DEEP WATER ISLAND

by ALAN LeMAY

W·N·U·RELEASE

INSTALLMENT EIGHTEEN

THE STORY SO FAR: Karen Waterson, believing herself to be the heir to Alakoa, the island estate of her grandfather, finds herself no heiress at all, when the old gentleman, Garrett Waterson, turns up after a long disappearance. Meantime she and her lawyer have been engaged in a dispute over the rights to the property with the Wayne family who have been in possession since the old man left, many years before. Richard (Tonga Dick) Wayne has fallen in love with Karen, as has also the lawyer, John Colt. Karen and Dick quarrel and after she leaves Alakoa, with Colt, Dick overtakes them and forces their boat to return. Garrett Waterson has arrived and is very ill. Karen nurses him back to health, but she and Dick have never become reconciled since their quarrel. One day Karen's grandfather tells Dick that Karen is going back to Honolulu, possibly to marry Colt. Dick asks him what he thinks of that.

Now continue with the story.

"Colt isn't just what I would have picked. I certainly wouldn't want to marry him myself," said Waterson.

With an effort Dick rallied. "I don't see why not," he said. "I think you'd make a lovely bride."

"I suppose he'll do well enough by her," Waterson said gloomily. "It's his stamp of crocodile that generally gets ahead. Of course, his infernal impudence made me kind of mad; but I was kind of tickled at him, after I thought it over. You have to kind of admire a man with as much brass as that."

There was a long silence, and Dick was thinking of a lot of things of which he would not have wished to speak.

"That girl is a wonderful girl," Waterson said. "So long as I ever have one dime that will do the work of a nickel, that girl is never going to be in want. She's something pretty special, Dick—sweet, and gentle, and loyal, and—"

Dick broke it up. "When do I sail for Nuku Hiva?"

"What's the matter with tomorrow?"

"The Holokai's full of oil. I guess tomorrow will be all right."

CHAPTER XVI

With his crew rounded up and fresh water aboard the Holokai, Dick Wayne went ashore to phone Honolulu by wireless. He did not suppose that his brothers would want him to mix in any more than they could help; but it seemed only decent to ask what the situation was, before he left Alakoa on a voyage that would keep him away for a matter of weeks. James Wayne's estate, embracing all of Alakoa, was hanging fire, and he supposed he owed it to them to tell them where he was going.

He sat at James Wayne's old desk, up above in the house that Garrett Waterson himself had built, and fiddled with the phone for the better part of half an hour before he got a connection which would do. It was Charles Wong whom he reached at last.

Charles Wong, it turned out, was dithering in a state of mental confusion and disorder.

"I—I've been trying to reach you for two days," Wong chattered. "I was about to come to Alakoa. Everything is terribly upset—it's absolutely necessary that you come here."

"What's the matter now?"

"Your brothers are absolutely unable to reconcile themselves to the will. If they cannot reach an agreement with you, I am almost certain that they will try to break it. You had better come here and talk to them as soon as possible. The disturbance is unimaginable, but Alakoa is going to suffer if—"

"What was the matter with the will?"

"Oh nothing, sir, nothing! But naturally your brothers are very much surprised. Certainly you must have anticipated that they would—"

"I don't even know what was in the will," Tonga Dick told him.

"Why—why—you haven't heard?"

"I haven't talked to Honolulu since my brothers left here."

A considerable hesitation, decorated with unrecognizable spluttering noises, represented Charles Wong's dumbfoundment. "The will gives you the controlling interest in Alakoa," Wong finally managed to get out.

"Who—me?" Dick said stupidly.

"Yes, sir. There are certain special provisions that seem intended to give your brothers a practically equal income; but you are given a fifty-one per cent interest, and absolute management of everything."

"I'm supposed to run the whole cockeyed thing?"

"You control it, yes, sir. The cattle production, and the plantations, and the mills—everything."

There was much more to it, and a good deal of it Dick was unable to understand from Charles Wong's disorganized explanations. Dick supposed that he could not expect to understand James Wayne's dispensations in detail until he had had a thorough consultation with a whole board of attorneys. But the main intent was clear. James Wayne had put Tonga Dick in control of Alakoa.

"But I think your brothers are going to try to break the will," Charles Wong finished.

"They aren't going to break anything," Dick answered.

Karen Waterson was waiting aboard the Holokai when Dick finally went aboard.

"No, sir—my personal belief is that it really cannot be done."

After that it was still necessary for Tonga Dick to explain to Charles Wong that he could not come to Honolulu yet—that he was going to Nuku Hiva. A good deal of expostulation attended that, but Wong could not persuade Tonga Dick to change his mind.

"This thing will be in probate a couple of years yet," Dick concluded. "Two or three weeks isn't going to make any difference."

After he had hung up the phone he sat for some time with his elbows on James Wayne's desk. It was very difficult for him to comprehend the full meaning of what had happened. He was convinced that no ability of his own had decided James Wayne; it must have been simply that no one could have known his brothers well without recognizing that they were futile and indecisive men.

It was strange to think that this desk where James Wayne had sat so many years was now his own; that he was supposed to sit there, and so manage James Wayne's conceptions of Alakoa that they should be brought to ultimate fruition. Plenty of exploitationists beside John Colt would be waiting to swallow Alakoa up if he should fail, and he did not believe that any of them could be expected to do well by Alakoa. It made him feel undersized, and unready; but he could not imagine failure—not in the long run.

Presently he took up the phone again, and began trying to reach various people in Honolulu—lawyers mostly. The Holokai was waiting, ready to sail, but she had to wait. Most of the day was gone before he had made sure that he really dared take the time to sail to Nuku Hiva, as he had promised Garrett Waterson to do.

Karen Waterson was waiting aboard the Holokai when Dick finally went aboard. His astonishment at finding her there was so complete that at first he did not know what to say to her.

"My grandfather tells me," Karen said, "that you are sailing almost any hour now."

"I have to go to Nuku Hiva for him."

"I know; I have learned quite a bit about island affairs while he's been sick. You'd be surprised how much I know about how things are done in the South Seas."

He still didn't know why she had come aboard the Holokai, but he didn't want to ask.

"Looks like good weather," he offered. "The Holokai ought to make good time."

"I hope you have a dandy trip."

"Thanks."

"But weren't you intending to touch at Honolulu, before you sail south?"

He started to tell her that he was not, but checked himself. "Why do you ask?"

"I was hoping you'd give me a lift. My grandfather will get along very nicely now, I think. Of course, he'd be glad to take me to Honolulu on the Sarah; but he ought not to go to sea for another ten days yet, and he simply won't go ashore. And I think—I would like to get away."

He knew that one of Alakoa's little cattle boats could give her passage to Honolulu in a day or two; but she didn't seem to know this, and he decided not to mention it.

"Of course I'll be glad to take you to Honolulu."

She smiled a little. "I knew you would. In fact, I even had my baggage put in the cabin."

That, too, somewhat surprised him, but he only said, "We'll weigh anchor soon."

"I think," Karen said, "I'll go below and take a nap, if you don't mind. There hasn't been an awful lot of sleep to be had aboard the Sarah."

When she had gone below and curled up on Dick's own bunk, Tonga Dick found that he was bitterly disappointed. He had supposed that the trip to Honolulu would give him a chance to talk to her again; but she might just as well have waited for the cattle boat, if she was going to sleep the voyage out.

By the time they were well out beyond the coral, Dick was trying to think of a plausible excuse for waking her up. He rigged a tray with a fish sandwich, a stalk of celery, a whisky soda, a glass of iced coffee, and a cup of tea, and carried it back to her bunk. Karen had to smile when he roused her to offer the silly assortment. It seemed to him that she looked astonishingly bright and fresh for someone so much in need of sleep.

"I didn't really think you'd want any of this junk," he admitted. "I want to talk to you, Karen."

"That's really a very attractive tray," Karen said. "I don't see how anyone could resist it. I think I would like a dry Martini."

"Go to thunder," said Tonga Dick. "Listen—I want to tell you something."

"Well?"

"You remember the night when I boarded the Seal, and made you come back to Alakoa?"

"Could I ever forget it? You were extremely piratical, and unpleasant. I could have killed you."

"I didn't know then that you were running off to Honolulu to marry John Colt. But I was afraid you were. I didn't really think that it would do your precious grandfather any good to bring you back; I was pretty sure he wouldn't even recognize you. And I know it's none of my business who you marry. But sometimes when people do something in a hurry it turns out to be a mistake."

"Interference with other people's affairs is usually a mistake."

"That's not what I meant. I'm not sorry I turned the Seal. As it turned out, it actually did pull old Garrett Waterson through, I think."

"For heaven's sake, sit down," said Karen. "You make me nervous, swaying around like that."

Dick sat down on the edge of the bunk. "There's still plenty of time for you to marry John Colt."

"You may as well know," Karen said, "that I'm not going to marry John Colt."

"But you were going to, weren't you?"

"Yes; I was going to. I was hurt, and angry, and disgusted with the whole thing. I wanted to get away from Alakoa and everything about it. To marry John seemed a quick and complete escape. But I'm glad now that you turned the Seal."

He studied her carefully to see if she meant for him to draw encouragement from that, but decided that she did not. Karen seemed immensely detached.

"My grandfather thinks that he sent Colt back to Honolulu," Karen went on, "but he did not. I was the one who sent him back. The raid on Alakoa is over, Dick."

"I should imagine," Dick said ironically, "that you'll have another chance at it later. Garrett Waterson isn't going to live forever."

Karen flushed faintly. "I wish you wouldn't talk like that."

"When Garrett Waterson is dead," Dick pointed out, "your case will be as good as ever."

"I wouldn't be interested," Karen said. "I see things differently now. When John Colt first worked out our plan for claiming Alakoa, it seemed daring and romantic—very adventurous, and all that sort of silliness. But that was when Garrett Waterson was just a forgotten name. He's real now, and I know him, and I like him. And he is my own grandfather. I wouldn't be able now to try to discredit his name."

"That's the way you feel now. Two weeks ago you felt differently, and in two weeks more you'll probably feel differently again."

"I thought you might be afraid of that," Karen said. "But you don't need to be—not any more. I have a present for you, Dick."

She hunted around for her handbag, found it, and produced a piece of paper. "This is for you."

He unfolded the sheet and glanced at it. It was closely written in Karen's own hand; at the bottom was the huge scrawling signature of Garrett Waterson, witnessed by Stahlquist and Karen Waterson herself.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

PATTERNS

SEWING CIRCLE

THIS inviting three-in-one pattern looks ahead to summer days and at the same time is immediately practical with its sleeveless jumper dress cut on princess lines, the matching jumper and bonnet. For every little girl can put the jumper with its cunning bolero topper on now and wear it.

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"What was the name of the last station we stopped at, mother?"

"I don't know," snapped Mrs. Jones, "and don't bother me when I'm reading."

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"Well, it's too bad you don't know the name of the station, because our Jimmy got off back there."

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By JERRY LINK

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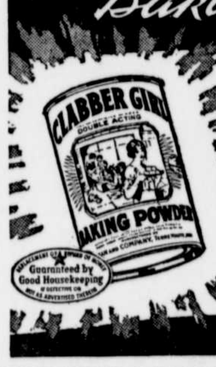

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