it. Am I forgiven?"

The girl raised her head and swallowed several times. "I'm sorry, too," she said. "I suppose that I seem dreadfully heartless, dreadfully selfish; but truly, *truly*, Mr. Harris, there isn't any way. I'd do anything that I could—oh, I'd be so glad if I could do something—but it just isn't possible. Won't you try to believe that I would help if I could? Won't you tell Mrs. Sands that there—there isn't anything that I could tell Mrs. Walters—not anything—and that I cannot see her, not ever."

"I will tell her," said Dick, soberly; "And you may be sure that I shall not judge you for refusing. No one but yourself can know your problems as you, yourself do; and no one can know so well how best to deal with them. Goodnight, little neighbor;" and he bent over and touched her hair, softly; "Tomorrow this will never have happened, as far as I am concerned." But as he turned away, there came again from the dark corner the long wail of the Hawaiian woman, intermixed with the broken words of appeal and recrimination and sorrow.

The next day Dick went to see Mrs. Sands. He was particularly crisp in his greeting. "Now see here," he said at once, "I did what you wanted me to, and it didn't work, and started a hell of a rum-

pus. I'm out of it from now on. Anything that you can do is up to you; but for me, no more and nothing doing!"

Bert grinned. "What happened?" she asked.

"Whatever happened isn't for repeating," he stated; "but the fact remains that she won't see Mrs. Walters, and that is absolutely flat. Now let's talk about the weather."

"Only a word," pleaded Bert. "Can't you just tell me how she took it, whether the suggestion bothered her?"

"Oh, yes!" said Dick, "It bothered her all right enough; and then the old grandmother took a hand and did the heavy part."

"The old grandmother!" exclaimed Bert, eagerly; "What did she say?"

"I don't know what she said," protested Dick; "I don't understand Hawaiian; but it sounded as if she must have banshee blood back of her somewhere."

"She wailed?" asked Bert, breathlessly.

"Maybe that's what they call it, I don't know; but I'm not hankering to hear any more of it, I can tell you that. Now *will* you talk about the weather or won't you?" and he made as if to get up and depart.

"All right, all right!" agreed Bert, cheerfully; "We haven't had any rain for six weeks; also, I repeat what I said the other day about your stu-

pidity. Sorry I messed things up for you, but me intentions was good, and I'm not harboring any ill will; so if you get into any more pilikias in your role of knight to the lady, just let me know, and I'll fly to the rescue, same as ever. Now let's have tea."

And Dick appreciatively drew up his chair and devoured buttered toast while he checked up with Bert on some of the mynah bird observations which she had been making for him. "Gee!" he said, at last, "You certainly are the finest chum that ever happened. If all women had as much sense as you have, we'd reach a mental millennium in about three generations." A statement to which Bert acquiesced with grinning enthusiasm and then dared him to a swim before he went back up the mountain.

And very soon again, Dick was living in his Land O'Dreams; shutting out all thought of possibly empty tomorrows, in the joy of todays full of the rapturous devotion of an all-absorbing love. And yet, close as their comradeship had become, he never put into words the faintest hint of his feeling toward her. The time had not come. He did not, himself, know what he was going to do about it and he feared to precipitate anything for which he was not prepared—which he would not know how to meet when it came, and concerning which he had no idea of her own attitude. She permitted the easy

camaraderie, which might have existed between two children, so careless and unaffected was its nature; and yet, lying back of that, there was a certain quiet reserve and poise which meant that she was perfect mistress of herself and of the situation, and the tempo of their camaraderie was entirely subject to her regulation. But as time went on Dick found it more and more difficult to restrain the tenderness which welled up in him as he sat at dusk watching the small brown hands move over the strings of the steel guitar, bringing forth the plaintive strains which aroused in him a deeper yearning than he knew how to suppress. And then he would try to bring himself down to earth by introducing some commonplace subject for discussion, in order to herd himself away from dangerous ground. But never, even when he sat alone blowing the smoke of his cigar out across the valley, did he come out and fairly face the problem with all of its factors. He dared not. In the forefront of everything was the fact that he loved the girl intensely. Back of this loomed perplexing and menacing shadows of elements which threatened and appalled him. The girl's race, her ancestry upon both sides, her own blame in the tragedy which had blackened her life, the child of her fault—all of these spectres lurked and mouthed at him, ready, he knew, to come forth and torture him whenever he would turn his eyes upon them and thus permit them to come into the

open and make their claims. Truly this mountain was well named Tantalus; for here, almost within his hand, was all that he asked of life; and yet, should he reach out his hand to take it, the dusky guardians would step forth and say "What of us?" And he dared not put his soul to the test of seeking an answer. And so he stayed in his Land O'Dreams and turned his back upon the dusky guard which ever dogged him.

It was some two weeks after little David's kidnapping that he crossed over to her lanai one early afternoon and found her sitting with the youngster nearly asleep in her arms, rocking softly back and forth and humming an old Hawaiian song. He came forward quietly and sat down near her, leaning back and watching her gently swaying figure and the curl of the soft hair at her slender neck, as she bent her head over the child. She looked only a child herself, with piquant features and the sweet clearness of her eyes as she glanced up at him and then back at the youngster's apple-blossom face. She brushed her hand across the velvet cheek and looked over at Dick again. "He is wonderfully fair, isn't he?" she said, seeming to marvel at the beauty of his baby skin.

Dick nodded his head sombrely. "Yes," he said, "he is very fair."

The girl seemed for the moment to be dreamily oblivious to everything but her momentary joy in

the beauty of the child's coloring. "I suppose that it is quite natural that he should be so fair," she said, contemplatively; "being three-fourths white, you know."

Dick winced. "He is a very beautiful boy." he said, gravely.

Her arms tightened about the little one. "Yes," she said; "he is beautiful." And then, still gazing down at the child, she shook her head slowly. "Oh," she said, "if David had only waited! He is so beautiful—if he had only waited, perhaps—"

A wave of hot jealousy surged up over the man. "But he couldn't have waited!" he blurted out almost savagely. "No man with a spark of red blood in him could have waited—in the face of anything like that!"

The girl turned her face to him and her eyes were soft with tears; "But he didn't give me a chance!" she cried, brokenly; "He never let me tell him. He gave me no chance to confess. He judged me—"

"It was too late then for a confession," said Dick, grimly.

"But," said the girl, trying to swallow her tears; "if he had only known—if he had let me tell him how my love maddened me—"

"No man," interrupted Dick, bitterly, with a queer feeling that it was his own case that he was defending, not that of the dead man; "—no man is ever made lenient by being told how much his wife

loves his rival."

"Oh-h!" moaned the girl, and bowed her head upon the child's fair hair. "Oh, it is useless, useless!" she cried out suddenly; "It is all such a terrible muddle, and there is no way ever to make it clear. No one would ever understand. I was so young and I loved him so—I loved him so!"

Dick stood up and began walking back and forth the length of the lanai. He felt a wild, unreasoning hatred for this fair-haired dead rival of his. "I can't understand it!" he burst forth. "You knew the other man before, and yet you married David Malua—and then went back to the other man. If you loved McKnight, why did you marry David Malua? But when you did marry him, why couldn't you have—been square?"

The girl was deathly silent for a moment; then she rose up quietly with the child in her arms, and went and laid him softly upon a couch; then she returned and came and stood before Dick where he had stopped near the rail of the lanai. The tears were all gone from her eyes now and her head was poised high on her slender neck. "You say," she said distinctly, "that you do not understand. Is it needful that you should understand? I have not asked your comments upon my behavior."

"But you didn't play the game," protested Dick, nursing his own jealous suffering and his antagonism toward this unsporting quality of her which

his love resented. "You dragged your husband's love through the mire of your own—"

The girl stepped back, panting a little; "What is it to you?" she flashed out. "What call have you to judge me? Who has asked for your opinion? Why should you care, one way or the other, *what* I have done?"

The fire suddenly went out of Dick's face, leaving it the color of grey ashes, and slowly he folded his arms and stood looking down at her gravely. His lips were tight. "That is the unfortunate part about it," he said quietly; "I do care. I care desperately." And then turning away from her he went back through the screen of ironwoods and on out through his garden and away up the road toward the mountain tops.

For the first mile or so he neither saw nor heard nor chose his way, but merely followed the curves of the road mechanically, as an engine follows its rails and with no more feeling nor observation than has the engine. The soul of him seemed to be indrawn in uncanny contemplation of itself, leaving the body to its own devices and unattended. Eventually a trail cut across the road and led into the forest, and his feet, seemingly of their own volition, turned into it and followed on through the dense wood. On and on he followed the little trail, brushing aside swaying jungle vines which swung in his way, or the bending foliage of ti plants along the

more open stretches; even stopping in one place to examine the curious veinings of the ivy-like leaves of a slender vine creeping over the moss of a huge boulder. He was conscious of examining it with interest; and yet it was a sort of wooden interest which seemed not to belong to the real man at all, but to be, rather, something extraneous and somewhat curious to observe. It was not until a cold wind struck him as he came around a sharp turn in the narrow trail, high up in the mountains, that he seemed to reassemble himself again and to look about and really sense his environment; and then for a moment he was dazed and bewildered by his surroundings. The trail which he had followed for all these miles had led him to the topmost ridge of the Koolau mountain range, a mere knife-edge cutting the line between the windward and leeward sides of the Island. The turn in the trail had brought him out upon a narrow stretch which commanded both sides of the range; the sheer, rocky precipice, and far below the tapestry of varicolored green foot-hills, grey craters and sapphire blue sea, upon one hand; and upon the other, the heavily wooded steep slopes which dropped down into the Manoa Valley, more than two thousand feet below at this point, with the rice and taro fields, the gay gardens and homes, and the curving, dark roads, all sweeping out toward the brilliant, shimmering sea. From the ridge, at one side of him loomed the dark

blue-green sides of Konahuanui, a thousand feet higher; and upon the other side the line of the ridge upon which he stood, rose sharply but in less lofty peaks, curving off into the distance. For a few moments he stood spellbound, drinking in the medicine which nature has provided for a sick soul; and then he walked reverently on along the rugged trail, no longer dull and introspective; but vitally alive and tingling with the joy of living and of setting his shoulders against the big wind which came tearing over the mountain tops and roaring away down the gorges. Once more he was all human and for the moment all questions of conservatism and Grundyism were submerged in the joy of just existing in a world so beautiful and in loving with an ardor beyond all compassing. To live in Hawaii forever, to have Evalani for his wife—beyond that nothing mattered—and that he would bring to pass, so help him God!

On he trod, buoyantly along the trail, which kept to the top of the ridge, merely winding upon one side or the other of some small peak, and then coming out again upon the thin knife-edge where the wind whipped and the koa trees bent and writhed in the blast and the lehuas scattered their red stamens in crimson wind-blown flocks of fiery arrows. There was a taller peak ahead which he knew to be Olympus, some twenty-five hundred feet high; and he determined to reach that point and then return, as he

began to be conscious of the demands for food and water which such a tramp engenders. He reached the point, and then finding that the real tip of the peak was a bit higher than the trail, he left the path, and climbing the little eminence he threw himself down upon the very top and lay at ease, looking out over the precipice and watching the little black specks of automobiles creeping along the ribbons of roads, or other tiny specks of sampans flecking the blue of the water, or the lacy lines of surf creeping up from the blue to the green and then on over the sand of the beaches. Life seemed good to him just then. He had solved his problem, or rather, it had solved itself, and he had no thought of questioning the decision. He accepted it, and as for details, why those would also arrange themselves, he would not bother with them now; but only revel in the fact that Evalani was going to be his own. He did not even think to admit the possibility that Evalani might have ideas of her own upon the matter; but with the egotism of one who feels that he has accepted the will of the gods, he generously conceded to the gods the task of working out the details and seeing that they all dovetailed in a proper manner.

Eventually he began to feel a bit chilly, for the wind at those higher altitudes is distinctly fresh, and so he sat up and stretched his arms luxuriously, preparatory to turning upon the back trail. He stood up and peered over the edge of the precipice

and estimated its depth, and then stooped and picked up a stone as large as his fist, to drop it and find if he could figure the depth by the time of its fall, in case that he was able to hear it alight. He bent forward in order to drop it sheer, and then suddenly whirled in his tracks to look into the slightly wavering barrel of a revolver not a dozen feet away. And then it was that his boyhood's baseball training stood him in good stead. Instantly, as if he had suddenly caught a man off base, the rock flew from his hand and the revolver hurtled through the air and dropped far below in an impenetrable mass of uluhi fern, while the man immediately grasped his right arm in his other hand and bent over it in a nursing attitude.

"What made you so slow?" called Dick, jocosely. "Got buck fever?"

The man looked up and swore.

"Wait where you are!" called Dick. Near as he was, there was still the slope of the little hillock upon which Dick stood, as well as the curve in the trail, to negotiate; and by the time that Dick had made these, on the jump, the man had sufficiently recovered from his jolt to take to his heels back down the trail. Dick had recognized him from the first glance, as Carter McKnight; and now his first thought was to let him go without further attention; but in another instant he remembered that there were half a hundred places on the back trail

where he could be ambushed from above and a ton or so of loosened rock rolled down upon him, where the trail was not more than a foot wide and the fall deep. And so, this not being at all to his taste, he started on the run behind the man; and, being a good sprinter, he soon had him in sight and near enough so that there was no chance for side-stepping for sinister purposes. In fact, where the curves were sharp and near together, he ran up almost upon the man's heels, and could hear him pant as he ran; and then, where the stretches were longer, he dropped back somewhat, for a bit of breathing space for himself.

And presently he began to be thoroughly amused. The man had followed him up the mountain to murder him, of that there was no question; though why he had not fired the fatal shot was a puzzle, unless he had only just arrived when Dick heard the slight sound which made him turn just in time. Possibly the man had not yet had the opportunity to more than aim the gun, or possibly it had been, as Dick said, buck fever. The man had all of the earmarks of a coward, and it was quite "in the cards" that he had been taken with qualms when he had his game covered. At any rate, he was now being ignominiously chased back down the trail, up which he had come, gun in hand, stalking big game.

At last McKnight began to show evidences of acute exhaustion. He wheezed as he ran, and now

and then staggered in a manner not at all comfortable upon so narrow a trail; and at last, reaching a point where the way was wider, he stumbled and fell in the grass at the side of the path, and lay still, breathing heavily, his arms over his head; probably expecting every moment to be his last.

However, Dick only stopped and stood looking down ironically at the heaving shoulders; and presently the man, being unable to stand the suspense of this silence containing he knew not what, raised his face, crimson from his long and agitated exertion, and stared at the man contemplating him. Dick stood with his hands in his pockets, grinning down upon his prostrate enemy, and quoted facetiously the absurd little jingle which had been running in his mind as he chased the fugitive down the mountain:—

“ ‘Algy met a bear.
“ ‘The bear was bulgy.
“ ‘The bulge was Algy!’ ”

And then he laughed and walked on down the trail, knowing that the man was too exhausted to leave his recumbent attitude for an hour or more, and too chastened to think up anything new right off.

Dick whistled a gay tune as he approached the two little houses on the Tantalus ridge. Tonight he would tell Evalani that she was to be his wife, and they would together plan out their future course. Tonight they would sit in the moonlight on her

lanai and—he remembered the soft sweetness of her mouth, and the curve of her throat, and the glint of her eyes in the moonlight on other nights when he had not been brave enough to come nearer. But now,—he might come very near,—when he had told her. Perhaps it might be arranged for them to be married very soon,—perhaps this week. The whistling stopped, and he hurried up the walk to his lanai and his room, to prepare for dinner and for an evening which was to mark a milestone in his life, and by that milestone a gateway into what looked for a moment like everlasting bliss.

But even with these bright prospects before him, his appetite, achieved by his strenuous walk and run, without food or water, was unimpaired; and, dinner over, he took a few restless turns upon his lanai with a cigarette, and then approached the ironwood screen and knocked upon the rail, which was the usual inquiry as to whether he might part the branches and come over. But from the other side there came no answer. The ironwoods swung and rustled with their soft surf sounds, but no cheery voice called from beyond, "Come in!" He waited for a few moments and then knocked again. But again there was no answer. Perhaps she was still at dinner. He took a few more impatient turns upon the lanai and then returned to the portal, but his summons brought no response. In fact, it was so still beyond the ironwoods that a momentary

fear shot through him. He leaned forward and swept aside the long green tassels; but instead of the vista of vine-covered lanai, there was before him only the blank wall of her heavy grey canvas curtain, rolled smoothly down and fastened at the bottom.

He let the green tassels fall back into place and turned away to stand by the farther rail and look deep down into the valley below. He could scarcely grasp the import of what he had seen. Her curtain had not been dropped a single time since she had first given him the privilege of rolling up the one upon his side of the screen. It could only mean that she was offended, seriously offended. But why? What had he said this afternoon? He had only told her that he cared for her. There was nothing in that to offend any woman, surely. And yet, *how* had he told her? He could scarcely remember. He had been maddened by her taunting way of demanding what her behavior was to him,—why he should care? But she should have understood that he was driven to his confession involuntarily. But what had he actually said? He tried to recall it, and at last the words came back; he had said that the unfortunate part of it was that he did care. The *unfortunate* part! To say that to a girl of her pride, a girl whose family name was Hookano, which means pride! To call it unfortunate that he loved her! Down into the depths of despair he dropped. She

would never forgive him. She ought not to. It was vile. He had said other things to her. He had said that she was not square with David Malua. He had said abominable things about matters which did not concern him; and she had been right to assert herself and to call him to account; but couldn't she understand that it was because of his love, because of the torture of his love? And then his calmer self said: "But when you called that love unfortunate and fled from her, you called down the dividing curtain between you. You lowered it yourself. What else could a woman do, in the face of anything like that? Oh, fool, fool, fool! To have had in your hand the one thing on earth that could make life worth living, and you cast it out like something unworthy, —you cast it at her feet with bitterness, as a misfortune!"

Back and forth, back and forth on the lanai he walked, hour after hour. What could he say? What could he do? How could he make her understand that this thing which he had termed a misfortune, was the dearest thing in his life? How could he ever heal the breach enough to come near again so that he might at least tell her of his torture and his humiliation; and that the proudest thing which he possessed was this love for her, whether she would have it or not? What was it to him, who she was, what she had done, what anyone said? She was Evalani, his one love; and nothing else in the wide

world, past, present or future, mattered, excepting that she understand this, even though she never were to see him again, even though she should never forgive him; yet only that she might know and understand. Over and over and in and out his thoughts wove and tangled with his love and his sorrow and his unrest and his longing; but from the other side of the blank curtain there came no sound; and at last, worn out with the depths of his revulsion from the anticipations of his return along the trail, to the unbelievable emptiness of the present reality, he flung himself upon a couch and fell into a heavy and exhausted sleep.

CHAPTER VII

THE MULANG LEI

THE following days were bitter ones for Dick and the epithets which he applied to himself were far from complimentary. In fact, so occupied was he with his misery because of Evalani, that he almost forgot about his encounter with Carter McKnight upon the mountain, and quite neglected to give consideration to what might have been the immediate purpose of the attempted attack. Eventually, however, having about worn out every possible line of suffering and self-recrimination which he could evolve from the situation, he gradually began to return to a more normal attitude toward life; and with this return came the recollection of the event upon the mountain; and the memory of the cowering figure which he had left beside the trail to contemplate the absurd little couplet which he had quoted, even brought a semblance of a grin to his gloomy countenance. And with this came an interest in reviewing the episode and its import. To his mind it seemed quite evident that McKnight's only object must have been to get him out of the way in order to eliminate his interference with his designs

upon Evalani and her child. And more strongly than ever was he inclined to the view that McKnight feared that his mother would adopt the child and thus cut him out of a possible inheritance, which easily accounted for Kat Morton's interest, if she were really engaged to McKnight, as report seemed to have it conclusively. This seemed to him the most logical solution to the mystery; and if it were true, then it behooved him to take good care of his self-assumed charges, since he was convinced that the persons involved were absolutely without compunction or conscience as long as their selfish interests were threatened by the continued life of the little boy. Of course he had found no opportunity to tell Evalani about his encounter with McKnight. At first he had intended to do so and had rather anticipated hearing her laughter at the fiasco; but now, in view of the still pending danger to her boy, he thought it wiser not to worry and frighten her by retailing the event; although for a moment he had contemplated it as a possible excuse for making a specific demand for an interview with her, on the score that he had information which it was necessary that she should know, in view of the safety of her child. He knew that this would bring about the desired conference, in the course of which he would have an opportunity to say the things which his very soul was crying out for her to understand;—but now that he had weighed the matter, he could

not do it; for it was perfectly evident that the knowledge that danger had come to him through her, would only add to her unhappiness, whether she cared for him or not; and would also frighten her more for the safety of the youngster whom Dick had firmly resolved to protect at any cost. And so, much as he longed to see her, he was forced to forego what seemed like the only possible opening for bringing about an interview, and try to content himself with keeping a close watch upon his charges, and speculating upon some other opening for bringing about the longed-for meeting.

A dozen times a day he went cautiously and brushed aside the ironwood tassels, hoping against hope that he might find that the canvas curtain had been rolled up again; but always it presented the same dull grey impenetrable wall between him and his hopes, and he would wander back to his typewriter and sit gazing out across the valley and cursing his ill fortune. He could not blame her for shutting him out of her life. He had deserved it. And not only that, but in the face of the humiliation which he had put upon one of her proud nature, she could not have done otherwise. It seemed as if he could not have wanted her to do otherwise. She could not be Evalani and bow to such an affront; but just the same, the consciousness of that blank grey wall beyond the ironwoods, was the cause of untold suffering.

And so, after three days of isolation, he determined to write to her, and he spent two days at his type-writer draughting the letter over and over again, telling her all about everything; and then tearing it up and taking a fresh sheet, which always met the same fate. Until at last, abandoning in despair the effort to tell her anything in this way, he flung himself down at his desk and scribbled hurriedly:—

“I love you, and that love is the proudest and dearest thing in my life.

“Will you let me see you and tell you?”

That was all. Neither beginning nor signature; only the words thrust into an envelope and addressed to her and given to Moto to deliver upon the instant, lest he should recall it and be back again in the treadmill of indecision.

Moto impassively received the envelope with orders to wait for an answer, and Dick fell to pacing the lanai while he awaited his fate. But Moto returned empty-handed. “Fong say no answer,” he stated, woodenly.

“Was she there? Did she read it?” asked Dick, tensely.

“Ye-es,” said Moto. “I speak Fong, did she read, or shall I come bime-by for answer. He say no, she read all right, she say no answer. Thas all.”

Dick returned to his pacing, his ears alert. Perhaps she would come and call to him through the

ironwoods. Surely, surely she could not absolutely ignore such a plea as that. But no call came. After an hour he went softly and brushed aside the sheltering boughs; perhaps the curtain had gone up and he had not heard. But no, there was still only the grey wall like a dense curtain of fog hanging between them, and no sound came from beyond it. And yet, yes, he did hear something, coming faintly through the barrier—it was Evalani singing the little boy to sleep with one of the old Hawaiian melodies. He stood still, his head bent against the soft green boughs and closed his eyes for a few moments; and then he let the tassels fall back into place and returned to his pacing of the lanai, his heart heavy and brooding and his soul sick with longing and discouragement, and his ability to plan and hope practically dead.

However, the next morning he went back, doggedly, to work. He had only one remaining possibility. He would keep an eye upon the curve of the road, as he could see it from his desk; and if Evalani should go forth for a walk, as had been her practice, he would watch for her return, and when he saw her round the curve, he would go out and intercept her as she passed his house. They had never made a practice of walking together; for once when he had proposed it, she had shaken her head and said quietly that she thought it would not be wise; and he had instantly seen that she was right, since the

road was sufficiently traveled to make it more than likely that they would meet motorists from town; and surely Evalani had suffered enough from malicious tongues so that he must not selfishly add the least shadow of motive for further gossip. And so now, should he see her, he must not follow her; but could only await her return to say the few words which he must say or continue to suffer untold agonies of mind.

For several days she failed to appear; and then, one afternoon, rather later than had been usual, he saw the flick of her yellow frock as she came out upon the curve and faced the mountain wind which ruffled her hair and tossed the fragrant lei of stephanotis and mulang blossoms which she so loved to wear about her neck. In the old days, she always used to turn at this point and wave to him, and he watched, hoping against hope, that she would do so today; but she did not turn her head, only kept steadily on and rounded the curve without a backward glance. It seemed to him, even at that distance, that she looked more frail and less buoyant than of old, and met the wind with less resistance of her slender form. Also, he missed seeing her strain at the leash of the big police dog, for he no longer accompanied her upon these walks since the stealing of the little boy; being left to guard the home whenever she was abroad; and somehow it seemed to Dick that his absence made her seem pa-

thetically alone upon the wild mountain road with the tangles of jungle growth reaching up from below and the weird, swaying branches of great trees and vines swinging down from overhead.

Dick's heart began to thump a bit heavily. Inside of half an hour she would return. Inside of half an hour he would have talked to her once more. Inside of half an hour he would know whether she could ever forgive him, or whether she was irrevocably offended. He found himself growing decidedly nervous. He dared not get up and pace the lanai, his usual solace in time of stress, lest she might pass while his back was turned; for the curve of road which was visible from his chair was a very short space indeed and it would take her only a moment to pass it. And all that he could do was to sit with his eyes glued to that little space, and call upon his gods to send him good fortune in this one all-important moment of his life.

The time seemed interminably long, and he glanced at his watch. Not quite half an hour, she would soon be coming now; and he half rose in his chair, that he might be ready upon the instant of her appearance, to dash out through his garden, so that there might be no possible chance for her to pass before he could intercept her. But eventually, as she did not come, he sank back into his seat, still watching with strained eyes. He tried to interest himself in the occasional cars which passed, mak-

ing the loop up one side of the mountain and down the other, but found the occupation empty. The half-hour passed, then three-quarters, and she had not come. He began to be anxious. There was no other way for her to come back, for though there were many trails farther up the mountain, and also down below, yet upon this particular ridge the roadway filled the entire knife-edge, leaving no space for a trail, though just at the curve there was a little hillock which one might ascend, but one must come down into the road again in plain sight; so there had been no way for her to have passed, unless he had slept on the watch, which he was only too positive that he had not. And yet she never stayed out so long as this. He looked at his watch again. It was the time that she always gave the little boy his supper; for he knew all of her little home schedule, and she never missed attending to that, herself.

He got up and went to the door anxiously, determined to brave Fong and inquire if she had come in; but when he passed through the break in the hedge, he found Fong standing in the road gazing toward the curve as intently as he had been doing. "Has Mrs. Malua come back from her walk?" he asked the man, sharply.

Fong turned, his gaunt face looking particularly grim. "No," he said; "She no come home. No good. I no like. She no stop so long before. I no like."

"All right, I'll go and find her;" said Dick, briskly; "You watch little boy good;" and he started on the run up the road and around the curve; not minding this time if she were to see him running to find her. But around the curve there was no sign of Evalani, nor around the next curve, nor the next. And then, where a trail cut into the road, from one of the other ridges, he halted. Had she taken the trail, or kept to the road? He had heard her say that she was fond of the trail, and so, on the strength of that, he turned into it, running over the soft ground and among the ferns and vines until he came out upon the road once more, beyond a wide turn where it made the grade. Again he hesitated and again he took the trail until he reached its next intersection with the road. And still there was no sign of Evalani. Perhaps she might have passed him on the way home, by keeping to the road while he was on the trail. If so, she would be at home by now; and he turned and ran back down the trail and along the now deserted road, toward home, trying to keep down his anxiety, and yet filled with a deadly fear. The sun was setting. He must find her before darkness fell.

As he turned the last curve his heart sank, for there still stood Fong in the road, and Dick's gesture of inquiry was answered by only a shake of the head; so he turned sharply back again, to search that part of the road which he had missed while on

the trail. She might have sprained her ankle or been hurt in some other way and, being Evalani, she would not have asked a passing motorist for a lift. He might find her waiting for him beside the road. She would know that he would come for her; and his heart swelled with a momentary joy at the thought of her waiting there in the dusk for him. At last, waiting for him to come for her.

But again when he had covered the ground up to the point to which he had first come, there was no sign of her; and now, thoroughly frightened at the idea of approaching darkness before he had found her, he turned to go back for his car, thinking to reach more quickly the farthest possible point to which her walk might have taken her. And it was while running back down the road, having just passed the point where the trail comes out from the forest, that he suddenly stopped stock still and stood turning his head this way and that and straining his eyes in the gloaming; for he had caught a sweet, passing whiff of mulang fragrance, and remembered the lei which he had seen the wind whipping about Evalani's neck. And yet she was nowhere in sight and there was no spot near at hand where she might be screened from view. He went back a few feet, scanning the sides of the road; and then suddenly he sprang forward and snatched from the grass beside the way a fragrant rope of white flowers. Not a circular lei, as she had worn

it about her neck; but a straight rope with a broken string and a crushed space as if a rude hand had grasped it and torn it away from her neck and flung it aside, where the fragrance of its crushed flowers had called to him from the ground. And yet, in that instant he did not read it in that way. He felt that it was Evalani's own hand which had broken the string and flung it down, had flung it down as a message to him, as a cry to him for help in her emergency; and thrusting it into his bosom he whirled in his steps and went racing madly back down the mountain road, knowing that Evalani had been carried away, had been stolen from him; and with all of the rage of a devastated mate, he sprang to the task of finding his love and wreaking his vengeance.

The white figure of Fong was still in the road when he rounded the curve toward the bungalows, but he did not stop for explanations; only called out; "I'll find her! Tell Grandma I'll find her all right!" as he dashed into the house and to his room, grasped his revolver and a flashlight, and was out again. But quick as he was, the old Chinaman already had the car out of the garage and sprang out of it with incredible agility as Dick reached it; and in another moment Dick was speeding away down the mountain, sure that whoever had taken the girl had gone on around the loop and down the Round Top road, and that the only place to find clue of her would be somewhere among those flickering lights.

beginning to blink out, down below in the town.

There being practically no cars out at this hour, Dick had a clear way for all of the speed which he dared upon this crooked, winding road, and also it afforded him a free mind to work upon the question before him—the question of where to begin his search—and as usual his mind reverted to Bert Sands and her clear little head, ready to grasp every phase of a situation at the first glance and reacting instantly with some wise suggestion for action. And therefore, at the first possible point he dashed for a telephone and called her number, praying that she might be at home.

Jack Sands answered the call. Dick was brief. "Dick Harris speaking," he said; "They've got Evalani. Ask Bert what to do."

Almost instantly Jack replied, half laughing, "Bert's half way to the garage. She says to go to an isolated bungalow on the beach, a few miles beyond Waimea Canyon. Go Leilehua way. I'm coming, too. Run easy in town; don't let the speed-cop get you. Go to it!"

Dick was back in his car in a flash, and then out through town, keeping as much as possible to the less traveled streets and with difficulty holding in his car, giving thanks for Jack's warning, since to be held up now would be maddening.

It was dark by the time that he was clear of the town and running through Moanalua gardens; but

fortunately the dangerous roads about the gulches beyond, were not over-full of traffic; and then when at last he reached the straighter stretches along Schofield Barracks he again gave thanks that the worst of the trip, some twenty miles, was over and nothing untoward had happened, to delay him; but still he dared not speed too much lest he should be stopped and detained perilously.

And now he began to wonder whether he should find the right house. The orders were indefinite; and anyway, how did Bert know where to direct him? Might he not be on a wild-goose chase out here, after all, while something terrible might be happening to Evalani somewhere nearer to town? But, on the other hand, if he did not come here, where should he go? The police would mean publicity and also delay while they went over the ground which he had already covered. No, he would follow this up as far as it went; and then if it did not lead to anything, he would at least have Bert at hand to take counsel with, and plan some other quick line of search.

His car spun along as fast as he would let it, seeming almost like a live thing, over-eager to be about its master's business, answering his touch like a thoroughbred, and yet always alert for every bit of rein that he would give it. He found himself talking to it as they went, praising it, even soothing it with a word as just beyond Haleiwa a small car

went careening by, evidently in the hands of a drunken driver, and swerved almost against their fender, requiring a quick turn of Dick's hand to avoid it.

Past Waimea Canyon and the house called haunted, and then along the road as close to the beach as he could get, straining his eyes through the gloom as buildings or trees loomed between him and the sea; and then at last, standing out by itself between the road and the heavy surf which was beating up as it beats nowhere else on Oahu, he saw the dark outlines of a bungalow with a low stone wall about it.

He swerved up to the entrance and stopped his car and sat still for a moment and listened. The house was dark, and the only sound was the heavy beat and swash of the surf and a singing sound of sand as the water washed back from the steep beach. He gripped his revolver and his flashlight and jumped out of the car and went up the walk which crossed the little sandy garden where a few newly planted coconut trees attested to the fact that it was not a deserted place, but probably merely a week-end home for some Honolulu city dweller.

He stepped up onto the lanai in the darkness and listened again, but there was no near at hand sound. He tried the two doors, without turning on his light, and found both of them locked. He leaned close to

one and put his ear against it, listening intently and trying to shut out the tumult of the sea. Not a sound came from within. The same silence met him at the other door. He returned to the first and leaning close to it he called softly "Evalani!" But there came no answer. He stood still, debating what to do. There seemed to be no one here, and yet this must be the house. It answered the meager description at every point. He would return to the road and wait there for Bert and Jack. As he passed the other door he stopped beside it again and called "Evalani!" and bent his head to listen. There came no answer; and yet vaguely it seemed to him that he heard something within the room—a movement, a rustle, a mere consciousness of life, he could scarcely tell. He called again, and again came the indefinite response. In an instant he had put his shoulder to the door and it sprang open with a bang and a crash and his flash-light suddenly splashed upon the figure of Evalani upon the floor, gagged and bound with wide strips of white cloth which wound about her like the wrappings of a mummy.

On the moment he was down beside her, loosening the gag and cutting wildly at the wrapping bandages, while the girl lay limp, her wide eyes gleaming up at him in the rays of the flash-light which lay on the floor by her head. And all the time he was talking to her brokenly. "Darling, my darling!

I've found you! My God, I thought that I'd never find you! Oh, sweetheart, you'll never escape me again, never! You're mine!" And he drew her released form into his arms, covering her face with kisses and holding her as if he would never let her go again. He could not tell whether she responded to any of his caresses or not,—perhaps he had not time to notice, so engrossed was he in the fact that he had found her and that he had her in his arms at last,—that she had been in terrible danger, had suffered, and he had not been there to defend her.

Presently he found that she was trying to speak and he bent his ear to hear. "My baby! Is my baby safe?" she whispered.

"Absolutely safe!" he assured her, eagerly.

She heaved a deep sigh of relief. Then a shudder swept over her form. "Take me away!" she whispered, fearfully.

He gathered her up in his arms and carried her out to his car and carefully placed her in the seat. Then as he turned to go around to his own side, the lights of an automobile flashed into view and Dick sprang into his seat and clutched his revolver as a car swept alongside and stopped; but in an instant Bert Sands' clear voice called: "Have you got her, all right?"

"Yes," said Dick, hoarsely, "I've got her."

"Did you kill the fellow?" asked Jack.

"He wasn't there," said Dick. "She was gagged

and trussed up and all alone.”

“Howcum?” inquired Jack.

“Don’t know. She isn’t able to talk yet.”

Evalani stirred and raised her head slightly from the back of the seat. “He went back to Haleiwa for more liquor,” she whispered. “He—he said that he wasn’t quite drunk enough to kill me. He was afraid. He is coming back,” and she dropped her head again with a moan, and began shivering as if with the cold.

Dick passed on what she said. “All right,” responded Bert. “Here, take this rug and wrap it around her good and tight, and then make for home. Go back by way of the Pali. It’s a lot longer, but that way we won’t meet him, and we don’t want to mess things up publicly if we can help it.”

“I’d like to meet him!” said Dick, through his clenched teeth and fingering his gun.

“Don’t be a fool!” said Bert. “Take care of your lady now and think of your revenge later on. Now go along and we’ll follow fairly close, so that if he tries to go after you, we can hold him up. What sort of a car is he driving, do you know?”

Dick again passed on Evalani’s whispered words. “A little two-door car, she says, blue with a grey line. A drive-yourself rented for the occasion, I suppose. All right, we’ll get going. Thanks beyond words.” And stopping only long enough to wrap Evalani tenderly in the warm rug and draw her

close to him, he turned out into the road and headed for the long drive around the windward side of the Island.

For a long time no word was spoken. The car hummed evenly along and Evalani lay huddled against his shoulder, seemingly in a half stupor, though now and then a long shiver or shudder quivered over her form. At last she moved her head slightly and put her hands to her throat. "Can I do anything for you?" asked Dick, bending closer.

Her head moved in a negative. "No," she whispered. "It's only—that my throat hurts."

"Of course it does," sympathized Dick. "There ought to have been some way to get you something hot before we started, but it didn't seem wise to go back to Haleiwa, and there is no other place until we get clear to town. If anything cool would help you, perhaps we might find some ginger ale at one of the little shops along the road."

But at this Evalani started up in a panic. "Oh, no!" she cried, in terror. "Don't stop anywhere! Oh, please don't! Just get me home as quickly as you can. Only just get me home to my baby, that's all I want."

Dick put a hand over the clenched fingers in her lap. "All right, sweetheart," he said, tenderly, as if to a child. "That is just what we are doing,—going home as fast as ever we can. Only don't worry, and

we'll be there pronto. Try to rest a little if you can."

For a time Evalani was quiet and then weariness and fear took hold upon her again, and presently she began to sob heavily, shivering the while. Dick slowed the car down a little and bent over her again. "Listen, dear," he said, "there's a long stretch of smooth road along here and I'm going to drive with one hand;" and his strong right arm went tenderly around the cowering form and drew her close to him. "Now," he said, "we're going to have you warm and comfy in just about three minutes. Come, snuggle your head up against my shoulder and see how safe you'll feel." And obediently Evalani cuddled up in the warm arm which held her and the big woolly rug in such a strong and protecting grip. And presently she stopped shivering and rested against him quietly, excepting for the occasional painful swallowing in an effort to relieve the swollen and aching throat. And the car continued to spin steadily on as before.

Somewhat later Dick heard the peculiar call of Bert's horn which indicated that she wanted to communicate, and he slowed down again and in a moment the Sands' car slid in alongside and Jack leaned out and tossed some oranges into the seat beside Evalani. "Bert thought that you would be thirsty," he said, "and so we got these at that Pa-ke shop back there. Eat them if you can; they'll do

you good. There wasn't anything else possible in the place." And without waiting for thanks, the car dropped back into its position of rear guard.

Evalani came out from the enveloping arm sufficiently to reach for one of the oranges, and although at first it seemed difficult for her to swallow even the juice, yet presently its subtle, stimulating quality began to have its effect and in a few minutes she nestled back again with a sigh of relief. "I feel so much better," she said, in a voice more nearly like her own.

"Well, don't talk!" said Dick, authoritatively. "Just rest until we get home."

"All right, only I want to know about things. Please tell me how you found me."

"Wait until we get home, dear," said Dick, coaxingly. "Just rest now, please."

"But it won't tire me to listen," pleaded Evalani. "It will tire me much more to worry and wonder."

"All right," Dick tightened his arm a little. "Do you happen to notice any perfume about where your head is resting?" he inquired.

Evalani sniffed, doubtfully. "Yes," she said, "I've kept thinking that I smelled mulang, but I supposed that it was because my mind was wandering."

"Nothing of the kind," declared Dick. "That blessed lei is right there inside of my coat, and has been there ever since I picked it up."

"And so you really found it?" whispered Evalani, softly.

"Surely! You left it for me, didn't you?"

"Yes. I thought that you would come to look for me."

"*Thought!*" reproached Dick.

Evalani rubbed her cheek against the coat. "I *knew* that you would," she said. And then, "But I can't understand. How did you manage to trace me?"

"Oh, as usual," said Dick, "I went after Bert Sands. All of the credit goes to her."

"But how did she know?" questioned Evalani. "How did she ever guess where he would take me?"

"Search me!" said Dick. "Bert seems to have a sort of Cosmic Consciousness; she knows everything."

By this time they had reached the foot of the Pali and Dick, much to his regret, realized that this was a case of both hands to the wheel, and reluctantly he released the now nearly recovered Evalani, who sat up quite brightly and inquired whether he was not at all interested in what her own experience had been; and to his protest that she ought not to talk, only to rest, she replied that it would do her a lot more good to talk it all out to him than to sit still and think about it to herself and get the shivers again. Whereupon Dick told her to go ahead, but that if she started to shivering, he would begin to

drive with one hand again even though they should be upon the raggedest edge of the narrowest part of the road. "Now," said he, "to begin with, how did that man ever manage to get a lively girl like you into the car and gag and tie her up that way, and all on a fairly well traveled road and in broad daylight?"

"Well," said Evalani, "it was like this: I had just come out of the trail onto the road and turned back toward home, when the little car drew up beside me and the door opened and out jumped Carter McKnight, and as he did so, Kat Morton leaned forward from the back seat and spoke to me."

"Kat Morton!" exclaimed Dick; "Do you mean that she actually took part in this—that she was there and helped to tie you up?"

"Exactly that," said Evalani. "But wait until I get to that part. Of course I wasn't frightened, only angry; for, as you say, it was broad daylight and a certain number of cars passing all the time. As soon as I grasped who it was, I actually saw red, just remembering what they had tried to do to my boy; and I didn't mince words in what I had to say to them. But Kat was creamy-er than ever and only smiled and said that it was all because I didn't understand, had been misinformed; and for me to get into the car and she would explain everything to me, how a dreadful mistake had been made and how sorry she was. But I wouldn't hear a word to it,

and just went on with what I had to say. I know Kat Morton. I went to Punahou School with her for years and years. But Kat kept saying that she was so sorry and that she wanted to explain and wouldn't I please get into the car to talk, because if anyone should go by they would be curious and would gossip about my looking so angry and fussing so. I refused point-blank to get into the car and said that I didn't want to hear any of her lying explanations, and I turned to go. And Carter McKnight was standing close behind me, and just as I turned, he suddenly thrust the gag into my mouth and tightened it and flung me forward into the car and Kat threw a rug over my head before I could get to my feet. McKnight bundled my feet in and shut the door and started up the car and Kat—actually, Kat sat on me!"

Here Evalani even laughed a little. "I know," she said, "it sounds funny; but it was a long way from being funny then, I can tell you. There I was, huddled in the bottom of the car with the gag in my mouth and the rug wrapped all over me and Kat sitting on top of me and saying in her creamy voice; 'This is your own mistake. If you had gotten in quietly, we wouldn't have had to be rough with you; but you would make us do it, and so it is your own fault, and not ours.' And she sat just as heavy as she could, too!"

"It was at the moment when he thrust the gag

into my mouth that I tore off the lei. He had crushed the flowers against my face and the idea flashed through my mind of trying to leave it for you as a message; and so I yanked at the string and in struggling with him, tried to drop it outside of the car but couldn't be sure whether I had succeeded or whether it was still in the folds of the rug."

"Your quick thinking certainly saved you," commented Dick. "I would probably still be searching Tantalus for you, if it had not been for that."

Evalani went on. "Of course I didn't know where we were going, down there in the dark. I had noticed at first that the curtains of the car were down, and although I could hear automobiles passing and hear the horns, I was absolutely helpless. I did kick some, though, for my feet were partly out of the rug; and by-and-by they ran off into some blind road or the driveway of some unoccupied house—anyway it was quiet and no cars passing, though of course I couldn't see anything—and there they got out those bandages, they were lengths torn from a sheet, and McKnight tied my feet; and then they lifted the rug, and I was almost smothered from the gag and the heat and the wool of the rug. Oh, it was awful! And then they tied my hands. I tried to fight, but it wasn't any use, against the two of them and I so exhausted, anyway. Kat has her fingernails manicured to

sharp points, just like claws, and they hurt my arms dreadfully when she would clutch me to make me hold still while McKnight tightened the bandages." The girl rubbed her arms and cringed. "They are sore yet," she said; "All bruised and so cut and scratched with those terrible nails."

Dick was driving ahead doggedly, his teeth clenched. "God!" he said, "I wish I had that man's neck in my fingers!"

Evalani continued. "When they had me all tied up, then McKnight went back to the wheel and started up the car again, and Kat sat and smiled at me just as if she were entertaining me at an afternoon tea. And oh, the things that she said!"

"What did she say?" asked Dick, grimly.

The girl was silent for a moment. "Well," she said at last, "it didn't really matter much what she said; for I knew that they meant to kill me, and all that I could think of was what would happen to my baby when they had gotten me out of the way. That was the awful part of it. Kat knew that would torture me more than anything else and so she kept harping upon that point. She said that I could rest assured that if anything ever happened to me, they would look after little David, and that it would really be a very good thing, because they knew much better than I what would be best for him and that I might be very sure that they would do it."

"I suppose," hazarded Dick, "that she meant to

insinuate that with you out of the way, they would have the boy at their mercy and could do away with him so that McKnight's mother could not adopt him and cut Carter and his lady-love out of part of her fortune. Wasn't that it?"

Evalani was silent again. "I suppose," she said, noncommittally, "that your idea might seem plausible. But anyway, the point was that they were going to get me out of the way, and after that they could do as they pleased."

"But did Kat go the whole way with you?"

"No. We went down the Round Top road. I could see enough through the wind-shield, after the rug was off of my head, to keep track of where we were. I don't know why they didn't blindfold me. Perhaps it was because Kat liked to watch my eyes while she tortured me. When we got down into the outskirts of town, he let Kat out, so that she could go home by street-car; but before she went, she gave my wrist a parting grip with her sharp nails and said, 'Good-bye. I hope that you will have a nice long joy-ride.' And after she was out, she looked back through the open door and bowed and smiled her creamy smile, as if she were saying good afternoon to her dearest friend.

"As soon as she was gone, McKnight began to drink every few minutes. He had taken a good deal before I met them, I could tell; and then several more drinks after I was out from under the rug;

and I could see that he was trying to drink himself into proper shape to carry out their plans. The man is a coward at heart and he was desperately scared at what was before him and was trying to drink in sufficient courage to carry him through. Of course I didn't know where we were headed for; but I had a lot of time to think while we were driving over the road, and I concluded that he was aiming to find some isolated spot where my body would not be discovered before he had a chance to do away with David and then get off on the *Malolo*, which sails Friday. She makes the trip in four days, and if he could get to the Coast before he was suspected and held up by cable, he would be pretty sure to make his escape safely. And I suppose that is why he went to that lonesome week-end house. That made the chances good that I would not be found before Sunday, and even possibly not until a week later. But if they found me the Sunday after the *Malolo* sailed, it would still be two or three days before the police machinery got to work sufficiently to bring him under suspicion, if they ever did come to suspect him at all, and by that time he would probably be beyond catching. At least that is the way I had it worked out."

"Very likely you're right," said Dick, grimly. "Well, there's going to be a day of reckoning, and I'll be there when it comes, you can wager on that. Go on, what next, when you got to the house? He

didn't hurt you, did he."

"No, no!" said Evalani, quickly. "He was very drunk by then, maudlin drunk, and he carried me in and dumped me down like a bag of meal. He evidently had a key to the house, for he put me down on the lanai while he unlocked the door, and then he dragged me in and flopped me onto the floor and then sat down beside me and began to cry. Yes, actually to cry, in that drunken, maudlin way; saying that he had got to kill me there in the dark and he hated to kill a woman, and that people were always making him do the dirty work and kill women and little children, and he wouldn't ever be able to sleep again as long as he lived, because he knew that I would haunt him, and then he began begging me to promise him that I wouldn't haunt him; but of course I was gagged and couldn't do any talking or promising. And then finally he tried to screw up his courage and leaned over and took a grip upon my throat with his two hands." Again a shudder shook her form.

Dick uttered an exclamation and drew her into the shelter of his arm once more, and after hiding her face for a moment against his shoulder, she went on. "Well, even then he couldn't make his courage hold out. His fingers turned flabby and dropped off and he began to cry again and talk about his poor dead brother and wish that he was there to do it for him. 'Jim would do it,' he said.

'If Jim was here he'd do it for me all right. He'd take a drink of booze and then he'd wade right in and do it; that's what he'd do.' And that made him think of the liquor and he got out his bottle and it was empty, and that made him cry again; and he said that he would have to go back to Haleiwa and get some more, and then he'd be all right. 'Why,' he said, 'I'll take a big drink, one good, big drink, and then I won't have any trouble at all. That's what I'll do. I'll get the booze and then come back here and finish you up fine. Now you wait and I'll come back;' and he stumbled out and locked the door and I heard him start up the car outside and drive away up the road."

"Yes," said Dick, "And I suppose that was the car that nearly ran into me just this side of Haleiwa. He came within a hair's breadth of side-swiping me off of the road. My Lord, I wish I'd known who it was then!"

"No," said Evalani, "It's better as it is!"

"Do you suppose that he was too drunk to come back?" asked Dick.

"No," said Evalani, "He'd have come back. I'm sure that he would have come back. He was maudlin, but just enough so to be tenacious of his purpose. I don't believe that he would have drunk anything more until he got back; and then he would have, as he said, taken a big drink and tried to do it on the first flash of the liquor in his brain. No,

he will have been back to the house by now, and I suppose that he is somewhere drunkenly searching for me along the road."

Dick drew her close. "Well," he said, "He isn't going to find you. You are going to be taken care of from now on, and no back talk. In just about three days—"

But Evalani put a small hand over his mouth. "Wait," she said, "Please don't talk of anything like that now. My head isn't clear enough tonight to know how to be wise. All that I want to think about now is just that I am safe and that my boy is safe."

By this time they had long ago passed the top of the Pali and now many lights were glimmering before them as they ran down the long, smooth road toward town. At a little out-of-the-way cafe Dick stopped and brought her out a cup of steaming hot coffee and a sandwich; and then away they spun again to start the long climb back to the little bungalows on Tantalus.

As they rounded the curve below the houses, late as it was, there stood the white figure of Fong, still in the road. He started forward as the car came into sight. "You got Missi Malua?" His voice soared and cracked under the stress.

"Yes, Fong, I'm here!" called Evalani. "Is David all right?"

Fong stood still and his voice dropped again to its habitual monotone. "Baby all ri," he said, and

turned and went back through the hedge.

Dick helped Evalani out and found that she could stand on her feet, and even walk, though with considerable stiffness. For a moment he took her into his arms. "Tonight and tomorrow morning you must rest," he said. "Tomorrow afternoon, at four o'clock, I am coming to see you and we are going to talk about a great many things, and I am going to do the most of the talking, and about all that you will have to do will be to agree. Now, good-night, Sweetheart," and for one long moment their lips met and all the sweetness of a lifetime seemed concentrated in that one moment of exquisite contact.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHANT

THE next morning Dick drove down to town early, ran out to Waikiki to have a talk with Bert Sands, and was back up the mountain before luncheon time. However, he possessed his soul with such patience as he could muster, until four o'clock, as he had promised Evalani; but, nevertheless, before that hour came, he was nervously pacing the lanai and consulting his watch anxiously, and rather breathlessly wondering if the grey canvas curtain was already rolled up, or if it still hung its gloomy blank between them.

At last, with his thumb-nail upon the dial of his watch, he approached the rail and knocked with what he tried to make resemble his old nonchalance. Evalani's answering voice came from the other side so clearly that he did not have to brush aside the ironwood boughs to know that the curtain was rolled up and that the way was open for his coming.

When he vaulted over the rail, she was sitting in a low canvas chair among a brilliant array of cushions, her fingers busy stringing stephanotis and mu-

lang blossoms into a lei. She looked up as he approached, and held out her hand. "I'm not going to get up," she said. "I feel as if I were one great bruise all over, and so stiff that Grandma is an athlete compared to me."

He sat down in the chair beside her, still holding the hand, and kissed the fingers softly and held them to his cheek for a moment; and then, as she drew them away, he relinquished them regretfully and turned his chair to face her. "Well," he said, "I don't quite know where to begin. That is, I know where I want to begin, but I suppose that, being feminine, you want all of the news before we get down to the hard, cold facts which I am going to lay before you presently. Besides, some of the news might have a bearing upon our affairs, more or less. Now, go ahead with your questions."

Evalani straightened herself among her cushions. "Did you see Mrs. Sands this morning?" she asked.

"I did," said Dick. "I knew that you would be burning up with curiosity as to how she knew where to look for you; and I might admit, on the side, that I was a bit curious myself; but it's all plain enough when you know Bert."

"Intuition? Clairvoyance?" asked Evalani, smiling.

"No," said Dick. "Just plain ordinary common sense, but speeded up to top-notch action. It's like this with Bert: her minds acts so quickly along

logical lines that what might seem like intuition in anybody else, is with her just that lightning reasoning power of hers acting among a lot of factors and picking out the right ones and deducing the answer before anyone else would have had time to even get focused upon the situation. She's a lightning calculator among facts instead of figures. Snap judgment, and right snap judgment, at that, is her long suit, and she certainly does get results."

"I'd like to know her," said Evalani, interestedly.

"Well, you're going to," said Dick, "and that mighty soon."

"You haven't told her—anything?" gasped Evalani, looking at him with wide eyes.

"Certainly *not*; but it's going to be so absolutely obvious to the whole world in next to no time——"

But Evalani put up a hand. "You haven't told me yet how she knew," she protested.

"That's so," said Dick, contritely. "Well, I'm not so very responsible today, and that's a fact. I'm too happy to bother about details. However, this was the way of it. Several weeks ago Mrs. Walters invited Bert and her husband to a picnic over at Waimea. Just a small party; the two Morton girls and Carter McKnight and Bert and Jack Sands; that was all. They went by way of Leilehua and when they reached Waimea they found that the road did not run very near to the beach, and as Mrs. Walters did not feel equal to walking much,

they kept on down the road until they came to a place which more nearly approached the sea, and they got out there to have their supper on the sand. Well, just as they were about ready to eat, there came up a rainstorm and that isolated and temporarily uninhabited bungalow being near at hand, they took shelter there on the lanai facing the sea until the storm had passed, and incidentally ate their supper there. Bert said that while she and Mrs. Walters were unpacking the baskets, Kat Morton and McKnight were nosing all about the house. Kat is the kind that is always peeping and prying into other people's affairs, just for sheer, unmitigated curiosity. Anyway, Mrs. Walters was very humiliated and apologetic because of it, and sent Calista to tell them to come to supper; but evidently the Copy-cat got interested, too; and after they had tried to look into all of the windows, evidently McKnight succeeded in climbing into one of them and came around and unlocked a door and the two girls went inside and continued their peeping and prying, and then they came out laughing and making fun of what they found and what they considered the bad taste of everything in the home. Well, that was all, excepting that it spoiled the picnic, because Mrs. Walters was so indignant that she became a perfect iceberg to the guilty members of the party, and everybody was glad when supper was finished and it was time to go home.

"Now that is all that there was to the incident and there was no reason why it should have impressed itself upon Bert's mind, excepting that that little brain of hers simply files away everything that comes along, and has it where she can lay her logic upon it any minute that it will dovetail with any other factors of any problem that may come to her attention. And so when I telephoned that they had carried you off, her wits flashed over the fact that they would need an isolated place to take you to, and that the place of the picnic exactly filled the bill. And so there you are."

"Well," said Evalani, with a deep breath, "I certainly am glad that Mrs. Sands went to that picnic."

"Am I?" asked Dick, reaching for her hand again. And then he went on, gravely: "I have some other news for you, too, dear."

Evalani looked up anxiously at the tone of his voice. He leaned nearer, still holding her hand. "Carter McKnight went back to the bungalow last night, after we left," he said.

"Yes?" said Evalani, quickly. "How do you know? What happened?"

Dick went on very quietly. "He was pretty drunk by that time, I guess; and when he found that you were gone, he started speeding back to town, by the same way that you went out, by Leilehua;—and— at one point he rounded a curve right into the face

of another car, smashed his fender and then slewed off of the road and went over—into Kipapa Gulch.”

“Oh!” said Evalani. “Kipapa! That death trap! And—and was he killed?” she asked, in a hushed voice.

“Yes,” said Dick. “Instantly.”

Evalani sat silent, her lip caught between her teeth and her big eyes fixed upon his.

“I know, dear,” said Dick, putting his other hand over the one which he held, and smiling down at her gently. “You feel as if you ought to be sorry, and you are not, and you don’t know how to be; not through any feeling of vengeance, but only because it spells safety for your boy and relief from anxiety for you.”

“But it seems so dreadful not to be sorry when someone has died.” Dick was silent; only pressed her hand softly. Evalani heaved a big sigh. “And yet, just to think, I won’t have to worry about David any more—or, at least, not so much, and—” The fingers of her free hand played nervously with the blossoms in her lap, “——and I was so dreadfully afraid of what might happen if you were to meet him—after this.”

“Well,” said Dick, “I don’t know, myself, what might have happened, no matter how wise my resolutions might have been; but we don’t have to think about that now, for Fate has taken it all out of our

hands." And then he added, "And, too, with his going, has gone the only incentive that the Morton girls had for injuring you or your boy." Evalani was silent, her fingers twining in and out of the twist of flowers. "And anyway," he continued, "in about three days you and the kiddie will be so well taken care of that we won't have to think about them at all;" and he leaned back, contemplating her with a smile which was almost boyish in its open satisfaction.

But Evalani's eyes did not meet his. Gently she drew away her hand and rising from the cushions she walked slowly across the lanai and stood looking off toward Diamond Head and the blue sea beyond.

Dick followed her and laid his hand lightly upon her shoulder. "Come, dear," he said, cheerily, "turn around and face the music. You can't tell me that you don't care for me—not after last night. We're going to be married inside of three days, I tell you, and that's all there is about it. I'm giving you three days to prepare your trousseau, and that's certainly a plenty!"

Evalani turned, her eyes misty, but even then with a little smile at his boyish assurance; but when he would have taken her in his arms, she shook her head slowly and put up both hands against his breast, and he covered them with his own. "Well?" he said, looking down into her eyes.

Her lips trembled for a moment and then her head came up with a little proud gesture as if tossing off her momentary weakness. "Yes," she said, steadily, "I do love you. I love you more than there are words to tell you. It isn't a wild, unreasoning infatuation, but a love that has come into my life like a benediction. When I am worried or frightened, and think of you and your strength and your dearness, the tumult all goes and I feel as if my tired soul had come into its haven of rest." Dick's hands tightened upon hers, but he waited, silently, for her to go on. "And yet, dear,——" she hesitated, "—-and yet there isn't any way." Her head bowed for an instant.

"Not *any* way?" Dick questioned, gravely.

"No. I can't see any possible way. All night and all day I've thought and thought, and I can't see any opening anywhere. It's just a blank wall of fog."

"But," said Dick, pleadingly, "can't you tell me all about it? Perhaps I could see daylight where you, who have been so long in the fog, cannot even glimpse it."

But she only shook her head. "No," she said, "I've been all over it and over it, again and again, and it can't be done. I'm enmeshed in a net of conditions, and there is no way out."

"Not ever?" asked Dick, definitely.

Evalani was silent for a moment, looking up into

his face wistfully. "I don't know," she said, reluctantly. "I can't see now how there can ever be a way out; anyway, not while David is so little. No, dear, there is absolutely no escape from the fog or the tangle of circumstances. There is no use for us to hope."

"But couldn't I take you both away, where no one knows anything about you or about anything here?"

"Away from Grandma, and leave her old and alone? Oh, no, I couldn't."

"But wouldn't she go, too?"

"Transplant her, at her age, to foreign soil? No, no; it couldn't be done. No, I've thought of everything, absolutely everything, but there is no way."

"Then you mean that there is actually no hope for me? That I must go away——"

"Oh, not go away! You wouldn't go away?" cried Evalani, her eyes wide with fear and pain.

"But how can I stay here like this?" protested Dick, "loving you as I do and knowing that you love me. You don't know—you can never know—what I suffered with that dead grey curtain down between us for all of those interminable days."

Evalani glanced at the ironwood screen which now swayed softly where the curtain had spread its dull, grey barrier. "*Don't* I know?" her lips quivered and she bowed her head upon their folded hands upon his breast.

For several moments they stood silently and then

at last she raised her head again. "It frightened me when you spoke of going away," she said, swallowing what seemed like tears. "Would it really be so hard for you that you must go?"

"It would be very hard," said Dick, solemnly.

Her form trembled a little. "Dear," she said, "if you love me a very, very great deal——"

"If I do?"

"I was just wondering," she began again, "if you might not care enough to be willing to—to just be my comrade for a little while. Couldn't we go back to the old friendship that we had before—before you told me that you cared? Perhaps after a little while I might get used to the idea of your going away, but just now it—it frightens me so." And again she bowed her head upon their clasped hands.

For a long time Dick stood silent, gazing out across the brilliant tapestry of color spread out below him, but seeing nothing; conscious only of the pain in his soul and the precious contact of the girl who stood with head bowed upon his breast. At last he released one hand and slipping it under her chin he raised her head so that he could look into her troubled eyes, and he smiled down into them a gentle smile of renunciation. "Little Pal," he said, "we're going to be the very finest comrades in the world, beginning right now. Both of us are going to lock away in our hearts something sweet and beautiful beyond words. We are not going to try to

kill it or to stamp it out; but we are going to cherish it as the most wonderful thing in our lives; but on the surface we are going to be just good chums and comrades, for the time being. But some day, dear, someday, I don't know how, things will come right; for a love like ours was never created to eat itself out, shut away from all that it was made for. But until then, we two are just splendid pals. Is it a go?"

And Evalani, holding her head high once more, looked fairly in his face and smiled. "It is a go," she said; and for a long moment their hands were clasped in the sealing of the compact.

And so the two slipped back into their old camaraderie, and yet it was a companionship a thousand times sweeter than had been the old contact; for now they had with them the peace and confidence engendered by the knowledge of the deep and abiding love which each had for the other. And then, as the days passed, even a certain amount of gaiety grew out of the little everyday happenings and their keen enjoyment of any bit of amusement which came their way. Dick was tireless in his efforts to bring entertainment into their lives; and eventually, besides books and flowers and a victrola, a radio found its way up the mountain; and thereafter, on many an evening the two danced there on the moonlit lanai to the music which came out of the air from far down below, where the lights

twinkled, or from some wider range when conditions were right; and the old grandmother sat back in her corner silently listening and perhaps wondering at the curious experiences which these strange and curious times were bringing into her later years. But it was only occasionally that they could pick up the wider range, when the atmospheric conditions happened to be favorable, and then it was mostly one or another of the coast cities.

Upon one of these evenings, when the moon was gorgeously full and round, they had been dancing to Honolulu music and then, by way of experiment, Evalani began turning the dial to find if they could pick up anything else, and in a moment came a strain of different music and shortly afterward a voice announcing a Los Angeles station. The music was good and again they danced, paying no further heed to the announcer but only following the melody and dreaming to its strains. And then for a moment they thought that they had been switched back onto their own Island again, for there came the sound of Hawaiian boys singing. But when the interval came, Los Angeles announced again, and they once more fell into the rhythm, even more pleased to think of the music which they loved best, coming over all of those far miles of sea, for their pleasure here on the lonely mountainside.

Presently Evalani wearied and they stopped to rest, the girl curling up among the cushions in her

canvas chair and Dick drawing a similar chair tete-a-tete, where he could watch the play of the moonlight over the features which he so ardently loved and see the gleam in her eyes as they met his in her answering glances of happiness.

The Hawaiian songs presently varied from the gay dance music to some of the old chants; *He Manao he Aloha*, with its weird, high strains, and again *Kaena*, with its soft, vibrating cadences. A momentary interval, and then a new voice came crying forth from the radio, crying forth in a chant of similar tone and rhythm but a woman's voice, clear and vibrant, but with the plaintive, wailing quality which only the Hawaiian voice can produce.

"When I came away from the land that I love——"

From the shadowy corner where the old woman sat, there came an answering wail, high-pitched, ululating. With the first notes, Evalani's pliant form resting against the cushions, had suddenly seemed to grow tense and her hand clutched the arm of her chair, while her eyes suddenly grew large and startled. The chanting voice went on:

*"When I came away from the land that I love,
I left my soul behind, because it refused to come with
me;
And there it stays, calling and crying to me,
And begging of me to come home.*

*"They told me that I should see mountains more won-
derful than my own.
It was not true.*

Their mountains are remote.

My mountains are near—you may pat their shoulders and lay your cheek against the throbbing of their hearts.

“They told me that I should find people greater than my own.

It was not true.

The faces and the hearts of their people are stained with the mire of the world.

My people are clean—the windows of their souls are transparent, their lips are fresh and sweet.

“I have known no rest, I have known no joy, I have known no moment of forgetfulness.

The calling of my soul comes yammering through all the darkened pathways of my being.

Its entreaties, its wailings, its pleadings — they flay the ear-drums of my consciousness.

It neither sleeps nor does it ever cease its far-spent call.

“They told me that their cities were more splendid than any sight that I had ever seen.

It was not true.

Soot-grimed monstrosities of shape and form, swarmed over and around by taloned things with beaks of gold!

My thieving mynah birds in shabby stolen nests, are less obscene upon the face of this green earth.

“They told me that their flowers were more fair.

Weak things in beds and boxes, trimmed into absurdities, or bred to a disgrace upon the seed-cups of their ancestors!

My flowers are pure and sturdy, and they grow their own free way, untrammelled and untortured,

And of a breath so sweet — you close your eyes and smile, and look within your heart for some sweet thought to fit.

“When I came away from the land that I love,

I left my soul behind, because it refused to come with me,

*And there it stays, calling and crying to me,
And begging of me to come home.”*

The voice ceased and for a moment there was silence, and then it came again, in an aching wail, almost like that of the old woman :

"Oh, let me come home!—Let me come home!"

Again rose the wail of the old woman in her shadowy corner, high-pitched, grief-laden : "Auwe! Auwe! Evalani, auwe!"

Dick leaned forward and laid his hand upon the small clenched one on the arm of the chair. "Dear," he said, "won't you let her come home?"

For a moment the wide dark eyes stared into his face and then, with a cry, she buried her face in her cushions and began to sob heavily, great tearing sobs, while her form shook as they were torn from her.

Dick dropped upon his knees beside the chair and drew her into his arms, holding her close and whispering tenderly and smoothing the soft, dark hair; and after a time the sobs eased a little and she relaxed, exhausted, in his arms; but for a long time he held her and soothed her as he would a little child.

At last she drew herself away and sat up, brushing the damp hair from her face and then dropping her hands limply into her lap and sitting with closed eyes, great tears still slipping from beneath her lashes. And then, finally, she opened her eyes and turned toward him, kneeling there beside her.

"How did you know?" she asked.

Dick took one of her hands again, in a strong, warm clasp. "A veil fell from my eyes," he said. "It fell from my eyes while she was singing, and I saw through the brown stain upon your skin, and saw all of the scattered pieces of the puzzle and how they fitted together, and everything was plain."

The girl let her hand remain in his and lay quietly back upon the cushions for a few minutes, and then she sat up and withdrew her hand and her head rose to its old proud poise. "I am going to tell you about it," she said.

"You need not," said Dick, quickly. "I have heard the story and I understand it all now. It will hurt you to live it over again."

"I want to tell you," she said, evenly, "and I would rather do it now. Otherwise, I shall live it over a hundred times while I am waiting to tell you."

"Go on," said Dick, gravely.

She was silent for a little while, evidently seeking for a starting point, and then she began. "My father had two daughters. One the daughter of his wife, the other the daughter of a sixteen year old Hawaiian girl who died when the child was born. We were very nearly of the same age and we both looked like him excepting that I, the daughter of his wife, had, with his dark eyes and thick, fair hair, my mother's white skin. My half-sister had the same dark eyes

and heavy hair, but her hair was black and she had the tawny skin of a half-white; but our forms and features were so much alike that anyone must have known that we were sisters. I was still a child when I first heard about her, through the Morton girls, of course. First it was sneers and innuendo, which I did not understand; and then gradually I came to comprehend and to feel the odious humiliation, and to realize what was meant by the meaning smiles and the veiled comment whenever the little girl happened to appear anywhere at the same time that I did. And then, when we both went into Punahou School and into the same class, the situation became unbearable; for even among children there are always those who delight in malicious persecution of anyone who has a vulnerable spot; and of course the Morton girls, although they were my cousins, were in the van of the torturers. Naturally I realized that it was harder upon Evalani than it was upon me; for she was the one who bore the stigma; and yet her pride was equal to it and I never saw her cringe, even under the bitter prods of my cousins.

“I bore it with as much cool indifference as possible, but when I was about fourteen the situation became absolutely intolerable and I determined to face it and see if I could not figure out some way to mitigate the torture. I had never become very well acquainted with Evalani, because whenever we

came into contact there was always an oppressive silence and every one was watching curiously and gloating over the flavor of the situation, and exchanging glances and whispering. I did not feel actual antagonism toward the girl; but for years she had come to mean to me humiliation and discomfort, and naturally I avoided her, and no doubt her attitude was similar. Anyway, when I decided to take the matter in hand, I went to her quietly and told her that I wanted to have it out with her and said that I had an idea of a way of lessening the difficulty. And so we two kiddies went over the situation and discussed it frankly and we agreed that my solution was at least worth trying out, and the suggestion was that we should become chums. That would soon do away with the spice of seeing us together and would make commonplace a matter which was interesting mostly by way of its uniqueness.

“Well, it worked out as I had anticipated. At first there was quite a flutter of excitement and comment and whispering, all over the school; but we kept serenely upon our appointed way and paid no heed, and in a remarkably short time the savor was all out of the affair and the most of the students lost interest and turned their attention to their own concerns. Of course the Morton girls tried to make trouble for me home, going to my mother with the pathetic story of their humiliation over my inti-

macy with a person of that character, as they put it, and publicly parading the disgrace of the family in everyone's face. Mother took it up with me and I told her exactly what I had done, and why; and she, the dear, while she couldn't really understand my attitude and seemed to think it very dreadful, still acquiesced as she always did with anything which seemed to be my wish. And so Evalani and I became close friends; at first outwardly for convention's sake, and then, as we came to know each other better and find how close we really were in thought and tastes, the assumed friendship ripened into a very real and deep-seated affection. We were even nearer than most sisters and the barrier between us actually dropped out of sight for us.

"This went on for a year or two and if the affair ever came to the attention of my father, he at least never mentioned it to me; but at last I went and took it up with him. Evalani was growing older and the allowance made for her was not sufficient for her proper pride, I told him. Everyone knew who she was, and for the sake of his own pride, if not for hers, he ought to give her enough for her fitting appearance and tastes. He met the issue nonchalantly and said that he would attend to the matter, which he did promptly, though not very magnificently. However, there was one point which he took pains to impress upon me, and that was that

however friendly we might be in public, under no circumstances was Evalani ever to come to our home; this out of consideration for my mother. I stated with dignity that nothing could possibly tempt Evalani to come even if I asked her to, and reminded him that her family name was Hookano. And that closed the episode.

“Probably you know that I went to the mainland to school for a time, and when I came back Evalani had finished Punahou and had come back up here on Tantalus to live with her grandmother again. Of course she occasionally came down to town to visit her aunt, but naturally we did not see nearly so much of each other, though our friendship was essentially just as strong, and when we did meet, we were just as intimate as ever.

“And then David Malua came into my life.” The girl was silent for a few moments, her eyes closed and her face strangely immobile in the moonlight. Then she raised herself on her cushions and turned breathlessly upon Dick. “That,” she said, “was like the gorgeous blossoming of a poinciana tree. My life suddenly flamed into intense living and eager loving. It was a mad love, an irresistible force, that tore me with both joy and fear. I had always had everything that I wanted, all my life, and now I wanted David. Nothing else mattered, no one else existed; it was all David, David, and nothing else in the world. And he loved me, too. He always loved

me, and I knew it, but he had himself too well in hand. Even greater than his love for me, was his love for his people. Race devotion and pride of family and of blood was instilled into his very soul. His race was dwindling, dying out, becoming vitiated by alien blood and, to his mind, the great duty of every member of his race was the perpetuation of that race; and with him, personally, the preservation of his family and blood was a principle which must stand first and foremost at every point of his life. It was a splendid principle and in my heart I honored him for it, but it played havoc with the one desire of my soul."

Again she was silent for a few moments, and then she went on. "Those months were very terrible and very wonderful. I gloried in my love and in the love which he had for me, and I suffered untold agonies because I was not able to break down his resolution. At one time I would be in the seventh heaven because of some momentary flaming up of his love, though quickly and firmly crushed and mastered; and again I was in the depths because the barrier of his principle stood like a stone wall between us and I realized that he would never surmount it and marry me. I scarcely knew whether my people objected or not—it wouldn't have mattered if they had. I would have married David any moment if he would only have taken me. And there was no humiliation in this, either; for I knew that he loved me

and that, but for that one stronger passion of race, he would have begged me to marry him. And then the time came when we talked it all over together, brought about by one of his momentary lapses into showing his affection for me; and solemnly he told me where he stood and that, much as he might love, he could never marry one who had not at least as much Hawaiian blood as he had; and that if our friendship was making it too hard for me, then he would not come to see me again. But I could not bear that and so things went on as before; my only hope being that he might eventually come to care so much that he would abandon his ideals for the sake of his love. And sometimes I even thought that I had reason for the hope.

“And then one day when we were driving up here on the mountain, we met Evalani and picked her up on the road and brought her back home. David had not seen her since she was a child and now she seemed a sort of revelation to him. I saw how it was with him at the very first, and my soul turned sick. She was like me, but she was part Hawaiian and of excellent blood. He could give her the love which he had for me and take her into his life without abandoning his dear principle. It seemed as if all hope had suddenly gone out and left me stranded; but even then I felt no antagonism for Evalani, she was not to blame; it was only that we were both involved in a terrible complication

from which there seemed no way out. The only chance was that Evalani would not care for him, and so a few days later I drove up the mountain to see her. She said that David had been to call upon her but that she had refused to receive him. We talked it all out. She knew how much I loved him, and she herself was at that time interested in Jim McKnight, who had a surveyors' camp in the forest near them, and she assured me that she was not at all interested in David and that she certainly should not encourage him at all. And she kept her word so loyally that he never even had a chance to become half acquainted with her, for she avoided him at every point and was scarcely civil to him when he managed to make an opportunity for a few words with her.

"But it didn't make any difference. Love is a queer thing; it seems more an obsession than anything which we, ourselves, can direct or control. Just as I wanted David, so David wanted Evalani, and no coldness upon her part could dampen or discourage his determination to win her.

"And meanwhile Evalani had become infatuated with the idea of going into the films. A company had been here on location and she had taken some small parts and caught the fever. She was a lovely girl and a wonderful dancer and the director saw her possibilities and offered her a chance to go back with them to the Coast. They would pay her ex-

penses, and all that she would need would be enough money to get such wardrobe as she might require and for emergency and small immediate outlays. We discussed it thoroughly and it seemed like a sort of heaven-sent dispensation. She did not care in the least for David, and if she went away, he might come back to me; at least there was a chance of it and we both welcomed the opening eagerly. We were only seventeen, you know. I was able to supply the necessary money for Evalani's venture and I also rifled my own wardrobe to make hers adequate, and we even became quite gay over the way that we were circumventing David and his infatuation. I was so entirely sure that it was really I whom he loved, and that Evalani was only the clothing of his ideal in human form, and that with her withdrawal, he would come to the realization that there had been no actual substance to his sudden passionate desire for her.

"Evalani and I had been very quiet about our plans for her going. The grandmother had consented and had agreed to go and stay with her daughter in Honolulu, but we could not be sure as to what my father's attitude might be and we were not taking any chances of its getting to his ears in time for him to take steps to prevent her departure. And so Evalani booked with the company under a stage name, and was so booked upon the steamer records, and everything went smoothly until two days be-

fore the ship was to sail, and then in some way David found it out. And then he was a mad-man. He drove up to her home that evening and insisted upon seeing her and begged of her to abandon the plan and marry him at once. She refused indignantly and told him that she did not care for him in the least and would not think of marrying him, whether she went away or not; and that she was certainly going and that nothing should prevent her. He begged of her to give him a chance, to at least postpone the trip and let him try to make her care for him; but she dismissed him definitely and said that there was absolutely no use in his persisting any further. He became bitter and accused her of being fond of Jim McKnight, although McKnight was engaged to Kat Morton; and, thinking the more definitely to discourage him, she refused to deny the accusation, and he left, still in a bitter mood.

“And then he came direct to me. It was a rather dreadful thing for him to do under the circumstances; but the man was half mad at the prospect of losing this girl whom he had made into a sort of idol without even knowing her; and perhaps I could in a measure understand, for I loved him in the same mad way. Well, he begged me to intercede for him. He knew that we two sisters were devoted to each other and he gathered that I was helping her to go away, and he thought that I might have influ-

ence enough to get her to at least postpone her departure and give him a chance to try to make her love him. It was a bitter experience for me—to have him pleading with me to help his cause with another woman, when I, myself, loved him better than life. I told him that it would do no good, that Evalani's mind was set upon the project and that she was determined upon a career, and that she certainly would go in spite of anything that I might say. And then he went all to pieces. He declared that if she went, he would give up his position and follow her, would follow her to the ends of the earth, that in spite of everything adverse in the world, he would still win her or die trying. And then he begged me again to try to influence her; until at last, in heart-broken desperation, I promised to come up the mountain the next morning and do my best to prevent her from going. And then he left me, and I crouched there on the lanai all night, utterly exhausted. But I kept thinking and thinking and thinking. I knew that Evalani would not give up this one opportunity which had come to her and which would probably be the only one in her lifetime. I believe that at that moment I would have really tried to influence her to stay, for I was so weary of the dreadful problem; but I knew that it would be of no use, and I knew, too, that David

would follow her, as he said, and that with his going, all hope would go out of my life.

“And then, during those long night hours, this fantastic plan began to take shape. I remembered how, years before, when Evalani and I had been coaxing the grandmother for stories of the old times here, she had told us of a young sailor lad in the navy who had fallen in love with a friend of hers and wanted to desert and stay here and marry her; and how one of the old Hawaiian women had given him the material for a bath of some simple herbal stain and a dye for his hair, and he had come forth as a very presentable half-white and had taken a job in town; and then, when at last the navy had given up the search and his mates were gone, the stain had gradually disappeared and he was now, in these later years, one of the pillars of commerce and society in the Islands, with a large and respected family of descendants. And so, as the memory of this flitted through my mind, I began to see the possibilities of my substituting for Evalani. We looked alike, all but our coloring; there was no question about that, and David scarcely knew Evalani at all; and, too, it was really I whom he loved, so there would be no shame in the substitution; and if we continued to live up here in the mountains and I kept away from my friends and Evalani’s, there would really be very little chance of discovery, for a long time at least. And I refused to look

further ahead than the mere fact that I would be David's wife. That seemed to be all that the world could hold for me.

"And it looked so easy. Evalani was to sail in two days and was booked under a stage name which would hide her identity; and as for me, I could just quietly disappear, and people might think what they chose—that item was of small moment to me—excepting for my mother. But even the thought of her could not weigh against the fact that here was a chance for me to gain the one thing that I craved, and nothing else really mattered. One is very selfish at seventeen," she added, with a sorry little smile.

Dick only pressed her hand, and she went on. "Well, the next morning I came up the mountain, as I had promised David that I would, but my errand was a very different one from the useless effort which he had demanded. I put the project before Evalani and after her first gasp of incredulity, she fell in with the idea with enthusiasm. It was harder to convince the old grandmother and get her help, but we both argued and explained and told her how David had threatened to go to our father and try to get him to prevent Evalani's leaving, and how it was Evalani's one chance of her whole life; and so, as she was passionately devoted to her motherless grandchild, she at last consented and agreed to prepare the stain and the hair dye

and have them ready for me the next morning, shortly after Evalani would have sailed. Evalani was to board the boat early and remain in her state-room throughout the entire voyage under the plea of sea-sickness, in order to avoid all possibility of recognition.

“And strange as it may seem, the plan actually worked out. As soon as I got back to town I called up David on the telephone and told him that I had been to see Evalani and that she had agreed to stay on and marry him. And then I told him that Evalani had really loved him all the time but had kept it hidden because of her loyalty to me, but that now that it was out, she was willing to marry him at once. And I advised him to put it through immediately, lest she change her mind, and said that she had set the following evening, if he was agreed; and that he might see her for a few minutes that same night, if he chose, for confirmation.

“I suppose that all of this deception seems very dreadful to you; but remember, we were only seventeen and full of romance and both of us wildly infatuated, she with the possibilities of a career, and I with an overmastering and consuming love which, to me, justified the deception, upon the plea that it was I whom he really loved and that when we were married he would fully realize it; and then, at last, I might tell him and beg his forgiveness in my proper person. It looked like such a beautiful

scheme, and somehow we scarcely noticed its dreadfulness, in the fascination of its fantastic possibilities.

“Well, at first David could hardly credit his good fortune, and then his next thought was for me; but I rather coldly told him to consider my pride and leave me out of the question entirely; and so I left him to his happiness and went home to prepare for my wedding day. He came up the mountain that evening and Evalani saw him only briefly and in the dusk of the garden; and she confirmed everything that I had said; stipulating only that they should continue to live here on the mountain with Grandmother, as she hated the social life in town, where she had been always marked as one with the bar sinister. David was willing to promise anything, and returned to town in an ecstasy of happiness.

“And so Evalani sailed the next morning, and the same morning I disappeared. I had come up here, keeping to the trails and out of sight as much as possible; and then, with Grandmother’s help, I was turned into an exact duplicate of my half-sister. Truly it was startling when I looked into the mirror and saw Evalani staring back at me, instead of myself. For a moment I felt weird, as if I had exchanged my very identity, as I actually had. And that evening we were married, here on the lanai with only the minister and, for witnesses, Grand-

mother and the minister's chauffeur; that was all."

There was another long silence, and when the girl's voice came again it was very soft and full of memories. "We were madly happy," she said. "I was the wife of the man whom I loved dearer than life, and he believed that he had won the one woman in the world whom he passionately adored;—and he never guessed, never suspected, while he lived. It was what he saw of me in Evalani, that he had loved, coupled with the realization of his cherished ideal; and now that love found absolute completeness in myself. There was not one flaw in our happiness. Such qualms of conscience as I might have had, were inundated in the fullness of my joy and my love for my husband. I am not ashamed, even now, of that happiness. I cannot even say that I regret all that was involved in it. It is given to few on this earth to have such measure of joy for even so brief a time, and for it I, to this day, give thanks." There was something of reverence in her voice and her face as she spoke in defense of her love. "Those months are sacred. They compass the perfect flowering of two lives in perfect accord, brought together as one complete unit. They were worth all that Fate has ever demanded of me in recompense."

"I understand," said Dick, solemnly. "You have been blessed beyond most of us in this life."

The girl went on. "Excepting just at first, we

were almost untouched by the wave of excitement created by the disappearance of Jean Walters. At the first news David was horribly shocked and went out over the mountains to help in the search. And, of course, I had to affect a certain amount of grief myself; but soon the hue and cry died down and the incident slid into the past. Anyway, all other life seemed absolutely outside of the radius of our little circle of happiness, up here above the small, sordid affairs of the town; and there was not room in our lives for any memory of Jean Walters; nor did it even occur to me to be grieved that David had let her drop out of his life so easily; for it was the I which *I* am, that David loved, no matter by what name or race; and so, when I was filling his life to overflowing, why even remember that name which now belonged to nobody? Also, Evalani wrote to me often that she was happy and was being, in a measure, successful, and all ran smoothly. It was easy enough to keep the stain on my skin and the dye on my hair always even and true, with Grandmother's help; and she was contented and satisfied in the thought that Evalani was having her chance in the world.

“And then, when at last we found that our baby was coming, it seemed as if Heaven were showering us with blessings beyond all computing. David was delighted beyond expression at the prospect and so was I, only I prayed day and night that the little

one might be dark like its father, and was sure that the eyes, at least, would be brown or black like our own. We took such joy in making our plans, David and I, and because the home seemed scarcely large enough, we decided to build the bungalow next door for Grandmother and to fit up her room here, for a nursery; and I had such a wonderful time making lovely things for the little one.

“And in all of those months, the only shadow that arose was because of Jim McKnight. Of course I had known him before, though only slightly, although he was engaged to my cousin; but I didn't like him and had never had any more to do with him than I could help. However, he was still camped here on the mountain and several times he came to the door and asked for Mrs. Malua, but, according to orders, Fong always turned him away upon some pretext or other. However, one day he came in through the hedge suddenly while I was in the garden. I tried to escape, but he insisted upon talking and I was conscious that he was watching me all the time, and before I could get away I had become convinced that he at least suspected me, and that it was very bad business because, with me out of the way, the Morton girls would come in for the bulk of my mother's fortune; and, as he was engaged to Kat, the discovery of my continued existence would be far from a happy one for him. However, as I had so much to do and so much to think about just then,

the matter nearly slipped from my mind; and when I did think of it, I decided that I had probably been mistaken about his suspicion; although it made me anxious when I remembered that he and Evalani had been very good friends indeed, and that if anyone could detect my masquerade, he would be the most likely to. And it was several weeks, the house next door being nearly finished, before he made another move, and by that time he had probably consulted with Kat Morton and had decided to make sure, and very likely she even plotted with him that he should make another occasion to see me and if that confirmed his suspicions, to at least give me a good fright, hoping that it might have evil results.

“He evidently watched the house for an opportunity, for late one afternoon, when Grandmother was over directing the carpenters and Fong had gone down to town, he suddenly came through the house and out here upon the lanai where I was sitting. I sprang up and demanded how he had dared to come in that way. He only laughed and came close to me and looked into my eyes and then he grasped my wrist and drew me to him and tried to kiss me. I was wild with anger and hatred. And then he told me that he knew, and tried to blackmail me—not for money; and said that he would tell David who I was, if I was cold to him. I tried to break away from him, but he continued to laugh

and threw his arm around me and I screamed; and it was just at that moment that I saw David coming through the door. And you have probably heard how David threw him out. I know that the carpenters working on the house next door, saw and told it all.

“When David came back I was crying hysterically, and he was very grave. He remembered that Evalani had once, long ago, admitted to him that she cared for Jim McKnight, though she had denied it afterward, when she promised to marry him. The trouble was that I had screamed just as David had reached the door, and he could not be sure whether I had screamed because I had seen him, or because I was afraid of McKnight. But my agony at the very thought of the first suggestion was so intense that he was convinced of my absolute innocence and threatened to go out after McKnight then and bring him to account; but I begged him not to. I was afraid that McKnight might tell him, if he were given a chance, and so I persuaded David to let it go, but to get the big police dog for my future protection; and that he did at once.

“But the shock had been too much for me and I was sick a great deal after that, and David worried constantly and cursed McKnight for his behavior and was desperately anxious until the baby came. But my greatest anxiety was that my baby should be like its father; and the first question that I asked

Grandma was: "Is it dark? Tell me, quick; is it dark?" And she had to tell me that it was fair.

"I was so frightened then; for David had been so eager for a child typical of his race, and I was so afraid that when he saw it he would realize the trick that I had played upon him and would hate me. And so I decided to tell him all about it at once, before he saw the baby; and then I was sure that when he realized how desperately I loved him and had done it all because I loved him so, and when he remembered how happy we had been, I was sure that he would forgive me—I didn't see how he could help but forgive me. I told Grandma that I was going to tell him, but she said that I was too weak then for any excitement and must wait a few days; but that she would keep David from seeing the child until then. I begged her to stain his skin, for I knew David's impetuosity and was afraid that he would not be kept out. But she said that she could not do it to so tiny a baby with its tender flesh; but promised that she would keep David out until I was strong enough to see him and tell him. She was my only doctor, and I had to obey her.

"And she did keep him out for several days, and then one day his fever to see me and his child became too strong for him and he pushed by her and came into my room; and the baby was lying beside me, all pink and white with wide open blue eyes

staring at his father. David just stood and looked for one long moment, and then, without a word, he turned and strode out of the room. I called after him, but he never turned, he never waited for me to tell him, but went off up the road into the mountains. You see, it never entered my mind that he would think what he did. I thought that he had just gone away to fight down his disappointment that the child was white. Whether he realized that I was Jean or whether he thought that it was only the working out of the white blood in us both, I did not know; but I thought that he would come back, when he had fought it down; and that then, when I had confessed and told him all, he would forgive me, for the sake of our child. But—he never came back.”

It was a long time before she took up the story again. “You know what happened. And even then I could not grasp at first *why* he had done it. It never entered my mind that he could really doubt me. The momentary distrust that he had felt when he found McKnight here that day, had seemed so entirely eradicated and had really impressed me so little because of the utter absurdity of it, despising McKnight as I did, that the thought was not a factor in the case at all, so far as I was concerned. And then, when I learned what had happened, and suddenly and horribly I realized what he had thought, then my very life went out. Evidently the suspicion

had stayed with him, subconsciously, and when he saw the face of the little fair-haired baby staring up at him from beside me, the awful conclusion surged up over him and he went forth to wipe out the stain which he saw upon his honor. And I—I had to live on for my baby's sake."

"Thank God for that!" said Dick, fervently.

"And now," the girl went on, presently, her voice low and musing, "it all seems so dreadfully long ago, as if it had happened in some past life; and yet many of the memories are so beautiful."

For a long time neither of them spoke. She was living with her dreams of the past and he felt that he, for the moment, had no place, and he was content to sit quietly watching her face in the moonlight and waiting for his day to come again.

At last she turned to him and smiled, and then he rose up and taking both of her hands he drew her up beside him, holding the hands close to his breast again. "I am going to leave you now, dear," he said, "but tomorrow morning I am coming over to talk to you. Thank you for telling me the story. It has made me understand you better and love you more."

"You still love me?" she asked, smiling up at him, mistily, "After all that I have done?"

"Still love you! Why, child, when I think of what you did and what you dared for your love, I feel like going down on my knees to you. And, too, dear

heart, I begin to see light for us both, and perhaps Heaven is going to be so good as to give us a taste of real happiness, after all. Tomorrow morning we will talk it all over. Good-night, sweetheart; sleep well; there will be a lot of sunshine for us tomorrow."

CHAPTER IX

PAU PILIKIA

HERE surely was plenty of sunshine the next morning when Dick came over the rail and found a very bright-eyed girl awaiting him, already decked out in the stephanotis and mulang lei. It somehow seemed as if all of the clouds had been cleared away and everything was ready to begin a new day and a new regime of happiness.

"Well," said Dick, still holding her hands after their greetings, "I've got it all worked out to a finish, and I can tell you now that it is as pretty a little scheme as you ever saw; and all that you have to do is to fall in with it and watch it spin along to success with us right in the middle of it. Now sit down here and listen while I hold forth;" and he drew her down beside him on a wide wicker divan. "To begin with, what am I going to call you? You are no longer Evalani, and I can't possibly go back to the chilly distance of calling you Mrs. Malua."

"I was always called Jean," said the girl, smiling.

"All right, Jean it is, then; and now I'll christen you;" which he proceeded to do after the most approved fashion. "Now, the next thing: I gather

that the real Evalani is homesick and wants to come home."

"Oh, she is, she is!" said Jean, "but she didn't let us know until recently, and there didn't seem to be any way. I couldn't confess to my people and go back home, because my marriage to David Malua had been under an assumed name and I didn't know whether the marriage was valid or not; and if it were not, then it would make my baby publicly—nameless. And besides, when the gossips found out that my baby was not a monster, they might think—what my husband did. The Morton girls would manage that. They might even make my mother think that, for their own purposes."

"Now, my dear," said Dick, tenderly, "give that imagination of yours a little rest. It's much too active."

"Of course! Oh, I know I'm foolish and full of notions; but my brain is all tangled up with thinking and wondering and trying to find a way when there isn't any. You see, I couldn't let Evalani come home and go away myself while David is so little, for there would be no way for me to support myself until he is big enough for school."

"But I asked you to let me take you both away," reproached Dick.

"I know," said Jean, "but I couldn't involve you in this terrible mix-up, and, besides, we have only just learned that Evalani wants to come home. Be-

fore that I couldn't ask her to give up her career just because I wanted to have another chance in my own life. Grandma's daughter in town has died since I came up here, and there was no one for the old woman to stay with. You see, there really wasn't any way, then."

"Well, there's going to be a way now," said Dick, decisively; "And we're going to be traveling on it mighty suddenly. I've got plans all worked out and we're going to get matters fixed up so quickly that it will make you dizzy. Now listen. To begin with, you are going to write to Evalani today, so that I can take the letter down to the boat tomorrow morning, and tell her to be ready to start for home in a fortnight. Next, I'm going to book you and the boy for San Francisco on the next boat out. I'm going to book you merely as Mrs. D. Malua, and nobody seeing the list will think anything about it, for there are plenty of Maluas here, without counting you in. You will go aboard early and keep to your room on the voyage, and when you get to the Coast you are going to a big, rambling old hotel in Berkeley, where you will stay quietly until I come for you, which will be just as quickly as I can get there via Los Angeles, for I am going to obviate any possible opening for Mrs. Grundy to exercise her tongue, should anything ever leak out, which it won't. Also, I shall see your sister and be sure that she is going to be on the job at the proper moment.

And then, when that is attended to, I am coming post haste to Berkeley and we are going to be married and I am going to legally adopt the youngster, pronto. And then we are going to take a nice, little honeymoon wherever you most want to go; but I suggest that it be a motor trip up and down the Coast, just to such points as the notion calls us."

"Yes, but——" began Jean.

"No buts about it!" proceeded Dick; "I'm not through yet. We have still to fix up the job for our coadjutor. As soon as we are off, Bert Sands will go and tell your mother that I have alighted upon a clue regarding her daughter and that I believe that she is still alive, and that I have gone to the Coast to follow it up, and will report just as soon as I have anything definite. And then I'll cable from Los Angeles and say that I have found her and that she is all right and that she will return home inside of a month. And then we'll follow that up with a letter to your mother, giving a glimpse of your life over there during these years, and that you have been married and lost your husband, but that you have a son whom you will bring home with you;—and then everything will be all set. And then, in the next letter, we will tell how we have fallen in love with each other and are going to be married right off and come home together. And so there you are!" and Dick sat back proudly and regarded his companion.

"But what about Evalani?" asked Jean, anxiously.

"Just as easy as can be," promulgated Dick. "Bert will be the circulating medium and she will confidentially give forth the fact here and there that Evalani has gone to the mainland with her poor little boy, (Nobody but the Morton girls know but that he is everything that he isn't), to put him in some school for such kiddies. And thus exit the poor little boy who never existed and enter David Harris, your son and my adopted son. And then, when Evalani comes back, supposedly relieved of the care and worry of the unfortunate child, she can gradually take her place again among her old friends; and will probably eventually marry and live happily ever after, which is exactly what we are going to do. Now then, young lady, pick some flaws in that scheme, if you can find any to pick."

Jean was smiling by now and her face had come alight with the hope of actual relief from her bondage of unhappiness. "It does look possible at every point, doesn't it?" she exclaimed. "It looks perfectly splendid. Oh, do you suppose that it really, really will work out?"

"It positively is going to work out," said Dick. "Just you watch it. Now you run along and write that letter to Evalani and get it out of your system, and I'll take it down first thing in the morning and at the same time I'll go and see Bert and put her

onto her part of the job.”

“Have we got to tell her—everything?” asked Jean, deprecatingly.

“Every solitary thing,” said Dick, decisively. “She’s got to be our right-hand man in this game, and she can’t go it blind. Besides, she’s deserving. The Lord knows what would have happened to us on several occasions, if it hadn’t been for her; but she’ll never breathe a word excepting what we tell her to. I predict that you and she are going to be wonderful friends as time goes on.”

“It won’t be my fault if we are not,” said Jean, with conviction.

Dick rose up. “All right; run along and write your letter, so that it won’t encroach upon our evening, and so tomorrow things will really be under way.”

It was still fairly early on the following morning when Dick drove out to the Sands’ home at Waikiki. Bert had just come in from a swim and was looking particularly boyish with the rings of damp black hair clinging to her small round head. “Well,” she greeted him, “how goes it?”

“Fine!” said Dick. “Wonderful!”

Bert grinned. “Got it all fixed up, have you?”

“Got what?” asked Dick, somewhat chap-fallen.

“When are the solemn rites to be performed?”

“Oh, I say!” said Dick, “Do you mean that you

knew that I was——That I——”

“That you were head over heels in love with the girl? Well, for goodness sake, I’m not deaf and blind and—lolo, am I?”

“Not that anybody knows of!” said Dick, emphatically. “I would rise to state that you are just about as far from that description as anyone that I ever knew.”

“Thank you so much,” said Bert, with mock smugness. “Well, tell us about the happy circumstances and what I can do to help along.”

Dick spoke seriously. “To tell the truth, you can do a lot to help along and that is just what I have come to see you about; but there will be a lot of things to explain to you first.”

“Oh, not so much!” said Bert, airily. “But go on; when and where is the lady going to make her debut in her own proper person?”

Dick slumped back in his chair flabbergasted. “Well, I’ll be jiggered!” he said. “How long have you known about that?”

“Ever since I saw you working like a Trojan to bring Mrs. Walters’s blessed little grandson back from over the range.”

“But how did you know then?”

“My little friend,” said Bert, “I have been spending about one third of my time with that dear lady ever since we came back from Japan. It has bothered the Kat sisters a lot, but not so much as if they

hadn't known that I am already beyond the reach of penury, and therefore had no ulterior motive. However, I have been with her so much that I know every line of her face and every expression of her eyes; and when you told me that the youngster was the child of the girl up on the mountain, and the youngster lifted his lids and looked at me; why there wasn't any guessing to do, it was all an open book."

"But I never thought of it."

"You don't know Mrs. Morton well; and anyway, you were too close to the problem to get any perspective."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"And let you get things all messed up before it was time? No indeed! And besides, it wasn't my secret, nor my business to do any talking until matters worked around to the right point. You say that they have all come out right now; then what have you got to fuss about?"

"Nothing," said Dick, devoutly. "Absolutely nothing. The world is mine." And then he proceeded to set forth in detail the part which they were hoping for Bert to play in the planned return.

When he had finished, Bert grinned her approval. "Perfect!" she said. "You certainly have done yourself proud, the way that you have it all conjured out, and I ask only one thing by way of return for my valuable services in the matter."

"Name it!" said Dick.

"That mine may be the voice to break the news to the Kat sisters, when the time comes."

"Granted with enthusiasm," said Dick. "Nobody could do it so perfectly as you, and I only wish that I might be there to see."

"Well, you can't," said Bert; "You'll be busy elsewhere; but oh, I shall have such a good time! As soon as I have announced Jean's discovery to Mrs. Walters, then I shall call upon them and break the news delightfully. It will be gorgeous! Of course they will have to pretend that they are tickled pink; but under the surface they will be getting ready on the instant to start some fussy tales; and I shall calmly tell them that if they let out a squeak of any kind I will tell Auntie the whole story from A to Z, including the fact that they knew where Jean was and still let the mother suffer by their silence; and also that they tried to drown her beloved grandchild, and likewise to do away with her beloved daughter; and if I told all that narrative, it would be good-bye for them to any hopes whatever of profiting by way of legacies from her. Doesn't that sound perfectly scrumptious?"

"It does," said Dick. "Go ahead and gloat all you want to; it's coming to you; and meanwhile, I must be getting back home."

"Of course you must," said Bert, with another of her boyish grins. "Run along. Fate has been pretty

kind to you after all. Give the lady my love and tell her that I'm counting upon exchanging a lot of reminiscences with her some day. Good-bye."

And so Dick, the stage all set, went back up the mountain, glowing with satisfaction and anticipation.

The following week was a busy one, with Jean's preparations for departure. The old grandmother, pathetically happy over the prospect of the return of her beloved grandchild, hovered about eagerly in her efforts to assist, forgetting her bitterness toward Jean, whom she had childishly accused for many months, of keeping Evalani away. And Dick was no less eager and perhaps only a trifle less of a hindrance. It was on the last night before Jean's sailing, that they sat in the starlight on the lanai and listened to the music coming to them over the leagues of water, and again there came the voices of the Hawaiian boys in the old songs that the two loved so dearly; and while they were singing, Jean whispered to her lover, "Evalani should have gotten my letter today. I wonder if it has made her happy."

"Not as happy as we are," whispered Dick; but just then, as if in answer came once more the sweet voice of the woman singer whom they had not heard again since the weird chant of a week ago. Eagerly they bent forward to listen, and instead of the

plaintive chant, there came a gay, rollicking melody sung in tones so full of joy and ecstasy that the very notes seemed to dance with delight.

*"I'm going home, I'm going home to Honolulu,
Back to where the soul of me is staying;
I left it back there when I took myself away
And now I'm going back to claim it.*

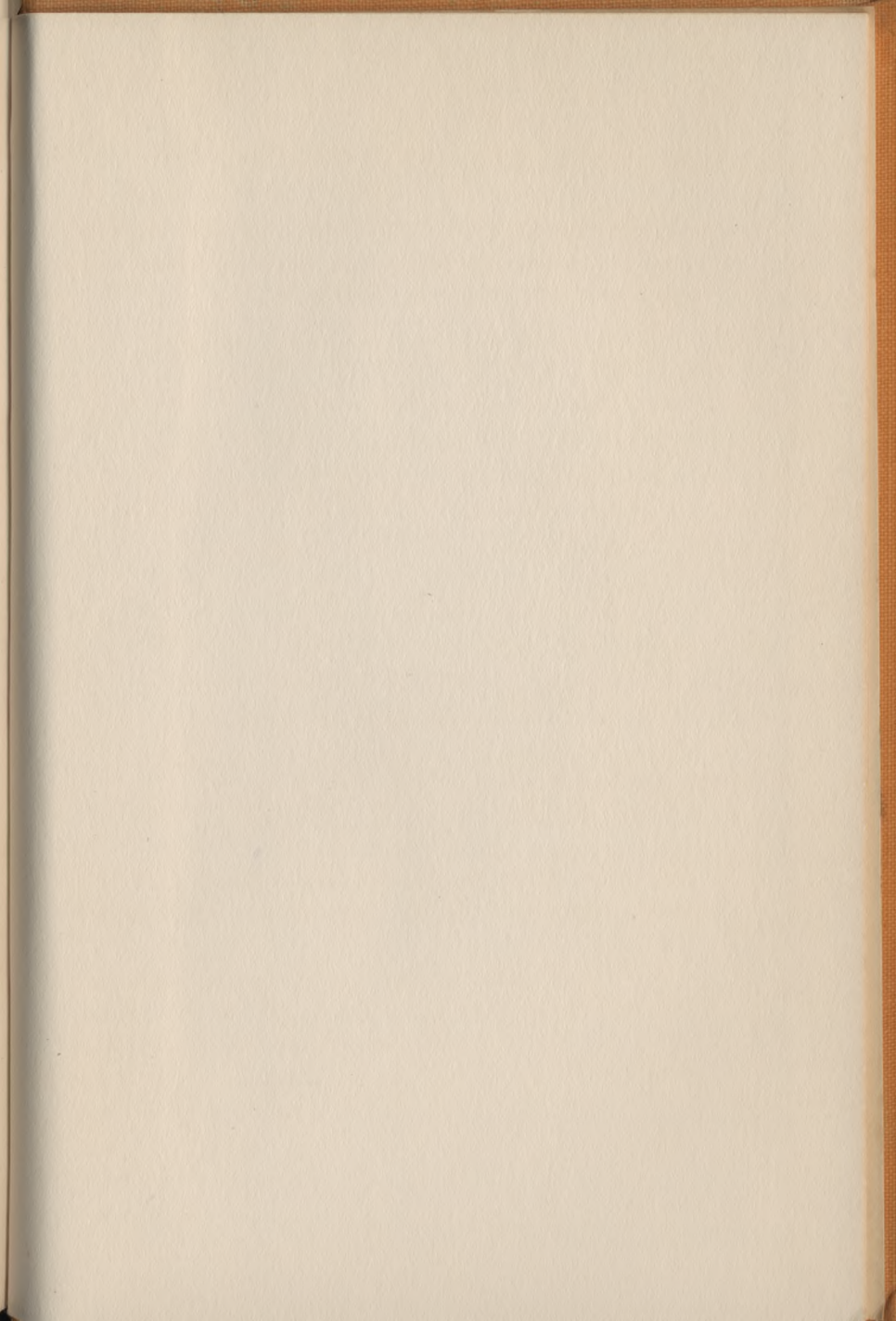
*Oh, the sea is pansy-purple
And the sands are sands of gold,
And Eternity's no deeper than the skies;
And the waterfalls and rainbows are shot through
and through with sunbeams
Like the laughter that is in a baby's eyes.*

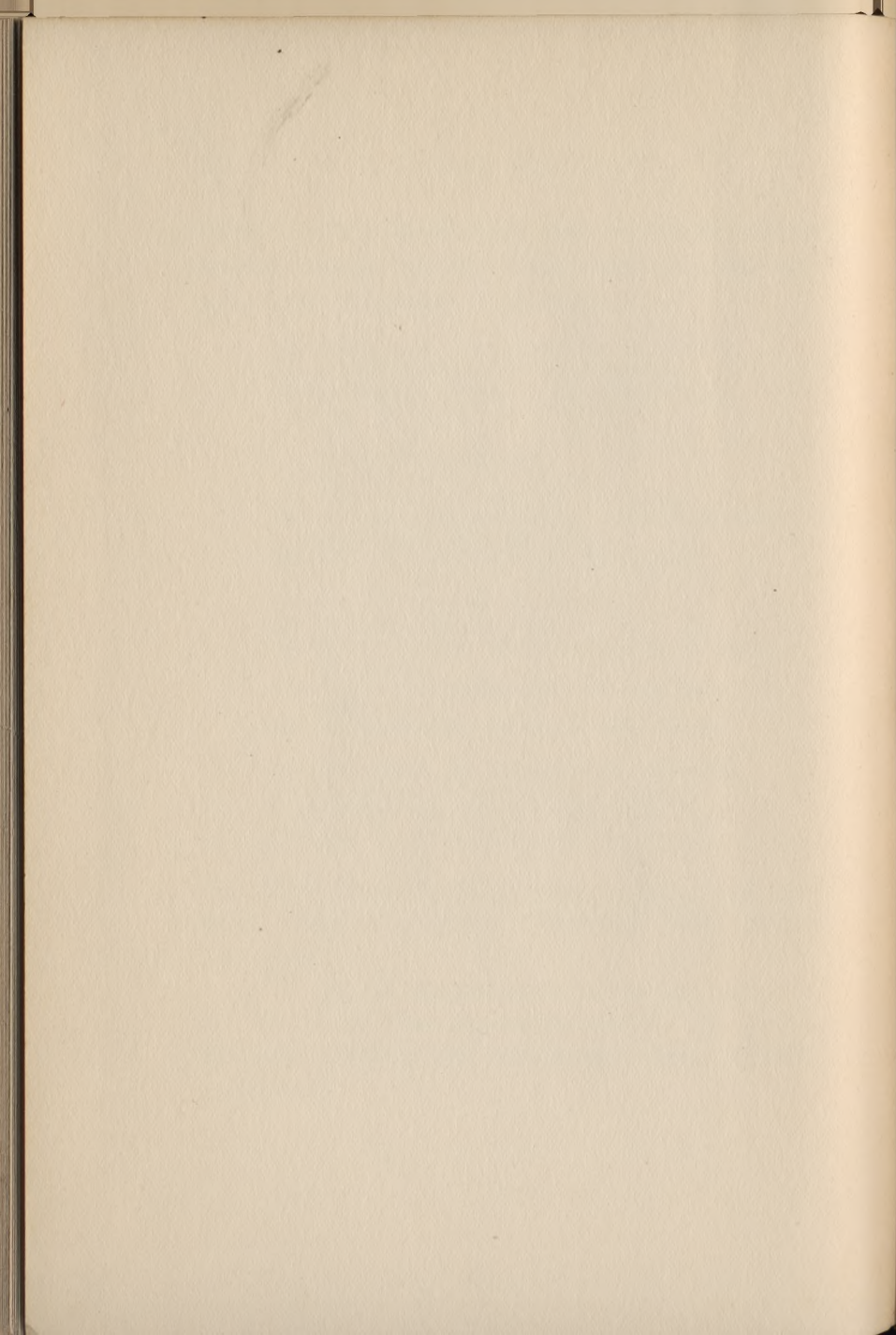
*Oh, the palm trees all are waving
And the taro fields are broad,
And the surf-boards come swift-driving through
the foam;—
I see it in my dreaming and I see it in my
waking,—
Oh, I'm hungry for my blessed island home.*

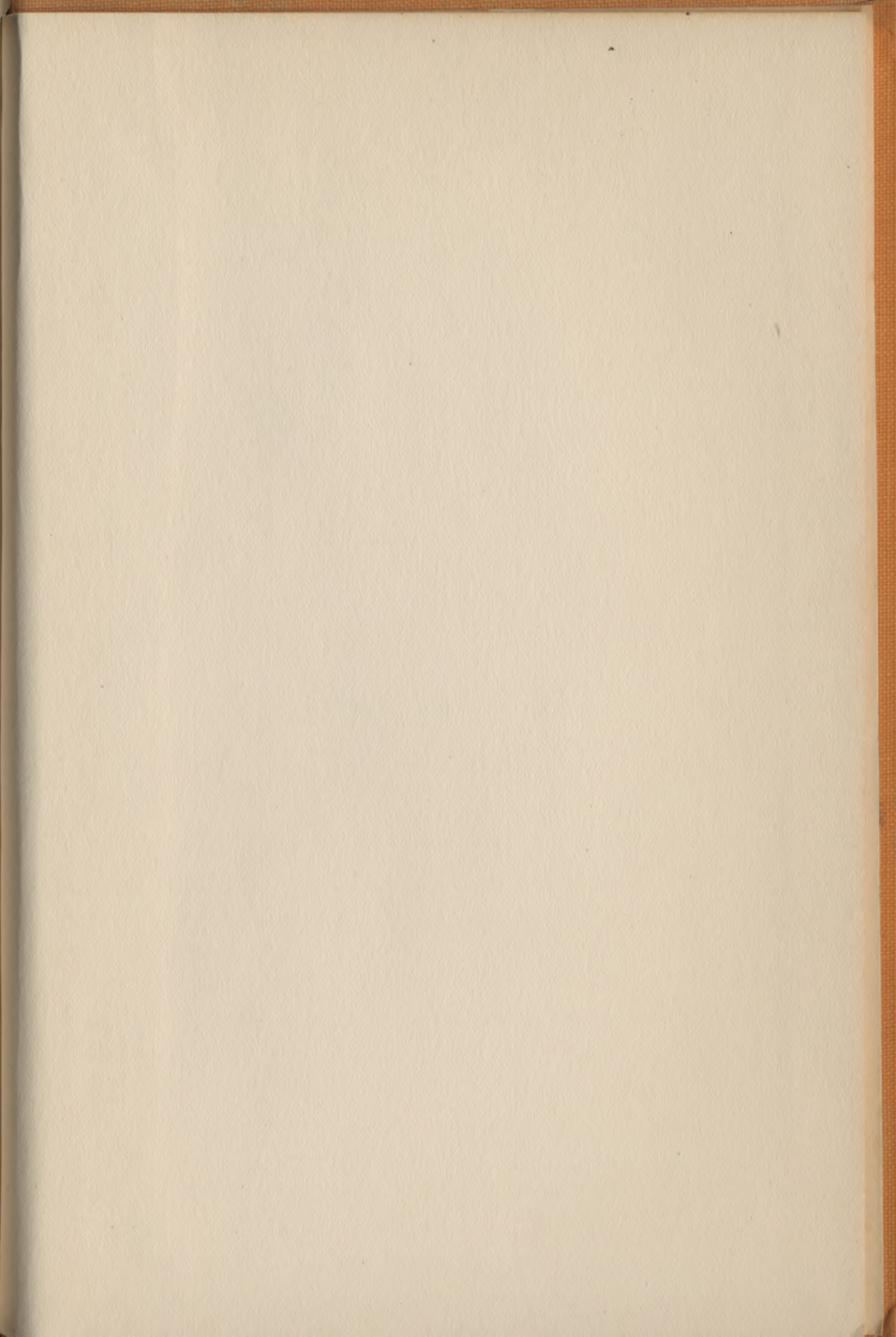
*I'm going home, I'm going home to Honolulu,
Back to where the soul of me is staying;
I left it back there when I took myself away
And now I'm going back again to claim it."*

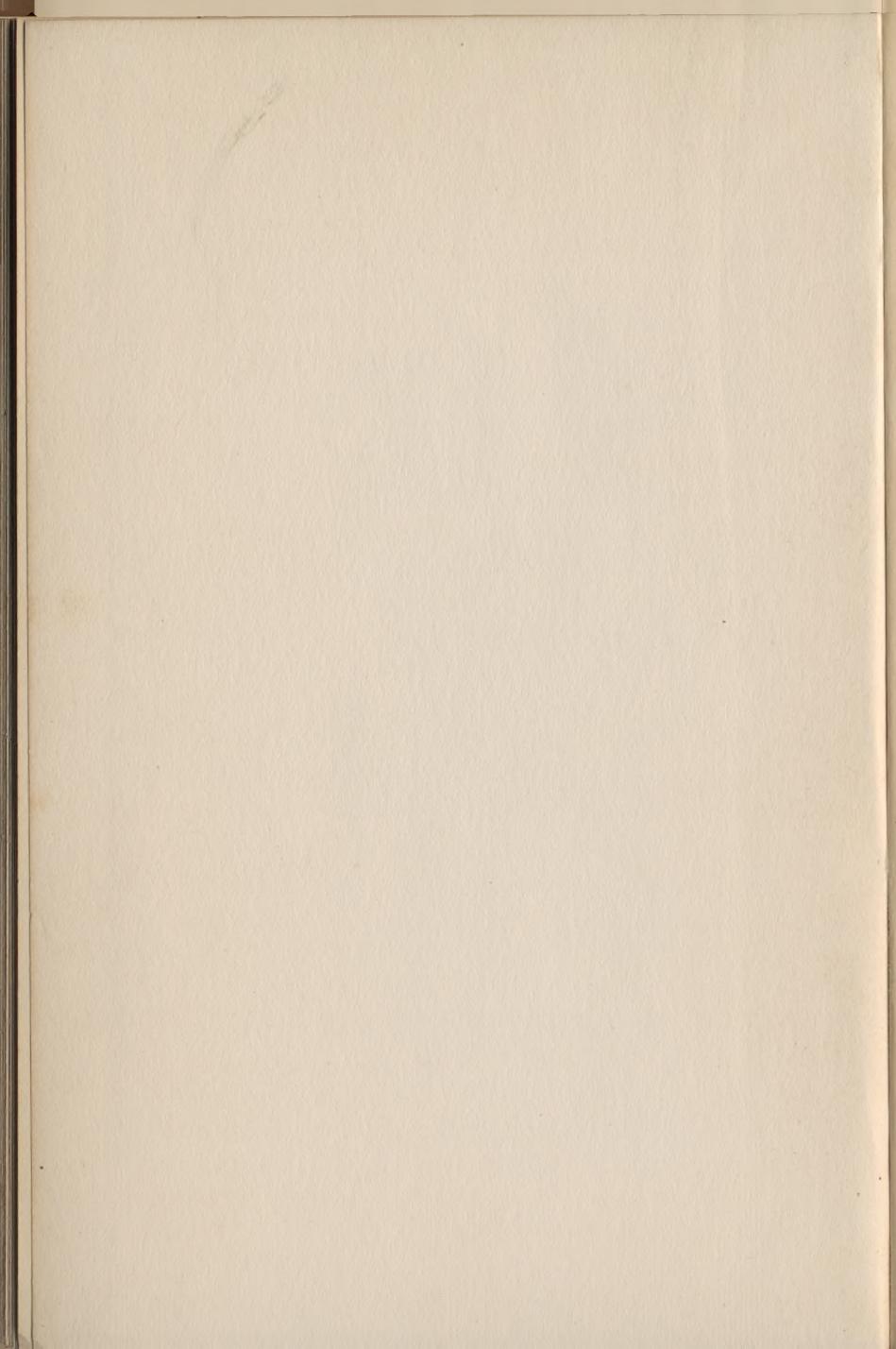
And then, when the last joyous cadence had died away, came an eager, tremulous, long drawn "A-l-o-h-a!"

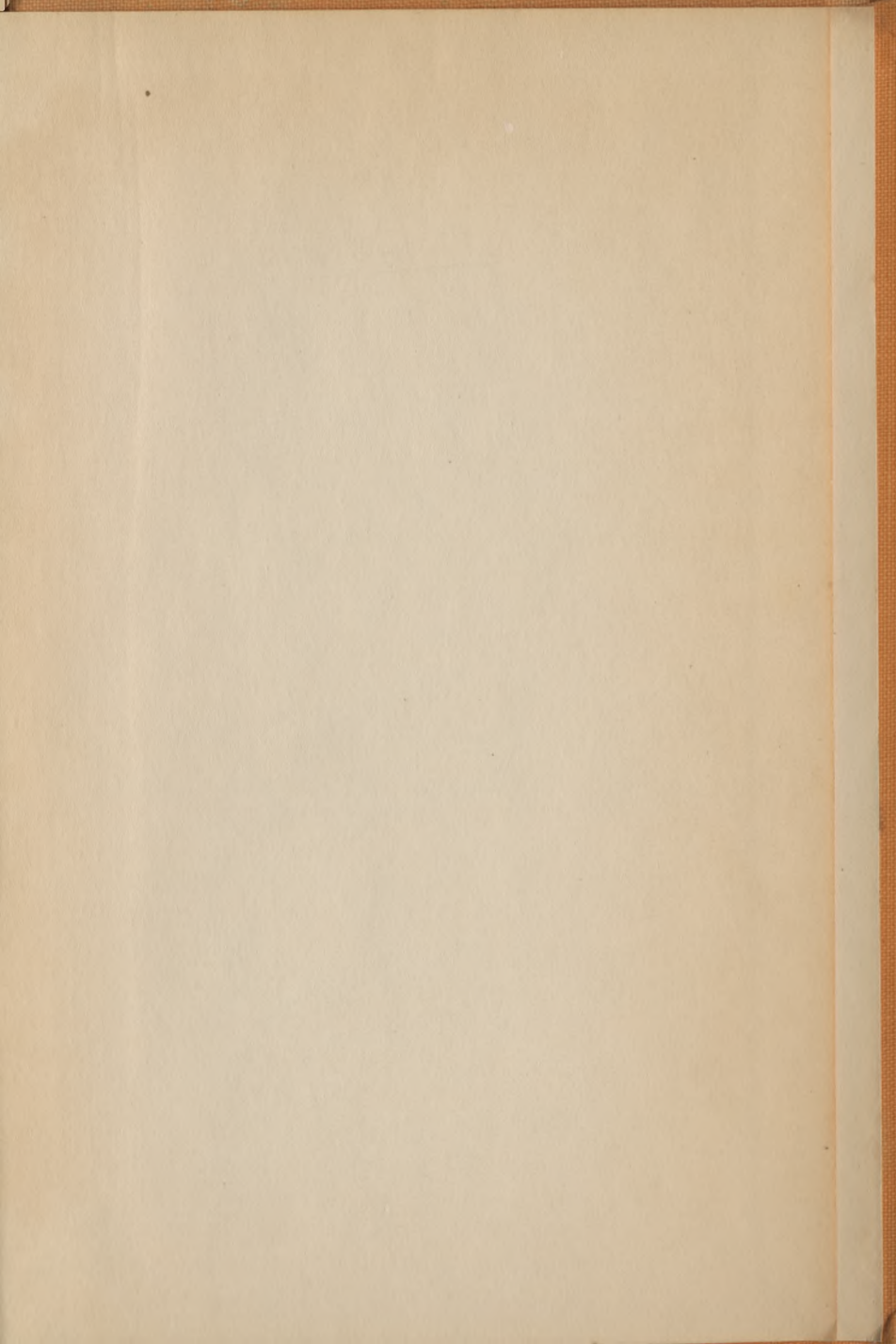
And from the deep shadow in the far corner of the lanai came an answering call in the grandmother's cracked and quavering voice; "Aloha! Aloha nui!"

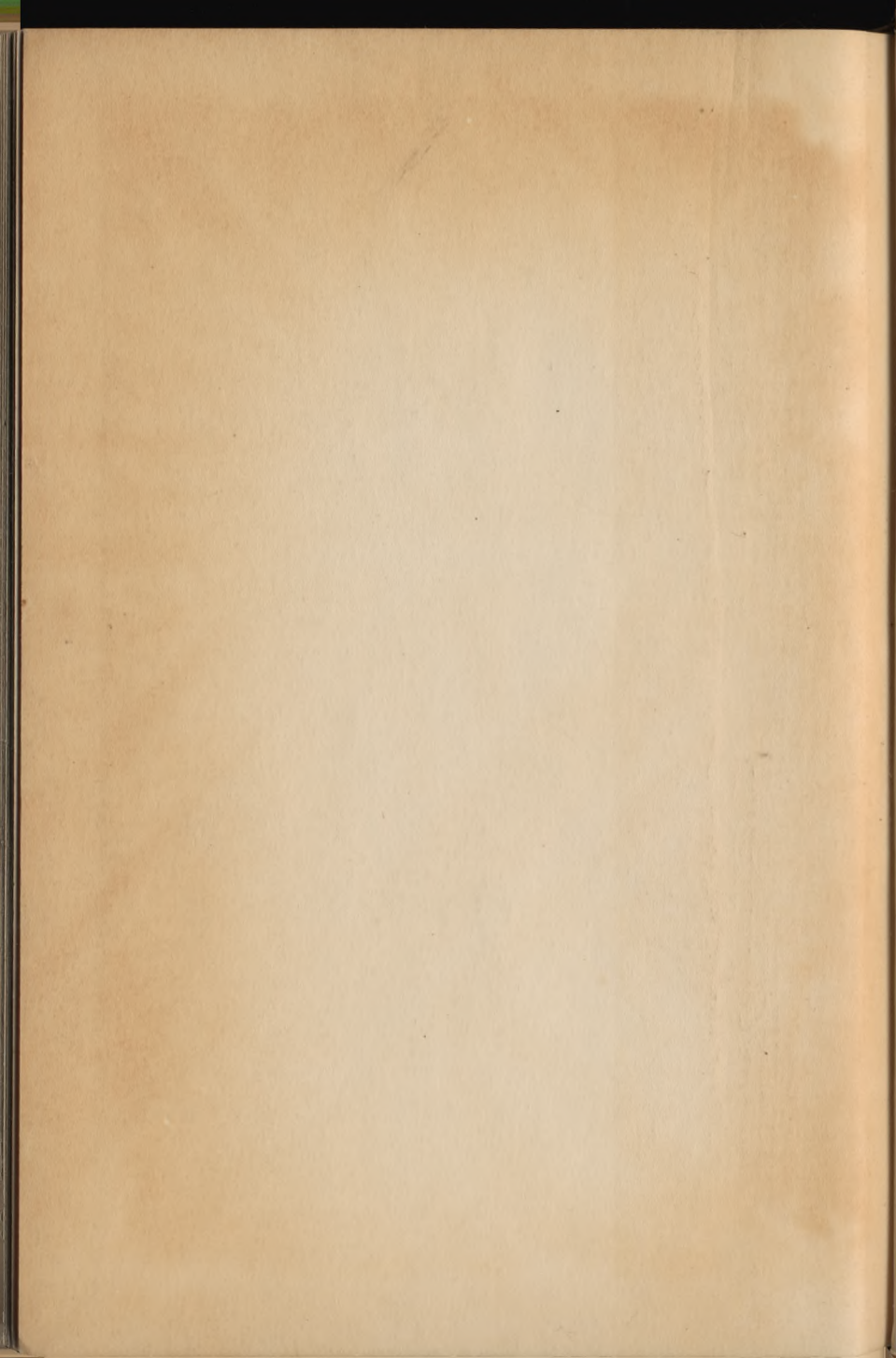


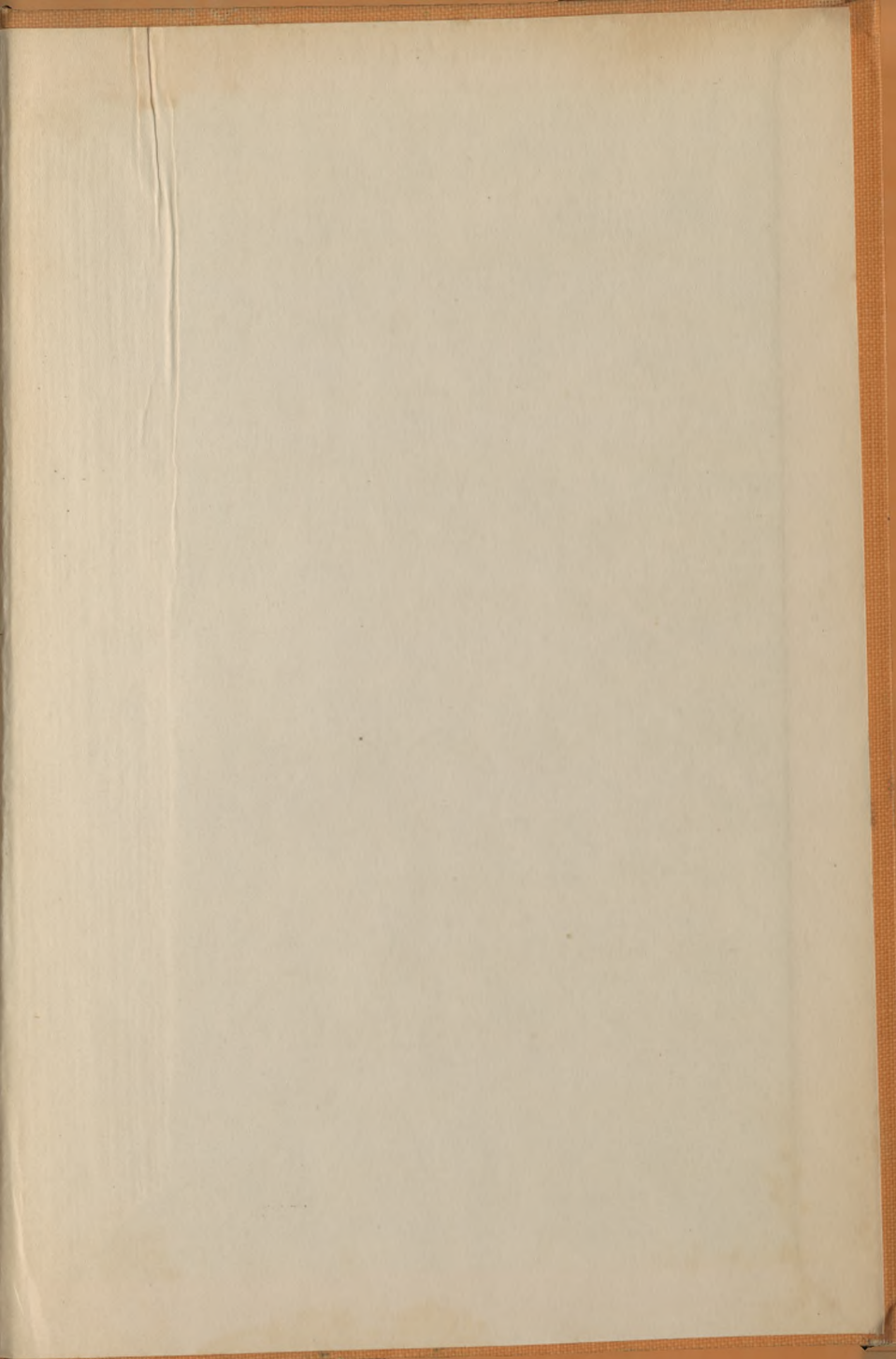












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