



BRIGHT SPURS

Armine von Tempski

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BRIGHT SPURS

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PAM'S PARADISE RANCH

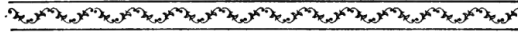
JUDY OF THE ISLANDS

BORN IN PARADISE

THUNDER IN HEAVEN

BRIGHT SPURS

BRIGHT SPURS



By ARMINE VON TEMPSKI

Illustrated by PAUL BROWN

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TO MY BELOVED SISTER,

“HAUK”

IN MEMORY OF OUR DUDE-WRANGLING DAYS

AND

TO ALL 'TEEN AGERS WHO GIVE A HUNDRED

AND TEN PER CENT TO DAILY LIVING.

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CHAPTER I

SECRET RETURN

GAY fastened her eyes on the turns of the road which the headlights of the car kept snatching up. Her fingers tightened about her fifteen-year-old sister's hand. Cherry gripped back.

After a couple of months in the States they were home again, facing problems which made them feel hollow and weak. Gay looked at the broad shoulders of the Hawaiian at the wheel, silhouetted against the dim dashboard light. He drove his car as if the fare he was earning were a matter of small consequence. Large, loafing contentment poured from his big body, as though he figured that life was to be enjoyed rather than worried about.

"Cherry and I must be like that," Gay thought, "confident, sure of ourselves." An electric tingle went through her but it was followed immediately by the hollow sinking sensation of a moment before.

"We *must* do it, Cherry," she said into the air.

"Yes," Cherry agreed in a rather grim little voice.

In the cast, against fields of stars, was the loom of the extinct volcano, Haleakala, near which they had spent their happy childhood. The cold, clear wind swept past, smelling richly of wet forests, deep grasslands, fat cattle and sleek horses, recalling the secure years just behind them, watched over by their father, who had been mother and pal, too, for his two daughters. Thinking of the difficult future confronting them without him, Gay stared bleakly ahead, then flung up her chin, mentally defying the obstacles lying in the path Cherry and she had determined to follow.

The lines of her face, finely modelled, had courage and breeding in them, without actual beauty, but a lighted something shone from inside her and her back-combed curly hair looked so alive that it seemed as if wind was always streaming through it. Wide gray eyes, a delicate, rather irregular nose, ending in an enchanting tilt, gave her an elfin quality, but her forehead was gallant and courageous.

By the faint dashboard light, seeping back over the Hawaiian's big shoulders, she could see her sister sitting taut and silent beside her. Cherry was an extra-special sort of person, she thought, direct and dependable. Her eyes were brown, fearless and steady, and shaded by thick lashes tipped with gold. But it was the way she held herself that made her stand out from other people, as if she were walking straight into the battle of life, confident that she would win it. Until their father's death, Cherry had been rated the second finest rider in Hawaii. Now, she held first place. She had taken part in Stake races, roped wild bulls, broken horses and trained polo ponies since she was ten.

"We'd better tell Pili we want to be let out at the foot of the hill," Cherry suggested in an undertone.

"And immediately he'll want to know *why*," Gay said edgily. "But if we drive into the garden, the dogs'll start barking, the servants will rush out, adding to the uproar, then Sam Spencer will hear and come over. By noon everyone on the island will know we're home!"

For a moment Gay looked as forceful as a person of twenty-seven, instead of seventeen. Leaning forward, she tapped the big Hawaiian on the back.

"Somekind you like?" he asked over his shoulder.

"Don't drive into *Wanaao*, stop at the bottom of the hill," Gay directed. Then she and Cherry braced themselves for the first of the thousands of questions they knew they would have to answer during the next few days. It came like an arrow.

"For why?" the man demanded in an amazed voice.

"You—and all Hawaii will know shortly," Gay replied rather breathlessly.

"And don't tell anyone we're home, Pili," Cherry cautioned. "We came on the late boat on purpose so no one would see us arrive. Here we are. Stop, please." She indicated the steep road winding up a hill with tall eucalyptus trees, filling the night with their clean, strong smell.

Bringing his car to a halt, the driver shut off the motor. Gay opened the door and got out. Cherry followed. Pili emerged from the front, and heaved

two heavy suitcases, which had been stacked beside him on the seat, onto the grassy bank. Then, rumpling his graying hair in a puzzled way, he confronted the girls.

“Why-for you kids not drive in? Why you sneak like thieves into your own house? Meny, meny years now I know your papa and you kids. I got a big sorry when your papa *make*. Tough when young girls never having mama, then lose papa, too.” He stopped for an instant, giving a brief, silent tribute to the dead, then continued indignantly. “But every peoples in Hawaii speak the same kind. You kids make a big crazy to take so much your money and spend it going America. How you eat? What-kind you make now? What you getting for making this crazy-kind stunt?”

“You’ll find out,” Cherry said. “We have twenty horses, the house for a while—”

“Sure, I hearing what-kind Sam make when your papa die. Your papa make good *hanahana*—work, for Sam and it *pololei* for Sam to tell to you girls you can stop the old place for one—two years. But when papa die, salary *pau* and you *pupule* kids spent his life-insuring money going America,” he went on hotly. “I hear what-kind you talk while us drive. You only got little left and that go quick!”

“Pili we each have two hands, two eyes, two feet—”

“And big crazys in the head!” Pili exploded, cutting her off.

“Time will prove that,” Cherry asserted with more assurance than she felt just then. “But in the meantime, our business is our business,” she finished, stressing the next to last word.

“Okay,” Pili agreed with the quick, good-natured tolerance of the Polynesians. “But better I *kokua* you girls and carry the suitcases to the house. Too heavy.” He indicated the big bags.

“We’ll manage, Pili, thanks,” Gay said. “You see, even if our dogs are always shut up in their kennels at night, if you’re with us, they’ll smell a stranger and start barking. If Sam hears them, he’ll come over to see what’s up. After all, he owns the place. Pili, while Cherry and I were in America, visiting my godmother, we got an idea for earning our living in a way that never has been done before in Hawaii. But Daddy always said that thinking about doing a thing, and doing it were two very different matters—”

“That *pololei*—right,” the big Hawaiian agreed, watching the youthful pair with curiosity and compassion.

In the bright starlight the expression of tender regret for the loss of their father, and concern about their future, was plain on his fine, big features. Suddenly Gay felt young, helpless, and inexperienced. The night seemed to

expand to vast proportions and to be filled with invisible enemies who would contest every step of the road along which she and Cherry were determined to go. Did they really have “big crazys in the head” to think they could do it? Before the thought was completed she flung it angrily from her mind and went on talking.

“Daddy taught us to face things, Pili, to think in straight lines, and we intend to prove his methods are right. Cherry and I have weighed our idea from every angle and feel we can swing it. But we want to get going before older people come swooping in with their ideas of how we should earn our livings, maybe getting us all tangled up in our minds and off the track. That’s one reason why we went away—to be able to think things out for ourselves. And besides, we just couldn’t bear to stay here after—” Her breath caught.

Pili gave the two girls a long, deep look. “Well, I not knowing what-kind you kids going to make and if you not like to tell me, that not my business. Anyhows, big Alohas and good lucks.”

Solemnly he gripped the girls’ hands, shaking them in a large, warm way. Then, doubling his big body, he got into the car and drove off.

Cherry and Gay gazed at each other. The night, rich and beautiful with remembered scents and sounds for which they had longed while away from Hawaii, was all at once awesome and empty. Island bred and raised, they had both responded to the fun and comfort that seems to fill life when a Hawaiian is around. Unconsciously during the drive they had been affected to a large degree by Pili’s unworried attitude about living. Now that he was gone, they realized that they were utterly alone, standing on the threshold of a major crisis of their lives.

“I feel about as big as a grain of sand on the bottom of the sea,” Gay said, finally.

“Me, too,” Cherry agreed in an undertone. “And when I think of the uproar and the avalanches of advice that’ll pour over us when people find out what we intend to do, I go all weak and wobbly inside.”

“We’ve got to get going before anyone finds out,” Gay insisted in a small, tight voice.

“If—we can.” Cherry stressed the words as if she doubted the possibility of such luck.

“Well, we’re not getting anywhere just standing here in a frozen panic at the bigness of the job ahead of us,” Gay announced. “Let’s get going, and every time we feel stampeded inside, we must remember that Dad always said a person can do anything, providing he wants to *enough!*”

“Yes, and that goes for us—too!” Cherry said staunchly.

Taking up their heavy suitcases, they crawled through the wire fence and began doggedly trudging up the hill. Fragrant guava bushes, the lusty smell of eucalyptus trees and the vital incense of earth and deep grass, damp from recent rain, filled the night.

The muscles in Gay’s arm ached at the drag of the heavy suitcase pulling against them. Silently, with frequent pauses for breath, she and Cherry toiled up the steep slope.

“Our life’s going to be like this,” Gay thought, “all uphill. Heaven only knows for how long. But if we can make the grade, reach the top—”

Cherry dumped her bag down and Gay followed suit. They stood for a moment, regaining their wind. In the starlight, the outlines of the island were plainly visible. To the west, the Iao Valley Mountains cut sharply into the sky. A long, dim shape on the horizon marked the Island of Molokai. Directly ahead, the monster dome of Haleakala filled the east, crowned by the dazzling beauty of Scorpio, blazing above the summit.

Gay’s heart caught into a knot as she recalled the countless times she and Cherry had lain wrapped in blankets, when they had camped on the 10,000 foot summit of Haleakala, while their father had taught them the names of the major stars and identified the jewel-like constellations in the majestic tropic heavens arching overhead.

Instinctively, her eyes turned to a familiar spot above the sea where the Southern Cross burned like an eternal beacon of hope. It had been the first star-cluster their father had showed them when they were little more than babies.

“Cherry,” she said chokily, pointing at it.

Together they gazed at the starry cross which they both loved most of all the constellations they knew. It symbolized their father, to whom people had instinctively rushed for help and advice in trouble, and also to share their joys: their father who had always insisted in his gay, brave way that even when life went against people, it was a worthwhile adventure. The sisters’ hands met and they stood silently for a moment. Then, taking up their heavy bags, they continued climbing the steep slope.

“One more heave and we’ll be there,” Cherry panted.

They plodded on and finally pushed through a hedge of oleanders and cypresses, which circled the big hilltop like a vast, fragrant garland. Acres of well-kept lawns, broken by flower beds, surrounded the low, rambling house in which they had lived so richly and widely with their father. Ginger,

gardenias, frangipani, alamanders, hibiscus, Chinese violets, mingled with blossoms from colder lands, sent up a symphony of perfumes.

In the center, crowning the big hilltop, was *Wanaao*, the home they so loved—and did not own. *Wanaao*, named for the first promise of light in the sky, the dawn before the dawn, the herald of the unending marvel of day being born again. Happiness and sorrow had lodged under its roof, and its walls guarded yesterday, today and tomorrow. It was the focal point of all the memories they cherished of a childhood such as few girls have ever enjoyed.

Their father had made it his business to have his motherless daughters share every phase of the vigorous outdoor life he led in managing a sixty-thousand-acre cattle ranch. From the time they had begun to ride they had helped him work with the stock, knew every trail threading the vast flanks of Haleakala. They had learned how to saddle and pack horses, pitch tents, had acquainted themselves with the haunts of the wild game roaming the mountain. They had thrilled to seasons coming and going—spring with its new growth of grass and crops of calves and colts; summer, when roundup time brought an added uproar of living to the ranch, as herds of glossy red cattle poured down the hills and broke like lava through the forests, and corrals seethed with the business of branding and ear-marking new calves. In the autumn they had ridden with their father to select new sites for the thousands of trees he set out every year, and watched him supervise the planting of grasses imported from all over the world to enrich pastures where herds in his charge grazed and fattened. They had hunted wild turkeys, pheasants, hogs, and plover, roving the upper reaches of Haleakala, and in winter, when great *Kona* gales roared up from the equator, they had raced on horseback with their father, through the rain and wind, exulting in the new growth that such storms brought to the Islands.

“*Wanaao*,” they whispered softly, gazing at the many-winged house. “*Wanaao*—The Promise of Light.”

Their hands met again and locked fiercely, then, picking up their bags, they headed across the lawn toward it. They required no key to get in, for, Island-fashion, all the French doors on to the wide *lanais* stood wide open. Like thieves they tiptoed indoors. They needed no light to find their way about, since they knew by heart where every piece of furniture stood.

“Gay—we’re home!” Cherry choked.

Gay could not answer, for the same thought was surging through them both. If they made a success of what they planned to do, in time, they might be able to buy the place they both loved so deeply.



CHAPTER II

REUNION

GAY awoke suddenly. For an instant she wanted to sink back into the safety of sleep, postponing for a while longer the myriad responsibilities confronting her. The idea which had brought the two sisters hurrying back to Hawaii sooner than they had planned had originated with her, and in the solemn hour of approaching dawn the fact struck home with full force. Chills raced over her skin like icy little breezes chasing each other across a lake. She must gather her wits together. No time must be wasted getting the machinery of their new life into motion.

Whipping to a sitting position, she worked around her bedroom. In a grass green voile nightgown, with her fair head flung back, she suggested a daffodil defiantly facing a rough wind, and she was facing one—the well-known wind of adversity. Only by fast, determined action could Cherry and she continue their old, splendid way of living, out-of-doors, on horseback, under blue skies. Embracing her knees fiercely, she sat in the middle of the mammoth four-poster, a lost but resolute little figure. For the hundredth time she reassured herself that she and Cherry had done the right thing in going to her godmother in America, where they could be far enough away from the Clan to think things out without feeling as if they were in the middle of a tug-of-war. It had only cost them their fare and they actually had worked out a plan for holding on to their beloved home—at least they hoped they had.

Haunted by the uncertainty of being able to remain at *Wanaao* beyond the stated period, she looked lovingly at the familiar objects in her room, just discernible in the gray light. She studied the great bed of finely grained

koa wood. It had been a wedding gift to their father and mother from a Hawaiian princess. The head board and foot were elaborately and beautifully carved with designs of mangoes and bananas gracefully twined together, and the top of each post was crowned with an intricately fashioned pineapple.

Across the room was a little rosewood piano, with brass candlebrackets flanking the music rack, which her father had given to her on her twelfth birthday. Foolish, delightful pictures of Pierrots and Pierrettes hung on the walls and to one side of the mirror on her ruffly dressing-table was a silver framed photograph of a big gray horse and two imp-faced wire-haired terriers.

A set of open windows facing the east framed the mass of Haleakala, towering against the first faint light beginning to well into the sky. Through open French doors on the opposite side of the room, under the branches of a tree-fern that lifted its leaves above the roof, were dim glimpses of the Island sloping to the pale, polished sea. Over massed treetops in the pasture below the house, two long promontories showed, reaching from the knife-edged summits of the Iao Valley Mountains, like dark, out-flung arms guarding Kahului and Malaea Bays that bit into the narrow peninsular, joining east and west Maui.

On the plains that rose gradually into the mass of Haleakala, long fires glowed through the gray, ghostly light. It was grinding season, and plantation laborers were burning the dry leaves off stalks of sugar cane before the wind rose. Later the cane would be loaded on to cars and taken to the mills, whose twinkling lights showed like clusters of jewels. Here it would be made into sugar.

A wild sort of gladness at being home ran through Gay but it ended in an aching lump in her throat. Her room, the gracious old house, the garden, were outwardly as they always had been, but they would be different from now on because of the threat of eventually losing them.

Waves of longing for her father engulfed her. She wanted the firm grip of his hard hand, the ringing sound of his voice to assure her that she and Cherry had made a sound decision. Details of the scheme which had brought them home hadn't been entirely worked out, but the main structure was as clear in both their minds and appeared solid.

"I've got to keep a tight hold on my emotions," she thought, "or I'll begin looking backwards, or thinking in circles, which never gets people anywhere."

Sliding out of bed, she took a deep, steadying breath. The soundest thing to do was to go and see everything and get rid of any treacherous uprush of

feelings which might break her down at the wrong moment.

Walking out to the palm- and fern-filled *lanai*, she stood entranced by the loveliness of her surroundings. Well-woven *lauhala* mats covered the floor of the eighty-foot-long *lanai*. Bamboo furniture was effectively grouped at strategic spots. Little glass wind bells tied to the branches of tree-ferns sent their fairy-like tinklings into the fresh morning. Transparent, handsomely designed Chinese lanterns hung from the beams at stated intervals.

Gay gazed at the flower-grown terrace, with a fountain in the center, at the lawns adding their green loveliness to the waking day. The garden tried to make itself felt with secret rustlings and whisperings. She was conscious of the presence of the great volcano behind the house. All the things of her childhood seemed to be ranging themselves about her for the battle ahead.

She let the impression sink deep into her, then walked to the living room, packed with a million memories. Above the mantel of the big fireplace, made of lava rock, a pair of wild bull horns, five feet three from tip to tip, was fastened with great bolts into the wall. Rows of silver racing trophies were arranged beneath it and on each side of the glittering array was a thoroughbred's racing shoe, framing a picture of Cherry and of herself, taken when they were small.

Chinese vases, a yard high, with delicate tracteries of flowers and birds, stood in their accustomed places. Many-times-read books filled long shelves at one end of the room. Deep chairs which had evidently been sat in and enjoyed, oil paintings, intimate trifles of ivory and porcelain, bowls of beautifully arranged flowers spun remembered magic into the atmosphere for Gay. She was particularly touched by the flowers. Faithful Suma had kept this special token of welcome constantly fresh for their return.

For an instant the beauty and fulness of her childhood memories rushed up and almost overwhelmed Gay, then she walked resolutely across the room and looked up at an enlarged photograph of her father hanging on the wall. From the back of a magnificent horse he smiled down at her and at the room he had loved and in which some essence of his personality seemed to linger.

Thoughtfully, Gay studied his features. His eyes, filled with intense joy in living, the flash of his smile, which made a person feel braver and stronger, set him apart from ordinary people. He had had the power to steady others in moments of stress, plus the gift of transforming commonplace or even upsetting happenings into adventures. Just through looking at his

picture Gay felt fortified. Sinking into a near-by chair, she reviewed the events which had led up to the present.

During the first stark days after their father's death, relatives and friends had taken it upon themselves to stay at *Wanaao* to try and soften the first blow of the girls' loss. Because their father had never treated them like children and had insisted on their thinking things out for themselves and making their own decisions, she and Cherry had been bewildered and stunned by the salvos of advice hurled at them. All it had done had been to drive home the fact that their dearest and merriest companion had been snatched from them, that they were orphans with their own way to make—for with their father's death his salary ceased—and that the house they loved was not their own.

Their father had been a two-handed giver. They had lived joyously and unstintedly, but nothing had been saved for emergencies ahead except a modest life insurance. Well-meaning relatives pointed out that it would carry the two orphans for a couple of years, until they were equipped to earn their livings—provided it was wisely spent.

Gay had finally determined to have a secret council with Cherry and one night, when the household was asleep, she had tiptoed into her sister's room and wakened her.

Wouldn't it be a sound move, Gay had suggested in a whisper, to accept her godmother's invitation—to take their own bit of money they had in the bank, plus a little of Dad's life insurance and get away from everyone and everything for a bit? In that way they could get a longer perspective on the situation confronting them, decide how they wanted to earn their livings, then come back and do it. . . .

They had weighed the idea from all angles.

"Yes, let's clear out," Cherry had agreed violently. "I'll go wild if I have to listen to any more advice from Uncle Archibald. I don't want to study to be a secretary. Think of sticking in an office all the time after the free, gorgeous way we've lived with Dad."

"And I've no intention of teaching all my life," Gay had whispered. "Let's pay the servants ahead. We know we can stay here for a year, maybe two. Let's get tickets for the mainland and when we have everything decided, we'll spring our bombshell."

"It's a date!" Cherry had agreed.

Somehow their midnight decision made them feel as though their father were with them, plotting secret fun as he had done so often in the past when they had all gone off on some senseless, beautiful jaunt which, in the world's

eyes, didn't add up, but which had remained a jewelled milestone in their lives ever after.

Gay's eyes flashed up to her father's picture. "Dear Dad," she whispered with a choke.

Gay and Cherry had decided to tell one other person of their plan, young Napier Hamilton, who was as close as a brother. Naps' parents were immensely wealthy but he preferred the simple, busy life of *Wanaao* to the lavish luxury of his own home and spent every possible moment he could with the Storm girls and their father.

Cherry had phoned him the next morning and finally, the three young people had managed to give everyone the slip. On horseback, among the green hills, with a soft wind singing past their ears, Cherry had told Naps what they planned to do.

"I'm for it a hundred per cent," he had assured them. "You can't think properly when dozens of people are pushing their own thoughts into your minds, especially girls brought up as you've been. Clear out as fast as possible. I'll help you."

"It may look crazy," Gay had said, "spending so much of the little cash we have ahead right off for this trip. Actually, it isn't. When we come home our low funds will force us to do something at once, instead of backing and filling, and still wondering what road is wisest to take."

"Any notion what you and Cherry want to do?" Naps had inquired.

"Not the faintest," Gay had replied.

"You girls don't realize how lucky you are," Naps had said thoughtfully. "You don't know what's ahead. Every step of my life is laid out. There are no hidden adventures waiting for me. I know when I'm through with high school I'll go to Yale. When I'm *pau* college I'll be Dad's assistant on the plantation. You two have all the fun of making successes of yourselves—"

"Or falling flat on our faces," Cherry had suggested, smiling for the first time in a week.

So they had gone away, in a very typhoon of protests. Naps had seen them off.

"When you come back, I'll stand at your right hand and keep the bridge with you," he had shouted from the wharf, quoting from the loved Horatius poem which their father had read aloud to them so often.

A warm glow went through Gay as she sat there before her father's picture. Naps was tops in every way. He knew they were home, for Cherry had written him from San Francisco, telling the date of their arrival, warning

him to say nothing about it, and asking him to come for breakfast the morning of their return, as they wanted to tell him about their ‘Great Idea.’

She and Cherry must get the stage set and wheels turning before anyone found out what they intended doing. There wasn’t a moment to lose. Today surely, possibly tomorrow, would be all they could hope for in the clear. But the fury of action would help to get them over the aching void of not having their father to fall back on in the undertaking looming ahead.

A clock struck five clear strokes, jerking Gay to her feet. The servants would be up shortly. She must wake Cherry. Her eyes went again to her father’s picture. It seemed, almost, as if he were with them on this bold venture, for a leap into the dark, such as they were planning, was exactly what he had reveled in.

Hurrying through the house, Gay went to her sister’s room and opened the door. Cherry was sprawled face downward in bed. Her close-cropped hair and lithe figure, clad in peppermint red and white striped pyjamas, made her look like a boy, but the curve of her cheek and the thick lashes shadowing it were all girl.

Cherry’s room reflected her dual personality. Dotted Swiss curtains draped the windows, her dresser top was covered with cut-glass perfume bottles, ruffly pincushions, a silver toilet set. But one wall was filled with lassos, bridles, polo mallets and rifles, and on the polished floor was the brindled hide of a wild bull which she had roped at ten years of age—and which had nearly cost her her life.

“Cherry,” Gay said.

Her sister sat up with a start, looked around, then caught her breath rapturously. “We’re home!” she cried. “Oh—Gay!”

Tossing back the covers, she leaped out of bed and hurried to the open door facing the mountain. Ten thousand feet it towered into the sky, impressively simple, wrapped with aloofness and mystery.

“Everything looks fine,” she said, after a moment. “There must have been lots of rain this spring. Get on your kimono and let’s turn the dogs loose. The uproar will bring the servants rushing out. Won’t they be surprised when they see us!” Her face was rosy with excitement.

“It’s going to be hard to tell Ah Sam, Naka and Suma that we can’t keep them on—” Gay began.

“Let’s put it off ’till tomorrow,” Cherry suggested. “Let’s all be happy together today. I want to realize I’m home.” Her voice curved lovingly

around the word. “And sort of try to adjust to—” Breaking off, she stared at the mountain.

“To not having Daddy around?” Gay finished for her, with a question in her voice.

“Yes.”

“But, Cherry, Dad’s still here with us,” Gay declared. “He’s in everything around us, in the stock he imported from America and New Zealand, in the grasses he sent for from all over the world, in the hundreds of thousands of trees he has planted.” She gestured toward the thick groves on the mountain, like bluish-green regiments drawn up in squads saluting his memory.

“Yes, I feel him, too,” Cherry said. “Not in a sad way, but in a glad way. What a glorious start he gave us. I wouldn’t trade the way we lived for all the money in the world. Dear old Dada.”

They stood silent for a moment, then Gay went to her room and slid into a flame-colored kimono, with green bamboos slashing across the silken material.

“Hurry!” Cherry called.

“Coming,” Gay called back.

Barefoot, they stepped on to the dewy grass. Involuntarily they paused for a moment to enjoy the lavish loveliness of their surroundings.

Hawaii is a land of vehement beauty. It arouses a love incomprehensible to persons not born under its spell. Gay and Cherry locked hands briefly. This had become a habit of theirs recently. It was an unspoken signal that they were closely united in whatever they might undertake.

Silently they started for the kennels. Cherry whistled sharply and a wild dog-chorus of barks and yips split the morning air. Laughing with excitement, the girls unlatched the gate and a torrent of fuzzy white bodies spilled out and rushed into the garden.

“Hula! Coquette!” Gay choked, kneeling down. Four wire-haired fox terriers propelled themselves at her, licking her neck, wriggling, making delirious sounds of dog-joy.

Cherry was bending over two smooth-coated terriers, crooning, “Spot, Vixen.”

Happy dog-pantings filled the air, little tails nearly wagged themselves off. A door in the smaller of a pair of cottages flew open and a tall Japanese in a blue and white kimono looked out and ran an amazed hand through his gray hair.

“Hi-yah! When you fella come home?” he gasped, his face creasing into deep smile-wrinkles.

“Last night.” Gay laughed, tousling her dogs.

“I no hear car,” the old yard boy protested, hurrying toward them.

He was gaunt, angular and moved with odd, jerky notions, as if he were jointed at specific places. The girls straightened up among the madly leaping dogs and the old man, with tears in his eyes, wrung their hands.

“I *torr* glad, I *torr* happy you come,” he said. “See, I take good care every-kind.” And he gestured at the flower beds and closely-cut lawns.

“Everything looks swell, Naka,” the girls said in unison.

After a pleased chuckle, he shouted, “*Banzai! Banzai!* Cherry-san and Gay-san come home.”

An old Chinaman popped his head out of second door in the smaller cottage, signalled wildly and streaked toward them. A door in the larger cottage flew open and a Japanese woman, her hair falling in a wiry black tumble about her shoulders, rushed across the lawn and embraced Gay and Cherry. Hana, her thirteen-year-old daughter, with a delicately beautiful face, joined them. Hurriedly questions and half-finished answers were tossed into the air, while the dogs rushed madly about the garden, crazy with delight.

“I go light fire and make coffee,” the old cook said, finally. “Then I fix hot-style breakfast, not only rice and fish. Now I can make every kind like before, roast beef, swell curry, roast chicken and you eat all or I very *huhu*.” And he pretended to be ferocious.

Cherry and Gay looked at each other, carefully. It was going to be difficult to tell these devoted people that they must find other jobs.

“I go unpack my girl-sans *lolis* and catch more flowers,” Suma said, looking important and happy.

“The house looks beautiful, Suma,” Cherry and Gay assured her.

“All lanch fellas velly, velly happy when me speak you come home,” Ah Sam said in a large, delighted way.

“You—not any of you—must tell even the *paniolos* who worked for Daddy that we’re home,” Gay said. “Anyway, for a few days.”

The servants stared at her, stunned.

“Why-for make this kind?” Nakashima finally demanded.

“Cherry and I want to be alone for a bit.”

“Sure, more good,” Ah Sam broke in. “When too many fellas stop here, all samee clazy house. Too much humbugger when too much talk-talk. Like

after Papa *make*.” He broke off and they were all silent, conscious of their common loss.

After a moment, the servants began dispersing to go about loved tasks.

“Well, that’s one obstacle behind us,” Cherry said into the pure morning air. “Old Naka seemed a bit suspicious for an instant but Ah Sam’s comment swung him into line.”

She stared thoughtfully at the mass of Haleakala, then her eyes swung to Gay’s. What did the future hold for them all?



CHAPTER III

THE GREAT IDEA

“WHEN I start really *thinking*,” Cherry stressed the last word, “way down deep I feel a bit panicky.”

“It’s no use trying to see ahead,” Gay declared staunchly. “And to look backward is senseless. There’s only *now* that we can wrestle with.”

“You sound like Daddy, Gay,” Cherry said in an honoring voice. Then, as if to brush off the sense of loss which intangibly shadowed their homecoming, she added briskly, “Let’s hurry up and dress and take a look at the horses and tack room before we eat.”

A short time later Gay in a gray tweed suit and Cherry in her ranch clothes opened the gate between the garden and pasture and began following a trail which wound through tall grass. Some distance away, twenty head of horses were busily grazing and enjoying the first warmth of early morning sunshine on their backs. As the girls drew near, the fine, glossy creatures raised their heads and pricked up their ears.

“Play Boy!” Cherry called. “Kaupo! Paniolo! Come here!”

A blood-bay gelding, six years old and obviously thoroughbred, blew out of coral-lined nostrils and began walking swiftly toward her. At his heels followed a small, but powerfully-built brown mare, with a perfect Arab head and prominent dark eyes. Behind her a rangy, less well-bred but dashing put together bay gelding, with a blazed face and short tail, trotted eagerly forward, turning his head from side to side.

Cherry watched them come, her three favorites, with an expression of deep affection on her face. In the few hours since she had been home she seemed to have come into some greater inheritance which made her skin

glow with the rich bloom of an apricot. As the horses crowded about her, her very being seemed to expand.

Gay looked on, thoughtfully, then called out, "Happy!"

A big gray gelding raised his head and began trotting toward her. Gay's eyes shone, noting the perfection of his points; great sloping shoulders, a short back for quick turns, powerful quarters, deep ribs and clean legs. His alert, quickly-moving little ears suggested tiny silver birds changing positions on his head. Pride and power charged every movement of the rippling muscles under the polished gray and silver of his coat.

With a happy little gasp, Gay started toward him. Reaching out his long, slender neck, Happy dropped his small, beautiful head into her out-stretched arms.

Gay had trained Happy from the time he was a colt. A proud thoroughbred, intelligent, eager, but controlled, he had won cups at Country Fairs and distinguished himself on the Kahului race track.

"Look, Gay," Cherry indicated the horses' hoofs, "Naps has been over and shod Happy, Playboy, and Kaupo, so we can ride today."

"How simply swell!" Gay exclaimed.

Cherry vaulted on to Playboy's back without rope or bridle to guide him, and went streaming away. Her slender figure was part of the horse, which she guided with her voice and expert pressure from her legs, clamping like slim, steel springs about his powerful body. Gay watched her sister enviously, wishing she had put on her riding clothes instead of the good suit she had worn traveling.

"I'll be out again for a ride in an hour or so, Happy," she promised, while the big gray pushed his head urgently against her.

The beauty of the freshly-born day, filled with color and movement, tugged at Gay's heart. Wind bowed the glittering tops of trees; leaves danced against the blue of the sky; horses went about their unending business of grazing; dogs scented through the grass for news of the night. Little moist black noses registered where a mongoose had ventured out of the stone wall, where a proud cock-pheasant had stalked haughtily through dew-laden grass, where a covey of quail had searched for early morning worms.

While Gay's fingers mechanically went over her horse's head, she watched Cherry galloping about the pasture. She looked wildly happy, utterly free, part of the green earth underneath and the blue heaven arching overhead. Slowly, a sort of curious defiance seemed to charge her figure, as if she were hurriedly assembling her forces to keep life at bay.

“Even if we break our backs, and hearts, it’s worth trying,” Gay thought. “It would be simply wicked for a person like Cherry to lead an indoor life. It would choke me.”

Cherry raced joyously back toward where her sister waited. She spoke quietly to her horse and he propped and came to a full stop. Sliding off, she flung a fond arm about Playboy’s neck, then slapped him on the rump and he trotted off to rejoin his mates, grazing in a far corner of the pasture. Gay gave Happy a dismissing pat and he cantered away, shaking his head, and giving an occasional joyous buck.

“Let’s take a quick peep at the tack room,” Cherry suggested. “My nose is hungry for the smell of good leather.” Her eyes were sparkling, a fiery rose color burned in her cheeks.

Gay smiled. “My nose is, too, Cherry.”

They headed for a small structure adjoining the stoutly-built corrals. Going up a short flight of steps, which ended on a tiny veranda, they opened the door and went in. Saddles, glossy and polished, blankets washed clean of any sweat, nose bags, rows of neck ropes, halters and bridles hung and sat on racks, or wooden pegs jutting from the wall. In one corner grain bags were stacked and above them was a shelf of curry combs and brushes. Another shelf held first aid remedies for horses; a large bottle of Creolin for washing cuts, gall-cure, picric acid, linseed oil, and carbolated vaseline, a hypodermic and ampules of adrenalin to counteract founder. . . .

Taking up a limp, well-oiled bridle rein, Cherry inhaled luxuriously, then the two sisters went systematically over the gear.

“Naka has kept everything in tiptop condition,” Cherry remarked in a satisfied way when, finally, they closed the door behind them.

They paused on the tiny platform outside the tack house. Over the trees lining the horse pasture, which shut off its lower slopes, the blue summit of Haleakala soared into the sky. Gay and Cherry never tired of watching *Naulu* and *Ukiukiu*—Trade-wind-driven clouds—swirling about the height and mass of Haleakala. Forever the opposing Cloud Warriors battled for possession of the summit, Naulu traveling along the southern flank of the mountain, Ukiukiu along the northern. Usually Ukiukiu was victorious, but a fair percentage of victories went to Naulu. Sometimes both Cloud Warriors called a truce and retreated to rest, leaving a clear space between heaped masses of vapor. The Hawaiians called the space *Alanui o Lani*—The Highway to Heaven.

“Haleakala,” Gay whispered, her eyes on the mighty volcano. Her face quivered a little.

Cherry slid her arm through her sister's. They stood taut and close. Something solemn and breath-taking had them in its grip, the sensation that fills men setting out to explore an unknown, uncharted territory.

The staccato sound of fast-galloping hoofs shattered the stillness of the morning like rifle-shots.

"Naps!" they cried delightedly.

Rushing down the steps, they flew through the corrals, opened the gate into the garden and watched the driveway leading from the garden to the road. A black horse with a figure leaning low over the animal's fast-moving withers burst into view. The girls waved and called out. Rushing his horse to within a yard or so of where they stood, Naps flung the animal to its haunches and vaulted off. His dark eyes were shining, his face lighted, even his tumbled black hair looked excited. Dropping the bridle reins, he strode forward and swept both girls into his arms. He gazed at them intently for a minute, then began pommeling them with boisterous, brother-like affection.

"Gosh, it's swell to have you back!" he exulted. "You both look tops. I actually believe you've put on an ounce of flesh, String Bean!"

Cherry fainted at him, he sparred back, and then they all gripped hands.

"Well, here I am to 'keep the bridge with you'—whatever it is," Naps said. His brown eyes were deep and shining, his tanned face, with its merry mouth, was both gay and sensitive. "You've got me half nuts by your veiled allusions to the Great Idea you've come home to put over—"

"As soon as we've eaten we'll tell you about it," Gay promised.

"Okay, Big Chief," Naps agreed good-naturedly. "I'll tie up *Elele* then lets make tracks for the kitchen. This past week has seemed a million years long."

"We thought it best to write ahead to you," Cherry explained. "If we phoned, after we got home, someone else might have answered and found out we were back."

Naps quirked an eyebrow at her as he tied his big black to the hitching rail. "And how long do you figure you can keep your return a secret—on Maui?" He laughed.

"We hope to for a day or so," Gay answered.

"I give you till tonight—maybe," Naps said.

Linking his arms through Gay's and Cherry's, he steered them toward the house. Talking in the disjointed fashion of close friends who have been separated for a long time, the three made their way among the flower beds, dogs trotting at their heels, and went into the kitchen.

The big table in the center was covered with beautifully-woven *lauhala* mats, which set off the blue and white china arranged at each place. There was a low bouquet of flowers in the middle. Nakashima was lolling against the sink, his seamed face filled with satisfaction. Suma was busily quartering golden *papaia*s and handing them to Hana to scrape free of dark, bullet-like seeds. Ah Sam hovered over the big wood range. Bacon and eggs sizzled and spluttered on the stove, buttered toast added its tempting aroma, coffee bubbled contentedly in a pot, pitchers of fresh, foaming milk were on the table.

In the Storm family, as in most white-born Island families, the devotion of masters to servants and servants to masters enriched the days and years of life. Laughter, work, sorrow and happiness were shared, forging bonds that drew all concerned closer and closer.

Feelings too deep for words had Gay by the throat. It had always been a rite of her father's that after an absence, family and servants had the first meal together, and it seemed as if at any instant he would come striding through the door.

"Okay, okay, eat *papaia wikiwiki*, then I give *kaukau*." Ah Sam waved contemptuously at the fruit, then proudly indicated the food on the stove. "And no eat too much *papaia*," he cautioned. "Me velly, velly closs spose you no eat evely kind I fix for breakfast."



REACHING OUT HIS LONG, SLENDER NECK, HAPPY DROPPED HIS BEAUTIFUL
HEAD INTO HER OUTSTRETCHED ARMS.

Everyone sat down. With ohs, and ahs of bliss, Gay and Cherry attacked the *papaia* as if they could not eat enough of it. Ah Sam watched cagily.

Suma rose, replacing the first crescents of fragrant golden fruit with seconds.

“No eat enny more,” the old Chinaman ordered, and Suma smilingly snatched the plates from the girls, who exchanged amused glances. Ah Sam filled fresh plates with crisp bacon, fried eggs, fluffy omelette and small wedges of perfectly brown toast.

Naps eyed the plates, glanced at Cherry, then grinned. “If you eat all that, you’ll qualify for the Fat Lady of the circus.”

Everyone laughed uproariously and Ah Sam pulled out his chair.

“Amelika fella cook more good from me?” he asked, a secret, pleased expression lurking about his eyes.

“They can give you cards and spades,” Cherry teased.

“You speak velly big *punipuni*,” the old man retorted hotly.

“Cherry’s only making foolish with you, Ah Sam,” Gay assured him. “Nowhere we went in America did we eat such food as you cook.”

“I think so, too,” Ah Sam agreed, complacence oozing from his stringy old figure.

“Which place you go?” Nakashima asked, pouring liberal quantities of dark, salty Shoyu over his eggs.

Cherry described the places they’d seen, while Naps and the servants listened avidly. Gay sat absolutely still. Watching the faces around the table in the big, sunny kitchen, the sense of her responsibility as eldest struck home with full force. She was now head of the family and it depended upon her to steer the wisest and straightest course possible. She listened to the loved voices, to the chink of knives and forks working against plates and the tiny tick of wooden chopsticks scraping rice out of china bowls. All at once she felt small, inadequate, inexperienced and beset by problems affecting them all. Involuntarily her eyes went to the open window which framed Haleakala, lifting its blue summit like an altar to God.

Cherry launched into a description of the wonders of America.

“What’s eating you, Gay?” Naps inquired when, for lack of breath, Cherry’s voice gave out. “Usually you’re the one who bubbles about beauty, but you’re still as a mouse.”

“I’m thinking.”

“Why not think aloud?” Naps suggested.

Gay’s eyes went cautiously to Cherry’s, asking a question.

“You carry on from here, Gay,” Cherry suggested. “We might as well ‘shoot the works’ and get everything over with.” She bit off the last words.

Her face was resolute but her eyes were faintly haunted, like those of a rider putting a horse at a jump which he isn't quite certain can be cleared.

Gay stopped her mind from doing loops and circles, took a steadying breath and began. "Well, Godmother took Cherry and me to visit with friends of hers on their ranch. During the summers it's run as a sort of Dude Ranch." Her eyes caught Cherry's excitedly. "One day while Cherry and I were trying to figure out some way to keep on living as we did while Daddy was alive, the idea bounced out of somewhere and landed in the middle of my mind . . . If people made a living Dude Ranching in America, *why couldn't Cherry and I do it in Hawaii?*"

In her own ears the words went ringing off into space, but the servants said nothing and Naps only stared at her small, earnest face, a puzzled expression in the depths of his warm, brown eyes.

Gay forced her voice to a steadiness she did not feel. "It may sound utterly crazy, Naps," she went on, "but actually I think we're on the trail of something sound. Look at the setup. We know we can stay at *Wanaao* for a year or two longer; we have twenty head of fine saddle horses of our own; we know every trail on Haleakala—"

"You mean," Naps burst out, "that you and Cherry are figuring to launch the first Dude Ranch in Hawaii?"

"Exactly," Gay cried, her eyes sparkling.

Naps' incredulous gaze was fixed on her. The servants looked puzzled. Outside the open windows the sunny day went calmly about its bright business.

"It seems to me, Naps," Gay went on, "that Cherry and I are equipped to make a success of such a venture. When an animal is cornered, it fights with teeth and claws for existence. They are the only weapons it knows. We feel now that life's cornered us and we have to earn a living, it's sanest to fight in the same way, using things that we know, that we have!"

She stopped for breath and Naps looked from her to Cherry, a dawning light in his eyes.

"I get the idea, but Schultz and Yarrow have been taking people up Haleakala since Pluto was a pup. While, actually, they're only guides, they're in the field ahead of you—"

"But they do things in a slipshod way," Cherry interrupted. "Their poor horses are galled, half-starved, badly shod—which makes miserable riding. Their saddles and bridles came out of the Ark. They feed the poor innocents who patronize them warped sandwiches, and give them cold water to drink at the top, even when it's freezing. Their people have to sleep at the Rest

House in dirty blankets which heaven only knows how many other persons have used. Gay and I intend to do things *de luxe*!”

A feeling of mounting excitement charged the kitchen. Shadows in the garden looked significant and the trade wind sighing past sounded like messengers tiptoeing along with important secrets.

“*De luxe*?” Naps asked finally, puzzled and intrigued.

“Yes, *de luxe*,” Gay answered. “Instead of charging five dollars per person for the trip to the top, we’re going to charge twenty-five—”

“Twenty-five!” Naps gasped.

“Yes, but we’ll give them their money’s worth, and a bit over for good measure. We intend to make our trips up Haleakala adventures instead of ordeals. We’ll start at noon, get to the summit well before sundown, settle our people as comfortably as possible and while they enjoy the view of the crater, we’ll cook supper. T-bone steaks, broiled over *mamani* coals, fried potatoes and hot Kona coffee, biscuits and canned fruit, or fresh pineapples or mangoes, when they’re in season, for dessert. And we’re going to take up clean sheets and pillowcases to protect our dudes from contact with used blankets. With our fine horses and tack, with slickers to keep people dry if *Ukiukiu* mist blows in—”

Naps threw back his head and the kitchen rang with his delighted laughter. “You’ve got something,” he exulted, banging the table with his fist. “It’s the old angle. ‘If you make a better mouse-trap than anyone else, the world will beat a trail to your door.’ My hat’s off to you both!”

“Then the idea doesn’t seem completely insane to you?” Gay cried, her voice shaky with relief.

“Crazy? In principle it’s as sound as Gibraltar, but—”

“Wait,” Cherry commanded. “As you know, Dad taught us to size up any situation from all angles. In this instance our liabilities about equal our assets, but not quite. Schultz and Yarrow are established in the tourist field ahead of us, that’s granted. Their price to the summit is cheap, ours is steep. But if we get two people to their ten, we’ll make as much money as they do, with less wear and tear on our horses and selves. So, that angle adds up.” Cherry’s voice was triumphant. “Of course, there’s the chance that because we’re girls people may hesitate to patronize us, but everyone in Hawaii *knows we know our stuff*. If lots of people do come and the pace gets fast and furious, we don’t know yet, for sure, whether our bodies will stand up under the hard work we’ll have to do, and keep doing—”

“Saddling and packing horses, wrestling with stiff ropes,” Naps interrupted, “cooking at high altitudes, being responsible for the safety of

inexperienced riders on rough trails—all that will be a haggering business.”

“Because of Dad’s thorough training, we know what we’re going into,” Gay insisted. “It is hard work, even when you do it for fun. When you’re doing it for a living, it’ll be even harder because there can’t be any slip-ups or mistakes, but if you *love* what you’re doing—”

Naps grinned in his attractive manner. “I’ve a hunch you and Cherry will make the grade, Gay. You’ve lived like boys since you were knee-high to grasshoppers. Your Dad taught you everything he knew, and shared all he did with you. He’s . . . he was, tops in every way but, somehow—” Naps hesitated and his eyes wandered around the big room, “I simply can’t picture —”

“*Wanaao* filled with strangers paying for hospitality which was always free and two-handed—till now?” Gay suggested.

“Yes, Gay.”

Gay gazed thoughtfully out of the windows at the sun-drenched garden. “Maybe we’ll have to fix up our guest rooms a bit, everything’s clean but a bit old.” She looked a little concerned, then brightened. “But Cherry and I are not going to open till June tenth and it’s only the first today. If we work like mad between now and then—”

“I no onderstan what-kind you talk,” Nakashima interrupted.

Gay tried to explain. Ah Sam looked cagey.

“I see, make like hotel-styles?” he asked.

“Sort of.” Gay smiled.

“Mebbe-so not bad idea.”

“Suppose, just for argument’s sake,” Naps began, “that no one patronizes you. How’ll you pay Ah Sam and Naka and Suma?”

“Never mind if no can pay. All fellas got some money save-up,” Ah Sam said, his eyes as bright as a mouse’s.

Naps’ serious eyes traveled around the table. “But you all have to eat,” he insisted. Then suddenly he grinned at Gay and Cherry. “Go ahead and try it. If you run into the red—”

“Cherry and I aren’t running up any bills, or borrowing, even from you, Naps.” Gay’s small face was earnest and resolute. “We’ve got to—we intend to—find out whether or not we can stand on our own feet. We’re starting from scratch!”

“What do you mean—from scratch?” Naps demanded.

“Suppose we borrowed money and started up with trumpets and flourishes and the thing flopped? We’d be in debt so deep it would take our

combined earnings as a nurse and a school-teacher,” she flung the words away, “years and years to pay back. If we begin in a small way and move carefully, we may, and probably will, make a go of it. Every bit of overhead must be cut down, so we intend *to do all the work ourselves*.”

She let the words hang in the room; then, with a choke in her voice, turned to the servants. “We can’t keep you on—for the present at any rate,” she finished.

“I think this big humbugger,” Nakashima announced hotly, pushing back his chair. “I go *hanahana* in the garden.” Rising, he started for the door, as if mentally washing his hands of the situation.

“Naka, wait!” Gay said.

He stopped.

“Look,” she went on. “I’m boss now.” Her voice fell like a wounded bird, then soared upward. “We can’t afford to keep any of you until we get our new business swinging. If it clicks, when we can afford it, we’ll re-hire you. But in the meantime, you all will have to find other jobs.”

Ah Sam glared at Gay. “You think us forget how many year us work for Mr. Guy?” he demanded. “You think us leave his girls—”

“But Ah Sam—” Gay began.

“Okay,” Nakashima interrupted. “If you speak us catch nodder jobs, I catch, but I sleep at *Wanaao* every night, just like always.”

Suma said nothing but wept in the silent way of Japanese women.

Gay wiped her moist eyes with her napkin. “Don’t cry, Suma,” she begged. “You’re the finest laundress on Maui and can make money taking in washing from families round here. Naka, you can get a job gardening any time with Mr. Spencer, Ah Sam—”

“I catch cook-jobs easy,” the Chinese broke in haughtily. “You boss. Might-be you velly, velly solly you speak I go. What you know about cook?” He indicated the big stove.

“I know a little,” Gay said weakly.

“Mebbe-so yes, mebbe-so no.”

Nakashima walked out of the kitchen. Ah Sam untied his apron, hung it on a nail and went to the back door for his after-breakfast pipe. Suma and Hana passed silently through the swinging door, as if to take a sorrowful farewell of the house they had tended so long with loving care. Gay blinked tears off her lashes, then looked at Cherry.

“Well, there’s another obstacle behind us—and it hurts,” she finished chokily.

“Look.” Naps crossed his arms on the table. “It seems to me that you and Cherry have bitten off more than you can chew.” His eyes challenged the two girls. “How can you possibly milk the cow, keep up the garden, chop firewood, shoe horses, cook meals, keep the house pretty *and* take people up Haleakala?”

“We can—if we want to *enough*,” Cherry said resolutely.

“You see,” Gay explained, “this goes beyond merely making a living, Naps. People have always questioned Dad’s way of bringing us up. We know, and are determined to prove his way is sound. Before our money runs out, God will send us some dudes,” she ended stoutly.

“Frankly—” Naps looked from Gay to Cherry.

“You may think we’ve shaved things thin, Naps. Maybe we have,” Gay agreed. “Maybe—”

“I do think you’ve shaved things thin,” Naps cut in, “but you probably have your own reasons for doing as you have—”

“We did it,” Gay’s voice rang, “for the same reason that Cortez burned all his ships.”

“I get the idea,” Naps declared. “Gosh, you’re swell, both of you! Let’s go for a good long ride and talk some about this. I’m all steamed up. When this bombshell explodes, it’ll rock Maui to its foundations.” He grinned, and then his face fell. “I wish you’d written me about it, though. I’m booked to visit my cousin Rudi on Kauai for two weeks. I leave tomorrow night and I’d give my eyeteeth to be around when the fireworks begin.”

“We’d like time to get our breath before things start exploding,” Cherry said, looking impish, yet demure.

“I’ll get into my riding togs.” Gay stood up. “I can hardly wait to give Happy a workout.”

“It was swell of you, Naps, to come over and shoe our horses,” Cherry declared.

“Loved doing it” Naps laughed. “I’ll saddle while you girls get ready. We have today, anyway, in the clear.”

The telephone rang.



CHAPTER IV

STATIC

GAY and Cherry froze. Naps grimaced.

“Uncle Archibald!” Cherry announced in stricken tones.

“Aunt Charity,” Gay prophesied, her young face looking all at once remote as she went to answer the phone call.

“Whoever it is, our ride’s shot. Why can’t they leave us alone?” Cherry said, a trifle venomously.

Naps flung a protective arm about her shoulders and gave her an affectionate shake. “No matter how rough the going may be, you and Gay are living at top speed. I envy you.”

He gazed out at the garden filled with color and light. The trees moving in the wind looked like huge birds resettling their bright plumage. The great mountain slept in the sun and the majestic breathing of the Pacific came faintly to their ears.

“When a person knows every step that’s ahead,” Naps told Cherry, “it takes the adventure out of things. I wish—” He broke off as Gay clicked down the phone and started back to where Cherry and he sat.

“You win, Cherry, sort-of. It wasn’t Uncle Archibald, but it was Aunt Laura. She’s all upset because we didn’t write ahead that we were coming back. She and Uncle Archibald have phoned Aunt Charity and they’ll all be here as fast as they can. But I suppose it’s just as well to get the tornado over with,” she finished, looking beset and resolute in one.

“You’d better do the talking, Gay,” Cherry suggested.

“Okay,” Gay agreed, a trifle grimly. “You’d better get dressed—”

“I’d rather keep on my riding clothes,” Cherry said. “I always feel braver in them.”

“I do, too, and we’re going to need every ounce of grit we have to stand up against the Clan. The hard part is, while they’ve never approved of the way Dad brought us up, behind their disapproval, they love us—in their own way. If they were out-and-out enemies—”

“Like Cousin Honor?” Naps suggested, grinning wickedly.

Gay flashed a look at him. “Yes, like Cousin Honor. Ever since I beat her in the first horse race we ever rode, she’s been after my scalp. And I simply can’t respect her. Like us, Cousin Honor belongs to a poor branch of the Storms, but she curries favor and tries to make herself indispensable to the rich ones—”

“*Meeouw! Meeouw!*” Naps teased. “For a nice girl—”

“I don’t know how nice I am deep down inside—where Honor’s concerned,” Gay admitted. “If she comes along—”

“She’s spending this week with Grandmother Storm,” Naps said roguishly. “It isn’t likely she’ll put in an appearance until that important occasion is over.”

“Suits me,” Gay retorted, then added in a sunk way, “When Grandmother Storm finds out what Cherry and I intend doing—”

Naps’ immoderate, delighted laughter filled the *lanai*.

When Gay and Cherry rose reluctantly Naps got to his feet with easy courtesy, announcing, “While you girls put on your armor for the fray I’ll try to smooth down the servants’ ruffled tail-feathers.”

“Thanks,” the sisters called as they hurried down the *lanai*.

“How on earth do you suppose our return leaked out so fast?” Cherry demanded as they prepared to take their showers.

“Maybe we were listed in the Honolulu papers yesterday as returning passengers on the *Malolo*,” Gay surmised. “Stupid of us not to remember that! The papers have been distributed in Wailuku and Kahului by now. Aunt Laura probably saw our names and probably phoned the wharfinger at Lahaina to find out if we came on the *Mauna Kea* last night.”

“Well, our time has come, Gay,” Cherry declared as she dressed. “But for some reason this reminds me a bit of when Dad used to jerk us out of school and take us to Hawaii to see Mauna Loa erupting, or like when—”

With lighted faces they gazed at each other, remembering high passages of their lives.

“Yes, Daddy, the darling old rascal, would relish what’s ahead,” Gay agreed. “He always insisted that it was healthful to explode an occasional bombshell in a family to jar people out of accustomed ruts.”

“But we’re such a large family,” Cherry almost groaned. “And we’re such, well, such assorted varieties of people.”

“Yes,” Gay agreed, smiling in spite of her fears.

They heard the faint hum of an approaching car. Cherry looked out of the window and saw a shiny black limousine sliding majestically along the driveway.

“Uncle Archibald and Aunt Laura,” she announced.

Two other cars followed in the limousine’s wake.

“There’s Sam!” Gay exclaimed. “How nice of him to come.”

Both girls were deeply fond of the man for whom their father had worked so long. Though he was years older than they were, Island custom permitted the use of his first name. They could not forget his many kindnesses, the many privileges he had extended to their father while he lived, or his generous gesture in regard to *Wanaao*, now that they were alone.

Cherry peered at the shabby rented car following Sam Spencer’s. Suddenly she gave a cry of delight.

“Look, Gay, Uncle Bellowing!” she exulted. “What luck he landed just at this time. For pure cussedness he’ll buck the others—”

Gay peered out the window and said thankfully. “It *is* Uncle Bellowing!”

Both girls loved this uncle who acted as First Mate on a second class freighter plying between Honolulu, Shanghai and other way-ports. His spaced visits were events that always carried a flavor of adventure.

They started for the living room with their steps firmer, but deep down inside they felt hollow, young, and scantily armed for the tussle ahead.

“The Clan can’t prevent us from at least taking a try at Dude Ranching,” Cherry said. “If we fail—”

“Let’s pretend Dad’s looking on, smoking his pipe and betting we’ll win, as he used to when we rode races at Kahului against a stiff field,” Gay suggested.

“Let’s,” Cherry agreed in a fierce young way.

They smiled valiantly at each other and walked quickly through the living room, filled with deep peace, then crossed the flower-crowded patio facing Haleakala.

“Let them do their talking first, Gay,” Cherry instructed. “Then give them both barrels!”

Gay nodded, trying to stifle the hurried beating of her heart. Remembering the typhoons of protest which had enveloped Cherry and herself when they left for the mainland, she dreaded the greater storm she knew would be unloosed when the Clan learned of what they planned to do now. While their father had lived, there had never been raised voices in the house. Each problem, as it came, was quietly talked over, then acted upon without fuss or uproar.

Naps was opening the door of the Cadillac. “Beat you to it,” he said laughingly as two solid, elderly people got out. “Cherry and Gay wrote me.” His voice was lightly teasing.

Aunt Laura directed a reproachful look at him. “It’s hardly kind of you —” she said on a quavering note.

“It was extremely inconsiderate of you young ladies not to inform us of the date of your arrival,” Uncle Archibald said icily.

He was a solidly built, handsome man, with an autocratic manner resulting from being, for forty years, the head of a large, important corporation and president of many local committees. His eyes were a cold, steely blue, his head devoid of hair, except for a scant strip across the back from ear to ear, but he wore his baldness as if it were not related to the common baldness of other men.

“But, Uncle Archibald, Cherry and I didn’t want anyone to know we were back,” Gay insisted in as steady a tone as she could command.

“Didn’t want anyone to know you were back!” Uncle Archibald exclaimed.

“Didn’t want anyone to know you were back?” Aunt Laura echoed.

She was a soft, fleshy woman, suggesting an over-powdered marshmallow. Safely established inside citadels of wealth, she had never been battered about by life, she had never been frightened, never challenged. When, as very young children, Gay and Cherry had lost their mother, she had wanted to mother—and smother—them. She had been horrified at the way in which they had been reared—“in breeches, on horseback”—but her disapproval had been tempered a little because the girls’ father had seen to it that they took turns running the house and officiating as hostesses in their home. Now that Gay and Cherry were orphans, she felt possessive once more. Weepingly, she embraced first one, then the other.

“Why didn’t you girls radio us that you were landing at Lahaina last night? We would have met your boat. Young people nowadays are so

thoughtless, and you my own flesh and blood.” She dabbed at her streaming eyes with a morsel of handkerchief.

“Please don’t cry, Aunt Laura,” Gay begged. “I’ll explain in a few minutes why Cherry and I returned as we did.” And she went to meet a slender, blond, middle-aged man, with a gentle face and slightly anxious expression.

“Sam!” She held out both hands and he gripped them.

“It’s nice to have you girls home,” he said, quiet friendliness pouring from his person. “I kept an eye on the place while you and Cherry were gone, though it wasn’t necessary. The servants, of course, carried on just as if you’d been here.”

“Thank you, just the same, Sam,” Cherry said. Then she added, a bit unsteadily, “You don’t know what it means to us to know we can stay at *Wanaao* until we sort of get our bearings.”

“Forget it,” Sam Spencer advised. “Though I don’t know much about ranching, I’m determined to learn it. I haven’t any immediate use for this house. My own place,” he nodded at massed trees in a hollow about a mile distant, “is just as centrally located for ranch work, and since I’ve decided not to hire another manager to take your Dad’s place, *Wanaao* might as well be used as standing idle.”

“Still—we’re grateful,” Gay murmured, then headed toward a hulk of a man bundling out of the shabby rented car.

“Uncle Bellowing!” she cried, with a half-sob.

Uncle Bellowing engulfed her in one big arm, the other was in a sling. After kissing Gay, he embraced Cherry, then stepped back to survey them.

His features were blunt, and forceful, his eyes surprisingly blue in his ruddy face. He was a fine giant of a man who carried himself with an air of being a rollicking rascal. He had not been to Hawaii for two years, and was wrestling now with memories of his other visits when Guy Storm’s gay shout had welcomed him to *Wanaao*.

“Well, the Black Sheep’s on hand to see that your ship is safely launched,” he roared, trying to cover up emotions which might unman him. He eyed Aunt Laura and Uncle Archibald belligerently. “Fellows like us,” his eyes swept Gay and Cherry, “who haven’t got a mint of dough, got to rustle for ourselves. Laura and Archie have never really lived!”

Slow red burned under Uncle Archibald’s skin and Aunt Laura dabbed at her eyes once more, pretending not to hear.

In the awkward pause that followed a steel-gray sedan swooped to a stop in the driveway and a tall, hawk-faced woman emerged, followed by two still taller sons with flat, expressionless faces.

Aunt Charity awed Gay. She was handsome and high-tempered. She had crossed swords with the girls' father on several occasions. Her sons, Luke and Ben, managed sugar plantations their mother owned, moving through life like mechanical figures animated by strings their mother pulled, but they both were smugly complacent about themselves and their ability.

With a sinking heart Gay greeted the trio.

"Well, now that you're back from your orgy of spending—what little you had," Aunt Charity's voice had a stinging note, "what do you propose doing?" She eyed Gay and Cherry critically.

Hot resentment filled Gay but she kept tight hold of herself and kissed her aunt dutifully. "I won't let them get me on the run," she thought.

"It was nice of you all to come so soon," she began bravely, trying to sound cordial.

"It was our duty to do so," Aunt Charity said in brisk, incisive tones. "You and Cherry proved by your reckless behavior when you left Hawaii that you haven't an ounce of common sense between you. Someone has got to take hold. Blood's thicker than water. But whenever I think of your spending—"

"Stow it, Charity!" Uncle Bellowing shouted.

Aunt Charity wheeled on him, noticed the arm tied to his chest. "You've been fighting!" she accused.

"No, arguing," Uncle Bellowing retorted truculently, with a quick twinkling glance at his nieces.

"Let's go indoors and talk," Gay suggested, trying to control her mirth at the shocked looks on the Clan's faces, which Uncle Bellowing was relishing.

Flowers breathed peace into the day, the great mountain lay relaxed in the sun, but invisible dynamite charged the immediate atmosphere. Gay's and Cherry's eyes met, then dropped apart, a hint of apprehension showing in both their faces. Uncle Bellowing's alert, cagey eyes noted this.

"I suppose, Charity," he roared, "you and your spineless sons, are here to assist Archie and Laura in whipping Gay and Cherry into your ways of living. Let 'em be! They know more about life than the lot of you ever will. You're all buried under money, though you walk around as if you were alive. Real living isn't all smooth seas and following winds. It's failures and

triumphs, high moments and low ones, heartaches and back-breaks. It's being torn to bits and tumbling down, then building bigger and better. It's —" His voice gave out and he breathed like a whale.

"Looks as if it's going to be a fine show," Naps whispered encouragingly to Gay as she led the way indoors. "Let 'em roar, then stand up and give it back—with dividends."

Gay managed a smile, but a feeling of complete unreality possessed her as she walked into the living room. She waited while the older people seated themselves. She felt as if life had pounced on her before she was ready for it. An impulse to run away surged through her, but she crushed it down. No matter how far or fast a person ran, he couldn't outdistance life. It had to be faced and wrestled with. Through the open French doors, facing Haleakala, she saw the hundreds of thousands of trees her father had planted, standing proud and straight in the sun. In calm or storm, they stood their ground. Through drought or deluge they grew on. . . .

Gay's misleadingly delicate little face set in lines of courage. Walking to the fireplace, she leaned her arm on the mantel and faced the room. Cherry came and stood beside her. Naps waited, a little apart.

The atmosphere seemed fairly to vibrate with the antagonistic principles and ideals, poles apart, which were ranging themselves for battle. Gay suspected that Cherry, like herself, was wincing from the ordeal ahead.

"I feel," Uncle Archibald began, after a charged silence, "that I should tell you young ladies at once that you cannot look to me for support—"

"No such thought has ever entered our minds," Gay interrupted hotly. "Cherry and I each have two eyes, two hands, two feet and our minds to work with—"

"To date, neither of you has given any evidence of the last," Uncle Archibald cut her off. "We—" his glance gathered up the assembled relatives.

"Cherry and I know exactly how you all feel about what we did with the little money we had," Gay cut in. "You made that quite clear before we left. But we just had to—"

"That's aside from the matter we're here to settle," Aunt Charity said crisply. "Now your money's spent, what do you propose to do?"

Sam Spencer moved uneasily in his chair. He had a remote, withdrawn air but concern poured invisibly from his slight person.

"Well, Cherry's not going to train to be a nurse and I'm not going to teach school, at least, not for more than one year—I hope," Gay added. "I've already signed up for the Makawao school this fall."

“You mean—” Aunt Charity’s voice rose.

“I wrote and asked for a position right after Cherry and I got to San Francisco,” Gay explained. “Thanks to D. C. Lindsay’s Aloha for Dad, he fixed it up.”

“Well, that’s something,” Aunt Charity snapped, in a dashed way.

Off in the hills a cow lowed contentedly to the calf, and a horse gave a shrill, joyous neigh, like a trumpet call to freedom. Uncle Bellowing drew out a pipe, as knotty and rough-looking as himself, and began slowly filling it with strong-smelling tobacco. Aunt Laura sniffed unhappily. Aunt Charity, without moving, gave the impression that she was disgustingly jerking away her skirts.

“And what, if I may inquire,” Uncle Archibald began stiffly, “do you propose to do, Cherry? Gay’s salary at Makawao, eighty dollars a month, will hardly keep you both. It is now June first and the fall semester is still three and a half months away.”

“We’ve still some money left,” Cherry retorted defiantly.

The hollow laughter of Ben and Luke filled the room.

“It will require a lot of money to take you even through this month,” Uncle Archibald snorted.

“We’ve already told the servants to find new jobs,” Gay said, quietly.

“But that doesn’t clear up what we’re here to find out,” Uncle Archibald almost shouted. “Until school starts, how do you propose—”

Gay made a little gesture, silencing him. “I’ll tell you what Cherry and I plan to do,” she said. Gripping the mantel with icy fingers, she outlined their plan in a few terse sentences.

“You mean,” Aunt Charity screamed indignantly, “that you girls intend to turn *Wanaao* into a sort of hotel and drag tourists up Haleakala?”

“Exactly,” Gay answered, more firmly than she felt.

Luke and Ben began laughing again. Uncle Archibald turned red, then white. Aunt Laura resumed her weak weeping.

“You’re madder than we’ve always suspected you of being,” Aunt Charity finally exploded, her eyes almost out of focus. “But girls raised the way you were—”

“Leave Daddy out of this, please,” Gay warned.

“Sam!” Aunt Charity whirled. “We’re not going to permit our nieces to make public spectacles of themselves. If they did not have this place for a year, they would be compelled—”

"My word has been given," Sam Spencer said, wriggling his eyebrows unhappily and looking ill at ease and superfluous in this family deadlock.

"I insist, and I'm speaking for the lot of us," Aunt Charity went on in high, excited tones, "that you take *Wanaao* back! That will make this mad scheme impossible." Her teeth bit down on the words.

"I feel," Sam Spencer began, batting his eyelids in a bothered, embarrassed way, "quite unnecessary to this family conference." He eyed the circle of outraged faces.

"Conference my eye!" Bellowing shouted. "Family—*row*!" And his huge, jeering laughter echoed against the beamed ceiling.

The rancher rose and edged toward the door.

"Please don't go," Gay begged. "After the Clan leaves there are a couple of matters Cherry and I want to talk over with you in—in—connection with our business."

"I'll have a pipe in the garden and wait." And Sam Spencer vanished through the open doors.

"Archibald!" Aunt Charity whirled on her brother.

"Just an instant, please, Aunt Charity," Gay said. "I want the floor a few minutes longer. This dude-ranching idea originated with me—"

"It would," Aunt Charity snapped.

"But I'm with Gay a hundred per cent," Cherry broke in. "We're on the trail of something sound and intend to go ahead with it, no matter what you all may say or try to do, to stop us."

"That's the old fight!" Uncle Bellowing brandished his good arm. "Stick to your guns and don't let anyone get your ship off the course you've charted."

Aunt Charity and Uncle Archibald directed blistering looks at him. The rough old man was a thorn in the side of the Storm clan. Bored with a life, hedged in by too many money-piles, a throwback to some rugged ancestor whose name had been quietly buried by time, Bellowing Ben had taken to the sea when he was twelve and now only returned at intervals to visit the branch of the family he loved—Gay, Cherry, and their father.

He slumped back in a deep chair, impishly relishing the effect that his presence created. His ruddy, bearded face, heavy shoulders and casual appearance were so many jarring notes to the carefully subdued, elegant garb of his rich, conservative relatives, who were pillars of everything important on the island of Maui. He grinned, winked at Gay and Cherry, and waited expectantly.

“Cherry and I have thought out this idea carefully and weighed it from every angle.” Gay went on quietly. “Why shouldn’t we turn our unusual upbringing to good account?” Her voice had a challenging tone. “Instead of ending the outdoor living we love, we intend to direct it into channels which will bring financial returns. It will be hard to let bad riders use our beautiful horses—hard, anyway for a while, to take all sorts of people into the home we love. But that’s better than leaving *Wanaao* to lead dull, humdrum lives. If we did as you’d like us to do, we could be sure, in time, of small, regular incomes. If we follow our program, we may make money—or fall flat on our faces. But we’re willing to take a chance.”

Luke and Ben snickered. Gay ignored them.

“Thanks to Daddy, we’re experts with horses and know the out-of-doors. Daddy always said riding horse races, as we have, was the best possible training to prepare us to tackle life.”

Uncle Archibald gave a disgusted snort. Aunt Charity gestured impatiently. Uncle Bellowing watched alertly from his deep chair.

“But it is,” Gay insisted, her face serious, her eyes steady. “In a horse race you must fight for your place, watch for openings, take chances, call on every ounce of courage and knowledge you have. But you must never foul the other fellow or break rules, or you’ll be disqualified. And no matter what, you must come in with a smile, which is all just about what we need to handle the job ahead of us.”

Luke and Ben started a whispered exchange. Their mother silenced them with an angry gesture, then whirled on her nieces.

“Upon my word—” she began.

“Please, Aunt Charity, I haven’t finished yet—”

“We’ve heard sufficient.” Uncle Archibald got furiously to his feet. “Neither of you are of age—”

“You can’t stop us, even if we aren’t,” Gay insisted. “We’re not asking any of you for help or for money. Thousands of girls all over the world, about our ages, are earning their living. And you can’t do anything to block us, now. It’s too late. The wheels are already in motion.”

“What on earth do you mean, ‘already in motion’?” Uncle Archibald roared, dignity forgotten.

“As soon as we docked in Honolulu yesterday, Cherry and I went to all the leading hotels and announced we were in the business of guiding tourists up Haleakala and taking them into *Wanaao*. We listed the time and cost of each trip to the top of Haleakala, or around the island. We explained to the hotel managers that our business would be on *de luxe* lines, that we would

serve hot meals on the trips and supply everything necessary for the comfort of people who come to us, and that every trip would be personally conducted by either Cherry or myself.” Gay paused to get her breath, then finished, “And we’re to have a full-page ad in next Sunday’s paper!”

The warm atmosphere of the kindly room fell notches, then froze into a silence, behind which warring impulses battled.

“Oh, don’t you see we’ve got something sound?” Gay cried when she could endure the tension no longer. “And aside from just seeing the sights of the Island, wouldn’t anyone with sense love to come and just stay at *Wanaao*?”

Her eyes swept the wide-open doors framing colorful vistas of the Island, then came back to the room with its noble fireplace, long polished table, flanking a deep step down into a glassed-in fernery where a tiny, splashing fountain sent liquid, musical notes into the atmosphere.

“Think of the people who’ve sat in this room,” she urged, “who spent months with Daddy—artists, writers, celebrities, world-travelers—”

“His hospitality was free, yours will cost money,” Aunt Charity broke in, her voice edged with acid.

“We’ll manage, somehow, to give people who come here the extra dividends that money won’t buy,” Gay insisted.

“Such as what?” Luke asked, amusedly, from the couch where he sprawled.

“The sort of dividends Dad put into life,” Gay flashed, and her eyes sought her father’s picture.

Silence again held the room. Guy Storm smiled down from the wall as though he were amused by the fact that these people had been shocked when they learned that, aside from his modest life insurance, he had made no further provision for his daughters’ future. Yet he had bequeathed Gay and Cherry a finer inheritance than the largest fortune in the world—courage, faith in themselves, quick, warm hearts and his gay adventuresome spirit . . .

“If you all could only look at this impersonally,” Gay continued finally. “Can’t you see that Cherry and I have gone into this with wide-open minds and eyes. Plus that, we haven’t left a stone unturned. As well as taking people into our home as paying guests, as well as guiding parties up Haleakala, we intend to meet every Inter-Island boat with our car and get added money—”

“You mean you intend to become rent-chauffeurs, *too*!” Aunt Charity almost screeched. “And line up on the wharf with Filipinos, Hawaiians and

Japanese!” Her eyes blazed and her proud, aquiline nose quivered with indignation.

“Why not?” Gay asked, pushing her hair back from her forehead. “Dad always said it didn’t matter *what* a person did, *how* he did it was the important part. He said a person could drive a garbage wagon with dignity and dash.” She faced the Clan defiantly.

“This—this will kill Grandmother Storm,” Aunt Laura sobbed.

“We’re leaving, Laura.” Uncle Archibald’s face was the dead white of a bone. “We’re washing our hands of this whole affair.”

“But we simply cannot permit our nieces to become guides, rent-chauffeurs—” Aunt Laura’s voice gave out and her large, fleshy form shook with sobs.

“Get hold of yourself, Laura,” Uncle Archibald commanded. “We’re leaving.”

“You might as well,” Gay said exhaustedly. “Cherry and I want to prove we can stand on our own feet, earn our living in a man’s field. We’re going to be better guides than Schultz and Yarrow. They’re just in it for money; we’re going into it because we love the out-of-doors, beauty, adventure—” Her voice trailed off.

Cherry slid her arm through Gay’s and viced it.

“Are you all right, Gay?” she asked.

“Perfectly all right.” Gay flung up her small, proud head.

“You’re both all right! You’re grand!” Uncle Bellowing roared, heaving to his feet. “Get to galley west out of here, all of you.” He brandished an enraged arm. “Cherry and Gay are worth the lot of you. They’re not scared of life. They’re willing to pitch in and work like stevedores—which is more than any of you have ever done. Everyone’s got the right to live as he pleases. You do, I do, Gay and Cherry—”

“They aren’t adults,” Aunt Charity broke in, her voice shrill with anger.

“They’ve got more brain-power than the whole shebang and kaboodle of you cabbages and turnips,” Uncle Bellowing shouted. “Cast off your hawsers and get out of here. Hoist your anchors before I blow the lot of you down with my good arm!” He leaned forward like a Kodiak bear starting into action. “The kids have got a right to take a crack at this business. If any of you try to block ’em you’ve got to reckon with me when I come back. Go and sit in your swank houses which were earned by your fathers and grandfathers!”

“Come!” Aunt Charity’s eyes commanded her sons. Luke and Ben rose and followed in her wake as she marched icily and loftily toward the door.

“Flap your fins, Archie, you trout, and keep your slippery snout out of Gay’s and Cherry’s lives or I’ll beat the livin’ daylights out of you!” And with a vast, enraged gesture, Uncle Bellowing herded his older brother and weeping sister-in-law out of the room.



CHAPTER V

SCRAMBLED TAKE-OFF

"I FEEL as if several tractors had run over me," Gay sighed, sinking into the nearest chair.

"It's lucky you did the talking," Cherry remarked. "I was so furious I would have lost my temper completely, and if you lose *that* the battle's lost."

Uncle Bellowing lowered his bulk into a capacious chair and studied his nieces. "Well, you've cast off all your moorings," he observed, his voice tinged with satisfaction. "The Clan's washed its hands of you both."

"I wonder?" Naps looked as indolent and relaxed as a Hawaiian, except for his eyes, which were watchful and sparkling.

"We're rid of them for a while, at any rate." Cherry chuckled.

Outside the open French windows the mammoth shape of Haleakala showed a tawny blue. The early morning clearness was leaving the mountain reluctantly as the Cloud warriors *Ukiukiu* and *Naulu* began assembling their forces to wage their eternal battle for possession of the summit.

"Want to come with me and talk to Sam about pasturing some of our horses in Kula?" she asked. "You're the diplomat of the family, Gay. When it comes to humping and heaving saddles and packs," Cherry grinned like a boy, "I'm there, but—" She gestured expressively.

Gay smiled and got up. As she stepped through the door she spotted the rancher slowly pacing a remote section of the garden. Hearing her footsteps, he turned, a faint smile lighting his mild blue eyes.

"I'm sorry," Gay began, "that you got let in for—"

"I should have waited until later in the day to come over," he told her. "But I knew coming home to an empty house would be tough."

A warm little glow stole through Gay, chilled and weary from the ordeal just behind.

"Sam," her voice was a trifle breathless, "there's a favor Cherry and I want to ask of you."

"Anything I can do to make things easier—"

"It isn't much." Gay hesitated. "And if we have any sort of luck getting mountain-parties this summer, we won't have to take advantage of what I'm going to ask you."

Sam Spencer watched her with growing admiration for the valiant spirit housed in such a slight body. He noted the slim strength of her tanned arms, the straightness of her back, and the firm way she stood in her worn boots and riding breeches.

"Go on, Gay," he urged.

"As you know, the horse-pasture that goes with *Wanaao* can't carry twenty head the year round. If we could afford to feed all the horses grain it would be a different matter. Until then," a faint flush crept into her cheeks, "would you let us pasture a few of them in your Kula paddock?" She motioned toward the distant green hills shimmering in the sun. "Of course we'll pay you whatever you feel right."

"You can pasture them free, Gay."

"No, Cherry and I want—"

"I understand how you girls feel, and admire your pluck. I hope you'll be able to put this dude-ranch over. I'm glad to have some share in it. The work'll be hard for you, though."

"We know." Gay smiled resolutely.

"Don't kill yourselves."

"We're tough—thanks to Dad."

"I'm afraid the Clan isn't going to forget that in a way I'm 'party to the crime.'" The rancher grinned and waved toward the old house resting happily among its flowers and trees.

"How could you know when we came home we'd have such a mad scheme in our heads?" Gay asked. "You only let us have *Wanaao* to make things easier than they would have been otherwise. We are so grateful—"

Sam Spencer brushed this aside hastily. "You said you'd signed up to teach this fall?"

“Yes, Sam, but that’s still three months away. Between now and September Cherry and I hope to get our business moving. If even a few tourists come this summer, we’ll be able to sled through the fall and winter and get ready for a big season next year—we hope!”

“Suppose you have people into the fall. How do you propose to manage?”

“Cherry will take parties to the top during the five week-days, I’ll take any trips scheduled for Saturdays. During the week I’ll drive the car after school hours to meet boats. I’ll cook and run the house. I’m not very expert in the kitchen but think I can manage. Cherry will keep up the garden, milk, shoe horses, take the majority of the trips—” She broke off.

“Your Dad would be mighty proud of you, if he knew,” Sam said in an honoring voice. “But you girls would have to be triplicates to handle all you’re planning to do.”

“We think we can swing it,” Gay said, a wistful note in her voice.

“Of course you can pasture some of your horses on the Kula Range,” Sam said abruptly. “As you know, a few friends have always run some of their saddle horses on the ranch.”

“Thanks a million, Sam.” Gay felt almost weak with relief. “We won’t have to send any for a few weeks. I see, from the condition of the pasture, that you—”

Sam waved it aside. “All your horses were running *mauka*,” he indicated the upper grasslands, “until a few days ago when Naps came and said he’d bring them in and get them shod before you got back.” Drawing a cigar from his pocket, he lighted it. “Well, I must shove off. Good luck—and Aloha.”

“Thanks for everything,” Gay said in moved tones.

As she watched him drive off, standing in the warm sunlight, a sudden panic seized her. Suppose nobody came? Suppose Cherry and she waited all summer without a single guest? She thrust the thought resolutely from her and gazed at the mountain she loved. For as far back as she could remember people had been coming from all parts of the world to see the crater of Haleakala. The law of averages should work it out so that at least a small percentage of sight-seers would pass through Cherry’s and her hands. Giving herself a brisk mental shake, she started back for the house.

“It’s all set,” she announced when she joined the others, who had adjourned to the *lanai*.

“Fine!” Cherry said. Then she added, “I’m hungry.”

“After that thumping breakfast!” Naps teased.

“Yes.” Cherry made a face at him.

“I’m as hollow as a ship’s hold without a cargo.” Uncle Bellowing boomed. “Must be nigh to noon.” Hauling out his big watch, he consulted it. “Blast my eyes! It’s only ten-twenty.”

“Our energy’s all burned up by the family set-to.” Gay turned toward the house. “I’ll find Ah Sam and ask him to make us a snack.”

When she rejoined them she made a wry face. “Ah Sam’s in a completely poisonous temper. He said ‘Okay, okay I catch *kaukau* but me velly velly *huhu* with you and Chelly. Tonight I catch new jobs.’ And he flounced around like a chicken with its head cut off.”

Uncle Bellowing grinned. “It’s not going to be all beer and skittles, trying to put this thing over without the servants to help you. Better let me loan you five hundred dollars so you can keep them on, anyway, through the summer.”

“No,” Cherry broke in. “Either we swing this alone, or we don’t swing it. If our dude-ranch goes into a tail spin, we’ll teach and nurse. ’Till then—” Her voice broke off.

“In other words,” Uncle Bellowing’s voice had a pleased sound, “you’re telling me to keep my hands off your tiller, as I told Archie to keep his snout out of your business.”

“Exactly,” Cherry said, her affectionate smile tempering her abruptness. She energetically pounded a fat cushion into a more comfortable shape, as though she were shaping her future to fit her wishes.

Ah Sam appeared with a loaded tray. “Here *kaukau*,” he indicated sandwiches, tall glasses of chilled pineapple juice, stuffed eggs, thin watercress minced into a bowl of cottage cheese, and sliced cold chicken, which he had roasted since breakfast. “Tomorrow you velly, velly solly you speak all mans find new jobs. After I gone—” And he left abruptly, still spluttering like a kettle forgotten on a hot stove.

When the platters were clean, Naps rose. “I have to beat it,” he explained. “Mom has invited Aunt Lucy and Cousin Herbert to lunch. I couldn’t wangle out of it because you said no one was to know you were back.” He laughed in a gay, impish way. “I’ll pop over some time tomorrow, if I can, before sailing.” And he went swinging off.

The telephone rang.

“Another member of the Clan,” Cherry snapped. “I’d like to put an ax through that phone.”

Gay streaked down the long *lanai* and, seating herself at the small telephone table, took the receiver off its hook. A fat golden bumblebee buzzed among heliotrope bushes lifting their fragrant purple flowers to the eaves. Cherry and her uncle smiled encouragingly at each other until some inflection in Gay's voice arrested their attention. Uncle Bellowing leaned forward. Cherry whipped to a sitting position.

"Yes? Yes, that's correct, Mr. Field. Cherry and I notified the leading hotels in Honolulu yesterday that we're going into the business of taking people up Haleakala and turning *Wanaao* into a kind of a dude-ranch. . . . Our ad will be in next Sunday's paper, with rates and details of various trips and the cost of staying at the house. . . ."

Gay's figure suddenly became electrified and her eyes flew wide open.

"You say our ad's in *today's* paper!" Her voice rose protestingly. "Well, if it is, it is. . . . But we won't open 'till June tenth." There was a note of finality in her voice, then it turned into a protesting wail.

"What did you *say*? You mean you're sending two people to us already! It's impossible. We can't take them. We only came home last night. . . . You say *they're already on their way up here!*" She gestured frantically. "Isn't there any way you can stop them? By phone? Or somehow!"

Cherry sprang to her feet, looking as outraged as a bird dog being hurried on a tricky scent.

"Gay, tell him we won't take them!"

Gay signed for her sister to be quiet.

"What's that? A Professor and Mrs. Tozzer from Boston?" Gay now acted as if she were talking in a bad dream. "All right, I'll see what we can do."

She hung up and sat for an instant looking completely stunned.

"That was Mr. Field," she began dully.

"I got the setup from your end of the conversation, Gay," Cherry said, her face crimson. "Call Mr. Field back and tell him to send someone after the professor and his wife and make them at least postpone going up Haleakala till tomorrow. Only three of the horses are shod and we'll need a fourth for the pack. I can't possibly shoe another horse between now and noon and get everything else ready as well."

A charged silence filled the *lanai*.

"Wait an instant, while I try to think," Gay said. "Naps has gone. I don't want to ask any more favors from Sam; he has done enough for us already."

Suddenly her face lighted. “I’ll phone Billy Clark. He was Dad’s pal and lives only five miles away.” Dashing to the phone, she began ringing the bell in a local call.

After a short silence, she said, “Billy? It’s Gay. Yes—we arrived home last night. Could you possibly send us a horse right away? Anything will do. It’s frightfully important. I’ll explain why we need it when I have time . . . Oh, you *angel*. Send it *wikiwiki*. A million *mahalos*. Thanks!”

She hung up triumphantly.

“Bill says he’s sending us a horse in nothing flat.”

Cherry looked at her sister indignantly. “You’re nuts, Gay! How can we possibly do all that has to be done in—” she calculated, “in less than two hours? Saddle the horses, get food ready, roll slickers in case it grows misty, get sheets and pillowcases packed, fill nose bags with grain, go to Makawao for steaks. . . .” Her breath gave out.

Gay gazed into Cherry’s blazing eyes, Uncle Bellowing watched the young pair in silence but even his hulking shoulders looked intent.

“I’ll admit this is a pretty steep assignment, Cherry, but stop and think for a minute.” Gay paused, then exclaimed on a high, excited note, “Don’t you realize that *our business has started?*”

Cherry felt a sort of mental recoil. She looked at her sister in awed silence. When the staggering thought had finally registered, it galvanized her into action.

“Uncle Bellowing,” she said, turning, “your car’s still here. Will you go to Makawao and buy three big T-bone steaks? The best you can find. While I get the horses and gear ready, Gay can take charge of the food end and, if we all work at top speed, we ought to be ready by noon.”

“Blistering barnacles, of course I will,” Uncle Bellowing shouted, heaving to his feet. “I’ll be back as fast as possible, kids.” And he went scooting off.

“Step on it, Gay,” Cherry called over her shoulder as she went streaking through the living room.

Gay nodded, then stood still for an instant. Before they had even had time to get their breath, they had been hurled into action! “I mustn’t get in a panic,” she thought. “It’s fine! It’s swell!”

“Oh, thank You, God, thank You!” she added earnestly and began stacking empty glasses and plates on to the tray. The house must be presentable in case the professor and his wife wanted to come in and rest for

a few minutes before setting off on the long trip to the summit. She sped toward the kitchen.

“Ah Sam!” she called as she put her shoulder against the swinging door. Her eyes leaped to the clock. Eleven-ten. But there was no familiar figure in white bending over the stove. She looked at the peg on the wall where his apron always hung between meals. It was gone . . .

“Ah Sam!” she cried wildly. Setting down the tray, she dashed through the pantry. Perhaps he had concluded that, as they had just had a snack, it would be wiser to lunch at one-thirty. Probably he was out bringing in firewood. Or smoking his wee Chinese pipe with its thimble-sized brass bowl at the end of the three-sided stem. But he wasn’t squatting under the bamboos where he loved to meditate.

“Ah Sam!” She tore across the garden to the small cottage he shared with Nakashima. The door was closed. She rapped on it. No answer. She opened it. The room was empty. He had gone to hunt a new job. The realization stunned her.

Speeding back to the house, she hurriedly washed a dozen potatoes and put them on to boil, for she knew from experience that cooking at high altitudes was a slow job and it would expedite getting supper for Cherry if the potatoes were partly cooked before she sliced and fried them. Luckily, the fire hadn’t quite died out and Gay stuffed light wood into the range for quick heat. Her hands were shaking, her heart beat so hard that it nearly choked her.

Then, swiftly, she began assembling items needed on a trip to the summit; essentials learned by rote, plus new items necessary for a trip *de luxe*.

Coffee, sugar, canned milk, salt, pepper, butter, matches, tea, eggs, bacon, bread, kerosene, a lantern . . . Without wasted motions she arranged the items on the table. Now, jam, canned fruit, pineapple juice for breakfast, pancake flour . . . On and on, until the list was completed and re-checked.

While Gay worked, she wondered how Cherry was progressing. Assuring herself that the fire was burning strongly, she thrust more wood in the stove. The potatoes must be parboiled.

She realized that she was trembling like an over-ridden horse. Giving herself a brisk mental shake, she raced through the house to the linen closet. Four clean sheets, two pillow slips, two hand towels, washcloths, soap. . . . There was an ample supply of blankets in the Rest House at the summit, which people of all nationalities and from all walks of life had rolled about them over a period of years. A tingle of pleasure went through her, realizing

that Cherry's "dudes" would sleep between clean sheets, which would protect them from contact with used bedding.

When the needed articles were assembled, she picked them up and hurried to her bedroom. Stacking the linens on the big four-poster, she went into the large cupboard in her father's room where camp-gear was kept and took a waterproof square of canvas off a shelf. When the linens were carefully wrapped to protect them from possible moisture, she headed for the corrals.

The three shod horses, Happy, Play Boy, and Kaupo, were saddled and tied to the hitching rail. Six dogs lay hopefully on the grass, anticipating a trip. The packsaddle sat on the fence, waiting for the promised horse. Cherry did not look up when Gay approached.

"Here's the linen and I'll have the food packed and bring it to you directly," Gay panted.

"Okay."

"Is something wrong?" Gay asked anxiously.

"I hate being rushed into things, Gay."

"Actually, Cherry," Gay said, "we haven't any choice. It would have been very foolish to have turned down our first customers—a bad start."

"I see what you mean, Gay," Cherry said in a less ruffled voice, "but it's such a wild scramble. I feel as if someone were shoving me around roughly." She gave a half-laugh, "We are being shoved about—by life. When the professor and his wife come, keep talking—fast. They may ask how long we've been in the business. If they find out that they're our first—victims, they may get cold feet and back out."

"I'll do the best I can," Gay promised.

She picked up the two chuck-boxes of light wood, fashioned to hang on each side of the packsaddle, and made for the kitchen. The potatoes were parboiled. Pouring the water off, she set them to cool while she packed the rest of the supplies. Cherry came in and, together, they carried the boxes to the corrals and set them down on the grass.

"It's about time Billy's horse was getting here," Cherry said nervously.

"Yes," Gay agreed. "Listen!"

The clop-clop of approaching hoofs sounded on the road and between the eucalyptus trunks lining it, the figure of a Hawaiian *paniolo* showed, leading a saddleless horse beside his own.

"There it comes," Cherry said. "You pack and saddle, Gay, while I change into mountain clothes." And she started for the house.

The *paniolo* came in jauntily, a lanky young Hawaiian with smiling dark eyes and dazzling white teeth. Flowers nodded around the crown of his tattered straw hat and he lounged in his saddle with the ease of a person whose life has been, mostly, spent astride of horses.

“Aloha! Here the *lio*.” He tossed the lead-rope to Gay.

“Thanks, Kealoha.”

“Have good time in America?”

“Swell.”

“I come tomorrow or next day for the horse,” he called, jogging off as if the world and its affairs were no concern of his.

Gay swung the saddle off the rail on to the mare’s back, then an appalled expression went over her face. She saw that the mare was due to have a colt before very long. The bones of her arms felt as if they were melting. To ride a mare gently around on level ground when she was in foal was one matter; to take her on a seventeen-mile trip to the summit of Haleakala, a climb from two thousand feet above sea level to ten, was another. If she overstrained, she might have her colt on the way!

A sort of rage, mixed with weakness, swept Gay. She should have explained the situation to her father’s small-rancher friend. But there hadn’t been time. What would Cherry say? What could they do? There wasn’t time to send for another horse, or shoe one. She glanced at her wrist watch. Ten to twelve. The professor and his wife would be arriving at any instant. The sound of a car roaring up the hill flung her mind into focus. There was nothing to be done but—risk it! Frantically, she began saddling and packing.

She glanced around as the car swung into the driveway. It was Uncle Bellowing. The driver stopped when he was abreast of where Gay stood, strapping the packs onto the sturdy old mare. Uncle Bellowing got out with a neatly wrapped package in his hands.

“These are the best steaks Cup Choy had,” he announced proudly. “My Aloha—for this first trip.”

“Thanks,” Gay said, weakly.

“Why, stow it! Are you crying?”

“Almost.” Gay choked and indicated the mare.

Despite years at sea, Uncle Bellowing was Island-raised and instantly recognized the mare’s condition. For an instant he looked floored, then went into shouts of laughter.

“It isn’t funny—it’s awful!” Gay almost wailed, then turned her head sharply. “There’s another car—probably Professor Tozzer and his wife.”

"I'll—blow," Uncle Bellowing announced.

"Don't, please," Gay begged.

"Won't do to have your dudes see me in the offing," Uncle Bellowing rumbled. "I'm rough-and-tough, no addition to the landscape when you kids are just launching your business. Besides, I've an important matter to attend to before I sail tonight. Tell Cherry good-bye." He kissed Gay fondly. "I'll be back in a few months to check up on how you're making out. Good luck and Aloha!" He patted her shoulder, climbed into the car and drove off, brandishing a heavy, encouraging arm.

The cars crossed halfway down the driveway. Gay went forward.

"Professor Tozzer?" she asked when the driver stopped.

"Yes. Miss Storm?"

"One of them." Gay tried to make her voice cool and collected, while blood roared in her head.

The pleasant, stockily-built man beamed and got out, followed by a lean, cordial woman. Gay shook hands with them both.

"What an utterly charming place," Mrs. Tozzer commented, eyeing the fresh green lawns and color-jammed flower beds. "Do you take paying guests as well as guide trips up the mountain?"

"Yes, we expect—we *do*."

"If we weren't scheduled to catch the *Kinau* tomorrow night to see the Volcano of Kilauea, I'd be tempted to stay."

"I would be, too," Professor Tozzer agreed heartily, adjusting his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Are you taking us up?" Professor Tozzer asked, indicating Gay's riding clothes.

"No, my sister is. We—alternate."

Gay saw Cherry approaching and cold shivers ran up and down her spine. When she saw that mare . . . For an instant everything went out of focus.

Cherry shook hands with the Tozzers, then asked, a little apprehensively, "Have you much luggage?"

"Only our sweaters and a small leather handbag," the Professor answered brightly. "We've traveled a lot and the lighter you go—" He took the satchel from the driver, paid him and was about to instruct him, when he turned. "At what time shall I tell our driver to come for us tomorrow?" he asked.

"We should be back about noon," Cherry answered over her shoulder, starting toward the pack horse.

Gay braced and perspiration burst out on her forehead. Cherry stopped, gave Gay one wild, incredulous look, in which unbelief and outrage mingled, then she set the bag down on the grass and began grimly unsaddling the mare.

"Would you like to go indoors for a few moments?" Gay asked the Tozzers, trying to control the shaking of her voice. Something inside her was running around, crying and wringing its hands. "It'll be five or ten minutes yet before Cherry is ready to go."

"Will she go or will she balk and refuse to attempt the trip to the summit?" Gay wondered.

"Yes, I'd like to see the house," Mrs. Tozzer said in her serene voice. "If the interior is as charming as the exterior—"

Gay went with them and showed them to a spare bedroom.

"The bath adjoins, if you care to wash up. I'll come for you when Cherry is ready." In her own ears her voice sounded unreal.

"We'll make ourselves at home," the pleasant middle-aged couple assured her, gazing delightedly at the fern and palm filled *lanai*.

Like a person in a daze, Gay retraced her steps to the corrals. Cherry was changing the pack saddle to Happy's back. That meant . . . an uprush of relief streamed through her, that meant Cherry was going to see the thing through! Happy had never carried a packsaddle and kept looking around in a puzzled way.

"I've—I've got to ride this mare," Cherry said through gritted teeth. "I'm lighter than the pack—" She swallowed. "If she foals on the trip, we'll be the laughing stock of Maui, and Schultz and Yarrow will howl! Can't you hear that horrible Schultz—'Ach, doze Storm girls dot is how goot horsevimen dey are!'" She slapped down the girth angrily. "Oh, Gay—I'll—I'll die if—" Tears of fury were in her voice.

"I know how you feel, Cherry. I—I felt the same way when I saw," Gay said chokily. "It's awful. On this first trip hangs our future. If it's successful, it'll give us courage and confidence. If it ends in a fiasco—" She laid an unsteady hand on the glossy shoulder of the complacent mare. "Stand by us, old girl," she begged. "Don't have your colt on the way."

"Please bring the professor and his wife," Cherry directed edgily. "I want to get off. We can't make our usual time to the top—with her." She indicated the mare. "We'll have to go at a walk all the way, and rest often. I can't take

any chances. It'll be about dark before we get to the summit. I hope Schultz and Yarrow won't be taking a party up, too."

Gay hurried to the house.

"Ridden much?" Cherry asked, when Gay returned with the Tozzers.

"We're not experts, though we've ridden trail in most of the National Parks in the West," Mrs. Tozzer replied. "If you go slowly, I don't think you'll find us too much trouble."

"You can't go out of a walk climbing Haleakala," Cherry said in faintly grim tones.

She assisted the professor on to Play Boy while Gay put Mrs. Tozzer on small, trail-wise Kaupo.

"What a chunky little beauty," the woman commented.

"Kaupo's Cherry's best cow pony," Gay explained. "She takes everything at our County Fairs."

"Your animals and gear are tiptop," Professor Tozzer remarked in pleased tones. "From that I judge you know your business thoroughly."

"Our Dad trained us," Gay said, controlling the catch in her throat.

Cherry mounted, lead-rope in hand. Happy looked uneasily at the pack bulging out on each side of his ribs, and Gay wondered wildly if he might resent it sufficiently to buck.

"Happy," she said, warningly and soothingly. He turned great dark eyes on her, relaxed and stepped out freely and strongly.

The waiting dogs leaped up eagerly.

"Don't let them come," Cherry called. "I can't be bothered with them this time—" She broke off hurriedly.

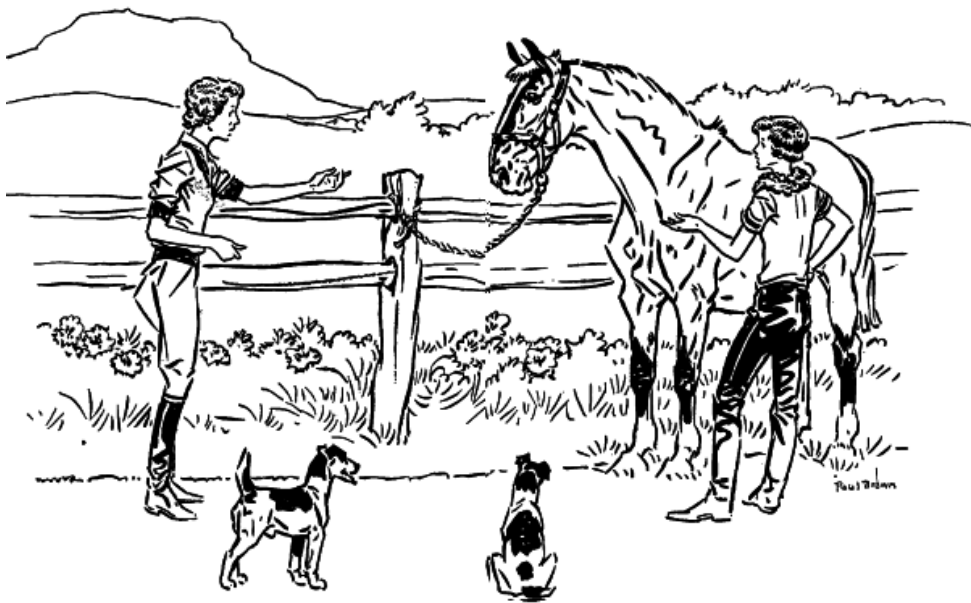
Gay whistled sharply and the dogs crowded about her, bewildered and dashed. She put them into the kennels and latched the gate. As Professor Tozzer drew his mount aside to allow his wife to precede him, his interested gaze dropped to Gay's small, intent face. Her eyes shone faintly, as though she were determinedly looking over rugged terrain at her feet to distant beauties beckoning imperiously to her to come on.

"Never, in all our travels," the Professor said thoughtfully, "have we run into girls doing this sort of work. Been at it long?"

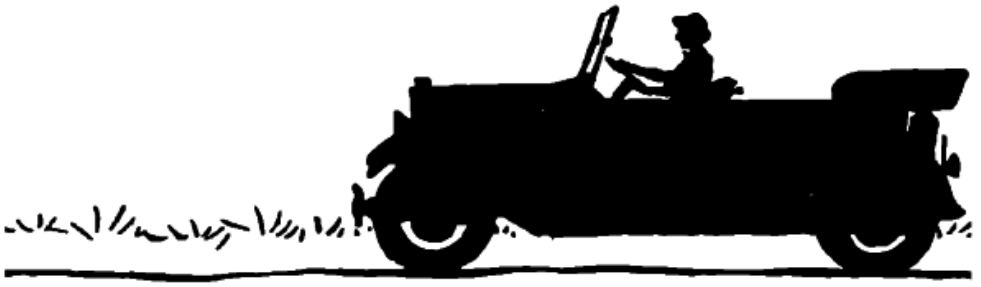
Gay fought a brief inner battle as to whether to tell a white—lie or the bald truth.

"You're our first customers," she admitted finally with a breathless little rush.

“So? We’re your—experiments!” the professor’s fine, hearty laughter filled the warm noon air. “Well, from the efficient way you both go about things, I’m not in the least concerned.” And he rode off jauntily.



“ON THIS FIRST TRIP HANGS OUR FUTURE,” GAY SAID CHOKILY. “IF IT’S SUCCESSFUL, IT’LL GIVE US COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE. IF IT ENDS IN A FIASCO—”



CHAPTER VI

THE GRENADIER

WHEN the small party had disappeared, Gay sat down weakly on the grass, feeling as though she were trying to struggle out of a terrible dream. What had she wished on Cherry? From the start she had been against this scrambled take-off. . . . Gay swallowed against the ache in her throat. "Probably I should have sent those nice people away, simply told them that it was all the mistake of Mr. Field, the proprietor of the Wailuku Hotel—that we weren't opening until June tenth." The other side of her mind argued, "But such a move would have been like banging a gate shut that had marvelously been flung open to let us into a new pasture. Well, it's too late to do anything now, except wait. The bridge has been crossed."

She gazed at the great mountain rearing up to the sky and terrific remorse tore at her. Cherry would have to climb its steep slopes at a snail's pace, nursing the mare under her at each step so she wouldn't over-exert. Dragging a handkerchief from her breeches' pocket, Gay mopped her moist face. The dogs whined to get out of their kennels and she rose and opened the gate.

For a moment she watched them scampering happily across the garden, then started for the house. As she neared it the realization struck home with full force that Cherry and she were 'on their own' with a vengeance! No Ah Sam. . . . She looked about the lawns. No Naka, now she came to think about it. Indignation swept her. Need the servants have been quite so fast in their actions? Then tolerance, learned from years of association with Hawaiians, replaced her sense of outrage. She and Cherry had wasted no time in telling them they would have to find other jobs. They had an equal right to take immediate steps to safeguard their own livelihoods. And

perhaps, she reflected, it was better this way. If a thing had to be done, it was better to get right in and do it.

As Gay passed the small cottages bowered with sweet-scented oleanders waving pink flowers in the wind, Suma came out.

“Somekind you like I *kokua*—help you, Gay-san?” she inquired.

“No, Suma, thanks.”

“Already Ah Sam and Naka go find new jobs,” the woman said in a sunk way. “Two fellas torr much *huhu*. Naka speak *Bakatari* making this kinds.” Then her worried eyes brightened. “Already Cherry-san catching *haoles* for taking up mounting?” And she gestured at Haleakala.

“Yes, Suma.”

“Berry fine. I tink sure after by-and-by my girl-sans catching many peoples and making big business, then all fellas can *hanahana* for you again.”

“I certainly hope you’re right, Suma.” Gay smiled a little. “We can manage to pay you to do this week’s laundry. And if we have any sort of luck in the next few weeks, we’ll want Hana to help in the house.”

“Hana liking berry much,” Suma announced contentedly. “And after I *pau* wash for other peoples, I wash for you and Cherry-san, and *kokua* a little in the house.”

Gay gratefully patted Suma’s plump, beautifully-shaped hand, which years of toil had never marred, then went on toward the house, wishing that Uncle Bellowing had not taken himself off so quickly. She felt utterly and frighteningly alone. She determined resolutely that she would take careful stock of guest rooms and household equipment in general, with an eye to paying guests who might patronize *Wanaao*. She must look the car over, too. Its tires were in a deplorable condition but would have to do for a while.

Pausing in the doorway leading to the living room, she turned to gaze again at Haleakala, now half-obsured by clouds. She had a moment of thankfulness, seeing that Naulu was victorious today instead of Ukiukiu. The clouds Naulu generated were dry and warm, resulting from air-currents passing over sun-heated lava beds. Those Ukiukiu produced were damp and chill from traversing the heavily-forested watersheds swathing the northeastern end of Haleakala. Naulu’s victory was especially good, for with sunset his clouds always withdrew, leaving unobstructed, breath-taking views of the summit crater and distant islands lying in the sea.

Feeling somewhat fortified, Gay made a careful inspection of the living room and decided it stacked up. While nothing was new and several of the easy chairs could stand recovering, books, paintings, beamed ceiling, huge

fireplace, eye-filling arrangements of flowers offered a definite charm which the sunken fernery and tiny fountain finished off with a flourish.

She started down the *lanai* toward the guest rooms, realizing suddenly that two of them constituted a distinct problem. Three were equipped with regulation beds, boasting mattresses and springs. The other two, and her father's room, were furnished with Hawaiian *puunes*. People accustomed to cushiony mattresses and box springs would hardly relish sleeping on *puunes*, for they were, anyway you looked at it, unyielding. Originally made of layers and layers of finely-woven, fragrant mats, they had been modernized by Island-born Whites by simply setting a moderately thick mattress into a polished wood frame raised a few inches off the floor.

During the joyous rush of existence while her father had been living, a stream of guests had come and gone, uncaring where, or if, or how, or when they slept, so engrossed were they with the swoop Guy Storm managed to instill into everyday life. But when people paid for things, they expected the best, and must be provided with the best according to their standards. The first thing Cherry and she must do with the money being earned by this initial trip up Haleakala was to buy mattresses and springs for the two *puune*-furnished guest rooms. Fifty dollars would just about do it. Fifty dollars! It seemed incredible that she and Cherry could earn fifty dollars in twenty-four hours, simply by doing things they'd always done and loved doing.

The fears and uncertainties of an hour before melted away like fog under a hot sun. Words her father had once spoken flashed across her mind. "The more kinds of people you know, the more things you do, the more that happens to you, the richer you are. Face facts, keep your eyes and ears open and you'll discover that life's a fine show, even when everything's going against you."

The shrill ringing of the telephone disturbed Gay. Who was calling now, she wondered impatiently. Her moment of assurance passed and, once more, she felt small, young and poorly equipped for the struggle ahead. Hurrying to the phone, she took up the receiver and said, "Hello?" in questioning tones.

A cool, perfectly modulated voice said, "Gay, this is Honor—"

Gay's slight figure became all at once on guard.

"Yes, Honor?"

"Grandmother Storm saw by the papers that you and Cherry are back."

"We landed last night."

“She also saw that ad,” Honor’s voice sounded aloof, “about you girls taking paying guests at *Wanaao* and guiding people up Haleakala.”

“Yes . . .”

“Naturally she’s up in arms and wants to see you and Cherry at once.”

“Cherry left for the top about an hour ago with our first two customers, Professor Tozzer and his wife—from Boston.” Gay could not keep the triumph out of her voice.

She heard Honor catch her breath, then begin consulting hurriedly with Grandmother Storm. While the conversation was in progress Gay thought of the old lady, who for forty years, from a four-poster bed, had ruled the Island of Maui and the network of Storms living on it. Gay had only seen her once, when she was about seven. It had been shortly after her mother died. The Grenadier, as her father called Grandmother Storm, had sent for her bereaved son and his two small girls. Gay had been as still as a mouse during the call and completely fascinated by the old lady and the great bed.

Young as she had been at the time, she had seen that the Grenadier, despite being an invalid, was a force to reckon with. “She doesn’t mind having to stay in bed,” Gay had thought, watching her grandmother while she outlined the future upbringing for her son’s daughters—according to her concepts of what would be wise. By the end of the visit, Gay had come to the conclusion that the Grenadier relished her position on Maui, where her word was law and practically everyone gave her uncontested sway. The fact that Gay’s father had refused to knuckle down to her, refused to follow her commands as to how he should raise his daughters, had resulted in a complete break between them. The three rebels had left in haste and never since re-entered the towering old house that perched like a castle on a high eminence on the southern flank of Haleakala.

“Gay—”

Honor’s voice snatched her mind back to the present.

“Yes?”

“Grandmother Storm says to get in your car and come to her at once.”

“I’m sorry but I can’t possibly do it today, Honor. There’re a million things I’ve got to do—”

“Yes, Grandmother Storm,” Gay heard Honor say. “All right . . . I’ll tell her. Gay—”

“Yes?”

“Grandmother Storm says if you don’t come, she’ll get out of bed and talk to you over the phone herself.”

“Get out of bed!” Gay gasped.

“Yes, and she says to tell you if she does, it’ll probably kill her and you’ll be entirely to blame.” Honor’s voice sounded condemning.

Despite her exasperation, Gay had an impulse to laugh. “The old tyrant, the magnificent browbeating old vixen!” she thought. “I’d like to see her again and find out how she strikes me, now that I’m grown up.”

“Tell Gren the horses aren’t shod and I’m not at all sure the car will run but I’ll try to come over.”

“Wait—” Honor’s voice was edged with impatience as she listened for further instructions, impatience Gay was astute enough to guess was not with the rich old woman who Honor secretly hoped would remember her generously when she died, but with the fact that Grandmother Storm was sufficiently stirred up to want to see a granddaughter whom she had, years before, disowned, along with the son she had loved best.

“Grandmother Storm says to tell you she’s sending her car for you,” Honor said icily. “She wants you to get here before Uncle Bellowing leaves —”

“Is Uncle Bellowing with Gren?” Gay gasped. He was another whom Grandmother Storm had disowned—when he went to sea.

“Yes, he’s here,” Honor answered stiffly.

“I’ll be ready when the car comes,” Gay promised and hung up.

In less than an hour a glistening limousine slid up the driveway and stopped. A friendly-faced Japanese got out, opened the door and when Gay was comfortably seated, slipped back under the wheel.

“Berry nice day,” he remarked, in conversational tones, after they had driven for a while in silence.

“Yes, it is,” Gay agreed, watching familiar hills and pastures slipping by and the beauty of distant islands sprawled contentedly in the warm, sapphire sea.

Whenever a turn of the road presented a full view of Haleakala, partially enveloped in clouds, a tingle rushed through her. Somewhere on those rugged slopes Cherry and her party were toiling slowly upward. Their business had really started! She tried to digest the stirring thought. There really were people who had sufficient faith in girl-guides to trust themselves to their care!

“Please God, send plenty of them,” she prayed under her breath.

The car began slowing down and Gay realized with surprise that they had reached “Rosebank,” as Grandmother Storm’s home was inappropriately called. When she was small, the trip over here had seemed endless. Actually it was only a distance of twenty-five miles.

The house, an enormous, three-story, shingled affair, loomed up from a bold, rocky rise. Old, angry-looking eucalyptus trees clustered about it, battered by gusty winds swooping down from the summit of Haleakala. Terraces crowded with mixed flowers, and a few discouraged-looking roses could not dispel the grim air wrapping the place.

“I hadn’t remembered it was so big,” Gay thought as she got out of the car. “There must be at least twenty or thirty rooms!” She thanked the driver, then ran up the steps. An old Chinaman with sleepy, turtle-like eyes opened the door. He made a small sound which was half a grunt of surprise and half a greeting.

“I speak Misse Stlorm you stop,” he announced and went slowly up a spectacular stairway, twisting down from upper stories into an enormous drawing room.

Gay looked interestedly about her. Carved, ornate, old-fashioned furniture and cabinets with curved surfaces of glass and gold, filled with collections of rare fans, occupied most of the floor space. Heavily-framed, over-sized pictures of bearded men, with faces of granite, tightly buttoned into dour black coats, and of women with precisely shut mouths and small, watchful eyes, clad in voluminous dresses, stared down from dark walls. Mirrors so huge they were awesome reflected the furnishings confusingly and a musty, heavy atmosphere brooded over everything.

The old Chinaman appeared again and signed for Gay to come with him. She mounted the curving stairway and followed the old man along a lofty hall. Closed doors on each side of it gave an impression that the house was completely blank and indifferent to everything going on inside it because it was occupied with things of the past. The Chinaman finally tapped on the last door at the end of the hallway, then opened it carefully. Gay entered, her heart doing double time.

Heavy drapes closely drawn across ceiling-high windows shut out the gay blue-and-gold day marching joyously and strongly across the island. Gay saw an ancient figure huddled in the center of the enormous, canopied four-poster which had so fascinated her when she was small. A crystal chandelier suspended from the center of the ceiling spilled its cruel downward light on the hawk-like old face, exaggerating its seams and wrinkles. Huge yellow diamonds, festooned about the old lady’s person,

blazed like wild animals' eyes when she moved imperceptibly, and the faint, dry breathing of the very-aged filled the room with eerie whispers.

Uncle Bellowing was spraddled out in a low rocker at one side of the bed. At the foot, like a guard, Honor stood. Gay glanced at her cousin with reluctant admiration, mingled with the always faint hope that she would see warmth instead of antagonism in Honor's blue eyes. Honor was not strictly pretty but she was striking and by clever dressing made her unusual height into an asset instead of a liability. In a beige hand-knitted sweater and skirt, finished with a flat, babyish collar, she suggested the exaggeratedly tall figures carelessly sketched by master designers in *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*. Her hair was cut quite short in the back, but above her forehead was a soft cluster of brown curls. Looking at Honor, a person always got the impression that an invisible spotlight, deftly manipulated by herself, was focused on her, singling her out from those around her.

"Come close, I want a good look at you," a great voice suddenly boomed.

Gay gave a slight start, astonished that such a volume of sound could come from so old a woman. She took a hesitant step forward.

"Closer, Gay. I'm prepared for the—worst!" the old lady roared, dragging herself higher on her pillows. The terribly alive eyes in the ancient mask of a face contracted to points. "I must be going into my dotage! Why—why you look like a lady!"

"Why shouldn't I look like one, Gren?" Gay asked in low tones.

"*What* did you call me?" the old lady bellowed.

"Gren," Gay replied unsteadily. "Daddy always called you that. It's short for the Grenadier."

The old lady glared, but portions of her wrinkled face twitched. "Guy was a thorn in my side," she announced in her astounding voice. "He wouldn't track—so overboard he went. As Ben did." She waved a bediamonded hand at Uncle Bellowing. "Any Storm who bucks me—"

"You secretly respect," Uncle Bellowing announced with a chuckle.

"Don't fool yourself! You aren't listed as one of my inheritors."

"So what?" he inquired, puffing on his rank pipe.

"I don't know how I ever owned such a toad," the old lady said violently, then transferred her attention back to Gay. "What's all this hoity-toity?" She angrily indicated the paper on her bed, folded back to display the full-page ad.

"Just what it says," Gay replied quietly. "Hasn't Uncle Bellowing—"

“He told me what you and Cherry *planned* to do—”

“We’re doing it, Gren.” Gay stressed the words. “Cherry’s halfway to the top by now with our first party.” Her voice rang with pride.

“Do you think for an instant I’ll stand for such goings on in my family?” the Grenadier roared. “My granddaughters making public spectacles of themselves, rent-chauffeurs, guiding hoipolloi up Haleakala, taking paying guests into their home? Hawaii would have a fine opinion of me if I stood for such goings on!”

With deep earnestness Gay went over the ground as she had that morning for her other relatives. The old lady listened without comment. Gay was uncomfortably aware of the yellow diamonds glinting at her, while she talked, and she felt Honor’s level gaze directed at her from the foot of the bed.

“Honor hates me more than ever,” Gay thought, “hates me because Gren has sent for me, and because she’s listening now to what I’ve got to say, instead of ranting and raving.” But she did not falter. When she finally ended, the old lady signed for her to come closer to the bed.

“You and Cherry are an addlepatated pair, independent as Guy was, and as Ben is.” She threw a baleful glare in Uncle Bellowing’s direction, and then picked Gay’s hand up in her old, dry ones.

Her eyes, hooded in myriads of tiny wrinkles, blazed for a moment. “I’ve stayed in this bed forty years, but Storms step around when I speak, except a very few of them, who, of course, will not be remembered in my will. If you know which side your bread is buttered on, you’ll throw this insane idea overboard. Both you and Cherry should be in school, instead of trying to earn your own living in this ridiculous fashion. Dude-Ranch! No good will ever come of it. You’ll probably break someone’s neck, or your own, as Guy—” Her voice dropped.

“If we do, at least we’ll go out in a splash of splendor, instead of petering out—”

“In bed, as I am?” the old lady shouted.

“You’re more alive than most people who are up and about, Gren.”

“You said a mouthful,” Uncle Bellowing commented from his chair.

“Who asked you to butt in?” the Grenadier shouted. Then Gay saw with astonishment that the old lady was enjoying herself hugely. “She likes excitement,” Gay thought. “She—”

“Pay attention, I’m talking to you,” the Grenadier roared. Snatching up a heavy cane lying handy on the bed, she pounded her satin puff with it.

"I'm sorry, Gren. I was thinking about you."

"What about me?"

Gay hesitated.

"Out with it!"

"I was thinking that you like upheavals, and to have bombs exploded in the family. Your cheeks are quite pink and your eyes—"

"Do you think I'm an ossified mummy?" The great voice rolled around the big room like distant thunder. "Any normal person likes excitement but the only real bits that the Storm tribe has contributed for the past forty years were when that toad Ben ran away to sea and when Lidy eloped with that good-for-nothing Tolliver." She glanced sharply at Honor, who appeared not to hear the Grenadier's allusion to her father. "And when your father told me off, Gay, and said he intended to raise his girls the way he thought best. Now you and Cherry come up with this horrible scheme—" She sank back on her pillows.

"Grandmother Storm," Honor started forward, "you shouldn't get so worked up. You'll be a wreck—"

"Wreck nothing!" The Grenadier whacked the covers with her cane. "I've got more dynamite in me than the lot of you put together. I mean the lot of you '*decent*' Storms!" Her voice stung. "You all play second fiddles to my first, hoping to curry favor, so I'll remember you generously when I die." She laughed in an evil way. "But I'll fool the lot of you. I may not have married until late in life. I may be ninety. But I intend to live for as long as I please!"

"To heckle 'em," Uncle Bellowing rumbled. "But you can't heckle me because I don't give a hoot for your millions—any more than Gay and Cherry do. We're rugged individualists, not echoes of you."

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, you old barnacle!" the Grenadier shouted. Her eyes narrowed and she gave a cackle of ancient mirth. "But you came to heel, too!" she mocked. "You swore when you left me you'd never darken this door again, and here you are." Her voice was taunting and malicious.

"It was the kids. Dismissing the servants got me. I keep thinking of them cutting firewood, packing, cooking, shoeing horses, taking parties up Haleakala. It's too stiff a job for youngsters!"

"You'll see," Gay said, watching him in a puzzled way. "I thought you were behind us, Uncle Bellowing."

"I am, but—"

“Cherry and I will show you,” Gay declared, smiling.

“You’re an obstinate little beast, as your father was,” the Grenadier cut in. “Secretly, I’ve always admired crackpots. You and Cherry and your dude-ranching will gag the Storm Clan.” She chuckled. “Go ahead.” She darted a quick look at Gay, then took her firm little chin between knotted, skinny fingers and gave it an approving shake. “You glorious little idiot.” Stealing a curious, cagey look at Uncle Ben, she slipped one of the spectacular diamonds off her finger and held it out. “Here. Take that and wear it for—remembrance.” She waited for Gay to reach for the stone. “If your business ‘flops,’ as you express it, sell the thing and get down to brass tacks.”

A faint, startled sound escaped Honor’s lips, making vivid more than any words could the dismay and unbelief surging through her.

“I don’t want it, Gren,” Gay protested.

“Wear it!” The old lady looked apoplectic. “If you’re an imitation of the real thing, you’re a good one, but I’m not easily fooled by people or gems. Most idiots think these are paste.” She indicated her barbaric display. “But I can’t tolerate shams. The real thing or nothing for me. If you and Cherry ‘swing’ this, as you put it, there’ll be the twin of that ring for her—after it’s earned. You get yours now because you were the genius that thought up this three-ring circus that will floor every Storm on Maui—except me.”

Taking Gay’s hand, the old lady slid the ring home and gave it a pat. “If the going gets rough, remember this is a talisman to insure success on the new trail you’re blazing in Hawaii. Storm accomplishments have been at a standstill for too long. The ranches and plantations the family manage were started a couple of generations ago. My generation brought them to their point of perfection. It’s high time some new field of endeavor was opened up. You and Cherry are attempting to do it. My hat’s off to you.”

“Gren—thank you,” Gay said with a choke.

“I shall expect a monthly report on how you’re progressing,” the Grenadier asserted.

“If we aren’t too busy, we’ll be happy to come, Gren. But we can’t promise—”

“Too busy! Fiddlesticks! I demand a monthly accounting!”

“You don’t understand,” Gay said in a quiet, steady voice. “It’s going to be all uphill going for Cherry and me for a long, long time. We’re having to do everything ourselves, which will mean we’ll have to work fourteen and fifteen hours out of the twenty-four. That doesn’t leave much time over and
—”

“I understand perfectly, you little idiot!” the Grenadier interrupted. “I was just experimenting to see if you’d begin knuckling down to me because of that.” She waved contemptuously at the diamond on Gay’s hand.

Gay looked at her, the old lady looked back and they both laughed.

“Now be off with you two!” She brandished her cane, and Uncle Bellowing heaved out of his chair in a satisfied way. “And Honor,” she transferred her attention to the foot of the bed, “tell that starched female idiot who takes care of me to come. I’m—tired.”

“Good-bye, Mom, and keep a strangle hold on that temper of yours or you’ll blow out your boilers,” Uncle Bellowing called.

“You old shellback, I’ve had enough of your jaw!” the Grenadier roared, sinking back into her pillows.



CHAPTER VII

KEEP THEM BRIGHT

FOR a while, Gay and Uncle Bellowing drove in silence. A blue and gold afternoon spread its benediction on the warm earth. Spectacular clouds, heaped high above the horizon, seemed to be holding mighty conferences. The steady trade wind, redolent with the spicy fragrances of the tropics, streamed out of the east, bringing health and vigor to the islands in its path. After a little, Uncle Bellowing touched the huge diamond glittering incongruously on Gay's small, tanned hand.

"Honor isn't going to like you any better for getting that thrown at you," he remarked, "or for Mom putting her stamp of approval on what you and Cherry are setting out to do."

"It's fantastic for Honor to dislike me for something that happened five years ago. A horse race is just fun and—"

"Since Honor was knee-high to a pup she's angled for top spot on Maui," Uncle Bellowing interrupted. "And she's swung it all the way till you stole the show from her on the track before the whole Island. Notice she's never ridden a race again?"

"She hurt her back."

"Back my eye! It was her ego that got bumped," Uncle Bellowing snorted.

Gay looked distressed. "I've always hoped that some day we could feel as cousins should."

"Not a chance after—this." Uncle Bellowing indicated the ring.

"I'm afraid not, but, in a way, I can't help admiring Honor. She has put up a fine fight to get places."

“Honor and her mother haven’t had an easy road to hoe,” Uncle Bellowing conceded. “That Tolliver Tuttle that Lidy married was a total loss. Even when he was living, Lidy had to teach to keep the family eating. It was a good riddance when Toll kicked the bucket.”

Gay watched turns in the road which the car kept snatching up and flinging behind. “You’d have thought that Gren and Aunt Lidy’s relatives would have got together and done something to make it easier after—”

“Not a chance,” Uncle Bellowing cut in. “Toll being dead didn’t make any difference to the Clan. When a Storm strikes off on his or her own—” He drew his forefinger across his throat. “Or they band together to try and make the rebels fall back into line, as they tried to make you and Cherry do this morning.”

“But why?” Gay asked as the shabby rented car swooped down a hill and ground up the other side.

“There’s a breed of people, Gay, who can’t bear to see others leaving the dull roads they plod along, or setting out to try to register on their own.”

He waited, allowing his words to sink in. Gay gave a slight, assenting nod.

“The Storms of today, with a few exceptions,” Uncle Bellowing beamed at her, “don’t really add up to much, but they think because they’re well-oiled with cash, they drag a heap of weight. Three generations ago, when the first ones came to Hawaii, they were a fine, rugged lot. Look what they’ve done to this Island.” He waved his big arm at jade green sugar plantations, dominated by mills with towering, slowly-smoking stacks, at distant fields of gray pineapple plants, weighted with golden cylinders of fruit, at shimmering grasslands, where herds of blooded stock grazed and fattened.

“Knocking ’round the world, I’ve seen a heap of living and done my share of thinking, Gay. Long as a person has to fight to get something, or work like blazes to make the grade, he’s on tiptoe inside. When things get too easy, he lets down and something that was keen and bright inside corrodes or rusts clear out. That’s the trouble with Archie and Charity and the rest. They haven’t got anything to battle for, so—*they’re deadwood.*”

“They manage their plantations and have cane pests to fight,” Gay protested.

“Not *first hand*” Uncle Bellowing snorted. “The Experimental Station in Honolulu sends over experts who tell ’em what sprays to use, and what fertilizers to use and their *lunas* and their gangs of laborers do the work. They don’t have to think out their own problems and carry ’em through *themselves.*”

Gay looked deeply thoughtful.

"I bet you can't guess who I count the four richest people on Maui?" Uncle Bellowing said, and laughed with huge glee.

"Who?" Gay asked.

"First you and Cherry—you're starting off to try and win your spurs in a new field that's never even been scratched in Hawaii. Next comes Honor. I can't stomach her type or the things she goes after, but I take my hat off to her because she's slugged to get the things she wants ever since she was old enough to realize that what stacks up with her she didn't have. Fourth comes Lidy."

Gay waited, an amazed expression in her eyes.

"Lidy's poor as a church mouse, and always will be. When Toll hit Maui, Lidy was pretty as a ship in full sail. You know what she looks like today, but there's a light in her because she's never stopped battling. Toll reckoned he was hitching his wagon to millions when he eloped with a Storm, but he didn't know the breed. When the newlyweds returned, every Storm on Maui banged the doors shut in their faces, and they've stayed shut. But even on the mangy salary Lidy earned teaching, she scrimped and saved and did without things to get enough ahead to send Honor to Punahou School, so she could have a chance to get chummy with her cousins who were dripping with dough. And now Honor's running with the young hounds of the pack that threw Lidy out."

"She leads them," Gay asserted. "Honor was elected President of her class four times while she attended Punahou. She was Editor of the Year Book and voted the most popular girl in the school. When she graduated and came back to Maui, she suggested a Junior League and the girls simply ate up the idea. She's head of that, too. Even on the little she has earned teaching these past two years she's counted the best dressed girl in Hawaii. Anne and Martha and the rest spend hundreds on clothes several times a year but when Honor steps out in a new outfit, which isn't often, they moan and droop and ache to look like her."

"She sure knows how to throw on the rags," Uncle Bellowing agreed.

"Honor's the star of the show at every party the Younger Set give and older people ask her to theirs to put over cute stunts she has thought up to add fresh flavor to their doings. And she never forgets birthdays or anniversaries or—"

"She sure knows how to polish the right apples in the right way to get where she wants," Uncle Bellowing interrupted. "She's out to marry a rich man and she's making herself indispensable to Every One Who Matters,

hoping that in one of their homes she'll bump into the sort of man she wants, and she probably will. Maui's poor pickin's these days. There're no eligible males except those fatheads, Ben and Luke. They're her first cousins or Honor'd nab one of 'em. If Naps was twenty, instead of sixteen, she'd be after him tooth and nail and the fact that Naps is Cherry's boy-friend wouldn't hinder her any. As I said, I can't stomach Honor's sort, or the things that stack up with her, but I do admire the drive in her."

"So do I," Gay agreed quietly.

"There are all kinds of fights, Gay, and all kinds of fighters." Uncle Bellowing asserted. "It doesn't matter whether they're fighting to get a man, write a book, paint a picture or put over some business, you can always spot fighters. Sometimes they're quiet sorts, but they've got a punch to 'em that other people haven't got. It puts dynamite in the air round 'em. Compare your Dad and other men you know here. Even when Guy was sitting quiet and not talking, you felt power flowing from him. Compare Honor with Anne or Sally or Martha, even when you're with 'em you forget 'em, but you don't forget Honor when she's in a room."

"You certainly don't," Gay agreed.

"You and Cherry are fighters," Uncle Bellowing went on in his slow, heavy way. "I've seen you riding races and you fought every inch of the way, even when you knew you couldn't possibly win."

"Of course."

Uncle Bellowing's big hand closed over hers. "Your Dad was my favorite brother." His voice grew husky. "Now that Guy's gone, you and Cherry sort of seem like my kids. I'm sailing tonight and it'll be months, maybe a year, before I'm back. I don't want to throw any scares into you, but I'm going to tip you off about something because I know you've got the stuff in you to take it."

He paused as if carefully marshaling his thoughts. Gay waited, her heart beating a little faster than normal.

"It's about this outfit we belong to, the Storms. Actually, they're a bad lot but they're cut, mostly, to one pattern and it annoys 'em when one of the pack branches off on a tack of his own. Have you ever wondered why Lidy, after teaching twenty-five years, isn't principal of some fine big school on Maui?"

"You mean—" Gay began, her heart giving a queer flutter.

"They ganged up on her," Uncle Bellowing stated bluntly. "And they may try to gang up on you and Cherry, unless you keep a sharp eye to wind'ard and loo'ard. Because Archie and Charity and the rest are rolling

rich, they're accustomed to the spotlight. When Lidy broke loose, all Hawaii was more interested in her than it was in them—so they crowded her into the background. Now you kids pop up with your dude ranch.” He chuckled. “The Eight Islands won’t be as interested in what Charity wore at a tea, or whether Archie is elected President of the Board of Supervisors again, as in whether you two sprouts can put this dude-ranching business over.”

He gave Gay’s hand a reassuring squeeze, and waited while the car lurched through a rut.

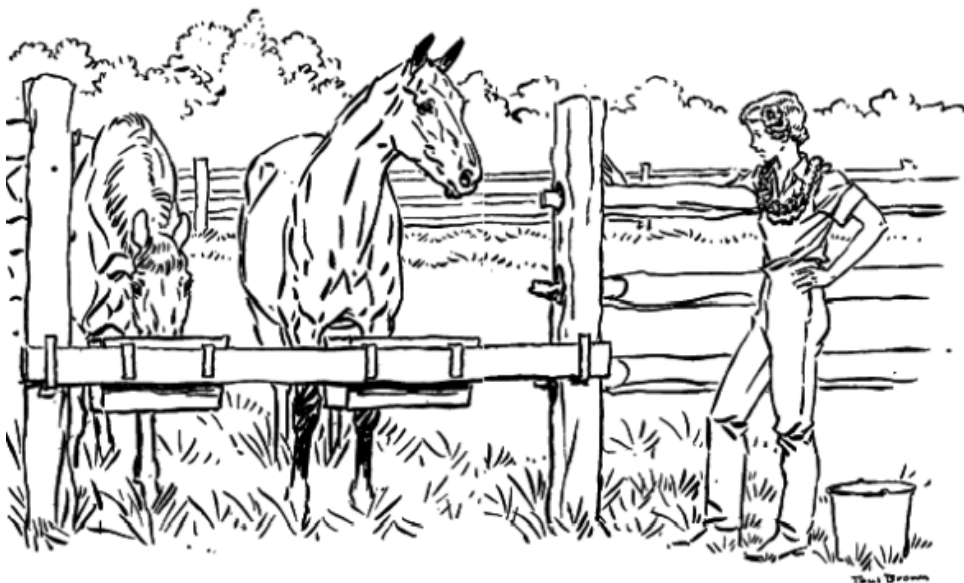
“When you’re as old as I am, Gay, you’ll find out from watching life go by that cowardly people always secretly resent brave people, and colorless people resent colorful ones. Get what I’m driving at?”

“I think I do.”

“That’s what it all boils down to really,” Uncle Bellowing asserted. “Archie and the rest aren’t bad, they’re just jealous—though they don’t even know it. But jealousy’s a nasty emotion and often makes decent people do shabby things. That’s why I went to see Mom.”

A cock pheasant, startled by the car, flew out of the grass and sailed away across the pastures, its iridescent plumage flashing in the late afternoon sunshine.

“It was a tough pill to swallow to go to Mom after telling her off when I was a shaver, but I know her. She shouts the whole kaboodle down, makes ’em tread a chalked line for sheer cussedness, but she respects people who won’t kowtow to her, though she rows at ’em. I figured if I could swing her to your side, out of plain contrariness she would stymie anything the rest of the outfit may try to do to block you and Cherry.”



HORSES BEGAN WALKING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE TALL GRASS, EYES AND EARS ALERT. SHE WATCHED THEM FONDLY AS THEY HUNG EAGER HEADS OVER THE BARS.

Gay sat tense and still.

“Wind up?” Uncle Bellowing inquired.

“No, but it sort of takes the bloom off life to think that your own flesh and blood, for *any* reason—”

“There’s no bloom on life *unless a fellow puts it there*,” Uncle Bellowing interrupted.

Gay stared at the long afternoon shadows, stretching from the tree-lots growing on the green flanks of Haleakala.

“When Cherry and I took this step, we set out to try to keep the bloom on our lives,” she asserted, her little chin thrust out at a rugged angle.

“Dern tootin’,” Uncle Bellowing agreed. “You girls don’t belong indoors any more than birds do.”

“Well, if we put this over, we’ll be set,” Gay said, watching the distant summit of Haleakala beginning to be visible between dispersing clouds.

“Gay,” Uncle Bellowing’s thick fingers tightened over her slim ones, “holding the lead at the beginning of a race doesn’t prove you’ll come in first at the end.”

“No,” Gay agreed, feeling as small as a dot.

“And winning the first battle doesn’t win a whole war.”

“No.”

“Life’s a long, tough battle. You kids are launched in this thing. I’ve a hunch you’ll make the grade but no one can tell for certain what’s ahead.”

“I realize that.”

“Remember the first time you and Cherry rode in the same race against a lot of older girls?”

Gay laughed blithely. “Yes, we came in neck and neck, with the field right on our heels.”

“Remember your Dad had put up a pair of silver spurs for the winner?”

“Yes.” Gay’s eyes shone. “He gave Cherry one spur, and me the other. We’ve taken turns, ever since, wearing them as a pair.”

“The thing that stuck with me,” Uncle Bellowing said, his rough voice low and resonant, “is what Guy said when he handed the divided prize to you hot, excited youngsters. He said,” Uncle Bellowing gazed back through the years, “‘Remember, girls, the real battle isn’t winning your spurs—*it’s keeping them bright.*’ ”

While the dust of Uncle Bellowing’s departing car drifted from the driveway across the green pasture, Gay stood thoughtfully turning over in her mind the things that Uncle Bellowing had said. Blue shadows were settling in the gulches carved into the sides of Haleakala by the winds and rains of centuries, and the mystery of approaching evening was stealing over land and sea.

She wondered how things were progressing with Cherry. Had she made the top in time for the Tozzers to see the sunset and the mysterious bowl of the crater before darkness stole it from view? Were Schultz and Yarrow going to the top with a party, too, or was Cherry mercifully alone on this first momentous occasion? Whispering a quick little prayer, Gay went indoors and changed from her dress into dungarees and a blue and white checked *palaka*.

With Naka off hunting a new job and Cherry at the top with a party, the *first* party—a thrill of pride ran through Gay—it devolved upon her to milk the cow and feed the horses and dogs. She sprinted across the lawn toward the corrals. Daisy was waiting patiently, her rosy udder tight with milk. Going into the feed room, Gay mixed up some barley and bran, shook it into a heavy wooden box and the cow began munching placidly. Fetching the stool and bucket, Gay leaned her head against the warm, softly breathing flank and went to work, enjoying the fragrance of fresh milk foaming into

the bucket. When it was filled, she covered it with a clean cloth and placed it on a shelf on the side of the tack house.

The sun was beginning to set, spilling wild colors on land and sea. Was Cherry at the top, yet? Was the mare still intact? Gay gave herself a little mental shake. To even wonder was wrong. Didn't the Bible say, "The thing I fear has come upon me." She mustn't fear, she must have faith and courage that events would be on the plus side.

Her buoyant nature re-asserted itself and she hummed happily under her breath as she carried barley and bran out and dumped it into a big tin tub. Dipping water out of the clear oblong of the trough, she rolled up her sleeves and began mixing grain. Horses who had drifted across the pasture as feeding-time drew near began walking swiftly through the tall grass, eyes and ears alert. She watched them fondly as they hung eager heads over the bars. When the feed was mixed, she scooped up bucketfuls and shot the contents into boxes nailed to sturdy posts. The waiting animals tossed impatient heads and stamped until she unfastened the sliprails and let them in. Thrusting and shoving good-naturedly, they went to their accustomed places and began feeding.

The waiting dogs stretched contentedly on the grass. Next would be their turn to eat. Gay stood for an instant enjoying the peaceful sound of horses happily munching grain. Then, taking up the heavy milk bucket, she headed for the house, the dogs trotting at her heels.

Going into the kitchen, she set the milk on the sink, assembled scraps into a big tin basin, poured part of the morning milk over the food and carried it out to the lawn. The dogs went at it joyously.

When the basin was licked clean, Gay whistled and, with the pack at her heels, she went to the kennels and shut the dogs up for the night. With contented sighs, they leaped into straw-filled bunks and gazed happily at their kingdom, complete now that she and Cherry were home.

Gay was reluctant to come to the end of this momentous day, the day their business had started! It had been stormy enough, and amazing enough—she glanced at the huge stone flashing on her finger—but it was stimulating to know that some people, at least, were willing to patronize them. If the Tozzers went away pleased, they would recommend Cherry and herself to others. From such a tiny beginning, often, great achievements grew.

Walking to the rear of the strangely silent servants' quarters, Gay inspected the vegetable garden that Naka had tended with such pride. Rows of lettuce, cabbage, beets and carrots fairly exploded from the earth. At the

far end of the wired-off enclosures, ruddy-stalked rhubarb spread its large, graceful leaves. Jade-green lima beans twined gracefully around amber bamboo poles. Artichoke bushes lifted their frosty foliage above beds of strawberries whose dainty white blossoms and glowing berries lay like jewels against dark, rich soil.

A glow of satisfaction spread through Gay. It would be an added touch, feeding ‘Dudes’ off produce grown on the place. Uncoiling the hose, she turned on the faucet and enjoyed the tingle of cold water breaking into a fine spray against her fingertip. As she watered, the light faded slowly from the wrinkled sides of Haleakala and the last fiery color in the west merged into smoky purple. The trade wind had died with the sun but a playful little breeze swooped down from the mountain, carrying in its heart scents of cinder and lava bed, *puakawao* and *ohelo* bushes.

Gay pictured Cherry scurrying about her duties, opening the Rest House and airing it, lighting the stove, unsaddling the horses, drawing water from the cistern for them, bucket by bucket, filling nose bags and strapping them on while the professor and his wife watched night gradually seeping into the vast, eerie crater two thousand feet below the rim. Then Cherry would stable the horses in the rock shelter which had been the original Rest House, make up the beds with the fresh linen, and cook dinner—a *real* dinner of steaks and fried potatoes, coffee and fresh pineapple, instead of the customary dried-out sandwiches and cold water served by Schultz and Yarrow.

Gay shut off the faucet and recoiled the hose. No smoke rose from the chimney of Suma’s cottage, so she concluded that the faithful Japanese woman and her daughter had gone off to make arrangements to do laundry for people living in the vicinity. In spite of the unnatural silence, Gay did not feel lonely, for the richness of the life she and Cherry were determined to follow lay over everything. This was the way God intended people to live, close to the earth, working with growing things and with animals.

She gazed at the pasture outlined by trees and saw horsemen jogging through it in groups. Her breath caught. The *paniols* who had worked for her father were coming to welcome his daughters home. Her eyes blurred, and she quickly wiped them dry. Watching the easy figures of the horsemen riding unhurriedly toward her, the rich, happy years of her childhood flashed across her mind. Being carried on a pillow in front of some *paniolo* before she could walk; her first saddle that old Hu had fashioned so lovingly; the first tiny lasso her fingers had held; the *leis* big, laughing men had made daily for Cherry and herself to wear; long days of riding behind steers being moved to fattening paddocks; the rousing summer roundup; nights spent on beaches brooded over by leaning coconut trees, waiting to ship cattle to

Honolulu markets on always-late Inter-Island boats; colorful race-meets at Kahului in which everyone—white ranchers, Japanese gardeners, Hawaiian *paniols*—participated. Christmases such as only Hawaii could produce . . .

Riding in the lead of the horsemen was Holomalua, the foreman. Six foot one, with mighty shoulders, the wisdom and kindness of sixty years shining in his eyes, Holomalua was regarded as spokesman and wiseman of the thirty *paniols* on the ranch. He could lift three hundred pounds without sweating and was so strong that no horse had ever been able to break the grip of his legs about its ribs when it bucked.

Riding near he called “*Aloha!*” in a voice as deep as a strongly flowing river, and the group behind him echoed the word. “*Aloha*—love to you.”

Dismounting, Holomalua walked forward and, taking Gay’s hand, held it silently to his forehead in the old gesture of a commoner pledging allegiance to a chief. Then he drew himself erect.

“Gay,” he said earnestly, “as oldest man here I speak for all us *paniols*. Us all have deep *Alohas* in our heart for your papa, and it not stop, it go on to you kids. Never us forgetting Guy. He swell fella. He got big fun and big *Alohas* in his hearts for every peoples, Hawaiians, Pake, Japanese, Filipinos, *haoles*.”

Gay made a quick, expressive gesture to signify that feelings too deep for words had hold of her throat.

“Menny years now all us fellas have shared *hanahana*, have make fun together, and had big-happys together. Now us share sorrow when your papa *make*, and that make us closer. Any-kind us *paniols* can do, and all fellas on the ranch, you and Cherry have only to tell to us and us *kokua*, with deep *Aloha* in our hearts.”

“I know, Holomalua,” Gay said chokily. “*Mahalo nui*—thanks.”

Men spilled off their horses and crowded forward to shake hands, men with fine flashing teeth and lustrous eyes. Finally one of them asked:

“*Mahaia* Cherry?”

Gay told them and their faces lighted.

“Swell! Swell!” they exulted. “You kids smart like enny kind making this kind. Us betting you put that *haole lapuwali* Schultz clear out the business.”

Their hearty enthusiasm was infectious and Gay felt as if she had been picked up on a great shoreward-rushing wave. Finally, they all swung onto their horses and started back to their small homes, tucked away among the

groves of trees that grew behind the tall line of eucalyptus outlining the horse pasture.

“*Aloha, Gay, Aloha!*” they called as they jogged off. “Swell you come home.” And their voices blended into one great voice that sounded as though it rose from the depths of the Island they all loved.

Gay went into the house feeling fortified and marvelously picked up. She fixed herself a light tray-supper and, taking it into the living room, lighted the fire. Placing the food on a small table handy to the deep chair she curled herself up in, she surrendered herself to the welcome quiet and peace after the crowded and tempestuous hours of the brightly-hued day which had now merged into a velvety plum-colored night.

The light pouring out of the wide-open doors fell on banks of blossoming ginger and heliotrope. Beyond, trees showed darkly against stars burning serenely in the deep arch of the heavens. The tiny rustlings of vegetation settling to sleep created the impression of benevolent spirits moving over the Island under the cover of night. The darkness smelled rich and damp with earthy offerings. The vibrations of sugar-mills, and the muted boom of surf sounded faintly in the distance.

As Gay sat there pleasantly relaxed Ah Sam poked his head through the swinging door.

“Where Chelly?” he asked.

Gay told him. His wrinkled face cracked into a pleased grin.

“Velly nice people come all ledy. This morning I velly, velly closs, but might-be after by-and-by evely kind okay.”

“Did you find a new job?”

“Got,” Ah Sam replied laconically. “I go tomollow but enny time you ledy for me to come back, you speak.”

“You’re tops, Ah Sam.”

He grinned and vanished, and Gay heard him busying himself getting food. When she had finished her supper she took the tray to the kitchen.

“I wash.” Ah Sam gestured at the dishes.

“Thank you, Ah Sam.”

“Might-be no see you in the morning,” he said, bending over the dishpan. “I go three o’clock. But velly big *Aloha*. Tell Chelly, too.”

“I will.”

“Today Naka and me two-fella talk-talk. I think more good I go work Wailuku. Naka catch gardner jobs with Spencer. Naka stop here for sleep evely night like before to look-out you girls. I catch plenty money work

Wailuku hotel, then suppose evely kind not so good for you and Chelly, I can *kokua*.”

“I’m sure Cherry and I will make the grade. If we don’t—”

“I got plenty dollar save up. I go catch more. I no care when I *make* if no can send my bones to China in velly big style,” the old cook said over his shoulder, the crusty tone of his voice hiding his deep devotion. “Enny time you and Chelly need little money, you talk-talk me first.”

“You’ll be the first person we S.O.S.,” Gay promised, moved to the depths.

The headlights of a car flashed into the driveway.

“I go see what-fella come,” Ah Sam said, starting for the door.

“I’ll be in the living room,” Gay announced, wondering who it could be.

Going to the fireplace, she poked among the logs, sending bright showers of sparks up the chimney. Footsteps sounded on the cement of the patio, then the door opened and Ah Sam entered belligerently.

“This two *haole* guys, Schultz and Yallow,” he indicated shadowy figures at his heels, “like make talk-talk with you. If you no like, I tell ’em go to hellie.”

He was bristling.

Gay felt stunned but hastily rallied her wits.

“Show them in, Ah Sam,” she said, in what she hoped was a cool, remote voice.

“I stop, too,” the old Chinaman announced truculently.

Gay flashed him a grateful look and waited for her uninvited and unwanted visitors.



CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST MILESTONE

GAY's misleadingly delicate face and large, luminous eyes always made people miss the clean, courageous line of her jaw. Standing in front of the fire in her many-times-washed jeans and a blue and white checked *palaka*, she suggested a slight boy, but her softly waving, honey-colored hair, finished off with a white flower above her right ear, stamped her a girl.

She was not frightened. She resented the intrusion of these men who, while her father had been living, had never crossed the threshold of *Wanaao*. It drove home the fact that she and Cherry must brace themselves for rugged experiences, now that they were earning a living in a man's field. Ah Sam held the door open, even his arm looking hostile. Schultz and Yarrow entered.

"Good evening," Gay said in a low, distant voice.

For a moment neither man spoke. Weighing her visitors, Gay was filled with mounting distaste. In the hundreds of trips she and Cherry had made up Haleakala with their father and the *paniolos* they had passed these two guides uncounted times on the trail. Brief greetings had been exchanged, but none of the warmth characteristic of Hawaii had flavored the occasions. To a family of horse-lovers, the pitiful condition of the animals in the Schultz and Yarrow string, and their complete disregard for the comfort of the people they took up Haleakala had brewed a silent resentment which had grown with the years.

Yarrow's small, red-rimmed eyes slid resentfully over oil paintings, shelves of books and bowls of flowers, as though they made him feel ill at ease and completely at a disadvantage. A three days' growth of sandy beard covered his angular face and big freckled hands hung loosely at his sides. Sun-parched lips, parted in a disagreeable grin, showed tobacco-stained, unpleasantly long teeth.

Schultz was typically Prussian, tall, thick-bodied, with a loud voice and eyes as cold as a turtle's. Close-cropped hair stood up like a scrubbing brush above his scarlet forehead, gathered into an angry frown.

"Vat does diss mean?" he demanded, shaking a newspaper in his left hand, while with the back of his right he smacked the full-page ad that Gay and Cherry had planned to run the following Sunday.

"Just what it says," Gay replied quietly.

"It iss an outrage," Schultz barked. "For twenty years Yarrow and I haff been taking tourists up Haleakala—"

"Mr. Field, who runs the Wailuku Hotel, didn't think it an outrage when Mr. Brown, after twenty years, built the Maui Hotel," Gay interrupted. "You have no corner on taking people up Haleakala, and Cherry and I intend to try our hand at it."

"And who do you think vill trust themselves to girl guides?" Schultz sneered.

While Gay stood silent, as though weighing Schultz's words, her mind was thrusting forward, like a warrior's sword hacking its way through enemies.

"I ask you again who vill trust themselves to girl guides?" Schultz shouted, contempt edging his loud voice.

Yarrow smirked and scratched at his forearm. The fire rustled and snapped. Outside a lonely little breeze fingered the corners of the house, as if trying to find its way forward.

"Some people will."

Schultz snorted his contempt. "Ve vill see," he sneered. "Vere iss your sister? Yarrow and I intend to make it clear dot ve—"

"Cherry is at the top with a party," Gay announced, a gleeful little smile flitting over her face.

Schultz's tomato-colored face turned a deep purple. Yarrow's lantern jaw fell.

"I do not belif you!" Schultz choked. "Vy, only diss mornings you come back. You are lying!"

“No make this lie-kind talk to Mr. Guy girl!” Ah Sam said belligerently, his slant eyes almost out of focus with fury. “S’pose you no *pau* talk this kinds I telephone Makawao policemen.”

The German glared at him. Ah Sam glared back.

“If diss is tru, you vill find out in time it iss always a mistake for vimen to try to push into men’s fields,” Schultz asserted, his voice thick with anger.

Gay smiled. Schultz glowered at her, then changed his mental sights and attacked from a new angle.

“It iss an outrage for rich peoples to take bread out of the mouths of poor ones. Look at diss house!” He waved an enraged arm. “Hand-painted pictures! Flowers! Books! Look at eferythings!” His voice rose. “Yarrow and I haf only a poor, small place at Olinda. We vork hard to make our littles. You girls with eferythings—”

“You know as well as I do that this place isn’t ours,” Gay cut in. “We only have *Wanaao* for a year, but while we’re here we’re going to try and earn a living taking people up Haleakala. We weren’t even sure people would patronize us, but today has proved that they will. And you can set your mind at rest on one point. We aren’t stealing your livelihood, because we intend to attract a higher class of people by conducting our business along *de luxe* lines.”

Yarrow looked puzzled; Schultz snorted.

“Vat do you mean *de luxe*? How can you *de luxe* a drip up dot mountain? Dot rough trail. Dot cold Rest House. Bah! You are mad.”

“Maybe.”

Schultz fixed Gay piercingly with his eyes, as if he were trying to rout out secrets in her mind.

“You vill quickly find out dot diss business is hard vork,” he asserted loftily. “Fife dollars—”

“We are charging twenty-five dollars for the trip to the top,” Gay cut in.

Schultz’s eyes almost crossed. “Twenty-fife dollars!” he gasped.

“Yes, twenty-five dollars,” Gay reiterated.

Schultz burst into noisy laughter; Yarrow shook with helpless mirth.

“Ach, dot iss goot!” Schultz choked. “Twenty-fife dollars to make dot horrible trip. Only fools vould pay twenty-fife dollars to see a big hole in the top of a mountain!” Then he stopped laughing, recollecting that Cherry *was* at the top with two people who were willing to pay twenty-five dollars to see the second largest extinct crater in the world.

His forehead knotted into an angry scowl, then he gathered himself together. "I do not think dot Yarrow and I need to vorry much about competitions," he said scornfully. "After a few times people vill find out the jip. Twenty-five dollars a person! Ach, it is a kick! Come, Yarrow, ve go home."

Yarrow batted his watery blue eyes; Schultz made an elaborate, mocking bow. "I vish you and your sister luck. Undoubtedly ve vill meet on the trail and at the top."

Ah Sam watched them go out, then shut the door sharply.

"Velly much I like to put this two fellas inside boiling water," he snapped. "Big humbugger like this kinds, make me velly, velly *huhu!*"

"It won't be exactly pleasant when we both have parties in the Rest House at the same time," Gay said.

The old cook gazed at her, admiration and disapproval mingling in his eyes.

When Gay went to bed, a little later, sleep would not come. The stormy and amazing and turbulent events of the day behind her were seething in her mind. The family set-to of the morning, Uncle Bellowing's vague warnings, the look Honor had directed at her when the Grenadier gave her the yellow diamond, Schultz and Yarrow's visit—all these made her feel spent and weak. A little zigzag of worry lanced through her, as she wondered how Cherry was faring. There was no telephone to the summit Rest House. It stood, bleak and lonely, ten thousand feet above the sea, with the starry bowl of the sky arching above it. There was no possible way to find out how matters were progressing up there. She would have to wait twelve more hours to find out the details of this first momentous trip which would largely determine what the future held for Cherry and her.

Raising to a sitting position, she lighted the lamp on her bedside table and took up a favorite book, but after a little while she laid it aside. No printed words, however magical, could be as vital and absorbing just now as the venture on which Cherry and she were launched.

Overcome with restlessness, she got up, slipped into her kimono and walked to the back door of Cherry's room, which always stood open, unless it was raining. Against the stirring sweep of the tropical heavens Haleakala loomed, sleeping quietly above the fires in its heart.

"I must be like Haleakala," Gay thought. "No matter how torn I feel inside, I must keep calm." Locking her slim arms across her chest, she stood

a small, lonely figure, facing the immensity of the world. The expression of her face was searching, half-frightened, but her eyes were steady and resolute.

Solemn thoughts marched through Gay's mind. The Power that created the beauty that governed the courses of the stars, the seasons, the flow and ebb of the sea, was in everything about her—in rocks and grass, flowers and trees, in the vital air passing over the earth. Hawaiians believed that the wind was God breathing His spirit, His strength and His love into all His creation. She was part of it . . .

Turning her face to the East to meet the cool breeze coming over the curve of the earth, Gay whispered, "God, fill me with Your strength. Make me brave. Make me have faith that all will work out right. Direct all my actions, and, oh *please*, God, don't let Billy's mare have her little colt until she's back from this trip."

"Maybe that's a funny prayer," Gay thought. Then something deep inside her made her know that any prayer prayed from the heart is always solemn. She exhaled a long breath, easing the pressure around her heart, and went back to bed.

When Gay opened her eyes, light was slowly and devoutly opening up the East. Through an open window she saw the morning star blazing above Haleakala. It shrank from a golden pool to a silver point. Somehow the trees looked taller and a solemn presence seemed to stand in each one. The grass, weighted with sparkling dew, looked as if during the night holy feet had walked over it.

Sitting up, Gay flung back the covers. She must hurry out. With Naka no longer in their pay, she must assume all the old gardener's duties, then get a good lunch ready for Cherry and her dudes when they returned.

Showering quickly, she dressed and went out. The sun was just clearing the indigo mass of Haleakala, flooding the green island with gold. A skylark shot out of the grass, singing as it winged its way upward, flowers breathed out fragrance, leaves flashed off light.

Gay gazed up at the far-off crater rim. Before long, Cherry would be leaving for the long, slow, difficult descent. Gay knew from the quality of the morning that there had been a sunrise to match the spectacular sunset of the evening before. So far, nature was certainly assisting them.

The garden seemed strange without Naka's tall, angular figure moving about it. No smoke rose from the kitchen chimney, signifying that Ah Sam

had left. The door of Suma's cottage was closed. Evidently she had gone to do laundry for some neighbor. But the beauty of the morning bred bravery and Gay flew about her duties happily. Her old life was ended but a new one, crowded with activity and big with challenge, lay ahead.

When the cow had been milked, dogs loosed, horses fed and leaves which had fallen during the night were raked up, she headed for the kitchen. After eating a light breakfast, she set the round table on the *lanai* for four and arranged a bouquet of pink begonias, spiked with sapphire larkspur in the center. It was nearing eleven before everything was done. She must start preparing lunch. Cherry should be in about twelve or twelve-thirty. Gay wondered if Schultz and Yarrow would be at the Halfway House, where the key to the Rest House was always returned to the Japanese who gave it out to people, and took it back. The Chamber of Commerce kept the old fellow there to take a tally on the number of persons who made the trip annually.

Gay shivered. More than likely, Schultz and Yarrow would make it their business to see how Cherry had fared. How they would gloat if the mare had foaled! Gay's overwrought imagination conjured up their voices, broadcasting the news to everyone on Maui.

"Ach, dot is goot! Sure, the Storm girls ride in races and take most of the prizes at the County Fair, but ach, it is goot, dey take a poor mare to the top and she haf her colt on the way!"

Gay's skin burned, then her jaw set, but her hands were unsteady as they arranged tempting, colorful salads on Canton China plates. When they were completed, she set them aside and, going to the stove, lifted the cover off the heavy black rice-pot. Each kernel was light and flaky. Now, if she could remember the exact steps Ah Sam took to make a mushroom omelette, she would be set.

In her complete absorption, she was oblivious of her appearance. Barefooted, in faded work clothes, her hair rumped, her face shiny, she looked like an overgrown, earnest child.

"Well," she thought, if lunch isn't quite as perfect as Ah Sam would prepare it, the long ride down the mountain should make any food taste good. She glanced out of the open windows for a sign of dust rising from the trail winding down through green pastures. There was none. She glanced at her wrist watch. Twenty to one!

Fear got her into its horrible grip. Her vivid young face grew ashen. Had it happened? "Well, if the mare has foaled, we'll live it down *in time*," she thought fiercely.

As if attacking enemies, she began beating up the whites and yellows of eggs in separate bowls, greased a heavy skillet and, after moving it away from the hot part of the stove, washed her hands. While the Tozzers cleaned up she could make the omelette. . . .

The sound of horses coming along the driveway set her heart thumping. Then, seizing her courage with both hands, she went out to meet the incoming party, the dogs scampering exuberantly around her. Would there be a gangly little colt trailing in the rear, or slung across Cherry's horse?

Gay looked. Only five horses, not six coming in! Relief made her dizzy.

"Oh, thank You, God. Thank You," she whispered.

"We had a perfectly gorgeous trip," Mrs. Tozzer called. "The sunset was beyond words and the sunrise even more wonderful. In all our travels we've never had a more efficient guide than your sister."

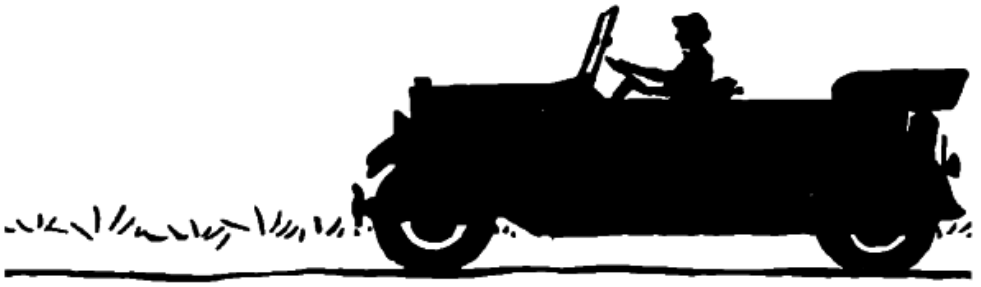
Gay beamed.

"As for the chow!" Professor Tozzer rolled expressive eyes. "No steaks we've ever had can compare with the ones Cherry broiled last night. As for the hotcakes this morning—"

"Oh, I'm so happy you're pleased!" Gay exclaimed.

"Pleased!" The professor swung off his horse while Gay assisted his wife to the ground. "We're so sold, we're postponing our trip to Kilauea Volcano to stay here a week. Will we press-agent you girls!"

Gay looked happily at Cherry. Their hands met and locked briefly. Then Cherry began slacking girths. The same thought as the one in Gay's mind shone from her face. The first milestone is safely behind!



CHAPTER IX

LEARNING THE ROPES

"I'M JITTERY inside," Gay thought disgustedly, as she drove on to the badly lighted wharf at Kahului and parked the car in the section reserved for rent drivers. Getting out, she gazed at the lights of the Inter-Island steamer coming around the end of the breakwater.

She eyed the knot of Hawaiians, Japanese, Chinese, and Portuguese good-naturedly joshing each other about who would get fares, and who would go home empty handed.

"Bet-you-my-lives," Pili boomed, "I catch full car."

"I berry smart for getting *haoles*," a Japanese standing by him explained. "My teeth berry white. I flash big smiles—" And he demonstrated expansively.

"I more smarts from any you fallahs for catch business," a big Portuguese bragged. "The risson for my success is—"

Gay went forward and quietly found an empty space on the rope stretched tautly across the wharf. In the semi-gloom nobody noticed her. The steamer blew a hoarse blast which seemed to tear the darkness into shreds. "I must keep remembering," Gay thought, "that Dad always insisted that if a person was built right inside, he, or she, could even drive a garbage wagon with dash and distinction." She gripped the big rope tightly and watched the steamer come alongside the wharf. Hawaiian sailors shouted from the ship as they tossed heavy hawsers to men on the dock. Local passengers peered down from the lighted decks, trying to see relatives or friends, who were due to meet them. Strangers speculated as to whether or not there would be cars for hire so very early in the morning.

The chauffeurs kept taunting each other like overgrown boys. All at once the Portuguese spied Gay standing a short distance from him. For an instant he looked puzzled, then he burst out excitedly. "Look! Sassy *haole* girl come steal our business. Big shame for making like this on us fallahs."

The dozen rent drivers looked where Gomez was pointing. Gay's skin burned but she resolutely maintained her place. Pili peered intently.

"Hah!" he exploded, bundling over to where Gay stood. "What-kind you doing here *keiki*—kid?"

"Trying to earn money, Pili, like the rest of you." Gay's voice was steady but her heart was pounding absurdly. Why, she wondered is this so hard to take? It's false pride, she concluded angrily, and choked the feeling back.

Pili shook his head in a concerned way. The other chauffeurs crowded up, fares temporarily forgotten in their amazement.

"What are *haole* leddy comin' to?" Gomez demanded, shouldering his way to where Gay stood. "First I hear you and seester takin' toorist up Haleakala; now you makin' moron things like driving rent car. I teenk got big seely in the brane."

Gay did not answer.

"Quick you get proofs that first-cum-first-serve in this rent car business," he went on. "And how you carry big suitcase like America *haoles* always bringin'? You just small peanut," he finished.

Gay appeared not to hear.

"I bin readin' *haole* etiquette books," Gomez went on, reveling in the spotlight momentarily focused on him by his stand. "Leddys' place is in the homes, sipping tea in dainty ways, and not making loud noise when drink. Bad etiquette to dress up like mans and try for steal us poor guys' work."

"*Kulikuli*, you big bulllys!" Pili said hotly. "If this kids have to make money, now her Papa *make*, not for us guys to makes lifes more hard for her. You go church every Sunday. You think this Christian kind for shove small young girl around and try to make shame her eye?"

Gay flashed a grateful look at him.

"What God care if peoples small or bigs, brown, or yellow or white? He make all, so He got big Alohas for all!" Pili asserted.

"You speaking berry sound talks, Pili," a Japanese agreed.

"I know Gay Papa velly long time," a tall Chinaman said, "and I bettin' Miss Gay actin' like leddy, even if she and sister make mankind *hanahana* for catch eats." He transferred his attention to Gay. "Sure, Gomez speak true. You small for carrying big suitcase but you look velly swell all dress up

like that.” He pointed to Gay’s smart riding breeches, polished boots and white silk shirt.

“Thank you, Chong,” she said.

The rope was switched away and the rent drivers surged forward to meet the passengers pouring down the gangway. Voices called out, people milled around stacked luggage, identifying their bags. Winches squeaked as cargo began to be discharged from the steamer.

Gay went to the portly, good-natured Hawaiian purser. “Did a Dr. and Mrs. Morrison, Dr. Morrison’s mother and two boys come over with you?” she asked.

“*Ae*.” The purser pointed at a small group standing a trifle anxiously on the outskirts of the crowd of summer sight-seers. Gay thanked the purser and started toward them.

“Dr. Morrison?” she asked.

“Yes.” The tall man looked relieved at hearing his name, then a stunned expression came over his face. “Are you—*Miss Storm*!” he asked incredulously.

“Yes, I am Gay Storm.”

“I’d expected, well, someone older. You’re just a—”

“I’m seventeen,” Gay hurried to tell him.

Dr. Morrison thoughtfully added her up, in a well-bred way, then remarked, “When the Tozzers wrote urging us to join them, I concluded, of course, that you and your sister were adults.”

There was, almost, a pained sound in his cultured voice.

“We may not be quite grown up, but we do know our business,” Gay assured him, “Daddy—”

“The Tozzers have written us in detail about you both, but failed to mention, well, your extreme—youth.” Mrs. Morrison broke in. Her mother-in-law smiled warmly at Gay and presented her two grandsons, ten and twelve.

“Which are your bags?” Gay tried to make her voice sound as though she had met ships and driven people for money all her life.

“Those over there are ours.” Dr. Morrison indicated an assorted heap of suitcases and handbags.

“As soon as I’ve settled you in the car, I’ll get one of the wharfmen to bring your luggage,” Gay said, hurriedly leading the way among dispersing passengers.

“Hi-yah!” one of the Japanese chauffeurs called out admiringly. “By golly, you catch fares like old-timer. Good on you!” And he streaked for his car, bags clutched under both arms, glancing around every so often to assure himself his fares were following.

Gay hoped fervently that the Morrisons had not overheard. She did not even dare to try to figure out how she could get the big bags to the car without assistance. Time enough for that, later. She glanced at the sky. Full daylight was still an hour or so away. If she worked fast enough, she could get her passengers to *Wanaao* before the too revealing light came. She did not want them to see the condition of the tires. The car had been only a casual adjunct to their lives while their Dad had been with them. She remembered that he had been planning to buy a new set of tires when he had been, so suddenly and so tragically, killed. Now good rubber must be a part of their business equipment, Gay resolved. The fifty dollars earned from the first mountain trip had been spent purchasing two good mattresses and two sets of springs. If the doctor and his wife and two boys decided to make the trip up Haleakala, tires could be bought very soon.

After establishing the Morrison family in the car, Gay raised the lid of the luggage compartment and hurried back to the wharf. Her stall of hiring someone to help with the bags wasn't very likely to prove a reality. Everyone was occupied unloading cargo. She carried the small hand-luggage in one trip, took the boys' moderate-sized suitcases on a second, then returned with a sinking heart to figure out how she could get the big valises to the car. The Morrisons might be impatient to start. Mrs. Morrison, Senior, was elderly and after a rough Inter-Island trip would be eager to get to her destination.

Using both hands, Gay tried to lift one of the big suitcases but could not swing it entirely clear of the ground. Perhaps she could hump it along. She glanced about anxiously, then set her teeth and humped the bag a few feet. After a brief rest she humped it again. A sudden fury possessed her that an inanimate object could so defy her living strength. Good-natured laughter filled her ears. Pili and Nakamura were barging down on her.

“Us take for you,” Pili said, his teeth flashing in a wide smile. “You game-sport.”

“Sure, *Banzai* for you!” Nakamura said approvingly.

Swooping on the bags, the men strode down the wharf and stowed them in the rear of Gay's car.

“There, all *pau pilikea*!” The men laughed.

“Gosh, you’re both swell!” Gay wrung their hands gratefully and, getting into the car, drove off.

The trip home was made without disaster and deep thankfulness welled up in Gay when she stopped the car in front of the house. Cherry was waiting in the patio to meet them. The Tozzers, who during the week they had been at *Wanaao* had become almost like members of the family, were waiting in the living room to greet their friends. Cherry had lighted the fire, and on a small table near the hearth was a tray with cups of coffee for the adults and chocolate for the boys.

“This is unheard of and completely delightful!” Mrs. Morrison declared, moving closer to the fire to warm up after the long, chill drive up the mountain. Her eyes went appreciatively over the room, then she accepted the cup of coffee Cherry held out. “I feel like royalty being welcomed, instead of an utter stranger coming to a place for the first time.”

“I told you when I wrote urging you to join us that Edward and I have never run into anything equal to being guests here,” Mrs. Tozzer said, glowing with satisfaction.

“How do you manage,” Mrs. Morrison’s fine, intelligent eyes went to the two girls, “to make a person feel so important and so wrapped in approval?”

“I guess,” Gay answered thoughtfully, “it’s because Island-born whites who have lived close to Hawaiians have absorbed their hospitality which springs from the depths of their hearts. In olden times Polynesians believed hospitality was not the choice of an individual but a sacred obligation of mankind. There’s an old saying of Polynesia which sums it all up—beautifully.” Her eyes grew luminous. “If a man be not hospitable to the stranger who halts at his door, his shame will be broadcast over the land, for when a guest crosses your threshold, God enters your house.”

When the Morrisons had been established in their rooms, Cherry and Gay collected the tray and cups and hurried to the kitchen. Cherry beamed at her sister.

“I never prayed so hard in my life as I did while you were gone, Gay. I was terrified that one, or all, of the tires, might blow out.”

Gay laughed with relief. “While I tried to engage the Morrisons with ‘brilliant conversation,’ the rest of my mind was praying full speed. My heart did back-flips at every revolution of the wheels. But we made it!” Her voice fairly sang. “Let’s sail in and get everything finished so we can breakfast by eight.”

“Better make it eight-thirty, in case the popovers fall.” Cherry giggled as she picked up the milk bucket. “That’ll give you a chance to try your hand at

a second batch.”

“You’re a wretch to make fun of my efforts,” Gay protested. “We may be fine camp cooks but when people stay with us for a week or two there ought to be a few fancy trimmings to vary the diet.”

“I’m just teasing; I think you’re doing marvelously.” Cherry’s voice had an admiring note. “Your gravy has been perfect ever since you hit on the idea of browning your flour first and putting it in glass jars. It can’t come out pale and lumpy now.”

“I haven’t learned how to make bread properly yet.” Gay laughed. “Suma will have to bake again tonight. The eight loaves I worked over so hard came out like lead.” She indicated the sorry array. “But I’ll lick it yet.”

Cherry gazed at the loaves, flat and unappetizingly pale, which Gay was throwing into the garbage can. “Let’s buy a small pig,” she suggested. “We can get one for five dollars. Then—”

“Then the food I spoil won’t be wasted?” Gay finished for her, laughing on a high, happy note.

Breakfast safely over with, Gay washed the dishes, planned lunch, then skirted around the back of the house and made up the beds, swept the rooms and arranged fresh flowers in each one. The tingling adventure of earning her own living made her feet light and kept her spirits singing. Even the ordinary household tasks were exciting.

Glancing up, she saw Cherry jogging off with the two Morrison boys, while the low murmur of voices from the *lanai* told her the older people were visiting together. She glanced at her wrist watch. It was only ten-thirty. Lunch wasn’t until one-thirty and it was always a light meal. That left over two hours in which she could attend to mail and get caught up with a few of the details demanding attention.

Going to her bedroom, she seated herself at the desk and went through the letters stamped with the names of Honolulu hotels. The house was booked full until August 28th, ten mountain trips scheduled. She gazed into space. It had all worked out so simply that it seemed as if there must be a joker somewhere. Only there wasn’t—not so far. She and Cherry were merely doing things they knew thoroughly and putting *a hundred and ten per cent* into their efforts, so—they were clicking.

She entered dates and the number of persons in the parties to be taken up Haleakala in a ledger, then studied a letter from a woman who wanted to send her two boys over while she visited a sister in San Francisco.

After weighing the matter, Gay typed off a letter saying that if the boys would be satisfied to live in a tent in the garden, she would see that they were happy and well cared for. Of course, the boys would be keen about living in a tent under the trees. The fact that the only tent she and Cherry happened to have on hand was ripped along the ridgepole, didn't daunt her. Gathering up the letters, she went out, caught her gray horse, vaulted on to him bareback and loped the mile to the post office. She was back in half an hour and, going to the tack house, dragged out the tent and spread it on the grass.

When she had fetched sewing implements from the house she sat down on the grass and began working. The material along the ridgepole was four layers thick, bulky, stiff and hard to handle. Her fingers soon ached and felt cramped, as she had to fight to draw the needle through at each stitch. Perspiration dampened her forehead but courage, founded on the knowledge of what she and Cherry were accomplishing, spurred her on.

Hula and Coquette stretched out in the shade of a near-by oleander pouring its faint, fairy-like fragrance into the air. Every so often they wagged their tails encouragingly and gave happy dog-pantings, showing little tongues pink as ham.

Finally Gay heard horses' hoofs coming along the driveway but she did not look up. Probably Cherry, returning with the Morrison boys. She re-beeswaxed the heavy linen thread and re-attacked the long rip.

"Gay!"

She threw up her head. Naps was striding toward her with a tall, red-headed stranger, who, she concluded, must be a newly acquired friend.

"Naps!" she cried. "I was at Kahului this morning but didn't see you get off the boat."

"Davie and I got off at Lahina and drove home," Naps explained. "Davie," he gripped his companion's arm, "this is Gay." His brown eyes sparkled mischievously. "Usually she's an eyeful, but—" He laughed in a teasing, brotherly way and gestured toward Gay's hot face and wind-blown hair. "Gay, this is my friend Davie. I met him on Kauai."

"I'm glad to know you," Gay said. "Excuse me for not getting up but I'll disturb my—fancywork!" She smiled, and motioned to the torn tent.

Davie was about Naps' build but taller and a year or two older. His features were clean cut. Faint freckles showed through his tan and an outlaw lock of his unruly red hair hung against his forehead. His eyes were darkly blue and intensely alive.

"I'm glad to know you, Gay," he said in a quiet, stirring voice.

He stood in the sunshine, as unaware of himself as a Polynesian, spreading a happy-go-lucky charm over everything, but an electrical something quivered about him, as if he'd just come in from swimming in a high sea.

Naps seated himself cross-legged on the grass, and Davie sat down beside him. Gay sturdily refused their offers of help.

"Where's Cherry?" Naps asked.

In breathless, excited rushes Gay related all that had happened. Naps listened, his eyes shining. Every so often he exclaimed. "Bully! Gay, that's tops! Gosh, how I envy you girls!"

His enthusiasm made Gay glow, but even while she talked she was conscious of Davie's presence. His silence, the interested, intent way he watched her as she reviewed the events of the past two weeks made all she was telling seem more important.

"You've certainly got off to a flying start," Naps announced, when Gay paused for breath. "Now, if you can hold the pace—"

"We're booked full until the last of August," Gay told him triumphantly, then re-attacked her sewing.

"That's simply swell," Naps exulted. "And all the time I was on Kauai I kept worrying and wondering how you two were getting on. I might have saved my energy."

"Won't you both stay to lunch?" Gay asked, finally, looking up from her work.

"Bet-you-my-life!" Naps laughed. "I'd just about concluded we'd have to ask ourselves."

Gay wondered how long Davie was going to visit Naps. From his clothes she knew he was not wealthy, though he wore them with careless ease and a sort of elegance that matched the fine moulding of his head and his superbly proportioned body. His red hair grew boldly off his forehead and his small-boned, short-fingered hands were strong and full of character. His silence was more exciting than conversation and every time she met his warm, smiling eyes the grass seemed greener and the sky a deeper blue.

Cherry jogged in with the boys and Naps streaked to meet her. Davie sat watching Gay sew and his presence was as restful and rich as a Hawaiian's. Contentment mixed with exhilaration stole through Gay. Life was fine and stimulating when a person was working at top speed to accomplish worthwhile things.

“Going to use that tent for camping?” Davie asked after they had sat for several minutes in a warm, companionable silence.

“No.” Gay explained about the woman who wanted to send her boys over.

Davie listened with an absorbed, thoughtful expression on his face. Gay gazed at the red lock moving roguishly about his forehead in the light wind. Then an incredible and astounding thing happened. Some force over which she had no control compelled her to reach out and poke her finger through it. Blood flamed into her face.

“Oh, Davie!” she gasped. “I didn’t mean to do that. *It just happened!*”

His resounding laughter picked her up. “Don’t apologize, Gay,” he said when he had controlled his mirth. “I’m enough of a judge of human nature to know you’re a one-in-a-million sort of girl—no silliness about you.”

“But it—it was an awful thing to do,” Gay insisted, her cheeks like flaming roses.

“It was—cute.” Davie grinned. “No one has ever poked a finger through that curl so—I’ll never forget you.”

They looked at each other, smiling, and it seemed as though they had been friends for years and years. Gay went on sewing the tent, Davie watched her absorbed face and busy, strong hands. When they began to shake with their efforts to push the thick needle through the heavy layers of material, he firmly took over the work.

“Whereabouts on Kauai do you live?” Gay asked as she sat back and watched him.

“Until three years ago I lived on Niihau.”

“Niihau!” Gay exclaimed. “I thought that the two white men who own the island didn’t permit anyone but Hawaiians on it.”

“They don’t,” Davie said. “But old Kane, the sort-of headman of the island, found me when I was a baby, drifting in a lifeboat to the northwest of the island. What became of my parents, and any others who may have been in the boat, remains one of the many deep mysteries of the Pacific. Kane and his wife Mele adopted me and raised me as their son. You know how Hawaiians are. They love the children that they adopt as deeply as their own ___”

“That explains something about you that has been puzzling me,” Gay broke in. “I know you’re a *haole* but you feel like a Hawaiian.”

“I should. I ate and slept and fished with them, laughed and sang with them, until I was seventeen. Elmer and Marks who own Niihau, tried to

force Kane to give me up, but he wouldn't be browbeaten into doing it. I was educated with the Hawaiian kids in the small school on Niihau. We had a good teacher. Every minute, for as far back as I can remember, spilled over with fun and happiness." A deep, remembering expression welled into his eyes. "Hawaiians are the way God intended people to be when He created them."

"I know," Gay said. Her eyes lighted. "You remember that line Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, which exactly hits the nail on the head about Polynesians."

"I'm afraid I don't. About the only books on Niihau are Bibles and schoolbooks."

"Stevenson said," Gay's voice had a triumphant ring to it, "'God's best, His sweetest work—Polynesians!'" "

The bright morning seemed to brim over as their eyes met. Sweet wind poured softly over the earth. Off in the pasture below the house a *paniolo* sang a *hula* as he rode about his work, and the music, coming faintly to their ears like music in a dream, seemed to crystallize the beautiful dream that is Hawaii.

"How did you happen to be on Kauai when Naps met you?" Gay inquired, as Davie struggled on with the tent mending.

"About three years ago old Kane, who was a real father to me, began to go blind." Davie stared back down the winding roads of memory. "Even when he grew quite blind there was no suggestion of weakness in his movements, rather of great force chained by darkness. Finally, he seemed to realize that he was—near the end of the trail. One evening he called me to him and told me that he felt it was best that I should go and live with relatives of his on Kauai so I could attend the Lehue school. He argued that, as I was really a *haole*, I must have more education. There was no future for me on Niihau. I knew he was right." Davie's voice was steady but had a sound of pain behind it. "I had never known any *haoles* except Elmer and Marks and they were ice cold affairs. Everyone was always glad when their twice-a-month visit was *pau*. The very island seemed to sigh with relief and shake itself free to be happy and gay again." He gave a little laugh, then his face became serious once more. "Kane, though the world will never know of him, was a great man. As well as being the only father I've ever known, or would want to know, he was a sort of *Alii* on Niihau. So—I took orders from my Chief, and got ready to go. Leaving was tough. I knew I could never go back to Kane and Mele and all my friends in the same way again. That part of my life was *pau*—forever."

Breaking off, he gazed at beautiful distances of earth and sea such as only islands can brew.

“Go on,” Gay urged, watching his deeply thoughtful eyes.

“Beside the wrench of leaving Kane,” Davie continued, “I dreaded to go among *haoles*. But the fact that I was to stay with relations of Kane’s, who were Hawaiians, and *hapa-haoles*, eased me over that hump. I was warmly greeted and went to school at Lehue. During vacations I worked as a *luna* on the plantation to earn money. I met Naps by chance when I was fishing with some Hawaiians at Hanalei. We clicked at once.” He gave a happy grin. “He persuaded me to come and get work on Maui. It’s a grand island.” His eyes swept the great blue shape of Haleakala, filling the east.

“Have you anything in view yet?” Gay asked.

“Before coming here Naps stopped in to see Mr. Spencer. I’m going to work for him as a *paniolo* until the summer roundup is over. In the fall he says, maybe, he’ll have a permanent job for me. If he hasn’t, I’ll get a *luna*’s job on some plantation.”

A little trickle of gladness poured through Gay.

“That would be tops, Davie,” she said simply.

“Yes, it will be,” he agreed. “Being raised among Hawaiians, not knowing even who I really am, I usually feel strange with *haoles* I meet. You see, inside I’m all Hawaiian. Money means nothing to me. I don’t want a big swanky house. Being on horseback all day, with all this around,” he gestured at the earth and sky as though sweeping them close to him, “I have—everything!”

“That’s just how Cherry and I feel.”

Davie grinned in his attractive way. “Isn’t it the best luck that I bumped into you and Naps and Cherry, who talk my language?”



CHAPTER X

HONOR TAKES A HAND

DURING the crowded weeks of June, July and August, Gay and Cherry were on the run from four in the morning until ten at night or later. At the end of June they decided, with business humming as it was, to hire fifteen-year-old Hana to assist with dishwashing, make up rooms and attend to other household details, leaving the girls freer to cope with the more difficult part of their work.

Each evening when old Nakashima returned from his new job he helped to cut wood or cultivate the vegetable garden. He grumbled and growled about ‘girl-sans making mankind *hanahana* (work)’ but it was evident he was deeply impressed by the success of the new venture. If the house was full and Cherry up Haleakala with a party, Suma assisted her daughter with the after-dinner dishes, to leave Gay free to play hostess to the guests staying at *Wanaao*. The deep devotion of the old servants, who refused any recompense for their assistance, warmed Gay’s heart and fortified her for greater efforts. Like Cherry and herself, Naka and Suma worked hard and long, but wished to give dividends of *Aloha* which gushed up from the bottoms of their hearts.

Once a month, on Monday, Ah Sam drove up from Wialuku in a rent car to give a few free hours of service in the kitchen, which somehow always seemed a brighter place during the hours when his familiar form was in command.

Cherry averaged two big mountain trips a week. Gay became accustomed to lining up with the other rent chauffeurs at the wharfs of Lahaina and Kahului.

On Sundays Gay and Cherry organized picnics which served a dual purpose. They enabled the little maid Hana to rest, and made it possible for visitors to enjoy the golden beaches or forest pools banked with fragrant, blossoming ginger, and leaning, spicy ferns. Cherry and Gay always served a hot lunch—steaks, coffee, lavish salads. The hearty midday meal permitted picnickers to return to *Wanaao* as late as they pleased to enjoy a cold supper prepared early in the day.

Visitors reveled in such jaunts but few of them realized that after they were in bed there were still long hours of work for the girls. Horses must be cared for, fed, gear put away, dishes washed, the living room and *lanai* made attractive and fresh for the next morning.

Local papers headlined any celebrities who visited *Wanaao* and lauded the astonishing success of the first guest-ranch in Hawaii. There were weekly write-ups about Gay and Cherry, but the editor of the Maui News did not see behind the scenes, so could not analyze the real reason why the new venture boomed as it did.

“Davie,” Naps said one Sunday morning as the two boys jogged along tree shaded roads to join the girls and their guests on a picnic, “write-ups like this,” he tapped a folded newspaper stuck into the pocket of his breeches, “must simply burn the Storm Clan to cinders.” He gave a pleased chuckle.

“They should be bursting with pride,” Davie asserted.

“Wait till you get to know ’em. They’ve given Gay and Cherry the air since the big row, but they won’t be able to stand it much longer, not having the spotlight focused on them and their doings. Honor’s name hasn’t been in the paper three times this summer, that is, in a big way. People skip social items telling what Aunt Laura wore at her tea, or what Aunt Charity served at her dinner, to find out who’s at *Wanaao* and how many people Cherry’s taking up Haleakala.”

Davie gazed up at the sunlight lacquering the tips of the tall trees under which they were riding.

“Gay and Cherry are working too hard,” he announced, after a silence. “They remind me of overtrained race horses. They’re too fine, too taut.”

“I agree with you there, but after September first tourist traffic will drop to nothing so they’re trying to cash in on everything they can while it lasts.”

"It sort of lets me down to see them so set on making money. It doesn't seem to fit in with their picture. Surely, they aren't the kind who mistake money for happiness."

"They only want to make enough cash, Davie, to buy *Wanaao* if they can. Once it's safely theirs—" Naps gestured as only an Islander can.

"So that's it." Davie's eyes suddenly looked as gay as a Hawaiian sea on a cloudless day. "I wonder if Mr. Spencer will sell it. As a rule, it's difficult to get big landholders in Hawaii to part with any acreage."

"I have a hunch he will, if the girls can meet the figure it's valued at, ten thousand dollars. He knows what the place means to them."

"I hope he sees his way to keeping me on permanently, Naps. After this swell summer, I'd hate to take work on some far-off plantation where I couldn't spend Saturday nights with you and see the girls on Sundays."

"Bet a dime to a dollar you're kept on," Naps asserted jauntily.

"Hope you're right." Davie grinned as they turned in the driveway of *Wanaao*.

Cherry and Gay were working feverishly about the long line of horses, but, with four more expert hands to assist, saddles were soon cinched on, food strapped to the pack horse and guests mounted.

"Take my guitar along, Davie," Gay called, "so we can have music as we ride."

"How divine!" a young girl from the mainland squealed gleefully.

"And isn't it fun the way all the horses have flowers in their bridles?" an elderly woman exclaimed. "It makes me feel as gay and carefree as if I were riding in a parade."

Davie's eyes caught Gay's. "Extra dividends," they said, and something deep in her which had felt tired, glowed.

"Where are we going today?" a heavy-set man who had already spent three weeks at *Wanaao* asked expectantly.

"To the Piholo pool," Gay told him, pointing at a big cone some five miles away. Through the green growth of guava and Hilo grass swathing its steep sides red streaks showed its cinder origin. Fat clouds sailed lazily overhead, and a cool, light wind, laden with the incense of moist forests, flowed softly toward the southwest.

When the cavalcade was underway, Davie dropped his reins over his pommel, swung his guitar into position and began singing a haunting *mele*, which seemed to express the deep heart of the Pacific. With his head thrown back, flowers about his straw hat, sitting carelessly in his saddle, he spilled

charm into the buoyant day. Behind his music was the sound of hoofs and spurs, the creak of leather, and horses blowing out their nostrils as they walked up green swales and crested sweeps of meadow.



WHEN THE CAVALCADE WAS UNDERWAY, DAVIE PROPPED HIS REINS OVER HIS POMMEL, SWUNG HIS GUITAR INTO POSITION AND BEGAN SINGING A HAUNTING *mele*.

An hour's ride brought the party to the brink of a steep gulch. Far below, emerald pools gleamed and the small stream linking them flashed among rocks which tore the green water into silver lace. Cherry led the way down the narrow trail, which emerged on to a vivid flat, shaded by *kukui* trees and *viavis*.

The girls, Naps and Davie assisted the twenty guests off their mounts and tied the horses in the shade. The two small boys who occupied the tent Gay had mended, having been to Piholo before, shouted and raced each other to the shingle beach jutting into the deep, still water. Guests scattered into the thick undergrowth to put on bathing suits and emerged to flop on cool beds of spicy *palapalai* fern. Gay and Cherry, Naps and Davie put lunch hampers in the shade, set up a collapsible grill, stocked driftwood beside it, then relaxed.

"Play some more, Davie," Gay said, her eyes on the waterfall flashing into the far end of the pool. The reflection of smooth rocks quivered on each side and above the twisting canyon walls the dome of Haleakala was visible

where the mighty Cloud Warriors, Ukiukiu and Naulu had assembled for battle.

Picking up his instrument, Davie plucked haunting chords from the resounding strings. "You're tired, Gay," he accused, behind the screen of the music.

"A little."

Davie glanced over to where Naps and Cherry were showing the boys how to skip pebbles. "Cherry looks a bit on the strung-up side, too. Just in the six weeks I've known you, both of you have lost pounds. You remind me of baby mynah birds—"

"All beaks and eyes?" Gay laughed aloud.

"Not exactly that," Davie protested.

"We're bound to look ragged, working as we do," Gay said defensively, "but we've earned over four thousand dollars in three months. When the season's *pau* we should have at least two thousand in savings. Not a bad take-off for a new business?" she challenged.

"It's wonderful."

"School opens September fifth," Gay went on, "and we're going to try to keep expenses down to the bone during the fall and winter. Then next spring —"

"You'll double or treble your business, if I'm any sort of a guesser; but don't kill yourselves."

"We won't, Davie. We want to cash in on all we possibly can because—"

"Naps told me why you girls are burning the candle at both ends and in the middle, too, but—" He glanced around.

A dreamy expression stole into Gay's eyes. "I know what you're thinking. Picnics like we have every Sunday are lots of extra work and net us no more money. But they net good will and that's more important." She waved at people sprawled luxuriously in the sun, at others chatting contentedly, at others soaking in the beauty of earth and sky. "These people will go away remembering this always, something they didn't pay extra for, that was given to them with both hands and *Aloha*." Her voice lingered on the word. "This is the only way Cherry and I can put the extra dividends into living, the way Dad did."

"I know you won't be poorer for it in the long run," Davie agreed. "Anyone who puts a hundred per cent effort into whatever he does, every time, will get somewhere. If he puts a hundred and ten per cent he'll—*go places!*"

Gay flashed a grateful look at him. "As Kipling expresses it in the *Jungle Tales*, 'We speak one tongue, thou and I.' "

"I've known some great people, old Kane for instance," Davie said, a deep note in his voice, "but you—" breaking off, he smiled, and his smile said more than any words could.

Gay's eyes looked like a pool filled to the brim. "Let's get the fire going so there'll be lots of coals to broil the steaks. Then we can swim."

Setting the guitar in the crotch of a *kukui* tree, Davie headed for the grill. "I'll light up while you get into your swim suit," he said.

"Thanks a million!" Gay cried.

When Gay came out of her thicket, Naps, Cherry and the guests were streaking about the pool, or splashing in the pebbly shallows. The green canyon walls echoed to gleeful shouts. Water falling over rocks sang its accompanying song.

"Isn't this something to write home about?" the stout man called to some newer-comers. "A mountain pool which isn't too cold to enjoy? I could stay in for hours—if I weren't hungry enough to eat an elephant."

Long before the guests had swum their fill, Gay and Cherry, Naps and Davie were working over lunch. While the girls wove *palapalai* fern into a fragrant cloth to spread on the grass, the boys broiled the steaks and made monster pots of coffee. When everything was ready Naps yelled—"Kaukau!"

Guests came scrambling out of the water and seated themselves dripping about the temptingly laid-out table. Sunlight flashed in bright drops stealing down bare, tanned backs. Wind ran cool fingers through women's hair. Platters of steaks vanished, salad bowls were scooped clean, coffee pots emptied.

"Now for at least two hours' shut-eye," the stout man said, rolling contentedly into a cool pool of shade.

When the debris was cleared away, utensils packed, and fire carefully put out Naps and Cherry exchanged meaningful glances and came to where Gay and Davie were closing hampers.

"Sam asked Davie while he was here to try and locate a steer that broke out of *Lehua Nui* pasture, into *Lehua Lili*," Naps said. "Cherry and I'd like to take on the job of finding it. We haven't done any roping together since this time last year. Okay by you Davie?"

"Sure," he agreed in his good-natured way.

“It shouldn’t take us more than an hour,” Cherry said to Naps as they started for their horses. “But *will* it feel good to swing a lasso again.”

Her feet seemed to fairly dance across the grass, and even her shoulders looked excited.

Gay stretched out in the sun. Davie took up his guitar, spilling soft music that melted into the beauty of the wide, lazy afternoon, lulling everything to a peace which was, at the same time, stirring.

“When it’s like this,” Gay said dreamily, “I always have a queer, excited feeling that anything is going to happen at any instant.”

Davie glanced down at her. “Having been brought up among Hawaiians, I know what you mean.”

After a little, Gay sat up. “I hear a horse coming down the trail.” She indicated the one they had followed to reach the bottom. A rider showed for a second, a small moving dot against the green wall, then disappeared behind some trees. When it reappeared Gay exclaimed, “Why, it looks like Honor!”

“So I’m to meet her at last,” Davie commented.

“I can’t figure out why she’s coming, unless she has a message from the Grenadier.”

Trees again engulfed horse and rider but in about ten minutes Honor came splashing across the stream, bright drops leaping from her horse’s fetlocks.

“Hello there!” she called brightly, waving a slender arm.

In tan breeches and white silk shirt, with a *lei* of scarlet Maui roses around her throat, she looked a part of the Island afternoon.

“Hello, Honor,” Gay called back, rising to her feet.

Davie laid aside his guitar and got up. Honor rode to within a yard of where they were standing and looked down at them.

“This is completely jolly.” She indicated prostrate figures and shimmering pool.

“It is,” Gay agreed, then presented Davie.

Honor’s eyes added him up slowly, then opened in amazement, as if she were utterly and completely swept away. “Why your hair is as red as the paddles of a warrior’s canoe! It’s simply—gorgeous!”

Davie turned a deep red.

“Hold my horse, will you, Davie?” she said, as if they had known each other for years. “I’m inoculated with all this lovely Hawaiian laziness. Maui

has grown away from it these past few years. I must try to get my crowd to take it up again. It's ever so much better than card parties and golf."

"Hawaiian laziness!" Davie exclaimed, as she dismounted. "These picnics are hard work for Gay and Cherry—"

Honor seemed not to hear.

"I felt it was about time some of the clan showed an interest in what you and Cherry are doing," she remarked, when she had dismounted, then pecked at Gay's cheek.

"How is Gren?"

"She's completely intrigued by all the write-ups." Honor laughed lightly. "But you know how she is. She likes action and accomplishment." The sound of her voice made what her cousins were doing seem of minor importance. Turning her head, she sniffed. "Steaks! Am I too late?"

"There are a couple left. I'll shake up the coals and broil one for you," Gay said, walking off.

"The girls really have got something, haven't they?" Honor said, addressing Davie so that her words subtly encircled him, detaining him with her.

"They've *made* it," he stressed the word.

"Where's Cherry?" Honor asked.

"After a steer with Naps."

"Personally, I'm pretty proud of my cousins," Honor murmured on, as if admitting him into an inner secret. "But the older members of the Storm clan are naturally upset. This is a complete departure, having members of the family in work of this kind, guiding tourists up Haleakala, taking paying guests into their home, driving a car for rent." She made a pretty, amused gesture, signifying that to her it meant nothing.

"I think it's grand of Gay and Cherry to pitch in as they are doing," Davie said warmly. "Not that my opinion counts."

"Why do you say that?" Honor looked at him engagingly.

"I don't even know who I am." Davie's hearty laughter came resoundingly from an untroubled heart, a heart that accepts life happily and without question, enjoying the good, forgetting the bad in an instant.

"Yes, I've heard about you. It's completely intriguing to me. Why, you might be the scion of some great family—"

"More likely a lowly laborer!" Davie's mirth was fine to hear.

"You couldn't be that—in any language," Honor asserted. "You're simply swell. I love gay people." And her laughter chimed out, pitched to

carry a fair distance.

Gay looked around, wondering what the fun was all about. Davie saw it and wanted suddenly to break away.

"I think I'd better go and help Gay with the steak—for *your* lunch."

"You're an amazing person," Honor said, quickly. "Your voice seems to make music even when you're talking about such commonplace things as broiling steaks, or when you laugh." Her eyes danced.

Davie flushed.

"You're blushing! How marvelous. Most men—" Her voice implied volumes.

"I may be a *haole* actually, but inside I'm Hawaiian," Davie said, "so I don't fit the pattern." He turned to start for the fire.

"Just an instant," Honor said. "You like her lots, don't you?"

"Gay's in a pasture of her own, she's steel and—star dust."

"Don't go completely off the deep end where she's concerned."

Davie looked blank. "What are you driving at?"

"Haven't you noticed the yellow diamond Gay wears on her left hand?"

"Who could miss it?"

"She tells people she wears it on her left because it gets in the way of her work on the other. Actually—" Honor's eyes probed at Davie's. "Well, because Gay's just seventeen, and because the stone is, well, appallingly large and hardly in good taste, she isn't announcing it till she's of age."

"I wish Naps and Cherry would come back," Gay said, after Honor had finished eating. She gazed at the steep green slopes of the cone which had once spouted lava. "It'll be dark in an hour and we should be starting home."

"Maybe they've run across the steer they were after," Davie suggested.

"Cherry has eight people to take to the top tomorrow. It'll be all of eleven tonight before we get people fed, horses taken care of and stuff ready for the mountain trip. I have to get up before dawn to meet the Kahului boat they're coming on." She watched the zigzag trail which got lost in guava bushes, then found again when it crossed grassy clearings.

"I think I see Naps now, on the second turn," Davie said, leaning forward. "Yes, that's Elele," he asserted, gazing through half-closed eyes at the black speck of Naps' horse.

"If it won't put you out, Gay," Honor said in her slow, charming voice, "I'd like to have supper with you all before I go home. This has been fun!

It's stimulating to meet people you haven't known all your life." She indicated the group chatting together by the edges of the still pool.

"Stay by all means; we have ample *kaukau*." Gay did not move her eyes from the trail. "I wonder where Cherry has gone to?" she asked, looking edgy.

"She's a loop ahead or behind," Davie assured her.

Gay made no reply but kept her eyes on the zigzags. Naps vanished into the underbrush and reappeared after a few minutes. "Naps is riding very slowly, and it looks as though he's carrying a colt or calf in front of him."

Davie's eyes narrowed, then his hand went out and gripped Gay's shoulder. "Gay, Naps is carrying Cherry. She must have had a spill. The country's pretty rough behind Piholo. I'll go and meet him."

"Thanks, Davie," Gay said with a choke as they both leaped to their feet. "Yes, I see Cherry's horse now, coming down the trail about two laps ahead of Naps'—" Her voice died in her throat.

Davie streaked toward his horse.

"Wait," Gay called, running after him. "This may sound beastly, as if Cherry came second with me." She swallowed hard and her dilated eyes were fixed pathetically on his. "Tell Naps to follow us home—out of sight. When people are paying for things, the wheels must turn smoothly." Her eyes were dark pools of anxiety. "I have to get these people home safely. If Cherry's brought in, hurt, everyone will get into a lather and mill around. If we're to make *Wanaao* before dark, and we must because most of these people are green riders—"

"Gosh, you've got grit and common sense," Davie said, his eyes warm with admiration.

"You—you'll let me know about—about Cherry as quickly as you can, won't you?" Gay asked.

Davie gripped her hand and turned toward his horse, speechless.

Gay watched him mount then started to collect gear stacked near the grill.

"I'll give you a hand," Honor offered.

"Thanks." Gay tried to control the trembling of her voice.

The mystic loveliness of evening was coming to the Pacific and its islands. Slow peace was seeping into the deep canyon like a vast benediction. Shadows hung like blue chiffon under cliffs swathed with green and high overhead plover whistled as they winged their way to their nesting places.

“Honor, will you pack this stuff into the saddle bags while I cinch up the horses and get people mounted?”

“Gladly. You give orders, I’ll execute them.”

“Thanks.” Gay forced her voice to normal, then began rounding up the merry-makers. “We’d better start. Naps and Cherry went after a wild steer. They’re late. Davie has gone to tell them we’re starting home. I want to get to *Wanaao* by daylight.”

“I do, too,” someone remarked. “It must be eerie riding at night.”

“It’s wonderful, if you know how to ride, but with so many greenhorns —” Gay flashed a smile around at the people donning sweaters and collecting drying bathing suits off guava bushes and *viavi* trees.

Davie came splashing across the stream, and Gay hurried to meet him. He pulled up where Honor was just taking down the grill. They were out of earshot of the guests.

“Cherry’s horse took a header as she was galloping down a hill after the wild steer,” he said in low tones. “No bones are broken, but she’s clear out.”

All the color drained from Gay’s face.

“Someone had better go ahead and phone for a doctor.” Davie glanced at Honor. “How about you? That’ll leave me free to stand by Naps, and Gay can get the dudes home before dark—maybe,” he added, glancing at the purple twilight creeping down into the canyon.

“I’ll be glad to go,” Honor said. “And I’ll get everything ready for Cherry when they bring her in.”

“It’s a dividend you came along today,” Davie remarked.

“I’m glad I did,” Honor called over her shoulder as she started for her horse.

“Stout heart, Gay,” Davie said, giving her fingers an encouraging grip. “Cherry’s tough as all get-out. Don’t worry too much.” Wheeling his horse, he re-crossed the stream and vanished into the green undergrowth.

Dark came before Gay got her guests home. As she rode along in the deepening gloom, part of her mind streamed backward to Cherry while the rest of her brain was alert to the responsibility of getting twenty inexperienced riders home safely. The knowledge that Davie was with Naps was comforting but she wished frantically that she could have been with her sister.

Instead, she had to occupy herself with innumerable details that demanded incessant vigilance. The horses were eager to get home, but she kept in the lead, holding them to a walk. Twice she had to dismount to re-set

stirrups and adjust a curb chain, and while she worked she had to watch that none of the horses slipped past her. Tall trees brooded overhead and a lonely wind sighed through their tops.

Dark descended and enveloped the cavalcade but Gay was acutely conscious of the hidden movements of the animals and persons in her wake. As she rode, every faculty was quiveringly alive and on its job. She realized that often in life a person was not only an individual, but an atom of a whole, that even love must, sometimes, be subordinated to a duty that a person had taken on of his own volition. These people had trusted themselves to her, and she could not fail them, even at a time when her whole being was being torn away and every natural instinct screamed to her to be elsewhere.

When she finally saw the lights of *Wanaao* shining from the hilltop, some inner part of her which had been clenched into an aching knot, relaxed for a brief instant. The Power that had guided Cherry and her so far would not fail them, now. The present might be awesome, but the ultimate outcome she would not doubt or question.

As they came along the driveway, Gay saw Honor waiting near the hitching rail with a lantern in her hand. Sliding off her horse, Gay busied herself helping people to dismount.

“Supper will be ready in about twenty minutes,” Honor said warmly as the guests began heading for the house.

“Fine!” someone exclaimed. “That’ll give us time to clean up.”

“I got the doctor, Gay. He’s on his way, and Cherry’s room is ready,” Honor said quietly.

“You’re a trump, Honor.”

“I’ll help with the unsaddling.”

“I’d rather have you go in and set out the cold supper, if you don’t mind. Everything is ready in the icebox—jellied chicken, salads. The macaroni is cooked and only needs re-heating. This is Hana’s night off. She and Naka and Suma went to a picture show in Makawao. Light the silver candles, will you? It adds a touch.” Gay was running on nervously now, anxiously watching down the dark driveway.

“I’ll do whatever you want me to, Gay,” Honor said, setting down the lantern and vanishing into the house.

“If I’m not through with the unsaddling, take over supper, will you?” Gay called.

“Okay.”

Gay swallowed against the ache in her throat. She missed Cherry's brisk presence as she worked, her ears strained to hear the sound of three horses approaching along the road. Just as the last animal had been turned out to roll and grunt, grinding the itch of saddle blankets off its back, she heard hoofbeats. Taking up the lantern, she waited, her heart pounding so savagely in her side it made her feel ill and weak.

"How is she?" she asked, as Davie, leading Cherry's horse, and Naps, holding Cherry carefully, came to where she stood.

"Still out," Naps answered, with his young voice catching slightly.

"Ride to the back," Gay directed tensely, leading the way with the lantern. In its beams the horses' legs seemed to get mixed up in her mind.

When they reached the door of Cherry's bedroom she set down the lantern and braced herself. Davie vaulted off and Naps slid Cherry carefully into his up-raised arms. Gay hurried in, feeling as if some inner part of her were running around crying, while, outwardly, she was cool, swift and collected.

"Lay her down carefully, Davie. I won't undress her until after the doctor has seen her."

When Cherry was established on the bed Gay covered her with a blanket. Naps and Davie hovered anxiously in the background.

"Bring the lantern, Naps," Gay directed.

He held it up and Gay studied her sister's face. It was hot and darkly flushed.

"She's had a concussion," Gay announced, fighting down the emotions that threatened to overwhelm her. She had never seen Cherry so still, for even when she slept aliveness poured from her.

The sound of a car coming up the hill sent a wave of relief through them.

"Go and meet Doctor Mac, Naps, please and bring him in by this door."

Naps vanished, looking unhappy and beset.

"Cherry'll be right as a bank in two or three days," Davie said to Gay.

"I'm sure she will," Gay whispered valiantly.

The doctor came in, Naps close at his heels. The small, kind, always-overworked man went directly to the bed and carefully examined his patient. Even the overcoat flapping about his knees seemed to express concern. After a few minutes he straightened up.

"Cherry has a pretty bad concussion," he informed them. "Her pulse is strong, her face very flushed. Keep her head raised, and keep her absolutely quiet. Use cold applications on her head and neck, and put on just enough

covers to keep her warm. Don't give her any stimulants. If she doesn't regain consciousness by two, phone me. If she does, phone me at the hospital about seven tomorrow morning."

Gay nodded in a stunned way, then said in shaky tones, "Is there an extra nurse we could get? Naps would drive down and get her."

"I'm so shorthanded at the hospital—" the little man made a hopeless gesture, "that I'm half crazy. Follow my directions to the letter and—"

Gay was already wringing out wet cloths from a basin of cold water which Naps had brought from the bathroom. Her hands were unsteady, her question, "Isn't there—any practical nurse—you could recommend?" came in breathless little jerks. "I have to meet the steamer early in the morning. There's a party of eight going to the top tomorrow. The house is full—Oh, I can't let Cherry down on all this!"

"Put the party off," the doctor said.

"It's impossible." Gay placed a cool cloth on her sister's head. "The trip's contracted for, and paid for. The people go up Haleakala tomorrow, on to Hawaii next day and fly back to Honolulu to catch the San Francisco liner Friday." Tears began to steal down her cheeks. "I—I guess—I'll manage—somehow," she said, her voice falling like a wounded bird.

The door opened and Honor entered, trailing composure and power in her wake.

"There's your solution!" Doctor Mac exclaimed delightedly. "Honor's the master pinch hitter of all time. I brought her into the world and I'm mighty proud of her performance since. She's got what it takes, brains and good looks." He nodded at her lithe figure in approval. "Honor can take care of Cherry while you carry on. I've often S-O-S-ed her when I've been shorthanded for a nurse. She hasn't a certificate but that's about all she lacks." And he laid an affectionate hand on Honor's perfectly tanned arm.

"Oh, Honor! Could you stay with us till the day after tomorrow?" Gay cried, hurriedly outlining the schedule confronting her.

"You know I'll be glad to," Honor said, a curious, pleased expression welling into her eyes, and dying down as quickly.

"You're a trump!" Davie asserted, his face lighting up.

Honor turned the battery of her slow, dramatic smile on him, then remarked, "I'll take over here, Gay. The people are getting a bit impatient. You had better go to them."

The doctor picked up his bag. "I've got to scoot. I have three more calls to make before I can even think of getting any sleep. I'll be at the hospital

about one, Honor. Call me there and let me know how things progress.”

Gay passed an anxious, loving hand over the cloth on Cherry’s head. Naps went out with the doctor, his shoulders looking very young and unhappy. Davie started after Gay, who was walking to the door giving on to the *lanai*.

“Davie,” Honor called, “please take this basin and put more ice in the water. It isn’t *nearly* cold enough.” She spoke in low tones, but projected her voice to follow Gay as she went through the door.

When supper was over Naps and Davie helped Gay to stack dishes and segregate silver.

“It’s lucky Honor blew in,” Davie remarked as Gay ran hot water into the dishpan.

“Yes,” Naps agreed, “but she always gives me the creeps. Even when she’s at her swellest, she makes me feel as if she had something on everyone which she wouldn’t hesitate to spring if it suited her.”

“She makes me feel that way, too,” Gay said in an undertone. “It’s horrid of me. I don’t know what I’d have done if she wasn’t here. You boys take over the dishwashing while I fix a supper tray for her. You can carry it to her when it’s ready, Naps. And tell Honor, as soon as everything is done I’ll relieve her so she can get some sleep before I go and meet the steamer. She’ll have to be on duty all tomorrow and tomorrow night and till noon the next day, when I get home.”

“How about your getting some sleep yourself?” Davie asked, watching Gay busying herself about the tray.

“I’m Hercules himself.”

“Some Herk!” Naps observed. “You must weigh all of a hundred and ten pounds.”

“Eight,” Gay corrected.

“Well, you and Cherry have the grit of the Marines.”

“It isn’t grit. It’s—fear,” Gay said over her shoulder.

“Fear?”

“Yes, Naps, fear drives people to do things they couldn’t do otherwise.” Gay’s face was earnest. “But a person can’t let fear stampede him; he must be *stimulated* by it!”

“I don’t get what you’re driving at.”

“It’s like a deer. When something startles a deer, it freezes to attention, adds the situation up in a flash, then, taking bigger leaps than seems possible, it sails off full speed. But once the danger is safely behind, it doesn’t worry about it any longer.”

“That’s a mighty swell simile, Gay,” Davie approved. “You sort of remind me of a deer. You’re all eyes and have a sort of softness that doesn’t cover up the fact that underneath you’re steel and on your toes every instant.”

“Thanks, Davie,” she said on a caught breath, and laid a grateful hand on his arm. He looked down, then seeing the blazing yellow diamond, his proud young face grew aloof and remote.

“Of course, Naps and I will be standing by to help whenever we can,” he said stiffly.



CHAPTER XI

ROUGH GOING

GAY let out the lead-rope of the pack horses a yard and glanced over her shoulder at the line of riders behind her. Far below were the dark eucalyptus groves her father had planted, standing majestically in the sun. The rough trail she was following had left the grasslands behind and was now beginning to wind through wastes of disintegrating lava.

Miraculously, she had got off on time. Cherry had regained partial consciousness about midnight, which had made going to meet the steamer less of an ordeal for Gay. When she returned with the new people, slated to leave for the summit at noon, Cherry was fully conscious. With Honor to care for her and manage the household until she got back, Gay knew she was free now to focus all her energies on getting her party to the top in good shape.

This was her first trip up Haleakala as a paid guide but she had no misgivings. She had taken innumerable guests up the mountain while her father lived and felt competent to do a good job. The pleasant sound of creaking leather, horses blowing dust out of their nostrils, hoofs crunching into cinders or knocking against fragments of lava, mingled with the scent of the mountain wind, revived her.

When she had left home her skin had been tight and hot from anxiety and lack of sleep, piled on top of months working at full speed. Plus that, she had sensed a faintly withdrawn quality in Davie's manner when he had left with Naps. She wondered if she had said or done something to hurt him. Cherry and Naps had been pals since they could toddle but until Davie came

Gay had never had a special boy friend. His warm friendship had fortified her for the terrific work she was doing and added zest to everything.

She took another backward glance at the horses plodding up the steep trail, to assure herself that saddles were in place and riders comfortable. The eight persons with her were pleasant, elderly folk, six women and two men. They had come on a chartered cruise to Hawaii and from their appearance and manner she surmised they were schoolteachers. As none of them had ever ridden before it was necessary to maintain a constant vigilance.

As they slowly mounted the rough slopes of the old volcano, the horizon swam higher and higher into the sky. Far below, the island spread out, a palette of warm colors. Ahead, rudely tilted cones reared red, orange, and purple peaks against a backdrop of blue. Every mile or so Gay stopped to wind the horses and rest the riders. Rests meant added work for her. She had to assist each person to the ground, slack girths and shift saddles to cool heated backs. Hats had to be watched and recovered if they blew off. Cameras slung jauntily over people's shoulders began to cut into them after a few hours, so they were transferred to the chuck boxes. Stirrups had to be lengthened or shortened.

Gay moved about her business, unconscious of the tremendous effect she had upon everyone. Her slight, appealing figure, clad in smart riding clothes; her small, intent face, framed in bright hair; her eyes large and a little dilated from recent anxiety, plus concentration on what she was doing, clutched at hearts.

"This seems terrific work for a girl to do," one of the women remarked.

"I know it, and love it," Gay replied simply.

"If you hadn't been so highly recommended by the Tourists Bureau, I confess I'd have hesitated to trust myself to a girl guide," one of the men declared. He was small and dried up, with a gentle but slightly haunted manner, as if life had awed him from the start.

The second man, who looked as if he might be recovering from a long illness, studied Gay, then asked, "Have you ever read a book called *The Prophet*?"

Gay, busy tightening a girth, shook her head.

"Your remark of a moment ago recalls an immortal line in it which says, 'If you do your work, loving it, you fulfill earth's finest dream.'"

A slow radiance lit Gay's tired face, and muscles shaking with fatigue relaxed for an instant.

"How beautiful," she said softly, "and how true!"

They started on. Plover wheeled overhead, cattle called from distant hilltops, cock pheasants crowed shrilly from fern-covered ridges. Fine dust rose from the trail and hung in the motionless air. Towering into the sky, the Cloud Warriors faced each other from a distance, as if debating whether to battle, or to rest, leaving the Highway to Heaven for mortals to use.

About two miles below the summit one of the horses caught a shoe in a lava crack and pulled it off.

"Oh, what'll we do?" the woman riding the animal cried, clinging to the pommel with both hands.

"I'll tack it on again," Gay told her. "We always carry spare nails and a hammer. No matter how well horses are shod, this happens occasionally when you're crossing lava beds."

Swinging off Happy, she tied the pack animals to a sturdy *kawao* bush and assisted the woman off her horse. "I think, if you don't mind this time, I'll leave the rest of you in your saddles," Gay said. "It'll only take a few minutes to tack on the shoe and—"

"Save you lots of extra effort?" one of the men suggested.

Gay nodded, smiling her sweet, sudden smile. Untieing a small canvas bag from her saddle, she fished inside it. The shoeless horse waited, cropping scanty grass off a near-by bank.

"But how can you manage *here*?" one of the party asked. "There's no forge—"

"We use malleable horseshoes," Gay explained. Taking up the cast shoe, she removed the nails with a small pair of pliers, clapped it against the animal's hoof, saw it was slightly out of line from the wrenching lava, tapped it back into shape, then, taking the horse's foot between her knees, hammered the shoe on again. Everyone watched, absorbed, until the task was completed.

"That'll hold till we get home," she announced, straightening up. Her face was flushed, her hands a trifle unsteady as she replaced the hammer, pliers and extra nails in the canvas bag.

The ascent grew steadily steeper. Horses puffed and sweated, strained and humped up over ledges of lava. Riders gripped their pommels and occasionally some woman gave a little cry of fright when the animal under her had to heave itself up sharply. About a mile from the top Gay stopped.

"This is the last and longest rest," she announced. "The climb from here is deep cinders, which makes heavy going for the horses."

When the riders were all off, stretching cramped limbs, she went to the pack horses and lifted down the two bags of barley and canvas chuck boxes of food. Stacking them near by, she loosed the pack saddles and shook them. People flopped on the ground, or propped their backs against convenient banks. With a sort of smothered panic, Gay realized she was exhausted. Her heart was pounding, not from the altitude, for she was accustomed to it, but from fatigue, generated by over-exertion for a period of three months. She realized she must husband her strength without making it apparent. There were still eighteen hours of work and vigilance before she reached home.

Stretching flat on her back, she relaxed and, after fifteen minutes, felt partly revived from contact with the earth, throbbing with resurgent life.

“Stay flopped,” she directed, “while I get things lined up for the last heave.” And she began the rounds of tightening saddles.

By the time the string was ready and the first pack horse loaded, waves of fatigue were washing around her again. She gazed at recumbent figures with a sort of desperation. None of them were horse-wise and they would only get in the way if she enlisted their assistance. She got the saddlebags up and one bag of barley. The other was still on the ground. It had to go on. The horses must be fed. There were eleven of them and one bag wouldn’t be enough for evening and morning meals.

Taking a great breath, she seized the sack by the ears and tried to boost it to her shoulder. She got it in place, then it slipped to the ground. She threw a wild look around, fearing that some of her ‘dudes’ might see her plight, but they were sunk in relaxation and oblivious to everything about them. Once more she attacked the grain bag but, again, it flopped off her shoulder.

“This is like the time I tried to carry the big suitcase when I went to meet the Morrisons. I’m enraged, again, to be licked by an inanimate object,” she thought. She had prayed for help then and Pili and Nakamura had come to her assistance but there were no big, kindly men here to help. She must accomplish her task alone and unassisted.

A faint sound from far below made her turn and she saw dust rising from the trail a few miles down. She looked harder. It was no mirage of her mind. It was there . . . dust raised by horses’ slow feet. For an instant she felt as though she had been struck. Schultz and Yarrow were coming up with a party! How they would gloat if they found her fighting with a bag of barley!

They mustn’t overtake her. She wanted to get to the summit first, to draw water, make beds, feed the horses and have dinner under way before more people came, complicating the situation. The Rest House had only one small stove to cook on, one long table at which everyone ate and, while there was

room to stable twenty horses in the rocky, partly-roofed enclosure which had been the original Rest House, animals belonging to different strings sometimes fought. . . .

On many occasions when Cherry had led parties up Haleakala, Schultz and Yarrow had been there also, but they had always arrived long after everything was done and, while their untidy ways dimmed things somewhat, they had given spunky little Cherry a wide berth.

"If," Gay thought with desperate grimness, "I can manage to get the barley onto the packsaddle, even in ten minutes, I'll make the summit in another forty and have everything organized before Schultz's party comes in." She tried again to heave the bag and realized that fear was robbing her limbs of their last strength.

There was only one help. Her eyes lifted to the blue depths arching above her. "Please, God, make a miracle!" she prayed with silent, white lips. "Make the bag light, or float it onto the horse. It has to go up. Don't desert me! Send Your strength to me!"

She looked down. The bag was still on the ground. Perhaps God wasn't interested in her small, earthy problem. But a person couldn't believe that who had watched the perfect workings of nature, the flow and ebb of tides, seasons going on their stately way. . . . She glanced down the rough slopes. Maybe she had just imagined the dust. But it was still rising, from another bend further up the trail. For a wild instant her mind went foggy. She felt forsaken and abandoned, then with a flash of wisdom, which even the very young possess, her mind clicked back into focus.

"*Show me a way, please*, God, to do what I have to!" she whispered through clenched teeth. She closed her eyes, then opened them. . . . Illumination came. The horse was standing by a bank! If she humped the bag up it, she could topple it on to the pack saddle. For an instant she felt as if her whole being were going up in a flame of thankfulness then, with a little laugh which was half a sob, she began the tedious humping. Moving in a fog of fatigue, *she* hadn't seen the bank, or realized the part it could play to end her predicament, but some Divine Force had *showed her the way* the job could be accomplished. Her prayer had been answered!

When the bag was on the horse's back, she stood a moment catching her breath, then called:

"Okay. Boots and saddles!"

Forty minutes later the shape of the Rest House loomed up between crags and lava ridges forming a jagged outline against the breath-taking blue of the sky.

“Get off here,” she directed. “After I’ve put the horses in the stable, I’ll take you to the rim. It’s only a hundred yards from here,” she said encouragingly, noting the obvious fatigue of most of the people with her. “When you look in the crater you’ll forget you’re tired, you’ll forget everything except the fact that you’re seeing one of the sights of all time.”

When the horses had been stabled, Gay led the way between lava masses that ended abruptly on the rim of the crater. Although she had looked into it countless times, it always took her breath away.

Immense, silent, rimmed with cyclopean walls, splashed with barbaric colors, harboring strange blue shadows beneath over-hanging cliffs, the vast bowl, two thousand feet deep and twenty-seven miles in circumference, cradled in magnificent beauty its seventeen giant cones. The afternoon was very still but sudden winds came out of the pit with gusty swirls and peculiar roaring noises, even as gasses had come out of it in ages past. Precipitous crags brooded over the distorted landscape far below, striking reminders of a time when mad flames had danced demon dances beneath crimson-dripping walls and quaking lava islands had floated on seas of molten slag. Across the farther rim, in contrast to the color and chaos directly below, the serene mountain tops of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, a hundred miles away on the Island of Hawaii, showed above packed masses of trade wind cloud, drifting at the five-thousand-foot level.

In awed silence the visitors gazed at the spectacle, until Gay directed them to button up coats and sweaters against the chilly wind and seek the shelter of a lava ledge. “The sun won’t set for an hour yet and you can get good pictures for the next forty minutes.”

Then she remembered that all the cameras were packed with the food. “I’ll get your Kodaks,” she said, trying to instill a bright, friendly note into her voice, while inwardly she fretted at the extra delay.

Just as she started to sprint back toward the Rest House a woman’s hat blew off. She captured it, took off her own kerchief and tied it over the wind-blown hair. “There!” She gave a circus-smile, and once more headed down the cindery trail.



“THAT’LL HOLD TILL WE GET HOME,” SHE ANNOUNCED, STRAIGHTENING UP.
HER FACE WAS FLUSHED, HER HANDS A TRIFLE UNSTEADY.

When, at last, everyone had his or her camera and was busy snapping pictures Gay ran back to the stables. Going to the cistern, she hauled up twenty-two buckets of water and poured them into the long concrete trough. By the time it was full her arms felt half pulled out of their sockets. The horses had cooled sufficiently to drink by the time she had unsaddled the last of them. When they had had their fill she strapped on the nose bags, closed the ‘stable’ door and began carrying gear to the Rest House. When it was all stacked, she unlocked the door. The long, narrow room, lined with double-decker bunks, was dank, cold and needed airing. She lighted the stove and opened windows, made up nine beds with clean sheets and pillow cases—seven in the men’s section, two in the women’s, then spread sufficient blankets to withstand the night cold which, even in warm weather, was bitter at an altitude of ten thousand feet.

She made up a huge potful of coffee, set dinner handy to cook, then went out to enjoy the sunset which was spilling wild colors and tragic shadows over land and sea. Eight figures were silhouetted against the skyline gazing, some hypnotized by the flaming furnace in the west, others staring into the pit which distilled an awesome loneliness as night approached.

When twilight had blurred the outlines of the islands lying to the north, west and south, Gay led her party back to the Rest House. Getting out an enormous register, she placed it on the table.

“The Hawaii Tourist Bureau requires guides to keep a list of everyone coming to the top, and where they hail from,” she explained.

While her party signed the register, Gay began cooking dinner, glancing every so often at the long table which she had already set. One end was covered with a blue and white checked cloth. Polished aluminum plates, cups and cutlery were arranged neatly at each place and a bouquet of red and white ohelo berries glowed from a jam jar in the center.

“Do I smell steaks?” a woman cried.

“Yes, and all the trimmings,” Gay called back.

Her naturally hospitable nature glowed at the thought of feeding people well and some of the terrible weariness which had weighted her down had lifted. She put bowls of freshly sliced pineapple, dusted with powdered sugar and finely chopped mint, on the table, added sliced loaves of homemade bread and fresh butter, then began pouring coffee. Last she carried over the platter, heaped with sizzling steaks and flanked with golden brown potatoes, and placed it so that it was handy for everyone to reach.

“This *is* something to write home about!” the small, haunted man exclaimed. “A meal like this, ten thousand feet above the sea, on the edge of the world’s second largest crater!”

Dinner was barely under way when the sound of hoofs crunching into deep cinders announced that a second party was coming in. Gay’s eyes grew watchful. Her people, busy with their food, did not hear. After a few minutes the door opened and weary, sunburned men and women began coming in. Their faces brightened at the sight of the table and the smell of good food.

“As I live and breathe!” a big, ruddy man exclaimed, waving triumphantly at the platter which still had a few steaks on it. “Lead me to some of that.” And swinging his heavy leg over the bench, he plumped himself down.

“Each guide feeds his own party,” Gay explained, unhappily. “But if you’d like a cup of coffee, I have plenty.”

The man’s face fell. “Thanks, I’ll take some.” Then he added longingly, “I hope Schultz and Yarrow do as well by us as you have by your party.”

Gay filled a cup and handed it to him.

A wispy little woman, groggy from exhaustion and altitude, eyed the made-up bunks behind the half-pulled curtains hungrily.

“Clean sheets and pillowcases. What bliss! I’m going to turn in this moment. I’m too weary to eat.”

"I'm sorry," Gay said, with an inward wince, followed by a flash of indignation for people who did work shoddily, "but those beds are for my party." And again she explained that each guide provided individually for the comfort of those he brought up.

The woman looked at the uninviting, un-made-up bunks and reluctantly laid down on one, like a person relinquishing some priceless treasure. Conscious that she was being stared at, Gay raised her eyes. Schultz, his face a furious red and his eyes bloodshot from cinder dust and altitude, was standing in the doorway. His arms were filled with paper bags, which the stout man sipping coffee eyed avidly.

"I see you haff beaten us to it," Schultz growled in a surly manner.

"We left early," Gay said, walking around her end of the table, refilling cups.

"Brother, I hope you have plenty!" the highly-colored man said, addressing Schultz. "I could eat an ox."

"It iss bad to overload the stomachs at high altitudes," Schultz asserted in his rough, loud voice. "Yarrow and I haff been in diss business for twenty-five years. Diss *de lux* stuff," he waved contemptuously at Gay's end of the table, "iss folly."

"Well, I could go for a lot of that sort of folly," the big man declared.

"You vill haff *sandwitches*," Schultz said, glowering. "Dese peoples pay twenty-five dollars each to make the trip with Miss Storm. I let you off easy. I only charge ten." And he began stacking warped sandwiches on the flattened paper bags.

"So," Gay thought, "they've upped their price, and give no more than when they only charged five dollars to come up. They won't stay in the business much longer at this rate."

"I'd pay twenty-five gladly for service like that!" the big man said explosively. He waved at Gay's party, wholeheartedly consuming steaks and trimmings. "You mean we're only having sandwiches after that long ride?"

"*And vater*." Schultz's whole figure exuded belligerence.

"You mean we don't even get coffee?"

"*Nein*."

"I call this a jip and an outrage. I shall certainly inform the Tourist Bureau in Honolulu and suggest that they should inform everyone making the trip up Haleakala—"

"Peoples who come up here are dopes," Schultz sneered.

“Yes, they are,” the big man said angrily. “At least the ones are who patronize *you*!”

The atmosphere crackled. The big American faced the big German pugilistically and their glances crossed like meeting swords. Gay’s heart began pounding madly. If a fight started, it would spoil her group’s enjoyment of the trip and mar forever an otherwise perfect memory.

“Look here,” she broke in. “I have plenty of coffee and will gladly make enough for you all.” She looked at the seven discouraged persons who had come up with Schultz.

“That’s mighty decent of you. Thanks, I’ll accept for the lot of us,” the big man said. His gray eyes added up Gay slowly. “You’re only a half-pint,” he grinned in a friendly way, “but you know your business. When people are off for a good time they’d rather pay extra and have all the frills.” He waved toward the far end of the table.

Schultz glared at him, then at Gay, and stamped out of the door. As Gay went to the stove to make more coffee, she felt vaguely disturbed. Instinct told her that trouble was in the wind and a sense of foreboding filled her which even the sound of contented voices and the pleasant warmth of the big room could not dispel. What, actually, could Schultz do, aside from being unpleasant?

When everyone was cared for and the dishes washed and the table re-set for breakfast, Gay excused herself to take the nose bags off her horses. The night was dark, cold and starry. Wind zipped over the ragged edge of the crater and she buttoned up her leather jacket snugly. She saw Schultz and Yarrow working among their tired, hungry horses, roughly pulling saddles off galled backs, cursing if an animal did not move to please them.

“Ach, so it iss Miss Smarty,” Schultz jeered as she headed for the stable.

Gay ignored him, pushed the door open and began moving among the warm bodies of her horses, unbuckling nose bags and hanging them on nails driven into what wood remained of the old Rest House. Her horses watched her with trusting, lustrous eyes, but she knew they were capable of kicking and biting if strange animals crowded them too much. Going to her own saddle, she untied her lasso, slid it around a beam and fastened it tautly to the opposite side, keeping her string together in one half of the structure.

Just as she finished the poor, stringy, over-ridden animals of Schultz and Yarrow began coming in, eager to get out of the bitter cold. Gay watched them, noting raw withers and galls pinched into bellies by badly adjusted girths. Her heart was filled with compassion, which was aggravated by the

knowledge that they would get no feed of any sort until they reached home. Yarrow stepped in, flashing his lantern around.

"I've tied my lasso across to keep our horses from fighting," Gay told him.

Yarrow exposed his long yellow teeth in an unpleasant grin. Schultz ducked through the door.

"Ach, Miss Efficiency," he sneered, noting the rope. "Your sister always does zat, too."

"There's no sense in getting horses bunged up, when a little forethought can prevent it," Gay retorted.

"Iss zat soo?" Schultz jeered, then transferred his attention to Yarrow. "Come, now let us eat. Perhaps," he bowed mockingly, "Miss Hospitality vill serve us coffee, too?"

"There's some left in the pot on the stove, if you want it."

They went out and after a few minutes she followed suit, closing and latching the door behind her. She stood for several minutes, looking at the magnificence overhead, while she fought down the indignation surging through her; then she headed toward the Rest House.

Gay found her party seated cosily around the stove. The big man had joined them, the rest of Schultz's people were in bed. Half-dried out sandwiches littered the table, some tasted, others still whole. Schultz and Yarrow wolfed half a dozen each and emptied the coffeepot.

"If you want to get to see the sunrise, I'll have to wake you at four," Gay finally told her party. "I'll have coffee ready before you go out."

As they started for their cots, Gay offered the two women a generous pot of face cream. "Put on plenty so your lips won't chap," she advised.

Schultz and Yarrow let out shouts of boisterous laughter.

"Ach, dat iss goot!" Schultz rocked back and forth. "She even creams the faces of the peoples she brings up. Vait till diss is broadcast in Hawaii."

Gay's eyes blazed. "Laugh if you want to. I know this mountain. I've seen people come down with their lips and faces like raw beefsteaks. We grease saddles to keep the leather from cracking. Why not faces? You can buy new saddles but you can't buy new faces. You have to wear them all your life."

"Half-Pint, you're grand!" the big man said delightedly. "My face is on fire. I'll smear on some of your goo, if I may."

Gay handed him the pot of face cream, smiling up at him gratefully. She liked his chivalry, which backed her up, and respected his manhood, which

was so assured that it dared to make a departure when common sense deemed it sound.

While he applied the cream. Gay's champion watched Schultz and Yarrow, who appeared not to see. Backed up by the big man's action, two of the men in Gay's party followed suit. Then she shyly offered the emollient to the burned women in the Schultz and Yarrow party.

When, finally, Gay was able to crawl under her blankets, sleep would not come. Grunts and groans sounded as saddle-weary people tossed and twisted in their sleep, which was punctuated by lusty snores from some of the hardier men. Outside, the wind prowled among the crags, or roared out of the pit.

Gay saw the heads of her two women silhouetted against clean white pillowslips and the white line of their sheets turned over their rough blankets. A glow of satisfaction stole through her fatigue-chilled body. There was a lift in doing things well!

About one o'clock, Gay dozed off, then woke with a start. Sitting up, she looked around. The fire in the stove threw just a faint glow over the top of the curtain, which was stirring in a chill breeze. Gay peered around the curtain and caught a glimpse of Schultz's figure disappearing out the door of the Rest House which he left slightly ajar. Probably he had gone out to see if it was going to be clear in the morning. She waited for a couple of minutes but he did not return. A sense of uneasiness began to steal over her. After enduring it for two or three minutes, she got up.

Pulling on her jacket and boots, she picked up the low-turned lantern, tiptoed down the line of sleepers and slipped out into the star-studded night. She stood peering around for a few minutes, but there was no sign of Schultz. She determined that, as long as she was up, she would go down and have a look at the horses.

When Gay was about halfway down the slope, she saw a horse come out of the stable. Then another. Their silhouettes were familiar.

"Happy! Play Boy!" she cried in ringing tones and they halted.

A sort of frozen horror made her go weak all over. Had all the other horses got out, too? If they had, she had a mount, two, to round them up. Lucky she had wakened when she did!

Walking swiftly toward the animals, Gay slid her arm about Happy's neck and led him to where the saddles were stacked. Taking two lead ropes, she tied the horses to the corral and headed for the stable. Another horse shot out.

"Kaupo!" she cried sharply and the chunky little mare came to a stop.

"Steady girl," she warned and darted through the door. Schultz was inside, horses milling about him.

Closing the door behind her, Gay held up the lantern. Schultz, fiery of face, whirled around to meet this unexpected intruder.

"Your blasted horses haff make troubles vid mine," he shouted. "I heard the roo—"

Gay was shaking with anger. The lasso, which she had tied so securely herself, was down. In a flash she grasped the whole situation. Schultz had sneaked down with the intention of turning all her horses loose, leaving her stranded with her party!

"If the horses had been fighting, the lasso would have been *broken*! It has been—*untied*!"

Schultz began blustering. "I did untie it. Von of my horses had got under it and yours vere beating him up. I tried to separate dem and—"

"So left the door open!" Gay accused.

"In my hurry—"

"Like all of your kind, you back water when you're cornered!" Gay said, her voice trembling with anger. "Don't waste your breath trying to alibi out of this. We *both* know the truth." She faced him dauntlessly, a slight, furious young girl, with right on her side. "You intended to turn all my horses loose. Luckily our animals come at call. Happy, Play Boy and Kaupo are outside, so I won't be in any jam in the morning."

"You insult me!" Schultz shouted.

Gay did not listen. Walking among the horses, she quieted both strings, then brought in the three animals she had tied outside. One by one she herded her own horses to where their mates stood quivering, with dilated nostrils and puzzled eyes. Then, picking up the lasso, she tied it solidly once more, dividing the two strings.

"You had better go and get your sleep," she advised. "I'm staying here until it's time to make coffee. Then I'll send down one of the men in my party to keep guard over the horses until I can saddle them and tie them up . . . in broad daylight." She looked at Schultz squarely. "It's hardly likely that you'll attempt—"

Schultz began blustering again. Ignoring him, Gay sat down on the floor, propped her back against the wall, clasped her knees with her arms and closed her eyes. . . .



CHAPTER XII

TRICKY GOING

GAY moved quietly about the big, clean kitchen. Occasionally she glanced out of the open windows at the honey-colored moonlight flooding the garden. Having discovered the economy of buying in bulk, the previous day she had purchased a hundred dozen eggs from near-by Portuguese and Japanese homesteaders. Because hens were on a crest of laying, she had been able to buy the eggs for twenty-five cents a dozen. Later in the fall, and through the winter, they would be sixty to seventy cents a dozen.

Her face was intent and absorbed as she went about the business of treating them with water-glass. She had put up six hundred the previous night and now she would complete the rest before she retired. Cherry had been pleased over the transaction and even Honor seemed to approve.

When Gay had returned from the top of Haleakala, four days previously, to find Cherry sitting up in bed, all the weariness of the trip and the haunting spectre of what might have happened had Schultz succeeded in turning all her horses out, had slipped from her like a distasteful garment discarded with a single quick shrug.

Dr. Mac had advised Cherry to remain in bed for several days longer, and to 'take it easy' for a week after that, which had compelled Gay to ask Honor if she would remain in order to maintain the schedule of summer trips. Honor had been most gracious about it. She had assured Gay that she was more than glad to pinch-hit until Cherry was up and her old self again.

"I should be thankful and grateful to have her here," Gay thought as she worked. "She meets people well, manages the house easily, gets on with

children, old people and all the betweens, Hana and Naka like her and there hasn't been a single hitch. . . .”

She paused in her work as the wind lessened. From the cowboys' camp, about a quarter of a mile away, came faint gusts of singing. Sam's *paniolos*, like all true Polynesians, could not waste such a night of beauty in sleep. The music brought back Gay's childhood, when she and Cherry had lain rolled up in blankets on golden beaches, or in the vast crater of Haleakala, listening to their father and his *paniolos* chanting ancient *meles* or rollicking *hulas* under the stars, while herded cattle waited restlessly for morning to come again to the world.

Occasionally Gay recognized Davie's fine baritone taking a lead. A troubled expression crept into her eyes. Since Honor had been part of their household Gay sensed that Davie had changed. Actually, she could not put her finger on anything concrete to account for the impression. He had skipped his lunch hour to be on hand to help her when she rode in from her mountain trip. He had come the following Sunday to help with a beach picnic, while Naps stayed with Cherry. But Gay felt a distant quality in his manner that distressed her.

Then, being naturally of a buoyant disposition, she gave herself a brisk mental shake. "I'm a vaporish idiot," she told herself. "Probably, way down deep, I'm ratty—nervous from working too hard."

She applied herself to the task ahead of her and by one o'clock the last egg had been treated and put away in the big cool-room behind the pantry. She surveyed her work with pride and satisfaction. "If that isn't a triumph in economy, I don't know what is," she thought and took herself briskly off to bed.

When Gay wakened, daylight was beginning to flood the East. Dressing in jeans and pulling a *palaka* over her shirt, for the air was sharp, she hurried out to attend to morning chores. By the time they were completed she felt recharged from the fresh beauty of the earth. Trees sparkled, flowers lifted happy faces to the sun, dogs trotted briskly about the grounds, and Haleakala heaved its blue shoulders into the growing warmth.

"Aren't you a little late, Gay?" Honor asked when she brought the milk into the kitchen.

Gay glanced at the clock. "I am a little," she admitted.

"Don't let it get you on the run," her cousin advised. "Hana and I have everything under control. The trays for the two Misses Simpkins have

already gone to their room, with their fruit juices and toast; both tables are set.”

Gay set down the milk buckets. In a simple, but smartly becoming sports dress of natural linen, finished with a maroon belt and low-heeled maroon sports shoes, Honor looked a picture. Her hair was glossy, her eyes bright, her enchanting topknot of curls seemed to dance above her low forehead and, no matter how busy she might be, she always contrived to have time to spare without wasting it.

Naps came bounding in, looking as if he'd just come from riding in a high wind. “Cherry looks tops!” he exclaimed. “I’m going to drive her down to the beach for the day. We’ll leave after breakfast and be home by supertime at the latest.”

Gay smiled. “That’ll be grand, Naps. Have breakfast with us?”

“Dern tootin’!”

“Where are the eggs, Gay?” Honor asked. “I’m going to show Hana how to make my own extra-special omelette. For eighteen people I’ll need at least three dozen.”

“There are about twenty fresh eggs in the safe,” Gay said, “but I’ll get some of the lot I bought before yesterday and treated with water-glass. Just a minute, I must cover the milk.”

“I’ll fetch ’em,” Naps offered.

“The boxes are in the cool-room,” Gay said over her shoulder.

“*Boxes?*” Honor said, in a puzzled way.

“Yes, I painted the eggs and put them away.”

“*Painted* them!” Honor’s amazed voice slid up a couple of notes.

“Yes, the stuff’s sort of like shellac or transparent nail-polish,” Gay explained.

“Didn’t you read the instructions?” Honor asked.

Gay shook her head.

“The usual way to preserve eggs with water-glass is to add a certain proportion of the solution to water and immerse the eggs in it.” Honor’s voice had an amused note.

A curious sinking sensation went through Gay. She felt like a helpless creature caught in some vast, invisible snare, with ambushed enemies crouching all around.

“Probably, they’ll be okay,” she declared stoutly. “Get a box, please, Naps.”

As he went off, the door opened and an elderly man who had been at *Wanaao* for three weeks came in. He pulled out a chair and sat down. The Storm household, despite the fact that its hospitality was now paid for, was still a delightfully casual affair. Guests drifted in and out of the kitchen, helped with chores and, on occasions that merited such action, pitched in and assisted with setting the table and polishing furniture for special events.

“Good morning, Mr. Nelson,” Honor said. “Want your before-breakfast cup of coffee, don’t you? I’ll fix it with my own lily-white, brown hands.” She flashed a smile at him and went to the stove.

Naps came in, carrying a box of eggs, and set it down on the floor. “There they are, Gay.”

“What beauties!” Mr. Nelson remarked, glancing down at the rows upon rows of brown eggs whose lustre had been emphasized by their brushing with water-glass.

Bending over, Gay tried to take up an egg but it was solidly glued to its mates. Her fingers tensed in an effort to break it free, but she had no success.

“They seem to be stuck together,” she said in a small, grim voice. “Give me a knife, Hana, so I can pry them apart.”

The maneuver proved fruitless. A hot flush spread over her cheeks. Everyone was watching. Silence, utter and absolute, pervaded the kitchen. Finally, Gay straightened up.

“Maybe if we run water over them, they’ll separate,” she said, feeling small, faraway and abandoned by everybody. “Naps, take them out and put them in the sink and we’ll turn the tap on.”

He lifted the box, juggled out the solid block of eggs and carried it to the sink. But running hot water over them did not do the trick.

A sort of mounting fury took hold of Gay. She saw held-back laughter in everyone’s eyes but Hana’s. Hers were filled with concern.

“Bad trouble,” she murmured. “Torr many *haoles*, torr much hungry and all *tamagos*.” She gestured helplessly at the eggs, “in one piece.”

Gay looked wildly at the clock. Breakfast was due to be served in twenty minutes. A hundred dozen eggs were in the house but unusable. Her work of two nights had resulted in this horrid, stupid mess! Her surging emotions put reason to flight.

“Give me the kettle of boiling water!” she said.

“Gay!” Honor’s voice rose. “If you pour boiling water over them, you’ll *cook* them!”

Shades of all the battles she had silently fought in her heart since her father had died showed in Gay's eyes. A frenzy of fury for the buffetings of the past few months crystallized into a sort of volcanic eruption that shook her until her mind went out of focus.

"Don't, don't look like an—ax!" Honor started laughing. "You're staring at those eggs as if you could murder them."

"I feel as if I could," Gay said in a numbed way. Then a thought, induced by Honor's remark, sent her charging into the back pantry. Lifting off the wall a small hatchet used for splitting kindling, she returned to the kitchen. "People have got to be fed eggs in some shape for breakfast, when they're paying board . . ." she muttered, stalking up to the sink.

Hana's eyes flew open.

Honor gasped, "What on earth are you going to *do*?"

"Get me the bread tub, Hana," Gay directed, as if she had not heard, "and a big sieve."

The little maid obeyed. Everyone else looked on, motionless. Setting the block of eggs in the center of the tub, Gay began attacking it with the hatchet, smashing it to pieces. Whites and yellows and fragments of shell seethed out under the blows until the block was a pulpy mass. "We'll strain this through the sieve and have scrambled eggs instead of poached," Gay announced grimly.

At that, the others began to laugh wildly. The kitchen echoed with their merriment. Cherry charged in.

For an instant she stood bewildered. She could see no reason for the storms of laughter. Hana was hiding her mirth in her *kimono* sleeve. Honor was bent over the sink, shaking helplessly. Naps was pounding his thigh with glee and old Mr. Nelson was rocking back and forth, wiping his faded blue eyes.

"Oh—oh—oh, this is *epic*!" Honor moaned.

"What's all the fun about?" Cherry demanded, trying to add up the scene.

Naps pointed at Gay, still standing over the tub, while the yellows and whites of broken eggs dripped slowly from her hatchet. Between gasps of laughter, Honor explained.

"You mean," Cherry burst out, whirling on Gay, "that all the eggs you bought the day before yesterday are like *these*!"

Gay nodded, feeling a million miles away—like a person who has been left out of the world, like a puppy that has been tramped on. . . .

Cherry's pale face turned a deep pink. "You mean we'll have to scramble *a hundred dozen eggs*, simply because you didn't read instructions?" Her voice was high with dismay.

"Yes," Gay answered dully.

"You mean we'll have to smash them up with a hatchet and strain them all through a sieve?"

"Yes."

Cherry made a disgusted, furious sound. Gay felt her fingers relaxing of their own volition their hold on the hatchet. It fell with a dull thud into the tin tub and she walked out of the kitchen.

"I must get away from the house, from everyone," she thought, "or I'll wail like a banshee!"

Like all true lovers of animals and the out-of-doors, Gay headed instinctively for the kennels and corrals, feeling as if everyone she had loved and trusted except animals had betrayed her. She didn't, and couldn't, resent the actual laughter, for she was fair enough to realize that she, too, would have been overcome with mirth had she watched a small, infuriated human being attacking eggs with a hatchet as if they were dragons. The angle that hurt was that she had appeared at a complete and utter disadvantage before the last person on earth that she wanted to fail—the younger sister she loved and wanted so to shield from trouble.

Going dully to the kennels, she loosed the dogs. Cherry's streamed for the house, but Gay's bounded exultantly about her. Dropping to one knee, she drew them close to her. They licked her neck and face deliriously. "Good, or bad, stupid or wise," she thought with a choke, "dogs love on, without question or judgment of the adored one."

There were horses she should take to Makawao to be shod, a girth to be mended, innumerable things that demanded immediate attention but she brushed them into the discard. Hurt instinct, which was stronger than reason, made her determine to rush up into the hills, standing strong and green in the sun. There she could collect the pieces of her which had been scattered and put them together in a new design.

Walking to the corral, she let down the bars and called, "Happy!"

Instantly the gelding's wise, beautiful gray head flashed out of the grass where he was grazing, then he began walking swiftly toward her. Going mechanically into the tack house, she gathered up her gear, saddled, and without a backward look rode across the pasture, the dogs scampering joyously ahead.

In a dim way she was aware of her horse's eager feet skimming the earth, of furry little white bodies—holding unswervingly loving hearts—dashing back from the excited scentings to leap about her horse as if saying, "We are here! Happy's here! The sun's shining! We're off on a jaunt and life is beautiful!"

But something which had been numb and leashed deep within Gay since her father died was struggling now to burst its bonds. The tears she had never shed, which had stayed like salty ice packed in her heart, were beginning to break up like ice floes in the Arctic when summer comes, and she was terrified that when the awful weeping came someone might see, or *hear*, her!

"I'm tired out," she thought ragingly, "tired to the marrow of my bones. That's why I'm like this. . . . That's why I couldn't take it! That's why I'm running away to the hills . . . to God!"

It was absurd, childish to feel so utterly sunk, so abandoned, so overwhelmed by something which wouldn't matter in a month. Happy turned his head and touched her knee with his nose. Automatically she patted the beautiful gray arch of his neck, then gazed at the noble contours of hills climbing each other up the slopes of Haleakala.

When Gay finally reached a bold ridge commanding unobstructed views of the island, she dismounted and turned her horse loose to graze in the shade of towering trees. To right and left, above, below, the acres of the ranch spread like a multi-colored relief map, acres her father had loved, beautified and left richer for generations to come.

She sat down in the warm, sweet grass. The blue day leaned over the world, stilling it to peace. For a while she quietly watched the dogs excitedly following the scent of a mongoose, listened to Happy contentedly grazing then suddenly locked her arms about her knees and bowed her forehead on them.

Her whole being was silently calling across space to her father. She wanted his help, his love, the gaiety he had spilled into life, with a strength behind them as unswerving as that of the hills about her. With a single, swift movement she turned and buried her face in the grass. Sobs jerked her body, tears rained from her eyes into the earth.

Finally, the paroxysm passed and, weak and spent, she sat up. The terrific crying had eased her heart but she felt as unreal as a ghost among humans. Sensing all was not well, the dogs came racing back from their mongoose hunt and, panting and shivering, began licking her wet cheeks.

She hugged them to her and when Happy walked over and reached out his wise head she brushed her cheek, still damp from tears, against his velvety muzzle.

“Your missie has been a sissy and a whimp,” she said with a sort of pathetic apology. “But only God heard me and He understands. I’m *pau* and we must go back.”

But she was reluctant to move. The warmth of the sun was relaxing. There was peace in the high hills and deep gorges, in the effortless flight of birds winging their way through the blue overhead, the busy stir of feathered things darting among the treetops and tiny, important insects creeping in the grass. How completely and utterly foolish and puny to feel so sunk in a universe spilling over with serenity and beauty!

Yet Gay shrank from going home. The instant Honor, or Cherry or anyone who had been present in the kitchen, saw her he or she would recall the last sight of her, hatchet in hand—slaying eggs! Her cheeks burned.

Suddenly the dogs tore themselves free and with joyously wagging tails tore down the faint trail Gay had followed to the ridge, made by stock in their endless grazing. Perhaps, she thought with a catch of her breath, Cherry had come hunting for her to say she was sorry she had blazed out, that the loss of a few eggs didn’t weigh against her sister’s good intentions, even if they’d ended in a bungling mess. . . . Or perhaps it was some wandering *paniolo*, riding herd on stock which once had been her father’s responsibility.

Hurriedly dragging out her sopped handkerchief, Gay scrubbed at her face. Then her heart did a back-flip. Jogging up the trail was Davie!

Inarticulate rage gripped her afresh. There was no justice. A while ago, in the kitchen, in her effort to do the extras that make for dividends, she had appeared an utter idiot. Now, the last person she wanted to see her crying *would* come along! She knew her face must be splotched with red from such furious crying, her eyes swollen. She hadn’t even a pocket mirror with her so she could at least try to obliterate the telltale signs of grief and upset.

Delight and surprise were in Davie’s eyes, as he waved. His horse scrambled up a little bank and he swung off while the dogs bounded joyously around him.

An air of distant defiance enveloped Gay, as if she were keeping life at bay. Dropping his reins, Davie strolled over to where she was sitting, his face warm and friendly; then he exclaimed as if he could not believe it:

“Gay—you’re crying!”

“I—I’m not,” she asserted, turning her face away.

“You’re quibbling,” he said bluntly.

She tore up a handful of grass but did not turn around.

“Tell me your *pili*kea,” he said, sitting down in the grass beside her. His voice was as gentle and impersonal as a Hawaiian’s.

Taking off his flower-weighted straw hat, he laid it on the ground beside him. Sunlight turned his red hair into flame and he thrust his strong fingers through it, brushing back the outlaw lock that always fell over his forehead. The sound of horses busily grazing in deep, rich grass spread serenity into the atmosphere and just having Davie near made Gay feel suddenly stronger and calmer.

“You’d laugh yourself ill if I told you what really got me on the run,” she said under her breath.

He looked faintly indignant. “Friends don’t laugh at each other’s *pili*keas—whatever they are,” he retorted.

“Anyone would—at mine,” Gay insisted, her voice filled with laughter and tears.



IN A DIM WAY SHE WAS AWARE OF HER HORSE’S EAGER FEET SKIMMING THE EARTH, OF FURRY LITTLE WHITE BODIES DASHING BACK FROM EXCITED SCENTINGS.

Suddenly, the episode which had stampeded her was reduced to its proper proportions. With a rush, she related what had happened. Davie stared at her, then his magnificent laughter rang out.

"You're the swellest person I've ever known," he asserted when he could manage his voice.

"I'm a sissy," she said.

"Sissy nothing!" His darkly blue eyes were steady and serious. "I believe in giving flowers to the living, not the dead. Trouble's the real test of a person, Gay. You've had a load of it dumped onto your shoulders since your dad died—and more during the past two weeks. It's no trick to carry on when things are easy. But when the going gets rough, if a person carries on with a smile, fights when he can't see a step ahead, laughs when crying's easier, has fun when there's nothing to make fun with—then he or she is a hundred per cent worthwhile. As you are."

"Davie," Gay said slowly, "you remind me of Dad. Just to have you round makes everything seem okay."

"Thanks, Gay." Then his eyes twinkled. "So a bunch of eggs almost made you let go all the holds. And you don't want to go home because you'll know that Honor is laughing inside every time she looks at you."

Gay nodded. "And I'm little enough to shiver, knowing she'll relay the story of my water-glass eggs to everyone on Maui."

"Let her!" Davie said stoutly. Then he added more thoughtfully, "Honor gives you an inferiority complex, doesn't she?"

"Yes, when she's around I feel like a bug under a microscope."

Davie linked Gay's arm through his and held her work-hardened hand between his harder ones. Silence went out in widening circles, then Gay said in low tones, "Ever since Cherry got hurt and Honor's been at *Wanaao*, everything has seemed changed." She hesitated.

"Spill it," Davie ordered.

"Until just now, even you've seemed different." She looked up smiling faintly, then saw that the warmth had gone from his face, suddenly leaving it aloof.

"There it is," she accused. "A moment ago you were close. Now—"

"It's—that." He indicated her ring.

"Why should that ring, well, make you like you are now?"

"You should know."

"But I don't. Gren gave it to me the day I visited her—"

"Honor inferred you were engaged."

"Engaged? I'm only seventeen!" Gay said explosively. "Cherry and I have our spurs to win, and keep bright, before we do anything else—"

“I added you up that way,” Davie said in satisfied tones. “People like us,” his eyes caught hers, “who have their own way to make, must get established before they can even begin to think of—” his eyes kept hold of hers, smiles lurking in their depths. “‘We speak one tongue, thou and I!’ ”

“Yes, Davie,” Gay agreed.

He stared across the splendid island in silence for several minutes, then turned back to her.

“Honor’s bad medicine, Gay,” he asserted. “This is none of my business, but I have a good hunch she’s trying to establish herself as a permanent part of your setup.”

“I’ve had that feeling, too, Davie, though I’ve nothing solid to back it up. It isn’t that I don’t appreciate all Honor has done—and is doing. Without her to pinch-hit, everything would have gone into tailspins all over the place. Both Cherry and I are in her debt and—” she hesitated.

“And being the sort of person she is, she’ll use that as a springboard to dive into a pond where she’d like to swim,” Davie finished for her. “Sure, it would suit Honor to a T to be a unit in *Wanaao*, now its doors are open to a stream of people from all over the world. She’ll have better chances to meet eligible men than even in the homes of rich, established Maui families, which are all apt to be clannish. I didn’t miss how she subtly strutted herself when those two rich young Englishmen were here ten days ago, and she wasn’t missing any trains when Brett Daggett, the millionaire international polo player, arrived to go to the top. There’ll be others.”

Gay nodded.

“You’re in a tricky spot,” Davie announced bluntly. “Honor’s clever as all get out. From what Naps has told me of her life, and from what I’ve seen during these past two weeks, I know you’re up against a pretty steep proposition, which you’ll have to handle with kid gloves.”

“I’m not ungrateful and I hate hurting people,” Gay said unhappily, gazing across the beautiful island, “but—”

“You don’t have to tell me that,” Davie interrupted. “But don’t let her ride you down. It stands to reason that Honor would rather be a co-hostess at *Wanaao* than teaching in a dinky school and hanging on to the skirts of rich relatives.”

Gay sighed in a deflated way.

“Don’t look so sunk, Gay. Once, when I was a kid, old Kane told me that it doesn’t matter what happens to people, but *it matters a lot what they do about what happens.*” He let the words hang in the air. “You’re having a

curved ball thrown at you. You can catch it—or duck it. That rests with you.”

Gay looked distressed. “If I give Honor the gate, even nicely—”

“She’ll never forget, or forgive it,” Davie finished. “But if you don’t spike her guns pretty soon, she’ll establish herself in the fattest corner of your new pasture. Whatever you do—I’m backing you to the finish!” Gripping her shoulders, he looked straight into her eyes. “And now,” he smiled encouragingly, “just to prove that I’m behind you, all the way, I’m riding home to have lunch with you—”

“To be a sort of bodyguard so a hundred dozen water-glassed eggs won’t stampede me again?” Gay flashed.

“You said it!” Davie’s laughter picked up the whole day, the island, the world.



CHAPTER XIII

THE QUESTION OF HONOR

DURING the following action filled days Davie's words haunted the edges of Gay's mind. However, no valid reason presented itself to suggest Honor leaving. She could not deliberately ask her cousin to go when outwardly she was all comradely kindness, and there was work, and over, for Cherry, Honor and herself to do. But when Honor was around, Gay burned with silent resentment. The story she had invented of Gay's engagement proved that Honor had tried to de-rail Davie's friendship, but nothing would be gained by confronting her with the matter and the always strained relationship of the young cousins would only be intensified.

Best to let things ride. The summer season was about over. School was due to start September fourth and then, automatically, Honor would have to leave to resume her duties at the Hamakuapoko School.

"Well," Cherry remarked one Sunday night when they were all back from a picnic, "a week from tomorrow, Gay, and you'll be school-marming."

"Yes," Gay said in a small, thoughtful voice.

The five young people were all on the lawn, the two boys softly strumming their guitars. Lights spilled from windows where guests, happily tired from a day of sunshine and swimming, were preparing for bed. But the night was too beautiful for Island-born people to sleep.

"Teaching, even in Hawaii where you wear flowers around your neck, isn't any cinch," Honor remarked.

Gay tensed inwardly. Instinct warned her that Honor was inching up on what might possibly be a chance to suggest that she remain at *Wanaao*. Davie's eyes met Gay's. "Head her off!" they said.

"Well, I'm going to try and put a hundred and ten per cent into the job," Gay asserted.

"As you did water-glassing the eggs?" Honor teased, then began laughing. "I hope you understand my—"

"I laugh, too—now—whenever I think of it," Gay interrupted.

"We were a bunch of meanies to act the way we did that day," Cherry asserted staunchly, putting an apologetic hand over Gay's with a warm, admiring pressure.

"Gay ought to be decorated for that episode," Davie said. "She has added, forever, to the free laughs of the world."

Honor clasped her knees with her long arms and, tilting back her head, gazed at the stars. Honey-colored moonlight flooded the garden. Below the lawn, the land sloped to the sea, a vast expanse of shimmering silver which brewed magic that was spine-tingling and disturbing. Flowers spilled their perfume and the soft wind whispered past, like a messenger tiptoeing into the future.

"I wish I could figure out some angle so I could add to the exchequer," Cherry announced after a silence. "Tourist pickings will be lean until late in April, when people start coming to Hawaii for Lei Day."

"We have enough to carry us and over, Cherry."

"I know, Gay, but there ought to be some way I can make extra money to keep us from digging too deeply into our savings," Cherry insisted.

The night was still and breathlessly beautiful. Davie plucked soft chords from his guitar and the music, rippling against the dark, created the impression that some listening, unseen Being was imposing in an effortless and inevitable way His veiled purpose. Suddenly, Cherry's figure became charged with excitement.

"I think I have an idea!" she exclaimed.

"Unlimber," Naps urged.

Davie made his chords softer until they washed around like water caressing unseen shores.

"Why couldn't we ask Sam if he'd be willing to rent us the shooting privileges at the far end of the crater? If he agrees, we could advertise hunting trips for business men. There are oodles of them in Honolulu who only get two-week vacations, which are juggled through the fall. Two weeks

isn't long enough to go to the mainland and I bet they'd spring at the idea I have in mind." Cherry's eyes sparkled. "The season for pheasants lasts till after Christmas. We could price the trip at a hundred dollars per person, which would cover all expenses from the time they land until they leave and give them nine days of fun, camping and shooting."

"Cherry, you've got something!" Gay cried.

Naps gave Cherry a fond whack on the back. "Between you and Gay, you're going to build this business to awesome proportions," he announced gleefully.

Honor stared into space. Davie watched her closely over his guitar.

"I'm going to see Sam first thing tomorrow morning," Cherry said. "If he agrees to lease us the hunting rights we want, we'll figure out an ad and shoot it to the Honolulu papers. I bet we get a flock of answers in nothing flat."

"Bet you do," Naps agreed, even his hair looking excited.

A gust of wind came prowling down from Haleakala, like a swift-footed, predatory animal. It shook the treetops and they seemed to consult hurriedly together.

"This *is* a bright idea, Cherry," Honor said in her deliberate manner, "but you may find there's a joker connected with it."

"Joker? I bet you anything—"

"Oh, the idea will go over like hotcakes," Honor broke in, "but the Clan, and residents of Maui at large, may be distressed at the thought of you going alone with men into the crater, whereas if *two* girls—"

"It's coming," Davie's eyes radioed Gay.

Cherry looked indignant. "Why should anyone think anything, Honor? I'm only a kid, fifteen. The men who'll be in the parties will be old enough to be my—well, fathers!" she ended with a laugh.

"Smart people never lay themselves open to conjectures of any sort," Honor said, making her voice sound experienced and wise. "For instance, if you *and* Gay were piloting the parties you propose taking into the crater, automatically, you'd protect each other."

"I'm signed up to teach," Gay declared shortly.

"Contracts can be broken," Honor said.

"I can't and won't break mine," Gay asserted. "I asked D. C. Lindsay to get me on as a teacher at Makawao at a time when eighty dollars a month looked pretty big to us. On the strength of his Aloha for Dad, he wangled it. I can't let him down, even if it means making more money."

“Under the circumstances, you’re entirely right,” Honor agreed. “After asking the favor, it wouldn’t be playing ball to back out. It’s harder to get teachers for small, obscure schools than for bigger ones on the plantations. It would put D. C. on the spot if you walked out now. It might be weeks before he could get another teacher to fill your place.”

“I don’t think,” Gay said, after a silence, “that anyone on Maui will be the least concerned about Cherry taking hunting parties of business men into Haleakala. Most of the ones who’ll come over are friends of Dad’s, or know of him.”

“Wait,” Honor interrupted, “I have an idea!” She tossed the words dramatically into the perfumed night.

“What is it?” Davie asked, watching her with narrowed eyes.

“This.” Leaning forward, Honor looked persuasively at her cousins. “Why wouldn’t it be to all our advantage if I broke *my* contract and added myself to the staff here?” She waved toward the old house, drenched in moonlight. “I’ve no scruples about making such a move. No one got my job for me; I got it myself. I’m not cut out to teach, though I get by with it. I think you’ll both agree from my performance here during the past weeks that this sort of thing is smack up my alley.” She made her eyes bright and her manner animated. “If I sign off, I can go with you, Cherry, on the hunting parties, while Gay holds the fort here and teaches school. And next summer there’ll be three of us, instead of two, to handle increased business.”

Moonlight played with moving shadows; the sea gave a long sigh against the shores of the island. Davie laid aside his guitar and Naps watched Honor intently.

“Doesn’t it sound like a sane solution to your immediate and future problems?” Honor inquired brightly. “Three of us,” she injected warmth into the words, “can handle things efficiently and—”

“From what I’ve seen,” Naps broke in, “Gay and Cherry have done a mighty efficient job alone.”

“I’m not saying they haven’t.” Honor’s voice was creamy and approving. “They’ve astonished everyone on Maui, in Hawaii. The crux of the matter is I’m sold on the idea of dude ranching. I’d like to get in it. Being older, I could supply, well, a sort of protective background, plus extra manpower to take this business on to a smashing success, so big it’ll stagger the Eight Islands.”

Gay moved unhappily, for she had a horrid sensation that Honor was cleverly maneuvering them toward the brink of a cliff whose bases were washed by restless, treacherous water.

“The reason why Cherry and I let our old servants go,” she said, goaded into action, “was because we didn’t want to take on more than we could handle. As it has turned out, we could have managed to pay them but we wouldn’t be as far ahead as we are. By doing everything ourselves, we’ve kept down overhead—”

“I’m not asking, or expecting you and Cherry to pay me anything,” Honor broke in. “I want to gamble with you on this fall and on next year. I have enough money saved up to take care of my immediate wants.”

Gay gestured unhappily. “The shooting parties are still up the spout, Honor. Suppose you resigned from your school and Sam decided he didn’t want to lease us the hunting rights in the crater. You’d be out on a limb and we’d feel responsible.”

“You’re missing the point completely.” Honor fixed Gay with her level gray eyes. “I’m willing, I’m eager, to gamble with you both. That makes it my affair, my responsibility. You’ll understand, Gay, after you’ve taught for a while that any girl with an ounce of sense would prefer leading the sort of life you and Cherry have led this summer to grinding away in a schoolroom.” Her words hung forebodingly in the air.

Shadows wavering in the moonlight created an impression that the garden was stirring, uneasy and apprehensive of what was ahead.

“She’s putting you on the spot,” Davie’s eyes radioed.

“I think it’s best to let the matter ride for the present,” Gay suggested.

“Are you giving me the gate—in a nice way?” Honor asked.

Gay felt trapped. Lacing her fingers tightly together, she stared down at them. She fancied that the night, too, held its breath.

“I’m not ‘giving you the gate,’ Honor,” she finally said in a small voice. “I read once that in any venture three people in one boat, let us say, make crosscurrents. The article had to do with the Canadian Mounted Police in isolated outposts. The Government found out, from statistics, that two men, even if they had cabin-fever, made the grade, while three always ended in two siding against the third, which resulted—in dynamite!”

“Inferring my presence would be a liability instead of an asset?” Honor inquired icily.

“Oh, Honor, no! I’m merely trying to point out—”

“That my being here wouldn’t work out—to your way of thinking?”

“No, from scientific observation,” Gay burst out.

“Gay’s right,” Cherry suddenly asserted herself. “We don’t always agree but we pull together. You’d have ‘high-hat’ ideas like the gags you inject

into ordinary parties to give them fresh flourishes. You'd want to go fancy, after a bit. Then *Wanaao* wouldn't be *Wanaao* any more."

"You've both got away from our starting point," Honor said. "This matter of my staying on here, originally, hinged on the angle of propriety."

"Phooey!" Cherry snorted. "This business of needing chaperones—"

"I hardly belong in that category." Sharp laughter edged Honor's voice. "I'm merely pointing out—"

"No need to go over the ground again," Cherry snapped. "Two girls would look better than one guiding men's shooting parties. You may be right, from one viewpoint. Perhaps our family, and our way of doing things, has always looked cock-eyed to most people, but we've always made the grade and—"

Honor watched Cherry closely, as if she were slowly, and reluctantly, adding her up.

"I know what you're thinking," Cherry declared. "That after the way you've pinch-hit for us these past weeks, we're ungrateful beasts—"

"Aren't you—a bit, not beasts, but ungrateful?" Honor asked. "I had fancied that you both—"

"We do appreciate how swell it was of you to stand by. If you hadn't, things would have gone into tailspins all over the place, but—"

"Now my usefulness is over, I go into the discard?" Honor suggested sharply.

"Oh, don't go female on the party," Naps said angrily. "That's what I hate about most girls. When they can't get what they want, they set out to make a person feel like a heel. Gay and Cherry behave like *people*; they never trade on the fact that they're *girls*!"

"I seem to have unleashed a tornado over my defenseless head," Honor murmured.

Moonlight still flooded the earth with beauty, but peace had withdrawn from the garden. Shrubs waved their branches like protesting arms and trees moved their tops from side to side, as if to signify they wanted no part in the deadlock.

"When I first suggested becoming a permanent part of your setup," Honor said slowly, "I was only stressing an angle that might be for your good. Then, as I talked, I realized I've simply loved every instant here. Surely you've seen that?" Honor challenged the small group. "Naturally, I've regretted the circumstances that kept me here—you being hurt, Cherry. But often accidents and unfortunate happenings are only springboards to

better things. I know everyone on Maui would feel better satisfied if I were here, working with you. I'm an institution on Maui."

She paused, and when no one spoke went on.

"You know how it is." Her voice was, of a sudden, intimate and warm again. "When someone gets an idea he wants to put over, he sends an S.O.S. to me. If Doctor Mac's shorthanded— But I hardly have to mention that angle—"

"Oh, Honor, *please*," Gay begged.

"What's there against taking me on for six months—on trial?" Honor suggested. "If it doesn't work out, I'll call it a day, and no hard feelings. See—I'm absolving you of all responsibility, before witnesses." She waved a graceful hand at the two boys.

"Honor," Gay's voice was tragic but firm, "I know it's best not to—"

"Oh, very well! I'm not the kind to try and horn in where I know I'm not wanted," Honor broke in. "I'll phone Mother in the morning."

"Oh, Honor—" Gay began.

"Listen, it's perfectly okay if you girls don't want me here," Honor interrupted again. "But you may find out, before you're through, that it never hurts to consider onlookers' reactions. If people safeguard themselves from possible criticism, they're that much ahead." She gazed across the moonlit island, as if thinking profoundly. "You know what I'd do if I were in your shoes?" Her eyes shuttled warily between Gay's and Cherry's.

"N-no," Gay answered reluctantly.

"I'd get some nice older person who needs a home to live here with you. Someone who would fit into your picture, help around the house and supply the one thing your setup lacks—the dignity of an older person."

"I hardly fancy that the people on Maui, who've known Gay and Cherry since they were babies, will be in the least concerned about their running this business—" Davie began.

"Un-protected?" Naps suggested, investing the word with a mocking, outdated quality.

Davie nodded. Gay nervously pulled up a handful of grass. Moonlight, caught in the facets of the big diamond, flashed faintly.

"That's quite a headlight," Davie remarked, imps playing tag with each other in his eyes. Taking the stone between his fingers, he inspected it, conscious of Honor's intent gaze on him. "As well," he spoke slowly and thoughtfully, "it's an Anchor to Windward. Didn't your grandmother tell you

when she gave it to you, Gay, that if your business blew up, you were to sell it and get down to brass tacks?”

“Yes,” Gay answered in a low, laughter-edged voice.

Summer began sliding into the thrilling autumn of Hawaii. Days stole over land and sea so utterly beautiful that it seemed as if God were breathing His love right on the Island.

Gay started teaching. Five days a week she rode, or if the horses were out on an occasional mountain trip, walked the three miles to Makawao. For five hours, relieved by brief recesses, she stood with *leis* around her neck, teaching fifty children of assorted nationalities. Having played as a child with Hawaiian, Chinese and Japanese youngsters, as well as with those of other nationalities, she felt no racial prejudice and cherished no barriers of color. As Pili had so aptly expressed it the first time she had lined up with other rent chauffeurs, “What God care if peoples small or bigs, brown or yellow or white? He make all, so He got big Alohas for all.”

The children, sensing her attitude—poles apart from that of most mainland teachers imported to Hawaii—reacted a hundred per cent, lavishing their affection on her and opening their bright, eager minds, hungry for the knowledge that she poured out with both hands and love in her heart.

Cherry succeeded in leasing the hunting rights in the crater from Sam and two weeks before the autumn shooting season opened, the ad went into the paper.

“It’s going to be a pretty big job for you if we get the results I expect we will,” Gay commented one evening when she and Cherry were enjoying a late supper on the *lanai*. “Having people in the crater for nine days at a stretch means you’ll have to pitch a tent and set up a regular camp. There’s water and firewood at Paliku, but you’ll need lots of provisions and bedding.”

“I’ve been figuring it out,” Cherry said. “I’m sure we’ll get parties and I want them to be perfect. It would be a waste of time and effort to take in supplies every trip, put up tents and take them down, drag them back and forth. If we can line up several parties ahead, I’ll go in and get the tents pitched, establish *caches* of canned goods—in case the men have poor luck or are bad shots.” Her laughter spilled into the twilight. “Then I’ll cut firewood and cord it and fix a place to cook that’ll handle eight or ten people pleasantly.”

"If you went in on a Friday, I could follow you and give you a hand."

"That would be tops, Gay." Cherry's brown eyes lighted. "You could leave very early Saturday morning and be with me by about noon. We could have a grand night together and get an early start Sunday to be back in time for church. Even with the work that must be done, it'll seem like a vacation after our summer of wrestling with people who, mostly, hardly know one end of a horse from the other."

Answers to the ad began coming after a few days. Cherry and Gay juggled dates, trying to dovetail fall vacations and string them out until Christmas. There was mad writing back and forth, re-arranging holidays, but when the hunting season was only ten days away the schedule of parties was finally arranged to everyone's satisfaction.

"I think it'll be wise to have a separate ledger for our hunting parties," Cherry said one night when she and Gay sat with books, papers, letters and lists spread out on the big dining-room table.

"That's a good idea," Gay agreed. "And I think you were smart to limit each party to eight people."

Cherry nodded, and began slowly going over the trips listed on a long yellow tablet.

"Our first party goes into the crater October the second and comes out the tenth. The next arrives October twelfth and comes out October twentieth. The third—we can't handle more than three a month—leaves October twenty-second and comes back October thirtieth," Cherry said slowly.

"That's correct," Gay asserted, checking dates with letters. "Now let's have November."

"Okay." Cherry bent her bright brown head over the paper.

When she had checked on through December she straightened up and stretched her arms high above her head. "This will keep us humping."

Gay laughed. "Daddy always said it was better to burn up than rust out."

Cherry smiled gaily. "We just about will. Now let's figure what we'll take in—gross." Pulling a clean sheet of paper toward her, she began computing. "We have seven parties of eight people each. Each person pays a hundred dollars for his nine days of fun. That means each party brings in eight hundred dollars. Seven times eight hundred adds up to five thousand, six hundred dollars!" she exclaimed, looking stunned.

"Yes!" Gay nodded, her eyes flying open with astonishment.

"Expenses will be about fifteen hundred dollars for food, horse-feed and renting cars to meet our customers and take them back to the steamer when

the trip's *pau*."

"That means a net profit of four thousand dollars, roughly," Gay said breathlessly, carefully checking figures.

They gazed at each other, floored.

"It seems completely crazy that we can earn so much money doing things we love and know!" Cherry exclaimed. "I don't seem to be able to get it into my head that we're really earning *big* money doing things we did before for—fun!"

"It's sort of staggering," Gay agreed. "The eighty dollars a month I earn from teaching looks absurd beside what you're bringing in."

"It looked pretty nice when we didn't know if we'd make the grade," Cherry said thoughtfully. "Besides, you're managing these trips as much as I am. If things continue the way they are, you won't have to teach next year. In the meantime, let's keep our running expenses cut down to the bone. Ah Sam's beginning to haunt us, but the less we put out, the more we can put away to buying *Wanaao*—if we can." She looked lovingly around the big, gracious room.

"Wouldn't it be marvelous," Gay exclaimed softly, "if we could save up ten thousand by a year from this coming Christmas? Then, if Sam's willing to sell—"

They gazed at each other, stars in their eyes.

"Well, let's finish up," Cherry said briskly, after a rapturous moment of dreaming. "Put dates, costs and profits from each hunting trip into this ledger." She passed a new one to her sister. "Then we can go to bed."

They worked busily while a sweet wind sighed across the island and the night spread its soft mantle over the earth.

"Today's Wednesday," Cherry said when they began gathering up their materials. "I'll leave Friday morning early for Paliku."

"I'll take off at crack of dawn Saturday morning," Gay announced. "By Sunday we should have everything ready for the Big Heave." She pushed back her hair. "I get goose pimples thinking about camping in the crater. We haven't been in," her voice dropped a little, "since Daddy died. It always seems his place, doesn't it?"

Cherry nodded. "It seems impossible that he won't be with us. What heavenly times we used to have in the autumn, when we drove steers in to fatten off the plateau back of Lauulu!"



CHAPTER XIV

S—O—S!

“PROBABLY,” GAY thought as she neared the summit of Haleakala, “Cherry and I are the only children in the world who had an extinct crater twenty-seven miles in circumference and two thousand feet deep for a summer playground when we were small.”

Its name, Haleakala, House of the Sun, arose from the legend that on its summit the legendary hero, Maui, for whom the island had been named, had lassoed the sun and broken off one leg, compelling it to move more slowly in order that Maui’s mother might have more light to braid the mats for which she was famous.

The trip into the crater was a glowing adventure that never dimmed. Gay gazed at the faint trail winding across reaches of cinder and lava beds. The stirring loneliness of high altitudes was about her. Below, at the six-thousand-foot level, trade-wind clouds were drifting, shutting off the lower half of the island. Above, a dome of blue went up to God and Gay had a fleeting sensation that Happy, her dogs and herself were the only living creatures on earth—and Cherry, waiting above, too.

When Gay reached the stone corrals at the foot of a violently-colored cone on the brink of the pit, she dismounted to rest her horse before starting down the long, steep descent into the crater. After making Happy comfortable and slipping on his nose bag, she propped her back against a rock and gazed across the vivid bowl. At the far end of the pit was the little green forest, at the base of the cliffs of Paliku, where Cherry was making camp. The seven-mile break in the walls directly opposite Paliku, which some explosion had blown out, was the Kaupo gap. The ten-mile wide break

to the northeast was the Koolau Gap. In a dreamy way, Gay tried to realize the force which had blasted out walls of solid granite and hurled them into the sea.

She listened to the pleasant rustling sound of her horse enjoying the grain in his nose bag, and watched the dogs panting in the shade of the corral wall. Drawing a sandwich out of her pocket, she began nibbling at it. The dogs came to instant attention, and smiling, she tossed crusts to them. As she ate she thoughtfully studied the breast-high stone fortifications terracing the cone before her. Below them a faint trail led to a rock quarry. In ancient times stone adzes had been fashioned there. Sturdy warriors, armed with slingshots and ten-foot *koa* spears, had battled for possession of the quarry and the now silent mountaintop had echoed with shouts and cries. Blood had drenched the cinders she sat on, and the name of a high peak on the southern wall of the crater, Puualioakakoaniuokane, Soldiers of the Mighty Army of Kane, recalled conflicts of long ago. . . .

When Happy was thoroughly rested, Gay began the descent. A delicious sense of remoteness from the world enveloped her as she began riding down the Sliding Sands. Golden dust smoked up from her horse's feet as they sunk into loose cinders, making a faint, hissing sound. Down, down, down, she rode, while the dogs raced ahead. In forty-five minutes they all reached the crater floor.

After resting her horse for a few minutes, Gay pushed on, following the trail winding past lakes of congealed lava, through masses of twisted and tortured rocks. Impressively simple cones lifted their heads hundreds of feet above the crater floor, and here and there on their lower slopes the foliage of Silver Swords glittered on the sun.

Now and then strange cries came from the towering *palis* as bands of wild goats moved along precipitous crags. The sun had passed the zenith and the goats were beginning to emerge from the caves where they slept during the heat of the day. Watching intently, Gay made out faint wisps of dust, raised by their sharp little hoofs as they trotted along the ledges to browse on the rich feed growing on alluvial flats formed by the earth that winter rains had washed down each narrow gully. Except from their thin, eerie cries and her horse's hoofs crunching into the cinders, a staggering silence brooded inside the huge bowl.

After an hour's riding, the trail swung up between a gray and a black cone. When it descended the rise, Gay dismounted, dropped Happy's reins and went to gaze into the Bottomless Pit. Ordering the dogs to lie down, she cautiously edged up to the spatter-lava the vent had blown up, forming a natural breastwork, and peered into the black void. Little shivers chased

over her skin as she gazed down the poisonous throat leading inward to the vitals of Haleakala. How many thousands of feet did it go down? What awful gasses had issued from it when Haleakala was active? Gay's nostrils, keen as a hound's, twitched slightly as they caught the faintly sour breath of the long-quiet volcano.

When she had gazed her fill, she rode on past acres of Silver Swords flanking the trail. The leaves, like slim daggers clothed with moth-down, glittered in the sun. Gay remembered that a naturalist her father had once taken to see the strange growths had explained that Silver Swords grew only in two places in the world, in the crater of Haleakala, and in a remote spot in the Himalayas.

As she pushed forward, the crater floor began taking on scattered vegetation, *kawao* bushes, stunted *mamani* trees and *ohelos*, dangling their tiny clusters of yellow and pink and burgundy colored berries. Ahead, directly at the base of the towering cliffs of Paliku, showed a small, golden-green forest. The northern end of the crater, which she was nearing, was the oldest in activity, and the trade wind, laden with moisture from the rain-soaked forests above Hana, poured over the cliffs, hit the cold air in the crater and precipitated moisture onto disintegrating lava, allowing vegetation to take hold.

Gay spied tethered horses browsing off imported grasses her father had planted, and saw Cherry's figure, diminished by distance to a dot, working busily among the trees. Standing in her stirrups, Gay sent a clear hail echoing across the space between. Cliffs picked it up, relaying it to each other. Cherry stopped and waved a welcoming arm. The dogs raced ahead to meet Cherry's dogs. . . .

"Isn't it a grand day to be in here?" Gay cried when she swung off Happy.

"Perfect. I hope the rains hold off until Christmas, as they mostly do. I'd like weather like this for all our parties," Cherry said.

By the time the sun was sliding toward its setting, the active sisters had the two big tents pitched in a grassy glade between *ohia*, *olapa* and *kolea* trees. Floors were leveled and strewed two feet deep with green bracken fern which, when it dried out, would shrink to about ten inches of fragrant, springy material for blankets to be spread on. Trenches were dug around each tent in case of rain; blankets, wrapped in tarpaulins to keep out moisture, were trimly arranged, with spaces for small duffel bags between them. Sufficient room was left toward the forward part of each tent for people to rest, chat, or play cards.

"I'll put my pup tent on that rise." Cherry waved toward a small space surrounded by high ferns and *akala* bushes dangling ruby-red berries, resembling raspberries grown to five times their normal size. "Then we'll cut and stack wood there." She pointed at a tarpaulin stretched between four trees over a large portable grill which would serve as a kitchen. Beside the grill was a flat-topped log for pots and pans.

At the end of a busy afternoon they were ready for a supper of broiled kid, which Cherry had shot on the previous afternoon, *akala* berries drowned in canned cream, *poi* and weak tea. Afterwards, they lay on blankets in front of one of the tents and watched evening creep into the crater. The sound of horses grazing, the faint cries of goats high on the *palis*, the bubbling of sea birds nesting in the crags, could not dispel the soul-stirring silence. A platinum twilight, sifted with silver, was sinking down into the vast bowl. Swinging walls were silhouetted sharply against the calm evening sky. Cones reared their purple and crimson and orange heads above the cobalt shadows steadily spreading across the crater floor.

The sun hit the twin cones guarding the faraway entrance, blazed for a moment, then slid out of sight. Majestic peace, accumulated from the ages, filled the vast pit to the brim. Instinctively, Gay and Cherry drew closer. In spite of the beauty, there was an awesome quality to their surroundings, intensified by the vastness of the crater, kin to the ones on the moon, which it approximated in size.

Night began pouring in, washing the bases of the cones which once had been vents for the fires which had built the mountain. Electric blue shadows hung in the cliffs, then, little by little, lava flows, cones and crags were taken from sight.

Getting up, Cherry put a fresh log on the fire. Flames reached up greedy red fingers, tearing at the dark. Rosy spirals of smoke twisted up among the crowding trees. The dogs quietly changed positions; the shadowy shapes of grazing horses were thrown into sudden relief.

"It seems as if Daddy had just gone to have a last look to see if the cattle are quiet," Gay remarked, into the air.

"I felt the same way last night when I was here alone," Cherry said softly. "I kept thinking of the wonderful life he gave us, of all the things he taught us which have made it possible for us to do what we're doing." She gazed at the shadowy walls, towering upward, at the canopy of darkness overhead, studded with stars.

"There were times, a while back, when I felt as if I were moving in a gray fog," Gay said slowly. "But even then, keeping our life the way it had

been, was worth that awful, numbing tiredness.”

“I know. But the worst’s over, Gay. These hunting parties won’t be bad. With camp set up ahead, once I get my people safely here, I’ll only have to cook, care for the horses and take the men where the shooting’s best.”

“You’re a rugged little soul,” Gay said proudly.

“Every time I think about Honor, I boil,” Cherry asserted abruptly. “All that nonsense about having a chaperone was only a steppingstone to her nosing into our pasture. Honor’s all right in her way, but it’s not our way.”

Gay looked off into the velvety darkness. “Sometimes, when I think about her, I feel sort of uneasy deep in my bones.”

“There’s one consolation.” Cherry laughed. “Her dislike of you, now, includes me. Phooey to her, anyway. Our roads lie far apart.”

“If our business grows, as I think it will, next summer we may want to take the servants back,” Gay said, thoughtfully.

“Let it ride for the time being,” Cherry suggested. “I’d like to try and swing it alone, Gay. You know why.” Her eyes met her sister’s, and they were brimming over with dreams.

“We can try it,” Gay said staunchly.

“What about—Christmas?” Gay asked, after a silence.

For several minutes Cherry made no answer, then she said violently, “Let’s skip it—this year. Let’s go to the Volcano. Next year, if we can buy *Wanaao*, we’ll have something real to celebrate.”

“That’s a good idea, Cherry. Every time I’ve thought of having a tree, and asking Dad’s old *paniolos* to it, as we used to, something inside me comes to a full stop. It would just be all—gestures. Yes, let’s go to the Volcano and next year, if we have *Wanaao*, we can letta-go-our-blouses in real Island style.”

“It’s a bargain!” Cherry said. “I feel as if tons had rolled off me.” She looked up at the stars. “Honestly, Gay, in spite of the fact that we’ve worked like plantation mules, everything’s so swell it seems as if there must be a joker in the deal—somewhere!”

Gay closed the door of the schoolhouse. A dozen children swarmed about her, others raced across the lawn and a few, who had miles to walk home, were reluctantly setting off. The bright afternoon echoed with shrill young voices, treetops bowed and swayed softly in the cool wind, and the scent of the garlands around her neck filled her nostrils with perfume.

"I wouldn't have missed this experience for anything," Gay thought, looking at small Japanese with square-cut bangs, at lustrous eyed Hawaiians, at wiry little Filipinos, at slender, solemn Chinese, at Portuguese and all the interracial crosses seething about her.

"Titcher! Titcher! I bring you gardenia *lei* tomorrow," a Japanese boy said excitedly.

"That will be swell, Saburo."

"I make ginger *lei* more big from Saburo gardenia *lei*," a Hawaiian girl cried, tossing her curls and laughing.

"Us not got enough flowers for make you *lei* tomorrow," a Chinese lad said, sadly. "Already I pick all for make you *leis* this week."

"Don't look so sunk, Ah Lau." Gay laughed. "I know you all love me whether or not you bring *leis*."

"Tomorrow if very nice day can us have school outside?" a handsome young Hawaiian of about eleven asked. "I keep sharp watchouts in case Mr. Robinsons drive up for make inspection."

"Charlie Kaneko, you're a rascal." Gay smiled. "But it seems silly to stay indoors for our lessons when it's nice outside. I'm going to talk to Mr. Robinson and point out that history and geography and reading can be done as well outside as in a schoolroom."

"*Welakahao!*" Kaneko shouted. "Then if Mr. Robinson speak okay, us not got big scares inside every time us hear a car coming, and us can sit in the nice sun and look the pretty trees."

"I *must* go home!" Gay protested.

"I get your Happy-horse," Ah Lau cried, loping toward the shady trees where the big gray was tied.

"How's your little sister, Teruko?" Gay asked, dropping to one knee to assist a little Japanese girl who was trying to bind a sleeping baby to diminutive Teruko's back.

"Baby-san swell, Titcher," Teruko answered. "I got big Alohas for you because you make like this." She indicated the infant being tied to her with an *obi*. "Before Titcher very *huhu* if us bring small brother and sister to school so Mama-san can work more easy."

"Actually, I believe it's against the rules, Teruko," Gay said. "But little Japanese and Hawaiian and Chinese children are no trouble—"

"And swell fun when us hear Mr. Robinson car come and hide the *keikis*—kids, inside the chalk-room." Charlie Kaneko laughed delightedly, his lustrous brown eyes dancing.

"I'm afraid I'm a naughty teacher," Gay said.

"You swell!" the children insisted. "When school *pau* us fella all cry like anything because you speaking you no titch again next year."

"I can't," Gay explained. "Our business is growing so fast I have to help my sister."

"But us fellas can come ranch sometimes and see you?" a small Filipino girl asked wistfully.

"Of course," Gay answered, swinging into her saddle. "And if the school is *pau* and you won't cry, I'll have you all up to *Wanaao* and we'll have ice cream and presents and games, just as if it were Christmas."

"No forget! No forget, Titcher!" the children chorused.

"I won't," Gay promised.

She jogged off, joyously inhaling the scents weighting the wind. Happy's steps were light and eager and every so often he reached out his head to get the feel of the reins. Gay looked at the blue shape of Haleakala and thought with pleasure that Cherry would be home when she arrived and the party on its way to meet the Honolulu-bound steamer. They would have two nights together before the next crater trip was due.

Swinging around a turn, she spied an approaching rider and waved.

"Sam!" she exclaimed as they drew abreast. "You look as if you'd been ill."

"I haven't been ill, Gay," he said, batting his eyes, "but I have been bothered and upset lately."

"Aren't ranch matters going well?" Gay asked anxiously.

"I'm still pretty green where cattle ranching is concerned," Sam admitted. "But Davie's a crackerjack to have around. Hawaiians love him as he's tops when it comes to handling stock."

Gay glowed—then realized that this fine friend of her father's looked as if something were haunting his waking and sleeping hours.

"Anything that Cherry and I can do to help your *pilikea*?" she asked.

The rancher looked past her. "Cherry back with her party?" he countered with another question.

"She ought to be home now."

"Doing anything tonight?"

"We never go out, probably because when our work is *pau* we're too tired to want to rush around."

“Well,” the rancher hesitated, “there is a matter that I want to talk to you girls about. If it’s okay, I’ll drop by after dinner.”

Gay’s heart came to a full stop. What was in the wind?

“Why not have supper with us?” she asked, when she had assembled her faculties again.

“My brother is over from Kauai, visiting me. I’ll be by about eight-thirty. Thanks just the same.”

He went on his way, Gay on hers, but the rich peace that had filled her to the brim slid away. In its place apprehension stalked with icy feet. What did Sam want to see them about? Knowing him since she was small, she felt him to be a man of his word. He had said that Cherry and she could remain at *Wanaao* for a year and possibly two. . . . Maybe he wanted to tell them that after the following summer he would need the place. He knew approximately what they had earned. All Hawaii did. The cost of their trips was listed in all the leading hotels; the register of visitors to the summit gave the total number of persons who had passed through their hands. As well, Sam knew the price of the hunting trips, per person, and how many they had taken in, and would take in until Christmas.

Perspiration dampened her forehead. Maybe Sam wanted his brother, who managed a sugar plantation on Kauai, to come to Maui so they could learn stock-raising and marketing together. Maybe he wanted *Wanaao* back—hurriedly she computed—in six months! Strength flowed out of her. Then, resolutely, she gathered herself together. If he did, she and Cherry could not resent it. He had been generous to their father and toward them. With the money they had earned he might figure that they could buy and build in some other place which would serve equally as well as *Wanaao* for their business. . . .

As Gay rode into the poinsettia- and blue-cypress lined driveway leading to the gardens she loved, her eyes misted. Sam—no one—could know how she and Cherry loved *Wanaao*. It was filled with jeweled memories for as far back as they could remember.

Cherry was working about the corrals. Tired horses were rolling and grunting, or stringing across the pasture to graze. Dogs stretched in the grass watching. Hula and Coquette, recognizing Gay and her big gray gelding, sprinted to meet her with joyously wagging tails. The old house nestled into its flower beds and greenery. A great, aching lump pushed into Gay’s throat. Determinedly she fought it down. After inquiring about Cherry’s trip, she unsaddled Happy and turned him out. When the camp gear was all put away, the two girls started for the house.

Cherry glanced sharply at her sister. "What's eating you, Gay? You look as though you'd seen a ghost."

Reluctantly, Gay told her. Cherry's face turned the dead gray of ashes.

"Something inside me seems to fall apart when I even think of leaving *Wanaao*." She choked. "It's part of us, as we're part of it." She could not go on.

Gay nodded, and her eyes went involuntarily to Haleakala. Although their father had never owned the acres which had been entrusted to his care, he had cultivated the land lovingly and intelligently, building for generations to come.

"I know how you feel, Cherry," she said slowly. "But we must remember, now, more than ever, that Daddy always said *owning* things didn't matter, *doing* them is what counts."

Cherry nodded, a faraway look in her brown eyes.

But the four hours until eight o'clock seemed aeons long. When the rancher's car drove in, Gay and Cherry looked at each other in a sudden panic, then got a strangle hold on their emotions and, with hands clasped tightly, walked to the door to greet their visitor. Sam came slowly toward the house, as if pulled against his will.

"I'm a bit early," he remarked when he was indoors. "Have you finished eating?"

"We're just *pau*," Cherry told him.

The three sat down and silence hung suspended in the room.

"The matter I've come to discuss with you girls is extremely distasteful," the rancher said finally. "But I'm compelled to do it."

Cherry's eyes turned pathetically to Gay.

"For some time—" Sam broke off, looking harassed.

Gay's hand stole out and locked her sister's.

"Get it over with, Sam," they urged.

"For the past six or seven weeks the whole Island has been hounding me to impress on you girls the necessity of having some older person living in the house."

"Is that all?" Cherry's voice rang with relief. "Gay and I were afraid you'd come to tell us you wanted *Wanaao* back next June."

The rancher smiled faintly, then his expression grew serious. "It may be a trifle to you, Cherry," he remarked in his kind way, "but it's a headache to me. Committees of women, now and then accompanied by their husbands, are in my hair continually. They proclaim that because I made it possible for

you to go into this business, it's up to me to insist that if you stay on at *Wanaao*, you must have a—"

"Chaperone?" Cherry finished for him, scornfully.

"Yes. Knowing how your father raised you to think of yourselves as people, not girls, I realize the absurdity of it but that doesn't make the situation any easier where I'm concerned."

"Why can't people keep their noses out of other people's business?" Cherry asked indignantly.

"They should, but that doesn't alter the fact that they don't. Your relatives—and everyone of consequence on Maui—have been to see me about the matter—"

"Honor's behind this," Cherry said, hotly.

"Honor?"

Gay related the proposal Honor had made the night before she left.

"Why don't you want her here? It seems to me it would be to your advantage. She and her mother could come and live with you. Mrs. Tolliver's highly thought of on Maui. Honor's an institution." His face, which had been worried, looked hopeful and relieved.

"Honor has never liked Gay since she beat her at the Kahului track," Cherry said bluntly. "And since we turned down her proposition about joining us, she hates me."

"Possibly if they came—"

"It wouldn't work. Water and oil won't mix and it would ruin the feeling that's in this house if there was even silent discord." Cherry gazed earnestly at the man who had been her father's friend as well as his employer. "Oh, don't look so *sunk*, Sam," she begged. "You've been so utterly swell that, much as it'll gag Gay and me, we'll dig up some older person to 'lend dignity' to our setup, as people put it."

"Thanks, girls. I feel as if tons had rolled off my shoulders. Don't feel rushed—*too* rushed, I mean. Take a few days and think it over, then select someone who, you feel, will fit in with—" he smiled faintly, "with *Wanaao*."

He looked about the room with appreciative eyes.

"Yes," he remarked thoughtfully, "in spite of the fact that Honor's a great girl, she wouldn't fit in here. The flavor of your Dad remains and mustn't be spoiled."

"Well, we have a problem and a half on our hands now," Cherry said, after Sam had gone. "Who on earth can you think of to stay here who'll *fit in*!"

"I simply don't know, Cherry."

"We've got to get someone. Sam looks as if he hadn't slept for weeks. In fairness to him, we must go right to work." Cherry's voice sounded grim.

"Wait!" Gay squealed. "I've got it! Let's radio Uncle Bellowing. He's *got* to come. I'd simply hate having some elderly lady—"

"You're a genius!" Cherry exulted. "Uncle Bellowing is our out. Don't let's say a word to anyone, except Sam. He'll get a big chuckle out of it. In the meantime, think up a radio to send Uncle Bellowing. From his last letter, his ship's due to dock in Nagasaki the fifteenth. Let's ask him to fly back. Won't the Clan—won't all Maui be sunk when Uncle Bellowing is installed as our chaperone?" Her bright laughter filled the room. "But no one can do anything about it because he's our uncle!"

"He may balk at the idea," Gay said.

"We'll tell him it's an emergency measure. Tell him if he can't stick it for always, he'll suffice till we can get someone else," Cherry said gaily. "He'll grouse around but he loves us and he'll come."

"I feel sure he will," Gay agreed. "It's odd. Just thinking about having him here is sort of comforting."

"I love the old ruffian." Cherry grinned. "He'll hate not being able to barge around in strange ports, but he loved Dad and he'll pinch-hit in this emergency."

"I'll radio him first thing in the morning," Gay promised. "Won't Naps and Davie howl when we tell them our solution to the 'chaperone' problem!"

"They'll roll on the grass, and Honor will froth at the mouth," Cherry said jauntily.

The radio was sent; Sam informed. The rancher laughed until tears rolled down his cheeks.

"This will slay the Island! I've already informed people you're getting an older person to stay with you."

Three days passed without a reply. The girls grew edgy. Had Uncle Bellowing's ship been transferred to another run? Was it possible he was writing to explain he couldn't come?

By the end of the week they were frantic. Then one night, just as they were going to bed, the phone rang. Gay rushed to answer it.

"It's Central saying there's a radio for us—from Nagasaki," she said over her shoulder. "Get a pencil and piece of paper, Cherry."

Cherry scribbled down the message Gay relayed:

I LIKE THAT STOP I'M AN EMERGENCY MEASURE STOP WILL
DO UNTIL SOME SUITABLE PERSON CAN BE FOUND STOP SO I'M
TO PLAY NURSE TO TWO BRATS WHO HAVE RAISED A HORNET'S
NEST AROUND THEIR EARS STOP BE SEEING YOU STOP TAKING
CHINA CLIPPER FOR HONOLULU TOMORROW STOP

LOVE

UNCLE BELLOWING



CHAPTER XV

RICH HARVESTS

GAY glanced up from the account books spread before her on the *lanai* table. A short distance away, Uncle Bellowing sat in a big chair, gazing at the blue Pacific. Gay wondered, with a little wince, whether it was very hard for him not to be steaming through strange seas and going ashore at faraway cities in Asia. During the months that Uncle Bellowing had been with them, some lost flavor had seeped back into life. Both she and Cherry realized there was a deep comfort in having an older person to turn to when events for which they were not wholly prepared leaped at them. Under Uncle Bellowing's bluff, and sometimes even belligerent manner, was a clumsy tenderness, and a deep pride in their achievements of the past year.

Gay glanced down the long, greenery-filled *lanai*. The house, for once, was empty of paying guests. The latest contingent had all elected to make the five-day, round-the-Island trip together. No boat docked before tomorrow, so she and Hana could get a much needed breathing spell. Gay's face grew thoughtful. In spite of the terrific strain on bodies and minds, in spite of putting in fourteen- and fifteen-hour days, she and Cherry were forging ahead in a larger way than they had dreamed would be possible when they had started their business venture just thirteen months ago.

Every guest room now boasted comfortable mattresses and springs, new matting and curtains. They had added five new horses to their string and had a complete new set of tires for their car. If this second summer continued the way it was going, by the following one they should have enough money ahead to make an offer to buy *Wanaao*.

Gay went thoughtfully back to her account books. In their first year, now just past, they had netted five thousand dollars. When Cherry returned from the round-the-Island trip, another twelve hundred would be added to that sum. Autumn hunting parties, already contracted for, would bring in another three thousand before the end of the year. Their rooms were booked full until late in the fall. She gazed out to sea. . . .

People openly criticized Cherry and her because they still did all the work themselves. Everyone insisted that they could afford to hire help, beyond little Hana, and were spending their energies foolishly by keeping expenses cut down to the bone. A secret smile touched Gay's lips. Once they owned *Wanaao*, they would re-set their sails and chart an easier course. Until then . . . Her face set in determined lines.

Carefully, she re-checked the figures. As things stood at the moment, they would have by December fifteenth nine thousand, two hundred dollars ahead. If they could get another fifteen hundred, from some unexpected quarter, the ten thousand for *Wanaao* would be "in the bag," and the net earnings from the house would carry them through the winter and spring. Dreams stole into her eyes.

"Uncle Bellowing—"

"What is it, Gay?"

Rapturously, she quoted from the ledger. Uncle Bellowing grinned at her.

"Pretty swell, Gay," he said in a prideful way.

The telephone rang and Gay leaped to answer it. Hana, quietly dusting the living room, flashed a smile at Gay as she streaked down the *lanai*. The little Japanese had an inordinate pride in the stream of activity which kept their days filled to the brim and spilling over far into the night.

"Might-be more pipples come Thursday," she called.

"Probably," Gay called back.

When she walked away from the telephone she looked floored.

"That was a radio from the Halekulani Hotel," she announced. "Dr. Grondal, the great botanist, wants to take his party of twenty into the Ditch Country tomorrow. I don't see how I can possibly manage them. Cherry has sixteen horses out."

Uncle Bellowing grunted and studied Gay from under his dark, heavy eyebrows. Then he grinned.

"You'll probably figure some way to swing it," he observed.

"I'd like to." Gay scanned the sheet of paper on which she had scribbled down the radioed message. "You see, he wants to try and locate two

varieties of ferns which another botanist reported finding in Honamanu. He says if we'll take him in, he'll pay us a flat thousand dollars for the trip!"

"And that, added to the figures you quoted a few minutes ago, will up your grand-total to over ten thousand," Uncle Bellowing suggested.

"Yes—"

"Which will cinch the figure you and Cherry want in the bank."

Gay nodded. Walking to the steps, she gazed at the gay garden, eagerly soaking in the rich golden sunlight. Above the dark trees the reaches of the island swept away to the knife-edged ranges in the West. Clean scents rose from the soil, charged with life and power.

Uncle Bellowing rocked quietly, and Hana, with the wisdom of Orientals, occupied herself with her dusting, leaving Gay's mind free to battle with the problem confronting her. She tried fiercely to figure out some way to manage such a trip singlehanded and without horses enough. For twenty people she would have to have four pack horses.

Her face, thinner than a year previously, was tense. It would be utterly splendid if she could tell Cherry when she came home that she had made the extra money that would put their savings 'over the top.' In the stress of the moment, Gay realized she was tired from the incessant activity of past weeks and months. Her temples felt compressed, her back ached—but her spirit burned upward with fierce, unending strength.

Walking back to the table, she sat down, outwardly calm, inwardly a human storm. She glanced at the account books, then at the bright day marching strongly over the earth. Who could sit back helplessly where in everything around there was the constant stir of growth and progression?

"I've got it!" she exclaimed, suddenly.

Uncle Bellowing waited in his large, unhurried way.

"I'm going to get Davie to help me. This is his holiday week."

"But he's over at Waiopai, branding cattle with Sam," Uncle Bellowing protested.

"Just because he wants to help," Gay said excitedly. "Actually, he's at liberty to do as he pleases."

"You can't ride seventeen miles—there and back—and do all that must be done between now and noon tomorrow," Uncle Bellowing said, scowling.

"I think I can manage it. I've fourteen horses here, Davie has four in his string. I can rent six more animals from Portuguese homesteaders living around here. They're only too glad to get extra money that way in the summer."

She glanced at her wrist watch. "It's one-thirty. If I get away in half an hour, I can make Waiopai Ranch by late afternoon. I can see Davie, rest for a while and leave him to follow after he has rounded up his extra horses. By riding steadily I can be home in time for some sleep."

"Old Super-Man himself." Uncle Bellowing grinned. "It's a pretty big order, Gay," he added, as an afterthought.

"Yes," she agreed as she headed for the telephone.

She sent the radio saying that the party could be handled, phoned two homesteaders and arranged for mounts to be brought to *Wanaao* by daylight the next morning, then went to her room.

When she returned, bright spots of color burned in her cheeks.

"You and Hana hold the fort," she instructed, kissing Uncle Bellowing. "Thank goodness no one is here!" She looked with relief at the silent house, which seemed to be resting and recharging itself for the tumultuous season still stretching ahead until the opening of colleges and schools and the call of business in the States took away the stream of summer vacationers.

"Big job," Hana commented.

"Yes, Hana." Gay smiled.

"No got time for enough sleep—"

"I'll make it up—afterwards," Gay said resolutely.

"I go make some *kaukau* for you while you saddle Happy. Better eat somekind before you go."

"Thanks, Hana, I will," Gay said gratefully.

The sun was beginning to pale by the time Gay turned around the southern end of Haleakala. Hour by hour the country grew wilder. Not a house showed along the faint trail leading through barren lava beds. The southern slopes of the island were twice as steep as those on the northern side and a feeling of violence hung over everything. Here, the last eruptions from Haleakala's cones had spouted their final fury and molten lava had poured into the sea, filling the world with shattering explosions.

Gay headed for the twin blow-holes of Lualilau, looming up ahead. Happy's gray shoulders were dark blue with sweat. In the V between the violently-colored cones she caught a glimpse of the wild land of Waiopai, far ahead. Mighty headlands rushed down from the summit of Haleakala, deep ravines opened foaming jaws on the sea.

When the blow-holes were left behind, Gay could see the whole southern flank of the mountain. The land was clothed with thick, tawny *pili* grass that shivered under the trade wind like the fur of a living beast. Wild lights were hitting the headlands as she dropped down into Manuwainui gulch. There was no beach but shiny black boulders, like cannon balls, rolled back and forth with each wave that broke on the shore, filling the canyon with dull thunder that echoed up the steep walls.

“Easy, boy,” Gay cautioned as her fine gray began briskly climbing the steep trail leading up the far side of the gorge. “We have to go a good many miles tomorrow, on top of all we’ll do today.”

Happy cocked a small, attentive ear but continued his swift pace until she checked him to a walk. She watched the muscles of his shoulders working rhythmically and powerfully, then, leaning down, embraced him. He shook his head playfully and side-stepped on the narrow trail to show he was not tired.

During the long hours of riding alone the scope of the task ahead of Gay had sunk in, not to daunt her, but to challenge her. A few hours from now she would have to be ready to leave *Wanaao* for the Ditch Country, as the splendid, wooded slopes of Haleakala were generally known. It was a country of mighty ravines and dense forests, without cultivation of any sort, or habitation, except for small settlements of Hawaiians who continued to work their little holdings in valleys fronting on the sea.

Now Gay sighted a cluster of weather-worn houses enclosed by sturdy stone walls. As a child she had loved visiting this isolated section of the ranch with her father, and the old thrill of being in wild places stole through her. Smoke was rising from the chimney of the cookhouse. Tired horses with the damp marks of saddle blankets on their backs were grazing across a small pasture and the pleasant sound of voices talking in Hawaiian drifted to her ears.

Men were moving about unfinished tasks with the characteristic large, loafing dignity of Polynesians. Others sat on the steps of the house and on stone walls, discussing events of the day. Behind their voices was the pleasant strumming of a guitar. Davie was sitting on the steps. Hearing hoof beats, he glanced up, saw Gay, set his guitar aside and bounded down the steps.

“Has something happened, Gay?” he asked, grasping her stirrup.

She explained the reason for her visit. The *paniolos* hailed her warmly. Sam came out on to the veranda. Davie relayed Gay’s information.

“By all means go and lend Gay a hand, Davie,” Sam urged, then transferred his attention to Gay. “What you contemplate doing would take the stuffing out of a strong man,” he protested.



GAY NURSED HER HORSE OVER THE LONG MILES BETWEEN WAIOPAI AND HOME. STEADILY, HAPPY'S LONG, SWINGING TROT ATE THEM UP.

“Actually, Sam, it won't be as bad as taking the same number of people to the top,” Gay said. “We'll go right to Honamanu and stay with Aunt Jolly. Hawaiians never care how full of people a house is. I think Dr. Grondal and his party will love being at Aunt Jolly's. She's such fun and knows every fern and plant growing in the Ditch Country. I won't have to cook and race around as we have to do up Haleakala. With Davie to help with the horses, it'll be almost like a vacation.”

“Well, come in and eat and rest for a couple of hours,” Sam urged.

“I'll fix *kaukau* for you,” Davie said, then called to a *paniolo* to unsaddle Happy, cool him off and give him barley.

“I'll have some food ready for you in a jiffy, Gay,” he said, leading the way into the kitchen. “There's some goat stew, rice and sweet potatoes. I'll make fresh coffee.”

While he assembled the meal, he went on talking.

“As luck would have it, my extra horses are running way *mauka*.” He waved toward the distant summit of Haleakala. “It'll take some time to

round them up, but with a couple of *paniolas* to help, I should be able to get away in two or three hours. Can't you wait till then?"

Gay shook her head. "It's late now. I want to be home as quickly as I can and have everything ready by the time you get in."

"I should be at *Wanaao* in time to be of some help," Davie said, then his eyes lighted up. "It'll be tops meeting Aunt Jolly. Kane knew her when she was head *hula* dancer at Kalakaua's court."

"We've known and loved her since we were small," Gay said. "Once every year Daddy took us to Honamanu for a week. It'll be a long day getting that big party in to the valley before dark, but once you're in Honamanu, everything that's tight inside you lets go in a big way."

Davie set a plate heaped with food before her, dragged up another chair and sat down. When the coffee was ready, he filled two cups.

"This trip will put your savings over the top, won't it?"

Gay gave an excited little nod.

"I've a hunch," Davie lowered his voice, "that if you and Cherry have the price of *Wanaao* by Christmas, Sam will risk the fury of the Clan and sell *Wanaao* to you and Cherry then. Christmas is an extra special time and —" His voice poised expressively.

"Oh, Davie—" Gay could not go on but all the things she felt shone in her eyes.

A new drive surged into her tired body and sent her spirit soaring into dizzy realms. "Yes," she thought, "Christmas is a time when people come into a greater inheritance which lifts them out of their everyday selves. If the move to buy the place we love is to be made, it should be done before the Birthday of all Birthdays comes around." Davie's eyes held hers and a sort of glory filled the plain old kitchen.

"It'll be another feather in your cap, having Dr. Grondal come to you," Davie finally remarked. "When I think of all you and Cherry have accomplished in a little more than a year, I'm floored. A lot of noses are out of joint. The spotlight isn't focused on a certain set of people who've been used to it. But no one with an ounce of real sportsmanship can resent the way you girls have won your spurs and, as your fine dad put it, are keeping them bright."

A warm, happy glow stole through Gay, then she said rather breathlessly, "When I think about it, I still feel edgy about Honor. Outwardly, she's friendly enough, but she isn't the sort of person who gives up easily when she wants a certain thing."

“Forget it,” Davie advised.

“I try to,” Gay promised. “But deep inside me I *know* that she hasn’t forgotten, or forgiven us for not wanting her to stay on at *Wanaao*.”

Davie looked thoughtful, then smiled in his confident way, and the dim fears which occasionally stalked along the edges of Gay’s mind faded away.

“Now you had better rest on the *puune* in the living room for a while,” Davie said, rising. “I’ll wake you in good time.”

Sam looked up as they entered the main room where he was checking up the calves branded that day. “*Moemoe* for you, Gay,” he said.

She nodded and flung herself on to the big Hawaiian day bed, ducked her head into a fat pillow, and slept until Davie woke her.

“Two of the *paniolos* have gone *mauka* to find my horses,” he said. “I wish they were back. Riding home with you on an evening like this would be a dividend.”

“Wouldn’t it?” Gay said.

Sam walked out with them. Gay patted her horse’s arching neck. Eager and refreshed, Happy was keen to get going. Gay swung into the saddle.

“If you and Cherry weren’t so infernally independent and so determined to make the grade without *kokua*, I’d send along a *paniolo* to help,” Sam remarked.

“Davie and I can do it,” Gay assured him. “Be seeing you!”

“*Aloha*,” Davie called.

Gay nursed her horse over the long miles stretching between Waiopai and home. Steadily, Happy’s long, swinging trot ate them up. About three miles from home she dismounted and led him for a while to stretch her limbs and save the horse for the long ride next day. When she had covered about a mile on foot she decided a remount but when she tried to pull herself into the saddle her tired arms were not up to the effort.

“I’m more *pula* than I realize from the past year’s hard work,” she thought disgustedly. Leading her horse to the side of the road, she mounted from the bank. “Uncle Bellowing wouldn’t call me Super-Man if he saw me doing this,” she thought and her laughter floated thinly away into the night.

When Gay finally reached home light was spilling from the kitchen windows. Unsaddling Happy, she turned him out. Hana had coffee ready. Uncle Bellowing was sitting at the kitchen table.

“So you made it,” he said.

“Yes,” Gay answered, sitting down wearily. The room was gratefully warm after her long ride along the chilly flank of the mountain.

“Davie coming?” Uncle Bellowing asked.

Gay nodded.

“Lucky he’s holidaying,” he grunted.

“Uncle Bellowing,” Gay said solemnly, “if you look facts in the face, Cherry and I have played in luck *all the way*. It’s almost scaring—”

“There has been more hard work than just luck. You’ve made your luck.”

“Not entirely,” Gay said honestly. “It was luck that Dad worked for such a swell person as Sam; luck that he was generous enough to say we could stay here until we found our feet; luck—”

“Rot!” Bellowing interrupted. “I’m not a preachy man but I do know my Bible. It says, ‘As a man soweth, so shall he reap.’ If a person sows deep, and well, the harvest is—inevitable!”



CHAPTER XVI

A PEEP INTO THE PAST

WHEN GAY awoke the sun had leaped clear of Haleakala, bringing a golden-blue day, edged with diamonds, to the world. Tearing into her work clothes, she hurried out, drove in the horses and fed them, lined up saddles, bridles, ropes, grain, then milked the cow. By the time she was finished, the Portuguese homesteaders rode in with the six hired horses, which Gay directed the men to tie apart from her own string for fear they might fight.

Just as she was beginning to grow edgy, she heard a clear hail and the sound of horses coming along the driveway.

"Sorry to be so late. We had trouble rounding up the horses," Davie called. "I see you've been at it sixty miles an hour." He laughed, swinging from his saddle.

Gay nodded, opened the gate into the corrals and drove in Davie's spare horses. "Let's have a quick breakfast, then saddle up and move out. The autos hired to collect Dr. Grondal and his party are to meet us at the end of the road, this side of Pohakumoa Gulch. I want to get to the meeting place ahead of the cars, so we can rest."

Davie gazed at her. Even in faded old jeans there was something young, fresh, lovely, and brave about her. She lived at top pitch because nothing else was possible to her.

"Way down deep inside you're tired, Gay," he said finally, "though you don't look it."

"I was, but now you're here, all the humping and heaving is fun," she retorted blithely.

The harried, crowded sensation which had trod on her heels since the radio message had come the previous afternoon had vanished and some inner part of her sang at the thought of seeing again the deep green valley whose sheer walls seemed to shut out the rest of the world.

The instant they had finished eating, the two young friends started off. Packs were neatly lashed onto four horses, stirrups tied across saddles of the still-riderless string. Gay took the lead, Davie the rear, driving the animals between them. Spicy dust rose from the road, sunlight poured down, flanking trees held themselves proudly, their leaves flashing off light.

It was nearing noon when the cavalcade reached the end of the automobile road. Tying the horses to trees, they stretched out on cool banks of green fern to wait for the automobiles to arrive. Above them loomed the forested shoulder of Haleakala, indigo blue under low-hanging clouds. Gay inhaled the sweet, damp breath of tangled vegetation.

"It looks and smells as though it had rained early this morning."

Davie nodded.

"I hope we can cross Pohakumoa Gulch," Gay said, a worried expression stealing into her eyes.

"Tough one?" Davie inquired.

"Yes, sometimes."

They heard the grinding of cars coming up the hill and rose to their feet. Pili and Nakamura and two other rent chauffeurs drove up. People got out of the cars. Gay recognized Dr. Grondal at once from newspaper pictures. He was a tall man with a thin, angular, intelligent face, finished off by brilliant brown eyes.

"Miss Storm?" he asked, coming forward.

"Yes, Dr. Grondal," Gay answered, shaking hands.

"I'm delighted you could take my party." He promptly introduced them, sixteen young men and three women. "We have different names and faces but are all cut from the same piece of cloth," he said briskly. "Botany is our job and from the looks of the country ahead, we'll have a feast."

"I think you will," Gay said.

Pili came strolling up. "I *kokua* to put fellas on the *lios*," he said, waving at the tied horses. "Nakamura and all us fellas got big *mahalos* for you girls because always you 'phoning us to drive the peoples who come your place."

Twenty minutes later the lengthy cavalcade started along the narrow trail which wound up and down spray-filled gorges, filled with rainbows and lined with thickets of wild bananas, bamboo, mighty *koa* trees, tangled creepers and wet banks of fern. Blossoming ginger, indigenous begonias, *apeape* leaves, six feet in diameter, fringed forest pools.

"In ages past, that plant grew on all the continents," Dr. Grondal told Gay as he jogged along behind her. "Today it's only found in the humid rain-forests of Hawaii."

"In Hawaiian the name *Apeape* means the Flying Away of the Fowls," Gay called over her shoulder.

Deeper and deeper they pushed into the wild, tangled country, too steep for either cattle or cultivation. The ground oozed water, trees and ferns dripped it, secret rills gurgled, gulches and canyons thundered their silvery burdens to the sea. Hot forests steamed and rain squalls marched like ghosts above the huge shoulder of Haleakala. Ravines, thousands of feet deep, gouged out of solid rock, gave evidence of the torrential downpours of centuries.

"I'd like to stop for a bit and prowl," Dr. Grondal said when they had ridden for about an hour.

"Could you please wait until we've crossed Pohakumoa Gulch?" Gay asked. "The forest on the far side of it is even more luxuriant and if we delay too long, we may not be able to cross. It's raining hard up *mauka*." She motioned toward the dark clouds, dragging their undersides on distant blue slopes.

"You're the Captain," Dr. Grondal said.

When they reached Pohakumoa, the river pouring along the bottom of the great gulch was swollen and muddy from cloud-bursts high on Haleakala. Not many yards below the ford they had to cross, the foaming torrent disappeared over a cliff and the roar of water hitting boulders hundreds of feet below filled the day with hollow thunder.

"Wait here, please," Gay directed, riding forward a few yards.

She sat for several minutes, studying a long groove chipped in the face of a sheer rock at the edge of the rushing, noisy water. The mark had been put there in olden times to gauge the volume of the river. If the water reached this mark, it was not safe to cross. The churning flood was still four inches below the danger line.

Riding back, Gay consulted with Davie. Tying the end of his lasso solidly to his pommel, he gave the other end to Gay, who fastened it to her own saddle horn. After a few instructions, he spurred his horse into the

angry water, letting out slack as he went. Gay gathered Happy together and braced back, in case Davie's horse should lose his footing and be swept toward the falls. Dr. Grondal and his party watched tensely.

When the water grew deep, Davie's horse began swimming across the tossing flood, losing a foot sideways every yard, but about a hundred feet above the lip of the falls he gave a violent plunge and scrambled up the far bank. One by one the men and women swam their horses across, with the stout rawhide guarding them from the menace of the cataract, whose threatening voice filled the rocky walls.

When the party began descending the narrow cobblestone path, built for the King Runners before white men came to Hawaii, long, slanting rays of sunlight were filling the valley below with moonstone lights. Checkerboards of taro patches showed and a long, lazy surf was breaking against a black shingle beach, fronting on the sea.

Gay halted at the brow of the green bluff towering above the valley floor. "There's one more tough spot and we'll be there," she said to the doctor and his party. "When we get to the bottom, we have to swim our horses across a narrow, treacherous arm of the sea on a timed wave-count. The secret has been handed down in old Kamanawa's family for generations."

"Lead on, MacDuff!" Dr. Grondal said, his eyes gleaming with anticipation as they swept the lush, jungled growth below. "Our specimen books and notebooks will be bulging from the looks of the country."

When Gay was halfway down the trail, she sent out a clear hail, then waited tensely. "I hope Kamanawa's home," she said. "Sometimes when he's up the valley working in his taro patches, you have to wait hours."

After a minute an answering hail came from below.

"He's there!" she cried joyously, pressing on.

They finally emerged from the overgrown trail onto a small sandspit. Across the tossing arm of blue water a tall Hawaiian, naked except for a scarlet *malo*, waited. His eyes were intently studying the waves running past, up a deep, narrow lagoon paralleling the cliff on the eastern side of the valley.

"*Hele—go!*" he called, signaling with a big brown arm.

Gay plunged in the water and after a few minutes of furious swimming, Happy lunged up the shingle beach, his gray coat flashing like quicksilver in the rays of the sinking sun.

Timing themselves with the waves, by Kamanawa's signals, the rest of the party swam their horses across without mishap and were enthusiastically

greeted by a group of Hawaiians collecting excitedly on the beach.

“This is like the Hawaii you dream about,” Dr. Grondal commented, in a pleased voice. “The friendliness of these natives—” He nodded expressively at the sparkling brown eyes and cordial faces.

“Since the Hawaiian Commercial Sugar Company put in the Ditch,” Gay pointed out, a mighty aqueduct, diminished by distance to a faint cut swinging along the sides of ravines and tunneling through ridges, “very few *haoles*—white people—come into this valley. Before the Ditch was built to take the surplus water from this end of Maui to irrigate the canal-lands, the trail we came by today was the only one around the island. Hawaiians are naturally hospitable and sociable and our stay here will be enjoyed by them while we’re in Honamanu and talked about for months afterward.”

Lusty Hawaiian youths, sumptuous old women, slender girls, robust men and hordes of lustrous-eyed children escorted the party toward a double-decker frame house set in a tangle of gardenias, ginger, hibiscus and plumaria flowers whose fragrance mingled with the clean smell of salt water tumbling up the black pebbled beach.

A majestic woman, who had a flavor of fun wrapped about her, came out onto the wide *lanai* and, seeing Gay, held out her arms.

“Gay, Gay! Swell you and your *aikanes*—friends—come my house. I got a big sorry when I hearing your fine Papa die.”

After a brief tribute of tears to the dead, her eyes sparkled so it seemed as if all the jollity of the world was housed in her two hundred pounds of golden flesh. Although she carried herself imperiously, Aunt Jolly was as unaware of herself as a child and, despite her bulk, she moved with the sure, easy grace of a cat in her voluminous red and white flowered *holoku*. Her heavily-lashed, curiously young eyes poured her love on the world.

After embracing Gay, she waved to the tired riders. “Get down your horse, you fellas. Aunt Jolly happy you come. Us have plenty fun tonight and tomorrow us make a big *luau*.”

Although she had never before seen anyone of the party but Gay, she managed to make every individual feel wrapped in approval and cheer. After greeting each person individually, she shouted a few orders to the Hawaiians chatting with Davie, then led the way into a cool, lofty room.

Vast couches filled two corners, covered with priceless Niihau mats. Tall *kahilis*, standing in great Canton vases, were grouped against one wall, their feathery heads close together, as if they were whispering about joyous passages of bygone days.

“Maile! Pinau!” Aunt Jolly motioned to two of the Hawaiian girls to come in. “Get young coconuts and us all have nice, cool drinks. Now you fellas take off your shoes, make yourselves at home. After us eat supper, us all go swim in the river and the boys make music for us.”

In a little while Gay excused herself and went out to help Davie unsaddle and feed the horses but it was already done. Several fine young Hawaiians were laughing and joking with him as if he were one of them. Gay watched thoughtfully, trying to picture Davie’s childhood on Niihau.

After supper everyone congregated on the wide, grassy bank of the limpid river to swim. Babies, grandmothers, lovers, husbands and wives romped and shrieked together—seemingly all one age—while a young moon sailed above the sheer cliffs, tinting the water with gold. Beyond the hump of the shingle beach a great surf roared dully and, every so often, a long white arm of spray sprang up for an instant, like an envious ghost forbidden by a *tabu* to mingle with human beings.

Davie strummed a guitar between rounds of swimming. Aunt Jolly talked to her uninvited guests, delight radiating from her.

Dr. Grondal was so quiet that Gay wondered if he were enjoying himself. Conscious of her intent gaze, he finally turned around. In spite of his unusual length of limb, he was graceful. His movements were deliberate, as if he possessed endless time to use. However, people felt instinctively that his leisurely manner was not laziness but an immense, untroubled serenity.

“This is all simply incredible,” he remarked to Gay. “Aside from the botanizing I anticipate tomorrow, I wouldn’t have missed coming into this magnificent valley for anything, or missed the privilege of meeting Hawaiians who are uncontaminated by contact with whites.”

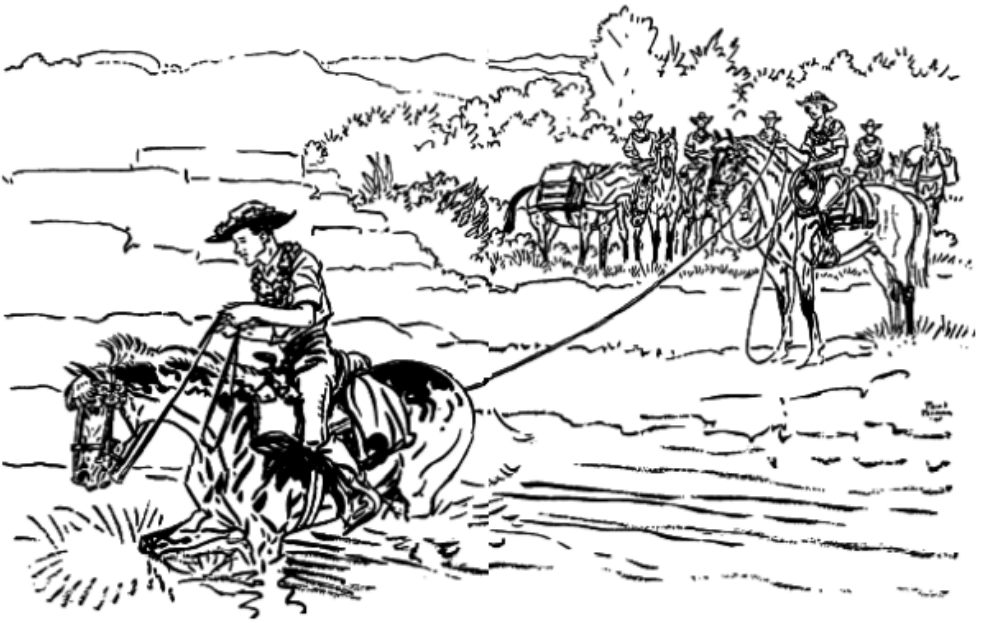
Aunt Jolly turned, her eyes filled with pleasure. “I know from your face you big *Alii* in your own country,” she said. “And I got big happys inside that you liking my valley and my people.”

“Being here with you all, I sense the Polynesia that was before white men came to the Pacific,” Dr. Grondal said in a thoughtful voice. “I wish I knew more about the history of your people.”

“S’pose you like I tell you little somethings,” Aunt Jolly volunteered. “But I can tell better in Hawaiian.” She sighed. “But you not understand, eh?”

Dr. Grondal shook his head in a regretful way.

Davie laid his guitar on the grass and leaned forward. “You talk in Hawaiian, Aunt Jolly, and I’ll translate for the doctor and his friends.”



WHEN THE WATER GREW DEEP, DAVIE'S HORSE BEGAN SWIMMING ACROSS THE TOSsing FLOOD, LOSING A FOOT SIDEWAYS EVERY YARD.

“Swell, *keiki o Kane!*” Aunt Jolly exclaimed, tossing back an armful of hair. “When Kane young fella, before he go to live on Niihau, us have jolly-fun together. I like fine this swell doctor to hear about Hawaiian peoples who live long-time before.”

Pausing, she let her mind drift back into the shrouded past of the Pacific. A long sea broke against the shores of the island with a great sigh. Hawaiians' eyes lighted with anticipation, whites edged closer, expectantly. Aunt Jolly spoke slowly, in majestic Hawaiian, and Davie carefully translated the spaced words coming from her proud, merry mouth.

“No people in ancient or modern times rated beauty higher among life's gifts than did the people who inhabited the star-scattered islands of the tropics,” she began. “They brought the culture of beauty, the rhythm of motion, to unequalled perfection; the adornment of their bodies and the development of natural attractions to a pitch of artistry that struck every early navigator as nothing short of marvelous. In their use of flowers for personal adornment, in their astounding art of pantomime, dancing and storytelling, they showed a delicacy of feeling and understanding of elegance unsurpassed in the records of any nation on earth.”

Her eyes wandered over graceful figures lolling on the cool grass, rested appreciatively on fragrant garlands encircling slim, shapely throats.

“Before whites came we had no words like barter or sell. Everyone, individuals and tribes, shared bumper crops and large catches of fish. Hospitality was not considered the choice of an individual but a sacred obligation of all mankind to all mankind. However humble the stranger might be who paused at your door, you gave him your best—with both hands.”

“As you have done to us,” Dr. Grondal said quietly, his eyes filled with admiration.

Aunt Jolly smiled, then went on talking.

“While Europeans were still creeping cautiously along their coasts, or venturing to sail the Mediterranean only within the threatening Pillars of Hercules, Polynesians in frail canoes were fearlessly making trips between Hawaii and New Zealand. During the daytime they guided themselves by the sun, trend of waves, winds and the flight of sea birds, but for the most part, during long voyages between island groups, the stars were used as guides.

“A youth studying navigation was taught to view the heavens as a cylinder on which were marked the highways of navigation. An invisible line bisected the sky leading from Noholua, the North Star, to Newa, the Southern Cross. The portion east of this line was known as the Bright Road of Kane, that to the west was called the Highway of Kanaloa.”

Leaning forward, she seemed to gaze back into the deep, rich past of her people.

“The Polynesian outposts in the Carolines and Easter Island are nearly nine thousand miles apart, and three thousand, eight hundred miles of water lie between Hawaii and New Zealand. Without chart, compass or sextant, the Vikings of the Pacific explored every island in their vast domain. Even uninhabited islands and atolls give up stone implements or shell fishhooks, proving that they have been visited at some time by the hardy navigators of long ago.”

A strange, moving dignity wrapped the big woman as she slowly made events of the long ago come to life.

“For trans-Pacific voyages, large twin canoes were often used, lashed together and covered by a canopy which shielded voyagers from sun and rain. Such canoes were remarkably seaworthy and could accommodate as many as sixty to eighty people, in addition to water, food, domestic animals and other supplies necessary for a long voyage. Plus that, our people took with them their songs, faith in their hearts and laughter on their lips and—”

her eyes sparkled, “seeds and plants to make the new islands they discovered more beautiful and productive for generations to come.”

A young Hawaiian with eyes as brilliant and liquid as a deer’s, reached out quietly and picked up his guitar. Davie flashed an approving smile at him and he began softly plucking strange, deeply-moving chords from the strings, which seemed to conjure up pictures of people who had lived before—vital brown people who had gone about their business of eating, sleeping, rearing children and recording the history of their achievements, not in written words but in songs and chants welling up from beauty-loving, courageous, joyous hearts. Aunt Jolly glanced toward the young fellow and her look was like the touch of an approving hand.

“The Norsemen about whom I read when I was in school,” she went on, “used oars and turned their backs on their destination. Polynesians used paddles and gazed ahead, watching for new islands while they prayed to the Creator to guide them to an undiscovered island. A steering paddle was used in place of a rudder and was counted so important that Polynesian chants of old-time voyages always gave the name of the canoe, and the steering paddles, as well as that of the hero who discovered a new island.

“Building a big, seaworthy canoe with nothing but stone adzes and chisels was the work of trained craftsmen. Canoes played such a major part in the life of the Islanders that each one was constructed with chants and ceremonies. When the tree was felled, when the wood was shaped, when launching-time came, the entire population assembled for the event. By the time Columbus ventured with his fearful crew across the Atlantic, the great voyages of Polynesia were over and the major island groups had all been discovered and inhabited.”

While Aunt Jolly talked there was a special immortal quality about her. She was the soul of Polynesia, proud, poised, adventurous, drinking deep draughts of life without fear or thought of the consequences. Gay embraced her knees fiercely with her arms and gazed thoughtfully about her.

The deep-cleft valley with its sheer walls swathed in a thousand greens, brimming with moonlight, the slow flow of the river seaward, the grassy bank strewn with shadowy figures, all together brewed some heady magic which made her feel as if she had been transported to the midst of bygone times when the culture of Polynesia was at its height. Here there was no haste, no desperate scrambling to live and eat. Love, peace, kindness, the deep joy of daily doing common tasks, time for play and laughter replaced the tension and stress which robbed people of some vital quality Polynesians possessed when they lived according to the ways of their ancestors.

As though she had guessed Gay's thoughts, Aunt Jolly said in her stately way, "My people are not quite like any other people on earth. We obey God's first command, 'Love ye one another.' Hawaiians do not judge, they understand. We have only one word of salutation, *Aloha*—My love to you. It has been said billions of times down the centuries. It is still the one form of greeting in Hawaii, among people of every race who have come to live in our Islands. Across the seas and in Asia people are constantly fighting. In Hawaii those of the same nationalities work and live peacefully side by side." She gave a soft, gay laugh and re-arranged a white gardenia tucked into the black cloud of her hair.

"You see Dr. Grondal," she relapsed into English, "even when us fellas wear *leis* around our necks, and flowers in our hair, we not wearing *just* flowers, but the kinds of things for which they stand. When one fella give other fella a *lei*, he put love and beauty around his friend. When a womans put a flower above her left ear, it tell to every peoples, 'Hands off, I wear flower over my heart. I love and I am loved.' If—" her eyes danced, "she wear flower over the right ear, it say, 'S'pose you like hands on—okay by me.' And if," her golden laughter spun away, becoming part of the honey-colored moonlight flooding the valley of Hunamanu, "you have two flower, one here and one here" she touched both her ears, "it say, 'I love and I am loved, but might-be I can do better!' Might be all you *haole*-fella," her eyes swept Dr. Grondal's party, "thinking Hawaiian peoples not so dumb. This way, when you go to big *luau* or *haole*-dance, you take one look and no waste time going up blind alleys."

Dr. Grondal threw back his head and shouted with laughter, echoed by his retinue which had listened avidly while Aunt Jolly talked and Davie translated. The young Hawaiian who had been playing muted music that sounded like long-gone people calling softly to each other across time, flashed a command at his comrades who snatched up *ukuleles* and guitars and swung into a rollicking *hula*.

Silence fell, filled with anticipation. Some of the older men went silently away, to return after a few minutes with drums. Girls preened themselves, re-arranging *leis* and tucking flowers tighter into their unbound hair.

Drums began beating behind chanting voices which had slid without a break from the jaunty *hula* into an ancient *mele*. Without haste, chanters and drumbeaters swelled toward a sustained crescendo, which seemed to summon up the life-force in the soil to meet sun and rain. Gradually voices rose as if evoking ancient spirits to come out of sacred fastnesses to which they had retreated. On and on the stately pounding went, like an endless procession of invisible feet, passing majestically through the moon-flooded

valley. Individuals seemed to merge into one solemn push toward some distant goal.

Then, one by one, girls began dancing. The slow undulations of their bodies, the liquid grace of gesturing hands and arms, of deftly, proudly moving feet spoke of wind, water, flowers, hills, trees. The whisper of bare feet against grass, the faint swish of tossed hair was the sound of warm rain falling, the song of hidden streams making their way to the sea, the soft vows of lovers in the dark. Nature in all its majesty was filing past. Behind the men and women chanting, behind the girls dancing like graceful spirits, the drums spoke an older, fiercer tongue, summoning ancient withdrawn forces to return to the earth.

Then, gradually, the drumbeat slowed down, dancers began retreating into the underbrush, like spirits withdrawing into invisible citadels from which they had emerged to counsel mortals for a while. A mighty, forward-flowing tide washed about the valley. Past, present and future merged into an intricate design woven into the pattern of the whole.

Silence lay its hand gently on the green, throbbing earth. Davie looked upward, then softly quoted the words of an old Hawaiian poet.

*“Ua maomao ka lani, ua kahaea luna,
Ua pipi ka maka oka hoku.”*

(The heavens are fair, stretching above,
Kind are the eyes of the stars.)

“Praises be!” Dr. Grondal said under his breath. “Four days of this, four days in Paradise ahead! It’s worth a cold million—in any language!” He looked at Gay. “I’ll never forget you, Gay Storm. You led us here.” He transferred his attention back to Aunt Jolly. “And I’ll never forget you, who give us Paradise with both hands, from the depths of your heart.”

Aunt Jolly smiled as only Hawaiians can. “I not giving any-kind to you. It just come up. Might-be after you stop in my valley for few days, you find out that—”

“Mankind has much to learn from Hawaii!” Dr. Grondal broke in.

“Yes,” she agreed, simply.

Big, serene, noble, she sat with the wealth of her memories wrapped about her. Laughter, zest for living, love for her fellow men safeguarded her from ever being lonely, or ever growing old. Her heart was as richly full as autumn—when the harvest has been safely gathered in.



CHAPTER XVII

END OF THE RAINBOW

“My bones feel weak and full of cold water,” Cherry said in taut tones as she and Gay and Uncle Bellowing joggled along the tree-shaded avenue leading to Sam’s house.

The air sparkled and was buoyant with sunshine and wind. Fox terriers scampered ahead, investigating tree trunks, sniffing at stone walls for lurking mongoose which menaced the feathered wild life of hills and pastures. But the day seemed like an enormous blue and green bowl, holding nothing.

“Don’t relish the prospect of being with you brats if Sam turns down your proposition,” Uncle Bellowing rumbled. “You’ll be about as cheery as a couple of crows.”

Shifting his bulk in the saddle, he mopped his beet-red face.

“The summer was enough to drive a fellow to drink. People. Trips. Uproar. The fall’s been almost as bad. Now, in two weeks it’ll be Christmas. If Sam agrees to you buying *Wanaao*, it’ll be swell. If he doesn’t, the holidays will be about as gay as a dirge.”

Gay stared ahead, struggling to control the dull thudding of her heart. She tried to project her mind back to the green valley of Honamanu, to regain the deep peace cradled between its towering walls tapestried with vegetation. The five days she had spent there shone with undimmed lustre in her memory, recharging her body with strength when it flagged, pouring peace into her soul and courage into her heart.

“Cherry and I are like those old Hawaiians setting out on a voyage which will land us—we don’t know where,” Gay thought. “They weren’t

afraid when they pushed their tiny canoes into the vast Pacific, leaving everything they'd ever known behind them. They *knew*, they had faith that they'd find other islands hidden from view by the blue curve of the earth."

She glanced at her sister. Cherry's face had a dogged expression on it, as if she were wrestling to keep her emotions under control.

"Not owning something you love, as we love *Wanaao*," Cherry said into the air, "is as bad as falling in love with a horse somebody else owns, which you aren't sure you can buy. First chills go over me. Next minute my skin's burning and everything inside me is boiling around. Pray hard for us, Uncle Bellowing, while Gay talks to Sam."

"I'm not very good at that," Uncle Bellowing shouted, but his eyes were full of concern.

Gay and Cherry were approaching the second major crisis of their lives. Whether Sam agreed to sell *Wanaao* to them or refused to, one era was ending, and a new one would commence. The fact lent solemnity to the sound of the horses' hoofs and of the wind sliding through treetops. Ends, and beginnings, are awesome affairs. . . .

The three rode on in silence. Shadows sunk in gulches on Haleakala seemed to brood over weighty matters. Clouds lifted impersonal heads into the sky.

They finally rode into the quadrangle behind Sam's big, luxurious house. Dismounting, they tied their horses to the long hitching rail. Gardens dreamed, a blue swimming pool shimmered in the sun. Wealth and security breathed from everything.

"It must be strange and wonderful," Gay said, her eyes deep and thoughtful, "to know all your days are safeguarded, never to have to wonder, and never to be afraid. Here we are, hardly able to breathe, wondering which way our road will go from here."

"We'll know in a few minutes," Cherry said.

"Kids," Uncle Bellowing said in his big, blustering way, "get this into your noddles." He glared at them. "If Sam refuses to sell, you'll feel as if the main prop of your lives has been cut from under you—that life has come to a full stop."

"Yes," Cherry said, in a small, dry voice.

"Life never stops—*only people do!*" Uncle Bellowing roared. "While your dad lived, you sang a fine song. When he died, that song stopped. Since his death, you've sung a new song that has been mighty splendid. I'm banking on you, however this turns out, to make your new life as rich as what has been. Life's worth living—no matter what! Don't take-off on the

wrong foot if things don't turn out the way you want them to. Don't look back and bleat for the 'good old days.' ” He gave a terrific snort. “If you jam all you can into each new day as it comes, after a bit you'll find out *they'll* become, in time, the 'good old days' of the future. In the meanwhile, keep your chins up, grin if it kills you and the world can never lick you.”

He mopped his scarlet face.

“I sound like a parson,” he roared. “But I'm giving you the goods. Straight. If you pin happiness only on things you can feel and see, you'll be left holding the sack—if those things are taken from you. Your fine dad never *owned* the things he worked with,” he brandished his arm at the mountain, at the shimmering pastures dotted with grazing herds, at the trees crowning hilltops, “but he put all he had into living, so his life was a success. Do you figure if he was in your boots and things didn't break as he'd hoped they would, that he'd go about yowling and ranting?”

“Of course not,” the girls said.

“Okay.” His heavy hands fell on Gay's and Cherry's tense shoulders. “If you can't buy *Wanaao*, there'll be a few bad wrenches pulling up stakes. That's part of growth. But don't look backward at things you *have* had, keep your eyes on the trail ahead, as a good horse does. If he kept looking back, he might stumble and fall over a cliff instead of getting to his destination.”

“Thanks, Uncle Bellowing. We needed a good jerking up,” Gay said.

They started along a winding walk flanked with flowers, that led to the Ranch Office. Like all Island ranches, the office was not just a place where bookkeeping was done and men were paid their wages. It was a place where plans were made for the future and mistakes of the past were corrected. The door was open, the rancher seated at his desk. Hearing steps, he turned.

“I wonder if Sam suspects why we want to see him?” Gay said, under her breath.

“Possibly,” Uncle Bellowing muttered.

After greetings had been exchanged, the rancher asked.

“What do you want to see me about?”

His remote manner did not dilute his friendliness, and the quiet *Aloha* he had ready for the trio still filled the room unobtrusively. Gay laced her fingers together so tightly they ached. Taking a deep, steadying breath, she looked into his eyes.

“There's no sense in beating about the bush,” she said, swallowing. “We've come to ask if you would consider selling *Wanaao* to us.”

Her eyes did not swerve from his face but she was aware of everything about her. Shelves of books on the breeding, raising and training of animals. Rows of medicines for man and beast. Volumes about grasses and trees. Branding irons hanging against one wall. A big iron safe. Once all these objects had been in a room off their father's bedroom, when *Wanaao* had been the heart of the ranch. The words Uncle Bellowing had said still rang in her ears. "Your fine dad never *owned* the things he worked with, but he put all he had into living, so his life was a success."

She tried to keep that thought uppermost in her mind while emotions churned inside her. "On this moment our future hangs," she thought. "When Sam speaks, we'll know if we'll have to leave behind all the things we've loved since we were little—our home, the gardens we've made beautiful, and all the memories tangled into them. . . ."

A fly buzzed frantically against a windowpane, trying to regain its lost freedom. Sam's face was a mixture of emotions—surprise, concern, distress, perplexity. Gay felt as if she were getting smaller and smaller and farther and farther away.

"I know, in Hawaii, it isn't usual to sell bits of big estates to people who aren't in the family," she finally said, when the rancher did not speak. "If you don't want to part with *Wanaao*, Cherry and I will understand. You've been wonderful to our family—all the way." Her voice died in her throat.

"You know, of course, what the place is valued at," Sam said, "and I conclude you have the price or you wouldn't be here."

"We have the price and two thousand dollars over," Gay answered in a voice just above a whisper.

Her eyes went to the open door leading into the quadrangle, framing a vista of Haleakala, tawny blue in the late afternoon sunshine.

"*Wanaao* is filled with the flavor of your family," Sam said in a slow, thoughtful voice. "I simply can't picture anyone else living in that house. If I sent you away from it, I'd feel—haunted." He gave a boylike grin. "You've earned your right to it and I'm happy to be the one to give you a reward that's justly yours!"

"Oh, *Sam*!" Cherry's voice skidded up an octave. "Say it again!"

"*Wanaao* is yours—for ten thousand dollars." His voice rang out, sending the words echoing into the wonderful years stretching ahead.

"Oh, *Gay*!" Cherry wheeled. "I feel *pupule*, I'm so happy!" Then she made a wild rush at the rancher and hugged him.

He looked pleased and abashed. Happy tears streamed from Gay's eyes. Uncle Bellowing blew his nose resoundingly.

“Don’t tell anyone, Sam,” Cherry begged, “ ’till the deed’s signed and everything’s *pau*. Do you think things can be fixed up—before Christmas?”

“Easily.”

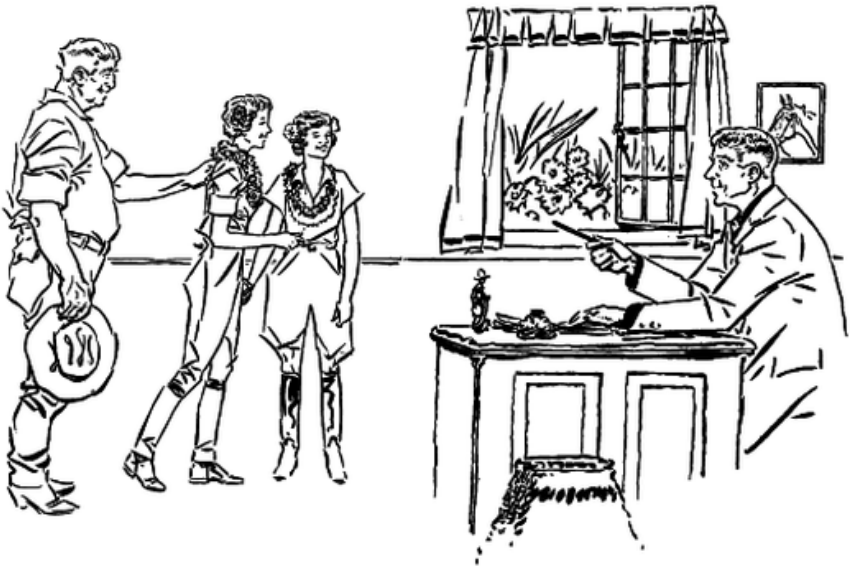
“Oh, Sam! Oh Gay! Something is singing inside me. It feels, almost, as if Dad were back with us. God will bless you forever, Sam.”

He wriggled his eyebrows and smiled his shy, friendly smile.

“My main satisfaction will be in knowing that you girls are set for life. Haleakala will always be there, people will always be coming to see the crater. Now Schultz and Yarrow have pulled out of the guiding business, the whole field is yours to reap. In time you’ll have to expand—progress will demand it.”

“I don’t even want to think farther ahead than Christmas,” Cherry chanted. “We’ll have a real one this year. You’re the first guest on our list, Sam. Gay, let’s invite *everyone*! When the tree is empty of presents and all the *hulas* danced and songs sung, we can spring our beautiful, wonderful news to end the evening with a flourish.”

“This is mighty white of you, Sam,” Uncle Bellowing shouted, wringing the rancher’s slim, tanned hand in his huge one. “Now my girls’ future is secure—”



“YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, WHAT THE PLACE IS VALUED AT,” SAM SAID, “AND I CONCLUDE YOU HAVE THE PRICE—”

"I feel like a bubble!" Gay cried. "Now we can have old Ah Sam back, and Naka and Suma. Let's ring up Ah Sam tomorrow. He has been in an evil temper for a year because we wouldn't take him back, even for the summer rush, when we were making such big money. But we wouldn't expand till we had the price of *Wanaao* in the bank. Think, Cherry," she turned happily to her sister, "we won't have to wrestle with cooking any more, or milk the cows, or mow the lawn. Even when we're going top pitch, it'll seem easy with our dear servants back."

The two men watched the two girls. In their faces were tangled memories of endless effort, of unceasing driving for one goal, now, safely achieved. It made their faces beautiful and invested their persons with an almost tangible radiance.

"When the deed is drawn up and ready to sign, I'll call you," the rancher said. "It won't take more than two or three days."

"Gosh, all the back-breaks and heartaches we've had seem like nothing," Gay almost sang. "I wouldn't have missed one of them, for they all led up to —*now!* To this glorious moment!" She came to a stop, as if she could not hold all the joy surging through her.

"It still doesn't seem really real that *Wanaao* is ours," Cherry said in awed tones.

"Well, it is." Sam smiled. "Go ahead and plan your Christmas party." His eyes twinkled. "This news will knock the Clan stem-winding, as you kids express it. And I guess," he grinned at Uncle Bellowing, "your chaperoning job will continue till the girls marry."

"Yep. Don't have to barge about hunting excitement when you've put your grappling hooks into the kids' ship." Uncle Bellowing shook with huge laughter.

"Sam, can we ask the *paniolos* and their families to the tree as we used to when Daddy was alive?"

"They'd be sunk if they weren't in on the celebration."

"Won't the Clan be eaten up with curiosity when they get invitations to spent Christmas Eve with us after they've given us such a wide berth for so long?" Cherry giggled.

"They'll come out of sheer curiosity," Uncle Bellowing announced. "It'll be quite a moment for the Black Sheep and his Ewe-lets when we explode the bomb that we're among the *landed gentry*." He shook with laughter. "Better ask Gren, too," he advised, looking wisely at the girls.

"Gren?" Gay gasped.

“Mom’d be up in arms if she wasn’t invited, even if she can’t come.”

“We’ll have everyone—Pili and Nakamura and the other rent chauffeurs who’ve carried bags for us and driven our parties to the ranch when they were too many for us to handle,” Gay cried. “Oh, there *are* fairies, and there *is* a Santa Claus!”

“Seems like it,” Cherry agreed blithely. “Even Honor’s fixed up and all set, now she’s landed that swell job as Secretary for the Maui Chamber of Commerce. When I saw her two days ago, she looked like a Christmas tree with all its candles lighted.”

“It looks to me,” Sam said, with quiet satisfaction, “as if—” He paused and quoted from Browning:

“God’s in His heaven,
All’s right with the world!”

“Amen,” Gay said softly.

“I can hardly wait to tell Naps and Davie our great news!” Cherry cried. “Or to start preparations for an old-time ranch Christmas!”



CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTMAS

IT seemed as if earth, water and air conspired to help to make that Christmas the most memorable of Gay's and Cherry's lives. Days came so beautiful that they seemed holy. Mountains looked stronger and more saturated with mystery. Periods of slashing silver rain lent added excitement, alternating with days of dazzling sunshine that filled the air with an electric quality. Four days before Christmas a *kona* storm roared up from the equator, convulsing land and sea for forty-eight hours. First came a louder note in the surf, followed by a shouting hurricane which climaxed in clouds black with thunder and heavy with savage rain. When the atmospheric convulsion was over, Haleakala was covered with a glittering cape of snow, in contrast to the sun-soaked, palm-fringed beaches at its feet.

For a week previously, *Wanaao* and, in fact, the entire ranch had taken on a heightened and expanded tempo of living. The usual work of herds and pastures was carried on but the *paniolos* substituted for each other so that all could share in the fun which was underway.

The Japanese busied themselves concocting *moochi*, a species of rice cake made only at that time of year. Gay and Cherry, busy with their own preparations, managed to make time to watch them working around hollowed out tree trunks, beating rice grains to powder fineness with great flails. While the men threshed and pounded, the women worked soybeans into a black, smooth paste, mixed the rice powder with water and patted it into pale, round cakes. Then in the middle of each one they inserted a wad of dark paste, slightly sweet and slightly salt. When this was covered over, the cakes were laid in layers in great tin tubs and set away until Christmas, when they would be heated in the oven and puff into great round balls.

In the Portuguese section of the ranch “camp,” old *Marias* were pounding mountains of dough into which they broke dozens of eggs, while younger, less expert women stoked white, cone-shaped ovens behind their houses until they reached the proper heat to bake the yard-wide cakes.

In the Hawaiian quarter, good-natured Hawaiian *wahines*, seated cross-legged on the grass, kneaded baked sweet potato and coconut into monstrous puddings of *kulolo*. Others concocted *haupia*, made from starch and grated coconut cream.

Enticing smells filled the air. Spurred men rode in and out with the plunder of forests and sea. Gunny sacks sprouting *maile* vines or *palapalai* fern were dumped off packhorses’ backs, to be twisted into fragrant *leis* for everyone to wear. The muted, continuous throbbing of guitars and *ukuleles*, voices singing the old, loved songs of Hawaii supplied a backdrop of music for nights and days.

Once more the gardens of *Wanaao* throbbed to old-time activities which had ended when the girls’ father died. To Gay and Cherry it seemed as if they had miraculously been transported back to the boundless life of their childhood. Plus that, they had their own achievements to add wealth to living. They, too, had contributed a verse to the Song of Hawaii. Knowing this made everything take on an added depth. . . .

Two days before Christmas, it being a week-end, Naps and Davie came to spend the night. The next morning, the four young people and Uncle Bellowing set off at daybreak for a carefully guarded grove of sandalwood trees which had been overlooked by the men who robbed the Hawaiian forests of the precious, fragrant wood in the early 1800’s. The girls’ father had protected the growth from cattle, and logs for the Christmas Eve fire were only cut from fallen trees.

When the section had been cut, it was placed across the V’s of the packsaddle and draped with *leis*, which had been made the night before. Then the five started down the mountain, singing the stirring *hula Kilokilo o Haleakala*. When they rode into *Wanaao* with their trophy the Yule season was formally underway.

“I simply can’t believe it’s us!” Cherry exclaimed the next morning as she moved happily about the living room. “I don’t want to miss a minute of this day but can hardly wait for evening. Christmas Eve.” Her voice curved lovingly around the word, “The Birthday of all birthdays for the world.”

Uncle Bellowing puffed and blew like a whale from climbing up and down the stepladder, arranging ornaments on the tree. Hawaiians, Japanese, Portuguese and Chinese began arriving with gifts to add to those already

stacked for yards about the base of the tree—lengths of black Portuguese sausage like policemen's clubs, monster loaves of egg-bread, bundles of *kulolu* tied in brown paper and decorated with flowers.

Hawaiian girls came with *leis* they had been weaving for the past twenty-four hours—*leis* for each member of the family, for expected guests, and special red carnation *leis*, like fluffy feather boas, to hang on the tree, giving the already heady Christmas smell filling the house its final tang.

"It looks simply magnificent!" Naps exclaimed when he and Davie arrived.

"Doesn't it?" the girls agreed. "Ah Sam is positively glowing, he's so pleased. Naka's as smug as if he owned the world, and Suma and Hana trot about as though the whole machinery of life is their responsibility." Gay laughed. "They're all simply gloating because not a person has refused an invitation."

"Didn't I tell you it would be that way?" Uncle Bellowing challenged. "The Clan's consumed with curiosity to know what the celebration's all about."

Ah Sam slid through the door and critically surveyed the big room. "I tink evely peoples velly, velly surprlise when they see all-kind." He beamed at the tree and the decorations. "Nobody can make laugh on you girls any more. I got velly fine feeling inside." Then he vanished back into the kitchen.

"It's exciting and solemn in one," Gay said over her shoulder, as she arranged red hibiscus among the silver racing trophies on the mantel. Her eyes went to her father's picture, lavishly encircled with *leis* of maroon carnations, which had been his favorite flower to wear.

As the afternoon waned, wonderful odors began drifting from the kitchen—plum puddings boiling rowdily, turkeys and pheasants roasting. Naps helped Cherry set the dinner table. Davie strummed his guitar, his eyes dreamily happy. Out in the garden other guitars and *ukuleles* sent soft music to meet his. All the joy, excitement and loveliness of the universe seemed centered in the old house. Distant islands, green cane fields, deep-grassed pastures seemed to inch closer, as if *Wanaao* were a magnetized spot drawing the rest of the earth toward it.

"The table's perfect!" Cherry gloated, as her eyes went slowly over it, appreciating the fine damask, heavy silver candelabra and red hibiscus blossoms floating like great ruffly butterflies from the ends of slender, amber-colored fern fronds, stripped of their green leaves. At each little

breeze that came through the wide-open doors, the flowers swayed and moved as if they were hovering and swarming together.

Gay and Hana came in, their arms heaped with *leis*, and began hanging them on the backs of the chairs, for the guests to put on when they sat down.

"I wish Gren could see *Wanaao* tonight," Gay mourned. "It seems impossible that she has never been here. I'm glad we decided to share our great news with her. She'll have fun picturing the Clan's reactions when we spring *our* Big Event!"

"I'd give a lot to meet the Grenadier," Davie said.

"She's epic," Naps declared. "It tickles me purple the way she has kept the whole Storm Clan on tenterhooks and dancing attendance on her—by staying in bed forty years!"

Gay went out onto the *lanai* and gazed happily about the gardens. Hawaiians were putting finishing touches of flowers on long, low tables covered with ferns, Chinese and Japanese hurried around, congenially assisting with other tasks.

Loose-coupled Hawaiian women, in flowing *holokus*, with *leis* around their necks, supervised operations, moving about with the stateliness of heavily-laden ships. Elderly Hawaiian men with grizzled hair and noble faces exchanged rib-nudging jokes. Young men, lounging over guitars, supplied music. Young girls uttered cascades of silvery giggles. Children shouted and played tag, their legs looking mischievous and gay. Old Portuguese *Marias*, with shawl-draped heads, gossiped together. Japanese Mama-sans hoisted wee sons or daughters, strapped to their backs, into more comfortable positions. Scrubbed Japanese Papa-sans held their first-born sons proudly by the hand. Chinese had quiet fun.

"What are you doing, Gay?" Davie called.

"Thinking."

Setting down his guitar, he went out.

"I know your thoughts are happy ones, Gay, from the look on your face."

"They are, Davie," she said softly. "It's beautiful, seeing all those people having a good time together. After they've had their *luau* and we've had Christmas dinner, we'll all gather around the tree like one big family made up of all nations."

The blue of Davie's eyes seemed to darken with feeling. "I've never been away from the Islands, Gay, as you have, but deep in my heart I know people, and life, in Hawaii are like what God intended them to be when He created the world."

“We look like—five other people!” Gay cried as her eyes swept the small group by the fire. In a dark suit, Uncle Bellowing’s sunburned face appeared redder than ever and his hands bigger and rougher, but a *lei* of crimson carnations encircled his throat and a matching blossom sat roguishly above his right ear. He suggested a merry, paunchy Santa who had gone thoroughly to the dogs and relished every step of the way.

Naps and Davie lounged against the mantel on each side of the rustling fire, which filled the vast room with the incense of sandalwood. Their white flannels and white silk shirts were dramatized by scarlet cummerbunds wound about their lean waists, and *leis* of scarlet roses hung round their necks.

“You both look completely dazzling,” Gay informed them with a smile.

“And feel it,” Naps announced blithely.

A glow of pride went through Gay as she looked at Cherry. In pale, frosty blue satin, with garlands of faintly-pink *frangipani* about her throat and three of the five-pointed, starlike blossoms nestling above her left ear, she appeared an entirely different person from the gallant young guide in blue denim. Her hair shone, her skin was fresh and fragrant. She looked as if she didn’t know the meaning of hard work. But behind the sleek outer person lurked the drive, courage, and steadfastness of purpose which had enabled her, despite her scant years, to survive the grueling trips which had carried her to the goal she had kept enshrined in her heart—to own *Wanaao*.

“Beautiful,” Gay thought, “knowing we have earned the place we loved, instead of having it handed to us on a platter. It was bought with back-breaks and heartaches, ceaseless effort—and was worth it.”

Her eyes wandered slowly and appreciatively over the room which, more than ever this Christmas Eve, had a flavor of her father. In a far corner, the tree, glittering with ornaments, piled for yards around its base with gifts, held up its candles, waiting for the moment when they would be lighted. The red carnation wreaths draped among its green boughs added their spicy fragrance to the clean, strong scent of pine. Lamps spilled soft circles of light on polished tables. Floral pieces, placed beneath splendid oil paintings, added more magic.

In the room beyond, the dinner table seemed impatient for guests to be seated at it. Every so often Ah Sam popped his head through the door, satisfaction oozing from every pore. Suma and Hana, in colorful *kimonos*, flitted about, adding finishing touches. Naka, in a starched white suit, stood by the door opening on the patio, to usher in the guests.

“Gay, you look like an angel, all lighted up inside,” Davie said.

His eyes approved her white taffeta, finished by a fluffy white carnation lei that drifted faint clouds of perfume about her.

“I didn’t realize, till I was putting on my newly purchased finery, that Cherry and I haven’t had time to get really dressed up for eighteen months.” Gay laughed.

“Well, you brats haven’t lost the art,” Uncle Bellowing thundered.

“The Clan’s Ugly Ducklings have turned into *our* Swans,” Naps announced, his dark eyes shining with excitement.

“Number One car come,” Naka announced from his post. Importance poured from his angular figure. “Now you keep sharp watch. I make butler-style!”

“The old rascal’s gloating at the reactions of the Clan to all this splendor.” Gay giggled.

A long car pulled in and came to a stop.

“Uncle Archie—” Gay guessed.

“Bet it’s Aunt Charity,” Cherry asserted.

They moved toward the door. Two figures came out of the dark into the light spilling from the windows flanking the patio.

“Not so fast, Hiro, you lout!” a terrific voice boomed.

“It’s—*Gren!*” Cherry gasped.

“She would be in on the kill!” Uncle Bellowing shouted in a gleeful tone and charged forward to meet his mother, the girls, Naps and Davie at his heels.

“Out of my way!” the old lady roared, brandishing her cane belligerently. “Hiro can handle me. I don’t intend to be pulled to bits by a pack of young fools. Remember—I’m ninety!”

“And so onery, Mom, you’ll probably live to be a hundred and twenty, simply to infuriate everyone who expects to be remembered in a big way when you move on.” Uncle Bellowing shook with laughter.

“Exactly,” Gren said, her sharp old eyes twinkling.

“It’s dear—*wonderful* of you to come—” Gay began, her voice shaky with excitement.

“Wonderful nothing! I came to enjoy the Clan’s consternation when they learn you’ve bought *Wanaao*. Not so fast, Hiro, you oaf. My legs feel about as substantial as wet macaroni.”

"It's a wonder they'll work at all, after having been idle forty years," Uncle Bellowing announced.

The Grenadier waved him aside with her cane. She eyed the girls, then the two boys. "You all look extremely creditable," she said, in a satisfied way. "Naps, you're practically a young man. . . . Who's this?" she poked Davie's leg with her cane.

Naps introduced him.

"Young man, if your disposition is as fiery as your hair, heaven help the woman who marries you."

Davie flashed his friendly smile at her. The Grenadier added him up with her wise old eyes, then a slow smile deepened the myriads of wrinkles time had etched on her face.

"I don't know who you are, or give a hoot what you have. You've got what millions of people would give their eyeteeth for. Magnetism. Charm. Good looks. You remind me of a perfectly schooled thoroughbred going onto a track for a big race, knowing he can, and will—win!"

Davie grinned, but slow red burned up to the roots of his hair. "You're a flatterer," he protested.

"Never flattered anyone in my life," the Grenadier shouted. "Take my other arm, Davie. Now, Hiro, hold me tighter. Gay—or Cherry—pull a chair up to the fire."

When Davie and Hiro had safely settled her in a deep chair, she surveyed the living room silently, then remarked in her staggering voice. "This is the first time since I was a child that I've felt the real thing . . . Christmas!" Her old eyes narrowed as though reviewing the long span of her years. Then she muttered, "It's incredible. Christmas is here. For over seventy years I've abominated December the twenty-fifth. Just gifts and food. But that extra tingling something is in this house. I came early—" the Grenadier began.

"To steal the show," Uncle Bellowing accused, grinning delightedly.

The Grenadier gave him a resounding whack with her cane and a strange gaiety suddenly sprang into the atmosphere, a gaiety which had not been in the house for two years. Life seemed to shake itself and bound exultantly forward. The past, which once had been the present, returned, with remembered beauties. The present, which would one day be more of the past, seemed to offer its gifts to the future.

Some mysterious fire poured from the aged woman which even ninety years could not dim. Energy of spirit flowed from her in widening circles, electrifying everything.

“Fetch me a spot of sherry, Ben,” she ordered.

“Better make it rum, Mom,” he suggested.

“Ladies don’t drink rum! I want sherry to fortify me before those cabbages and turnips come in, dragging dullness in their wake.” She made a pass at Uncle Bellowing with her cane, and he shambled off toward the kitchen.

“Don’t either of you boys play?” She waved at the guitars and *ukuleles* stacked in a corner.

“I do,” Davie said.

“You would.” The old lady grinned. “Get busy.”

Uncle Bellowing returned with a thimble-full of sherry, which the Grenadier waved about, keeping time to Davie’s music.

“I haven’t had such a good time since you ran away to sea, Ben. What a to-do that raised on Maui!”

“What I can’t make out,” Naps said, watching her spellbound, “is how anyone who’s so frightfully alive as you are could have stayed in bed forty years!”

“I was bored to extinction with the complete stuffiness of my offspring,” the Grenadier retorted. “By taking to bed, I kept them on tenterhooks. At heart I’m a wicked old woman. I quarreled with Guy, whom I loved, and with you, Ben, who at least had a will of your own. I’ve pushed everyone I know around mentally—just to stir up some sort of excitement. Now, thanks to you two girls, I’ve had all the excitement I’ve wanted for the past year and a half. You’ve cornered the spotlight and kept it without ever thinking about it. You’ve had top-billing in every Island paper—which slays the rest of the Clan. It’s good for ’em. I used to think you should have been fenced in, tearing all over Haleakala like boys. Now, I’d like to preserve you as models—for posterity!”

“Nodder car come up hill,” Naka announced importantly from his post at the door.

“Bring on your dogs!” the Grenadier shouted. “This is the first round of what promises to be a ten-ring circus.” And she settled herself in a satisfied way, while the yellow diamonds draped over her ancient person blazed like the eyes of ambushed wild animals.



CHAPTER XIX

CHANGE OF HEART

“WELL, aren’t we—splendid!” Honor exclaimed, as she and her mother came through the door on the heels of more important members of the Clan. Her eyes swept the room with seeming approval but behind her pupils a strange, glittering sort of triumph stalked. Then she saw the tiny figure seated by the fire. Her face became a mixture of emotions as violent, and as stunned, as if Haleakala, after hundreds of years of inactivity, had gone into full eruption without warning.

“Gren!” her voice slid up an octave and even her enchanting topknot of curls looked outraged.

The Clan, resplendent in evening attire, froze to the floor. Uncle Bellowing towered up behind the Grenadier’s chair, his eyes filled with impish glee.

“Yes, Mom decided to cut out the invalidism and be in on the fun,” he announced. “She knows why the girls are letta-going-their blouses this Christmas.” And he brandished an expansive arm at the glowing room.

Naka, his slant eyes filled with quiet triumph, waited in the background to lead the men guests to the bedroom assigned to them. Luke’s and Ben’s big, stupid faces went completely blank.

“Mother, this is perfectly astounding,” Uncle Archibald said in stiff, shocked tones.

“Isn’t it?” the Grenadier agreed.

“But, Mother—” Aunt Laura’s voice trembled with tears. “You shouldn’t have done this! Won’t it—”

“Do me up?” the Grenadier asked. “If it does, it’ll be worth it.”

“This is utter insanity.” Aunt Charity was fairly bristling inside her costly gown of draped black lace. “At your age—”

“My age is my own business.” The Grenadier pounded the floor with her cane. “I’m ninety years young—tonight.”

“But you haven’t used your legs for forty years!” Aunt Laura said shakily.

The Grenadier calmly contemplated the shocked group, then drew up her lower eyelids, like a meditative fowl, and announced in her appalling voice, “Maybe.”

“You mean,” Uncle Archibald fairly shouted, his face livid and distorted by the thoughts tearing through his mind, “that you got up and exercised them at night when no one was around? You mean being bedridden was just a hoax?”

“An act, a stunt, to be more up to date.” The Grenadier grinned.

“Mother!” Aunt Charity cried in shrill tones.

“I was completely bored with the lot of you. Am still, for that matter. None of you have ever provided me with even a smidgin of excitement. There was nothing to be about for. Now, there is.” She brandished her cane at Gay and Cherry, waiting with hands tightly clasped for the tornado to subside so they could welcome their guests.

Uncle Archibald and Aunt Charity stared at the Grenadier with eyes of steel. Honor’s face, above her yellow satin gown, was still a battleground of emotions. Her mother smiled an odd little smile that lent a quick beauty to her face, taut with twenty-two years of making a scanty living which she had stretched to give her daughter a chance to move in the circles which she craved. The lines in her small, angular face, which once had been so fresh and lovely, were not bitter ones, they were, rather—and the gray streaking her hair—service stripes of gallant living.

“I think it’s perfectly splendid that you’re here, Mother,” she said in a light, cultured voice.

“Dern tootin’,” Uncle Bellowing agreed in resounding tones.

There was a charged silence, then Gay and Cherry came forward.

“*Aloha*—Merry Christmas!” they cried, their faces radiant from overflowing happiness within. “Naka will show you where to leave your hats and coats.” They motioned to the men.

“We’ll take you to our rooms,” Gay said, linking her arm in Aunt Lidy’s.

“Naps, watch for Sam and his brother and anyone else who may come,” Cherry called over her shoulder.

“May I ask what is the occasion, aside from Christmas, for this splurge?” Aunt Charity inquired as she laid her sequin wrap across the foot of the great four-poster bed that loomed up like an island in Gay’s room.

She eyed her nieces with cold suspicion.

“You’ll all find out why we’re celebrating in such a big way—after the present-giving is over and the singing and dancing,” Cherry said, imparts sparkling in her eyes.

Honor watched her cousins in a strange, calculating way, as if her mind were adding up assets and liabilities.

“I must say you’ve improved the place immensely since last summer when I stayed with you,” she said, her eyes sliding over the new drapes and fresh Chinese matting tacked to the floor.

“We felt we could do so without digging too deeply into our earnings,” Gay remarked. “Would you like to take a peep at the rooms we rent?” she asked her aunts.

“Of course,” Aunt Charity snapped. “Come Laura, Honor, Lidy.” She seemed to sweep them into her wake. “It’s quite remarkable that you girls have done so well.”

“Why is it remarkable?” Cherry asked. “We’ve worked like plantation mules.”

“Hawaii is proud of you both,” Honor’s mother said gently. “We all are.”

“Oh, Aunt Lidy, that’s dear of you!” Gay cried, as she enjoyed the unaccustomed rustling of her long white taffeta dress.

With natural pride, the girls displayed the set of guest rooms—rooms that had a flavor unlike the stereotyped affairs which conform with conventional sleeping quarters. Each boasted a *puune* equipped with comfortable mattress and springs, piled with gay pillows and covered with finely woven, cool, *lauhala* mats. Instead of carpets on the floor, they were covered with sturdier mats that pulled the whole together in a satisfying way. Bamboo furniture, and bamboo dressers, adorned with bowls of flowers, lent a cool, casual atmosphere, redolent of the tropics.

“I must say you’ve displayed excellent taste,” Honor said. “This is exactly the sort of thing mainlanders want and seldom find in the Islands.”

“With travel increasing and Schultz and Yarrow out of guiding, you should expand, build cottages and do things in a really big way,” Honor’s

mother advised gently.

“We may have to, eventually,” Gay said.

When the tour finally ended and they returned to the living room, the rest of the guests had arrived. Sam, looking quietly pleased, stood with his brother, who was an older replica of him. Naps’ parents, folks of the same vintage and type as Uncle Archibald and Aunt Charity, stood with the group about the Grenadier. Naka, bristling with importance in his starched whites, brought in canapes, tomato juice and sherry. The fire sent out its fragrance, the silver racing trophies gleamed on the mantel. From the garden came sounds of merriment.

“Dinner ledly,” Ah Sam announced, popping his head through the swinging door.

“Fine, Ah Sam,” Gay said.

Hana and Suma slid in and lighted the branched candelabra on the table. Everyone was finally seated, *leis* were donned, and dinner got underway. The room was filled with a sort of singing happiness which even ponderous utterances could not dim.

Every so often Gay and Cherry glanced out the open doors into the velvety darkness. At last the moment they loved beyond everything came. There was the sound of horses’ hoofs, men’s joyous voices singing *Kilokilo o Haleakala*, while big guitars clasped to mighty chests blended in a joyful symphony of sound that seemed to well up from the depths of the earth. The ranch *paniols*, mounted on their best horses and decked with *leis*, had come to serenade the family in the old way, singing the *hula*, telling of their love and allegiance to the volcano on which they all lived, and to the island of Maui.

Gay and Cherry ran out to welcome them, their eyes spilling over with the unashamed tears of Islanders, moved to the depths of their beings. “*Aloha*—our love to you! Merry Christmas!” they called.

The *paniols* finished the verse they were singing and answered with the same words. Then, dismounting, they tied their horses to convenient trees and swarmed up the steps. Behind them, on foot, came wives, children, relatives. Every available chair was filled, couches were jammed and the overflow sat cross-legged on the floor.

The Grenadier was established in a seat of honor, facing the tree. Ah Sam, his mummy-face cracked by a grin, lighted the candles with a larger candle tied to the end of a slender bamboo pole. When the tree was a blaze of quivering lights, Gay went to the piano and struck the opening chords of

Little Town of Bethlehem. Cherry stood beside her, Naps and Davie on either side.

Involuntarily the eyes of both girls went to their father's picture, smiling from its encircling *leis*. He had always been the one to play the loved, old hymn. They were carrying on the tradition for him.

With the simultaneous singing of the words by all nationalities, a light brighter and stronger than that shed by the candles or sent up by the sandalwood fire filled the room.

When the last verse was finished, the distribution of presents began, interspersed by jokes, *hulas* and ancient chants sung by the *paniolos* and older men and women. Babies too small to participate actively in the gaiety, slept placidly in their *Tutus*'—grandparents'—laps. Children played with their new toys and rolled oranges and apples across the floor. Japanese Mama-sans danced the stiff little butterfly dances of the Orient. Portuguese gave jerky imitations of *hulas*, which evoked shouts of glee from the Hawaiians. The house servants, assisted by volunteer-helpers from the audience, made unending rounds with cold punch, fruit cake and candy.

The Grenadier looked on with evident satisfaction, watching Gay and Cherry moving easily and happily among the people who had once worked for their father. Sam smoked his pipe, and wriggled his eyebrows when some big *paniolo* tiptoed to Guy Storm's picture and placed the back of a big brown hand against his forehead, pledging undying allegiance to one who had gone on.

"It's absolutely *right* that you girls have *Wanaao*," he said under his breath to Gay, as she halted beside him with a tray loaded with edibles. "Your father put everything he had into the ranch and these *paniolos* can never feel toward me as they did toward him. I have their loyalty, he had their love."

About midnight the present-giving came to an end. Davie and a group of *paniolos* supplied soft music. Weary children dozed against their mothers' sides. Servants, their duties largely over, sat cross-legged on the floor. Uncle Archibald watched his nieces in a strange, moved way as if, for the first time, he was realizing what they put in and got out of living.

"When," Aunt Charity inquired, in her iced voice, "are we to be informed of the reason for this—splurge? Christmas on such a scale costs plenty, to say nothing of the hogs, chickens and steer for the *luau* for the ranch hands."

"Sam supplied all the food for the ranch people as his *kokua* and *Aloha*," Gay informed her in a touched way.

The rancher flushed and made a slight, protesting gesture.

"I must say that was most generous of you," Aunt Charity observed.

Gay walked toward the tree and took a long envelope out of the branches. "Uncle Bellowing, will you please read the contents aloud?" Gay asked, taking the deed to *Wanaao* to him.

The Grenadier's watchful, bright eyes shuttled over her offspring and she folded her arms in a satisfied way, making her array of diamonds blaze and burn.

When Uncle Bellowing stopped reading the deed there was a stunned silence, broken almost instantly by a deep throated roar of delight from the *paniolos* and their families. Hawaiians, Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese scrambled and rushed to the girls.

"Good on you, Sam! Fine you make this kind!" they shouted, wrapping him in invisible approval, while they poured their gladness over the girls.

"Seem like Papa stop again," a big Hawaiian exulted. "You *keikis* work hard like enny kind since he *make*. Now, always, you have the old place. Always you making plenty *kalas* from tourist peoples who like go see Haleakala. *Welakahao!*" And the exuberant shouts echoed against the ceiling. Naka and Ah Sam beamed at each other. Suma and Hana wiped their streaming eyes.

Finally, the uproar subsided.

"Better us sing *Kilokilo o Haleakala* one more time for show our big happy," the *paniolos* shouted, snatching up any instrument that was handy. Cherry and Gay stood with locked hands, their faces luminous with happiness.

"Dance! Dance!" the *paniolos* commanded, waving them on to the floor.

The girls began the intricate *hula* steps and their expressive hands and gestures made vivid the words of the *hula* describing the mighty blue dome of the mountain, the sun springing over the rim, the joyous thunder of horses' hoofs, the whining of lassos as men chased stock through the amber and jade of forest sunlight and shadow. In a mighty flood lost years flowed back. Finally, the *hula* came to a shouting finish.

"*Aloha ka ko!* Our love to the world!" the men shouted. "*Welakahao.* Melly Kalikamaka!"

Such exultant fun as is only known by the many races which have lived and worked together in Hawaii for over a century, throbbed in the room and spilled into the night jeweled with stars. All differences of race, sex, age and

station were nonexistent as the great family, made up of so many nationalities, celebrated together.

Finally, reluctantly, people began gathering up their gifts, collected their children, and started home. Gay and Cherry, Naps and Davie stood by the door as they filed out, calling, “*Aloha—Melly Kalikamaka!*” over their shoulders. Finally, only the Clan remained. Honor watched the two girls in an odd, intent way. The Grenadier half-dozed in her deep chair. Uncle Bellowing waited silently.

“Isn’t this an occasion worth celebrating?” Cherry asked on a high, happy note.

“It seems incredible that you really own *Wanaao*,” Aunt Charity said. “It will always seem Sam’s—”

“But it isn’t mine any more,” the rancher asserted. “The girls own it out-and-out.”

Gay looked about the room, then exclaimed in shocked tones, “Uncle Archie, are you ill?”

His face was the dead white of a blanched bone, his eyes two blue blanks. He stood, looking drenched in crime, then muttered thickly:

“This—this is utterly monstrous!”

“Monstrous?” Gay questioned. “I should think—”

He made a violent gesture, silencing her.

“I’ve ruined your business,” he asserted, wrenching the words from his stiff throat. Involuntarily his eyes went to Honor, but he dragged them back. “It was suggested, some time ago, that with increased tourist traffic, it would be an asset to put an automobile road up Haleakala.” He broke off, breathing like an over-ridden horse.

The Grenadier glared at her eldest son.

“Wait!” Uncle Archibald said in a ragged voice. “Last night the Chamber of Commerce put the move to a vote. I signed the papers okaying it. I feel—I feel—”

The Grenadier pounded the floor with her cane.

“When is your blasted road to be started?” she shouted.

“January fifteenth of next year.”

Gay and Cherry looked at each other, the same thought in both their eyes. A single stroke of a pen had wiped out, or would wipe out eventually, their main source of income. Then something rugged and unconquerable flamed up in both of them.

“Don’t look so sunk, Uncle Archie,” Gay said, finally, in a steady voice, but the ghosts of tears were behind her words. “Life’s more than just having a roof over your head and food to eat and money in the bank. We’ll make out. We’ll figure new ways to earn a living. We can still have people at the house. Our autumn hunting parties won’t be hurt by an auto road up Haleakala. Between the two, we’ll make the grade—somehow!”

She paused for a moment, and her eyes went to Uncle Bellowing, standing beside the Grenadier. He looked as if he had been clubbed from behind. Rage and unbelief distorted his rugged features.

“You see,” Gay’s voice was low, “I haven’t forgotten something Uncle Bellowing said to me the day we came home. He told me that as long as a person has to fight to get something, or do something, he’s on tiptoe inside. When things get too easy, he lets down and the thing that was keen and bright inside him corrodes or rusts out.” And behind her quiet words was a great ring that went echoing off into time.



CHAPTER XX

THE ROAD

SHORTLY after the first of the year, despite the fact that the rainy season had not ended, work was begun on a temporary road up Haleakala, which eventually would become the paved highway. Both the Tourist Bureau and the Maui Chamber of Commerce were avid to make Island beauty spots easily available. Tourist travel was becoming a major problem to cope with. Every hotel was filled to capacity and the overflow visitors rented spare rooms in private homes when they were available.

The engineer for the project, followed by surveyors and their crews, figured grades and detours. Ponderous machinery was laboriously dragged to higher and higher altitudes. Flimsy camps were constructed for road gangs, used briefly, then torn down and moved to new levels, leaving litters of cans and refuse behind. Bulldozers with dragonlike jaws bit into fragrant green hillsides, then swung away in half arcs, spilling tangled greens and earth as red as blood from between their clenched iron teeth. Then, at the movement of a lever, they disgorged everything onto banks of ferns and shimmering grasses, burying them forever.

Pickaxes, rhythmically swung by muscled brown arms, dug into banks, disturbing frantic lizards forced to abandon the tiny white eggs they had laid in crevices for the warm earth to hatch. Quail, pheasants, turkeys and other feathered things moved to higher altitudes to make nests. Insects, too small to see, were destroyed with their homes. Proud red herds and bands of glossy horses gave the ever-lengthening red gash, steadily pushing upwards in vast zigzags, a wide berth, for every so often dull explosions of dynamite jarred what had once been peaceful green solitudes. Hollows where newborn, white-faced calves had dozed while their mothers ranged and

grazed were filled up. Gulch sides swathed with maidenhair fern, *akala* bushes and leaning trees were blasted out or cut away and went tumbling down, baring the great naked rock ribs of the mountain. Scrapers and levelers roared back and forth. Gangs of men swarmed forward and upward like ants, working insatiably to reach the aloof blue summit.

Between rains the rim line of the crater stood clear cut against great broken blue-and-white skies. Again clouds veiled the summit, as though trying to hide the long scar of its wound as the volcano was being branded for man's pleasure. Every time Gay and Cherry looked at Haleakala they felt a deep pang that left a sort of echoing loneliness in its wake.

Wanaao was filled to capacity, following a brief respite through the first three months of the year. Mainland visitors who had money in their pockets and leisure at their disposal reveled in the lavish hospitality that had persisted in the house from its beginning. On rainy days, they stayed indoors, listening to the magnificent tropical rain assaulting the earth and amusing themselves with bridge and talk. When it was fine, they rode off in gay cavalcades.

"Prancing porpoises!" Uncle Bellowing roared one afternoon when he went out to meet Gay and Cherry, who had just unmounted about twenty people and sent them indoors to get ready for supper.

"What's the matter?" Cherry asked.

"I'll take to the sea again if this goes on much longer! No peace! No quiet! Just a mess of *malihinis* coming and going. How on earth can you girls take it?"

"We've got to make hay while the sun shines," Gay replied. "When that's finished," she motioned toward the road, "all horse-trips up Haleakala will be *pau*. We're making all we can while we can, so whatever comes, we'll have an anchor to windward that'll tide us over the humps and bumps that are hidden in the future."

"I guess I'm a bit of a sissy inside," Cherry said, as she lined saddles along a rail. "Every time I take a party to the top and see that road, something inside me runs around crying. I know progress is inevitable, but Haleakala is more than just a mountain to us, it's a shrine."

"Yes," Gay agreed. "The most beautiful times in our lives have been spent riding over the old House of the Sun. Until the road started, Haleakala seemed something man dared not desecrate or scar. Now—" She broke off with a small sigh.

"Honor sure trumped your ace, girls," Uncle Bellowing declared. "It's all clear as glass. She wangled that job in the Chamber of Commerce and

haunted all the members and the Tourist Bureau to put an auto road up Haleakala. Knowing how horse-minded you both are, she probably figured you wouldn't swap your horses for a mess of cars."

"We won't," Cherry asserted determinedly.

"Stubborn what?" Uncle Bellowing said, in a pleased rather than disgusted way.

"Maybe, and maybe we only know how we want to live and intend to do so, no matter what. But Honor didn't trump our ace as much as she thinks she has. Once the road's *pau*, we won't make the money we are making, but we don't have to. *Wanaao* is ours! We're saving every possible cent and—" She gestured like a Hawaiian, making life careless and gay.

"It's probably selfish and horrible of me," Gay said thoughtfully. "I realize that lots of older people and people who can't ride will be able to see the crater when cars can drive to the summit. But when I think that before many months cars will be swarming back and forth like hideous, metallic beetles over *our* mountain something inside me burns like lava."

The three of them gazed at the great volcano. On it the purple mystery of twilight was deepening between noble hills. Electric blue shadows hung in deep gulches. Dying light gently touched tree lots their father had planted, but the jagged crimson streak of torn earth showed cruelly across the swelling flanks of the huge mountain.

"Maybe when the road's *pau* and those hideous, untidy camps are torn down for good, and that rowdy machinery is taken away, it won't be quite so bad," Cherry suggested. "Ferns and greens will cover the red cuts and the lovely old feeling of peace will creep back little by little. But it'll never be quite like what it was before."

The three went silently into the house and dressed for dinner, prepared for twenty odd guests.

Just as the large party had seated themselves at the table the telephone rang and Hana answered it. She came flitting back in her colorful *kimono*, an astonished expression in her almond eyes.

"Uncle Archibald like talk-talk," she announced.

Gay excused herself and hurried to the phone. When she came back, she said quietly to her sister, "Uncle Archie wants to know if he can see us for a little while after dinner, Cherry."

Her eyes swept the big table, surrounded by hungry people.

"Better tell him we have a houseful," Cherry said.

"I did. He said he felt sure that our guests would excuse us for a brief family conference." Her eyes made the circle of faces in a warm, sweet way.

"Of course, see your uncle. We can take care of ourselves," a big man seated next to Cherry said.

"Thanks." Gay went back to the phone, then returned to the table in the *lanai* and took her place at the head.

"I wonder what in thunder Archie has got on his mind?" Uncle Bellowing rumbled when the meal was over.

"I simply can't imagine," Gay replied, then busied herself seeing to the comfort and pleasure of mainlanders from a dozen States, assembled under the old roof which had echoed to so much fun and laughter in days gone by.

About nine-thirty a car drove in. Gay and Cherry excused themselves and Uncle Bellowing bundled off to bed. Walking into the patio, redolent with the scent of heavy tropic flowers, the girls waited to greet their uncle. He got out of his car, pecked at their cheeks, and hitched his shoulders inside an expensive greatcoat.

"Where can we go to be alone?" he asked in his stiff, pompous manner.

"To my bedroom," Gay told him.

"Take me in the back way. I don't want to disturb your guests. From the noise they're making, they appear to be enjoying themselves."

"People always do at *Wanaao*," Gay said.

They walked around the many wings, past lighted windows and went in through Cherry's room to Gay's. "Mine's bigger and more like a sitting room," Gay explained, as she led the way.

A pleasant little glow went through her as they entered. With its tall, majestic old bed, the little rosewood piano with its brass candle brackets on each side of the music rack, the freshly matted floor and couch piled with pillows, her room looked as if it welcomed them to its peace and seclusion after the crowded living rooms and *lanais*.

"This is—nice," Uncle Archibald said.

The girls waited until he was seated in a deep, chintz-covered chair, then sat down on the couch together. Their uncle blew his big nose, twitched his feet and lighted a cigar. From behind its curling blue smoke wreaths he added up the two girls in a slow, deliberate manner, then transferred his attention to his surroundings. There was no display of wealth in the room but it breathed peace and warmth. The great old bed lent dignity, the foolish, gay pictures of Pierrettes and Pierrots on the wall added the spice of youth, bouquets of flowers reflected love of beauty and nature.

He moved slightly, drew on his cigar, then announced in an oddly moved voice. “Ever since Christmas I’ve—well, felt like a—hound!”

Cherry’s and Gay’s bright laughter spun into the air.

“Why, Uncle Archie, that’s completely silly!” Gay declared. “You didn’t know when you okayed the project for the road to the summit that we’d bought *Wanaao*.”

The tall, cold man gestured commandingly. “I didn’t know, but I did know, whether or not you owned the place, that an auto road to the top would rob you of your main source of income.” The words fell like heavy stones into a still pond.

Gay and Cherry looked uncomfortable, distressed as people will be when another is shockingly honest. There seemed to be nothing to say. Uncle Archibald’s face twitched imperceptibly, then, as though some power compelled him, he went on.

“I resented you girls refusing to follow my advice. I resented, well, the whole business. Because I’ve been accustomed to dictate, it infuriated me to see how right you had proved in your decision and how efficiently you conducted your business. It made me appear a fool, with myself and with all Maui. No one enjoys looking like an idiot!” He puffed violently on his cigar. “Then when I came to your Christmas—” He broke off.

“Let’s forget it. It’s all *pau*,” Cherry said quickly. “I think it’s big of you to come like this to tell us you’re sorry. It’ll make it easier for us to feel the way relatives should feel toward each other—warm and close.”

“That’s the whole thing,” Uncle Archie interrupted. “I can’t feel square with myself without trying to make some sort of amends.”

“You’ve made them, by coming like this tonight,” Gay insisted.

Uncle Archie got to his feet and paced the floor.

“I came tonight to discuss a scheme with you girls which, if you’ll agree to it, will make me feel better with myself.” He shook his broad shoulders.

“What is it?” Cherry asked in her direct way.

“The matter I’m going to outline I’ve already discussed with the Maui Chamber of Commerce and the Hawaii Tourist Bureau. It has their full backing and hearty approval.”

Gay and Cherry glanced at each other guardedly.

“You girls hold top place in the tourist trade. If a lot of cottages were put up in your horse pasture, tennis courts and a swimming pool built, *Wanaao* could be turned into a first class resort. Maui, all Hawaii needs something like *Wanaao*—expanded.” He glanced around the room, while his mind

ranged invisibly over the old house, as if, at long last, he recognized what it symbolized—a subtle blending of all that was truly Hawaii, colorful, casual, hospitable living, given with both hands from the heart.

Gay's blue eyes and Cherry's brown ones met swiftly, the same thought in both their depths. Another crossroads. Another major decision must be made, determining which way their lives would go from here.

"I'd feel a lot better about—the road, if you could see the soundness of this idea. Let me put up the cash. I'll leave you entirely free about the building and management of *Wanaao* on an enlarged scale. You can repay my investment at your own convenience." He cleared his throat.

Silence, charged with the solemn current of life pausing before taking another surge forward, hung over the room. Gay and Cherry watched their uncle's restless pacing, then suddenly their minds met and fused. Without a word, they knew that they agreed in their decision.

"Uncle Archie, it's dear of you to want to help to make up for what we'll be out after the road's *pau*," Cherry said earnestly. "But if we did what you suggest, *Wanaao* wouldn't be *Wanaao* any more. It would be a sort of Kona Inn, or a small-sized Royal Hawaiian Hotel. They're both gorgeous, but they aren't the real Hawaii that Island-born white people love, or the Hawaii most mainlanders want to find and enjoy."

"I feel as Cherry does," Gay said.

"If you expanded, you could make mints of money—"

"Uncle Archie, everyone wants to have enough to live decently. But maybe because Daddy and Cherry and I have lived so long and so close to Hawaiians, money, heaps of it, doesn't mean anything to us. I mean just *possessing* huge amounts. I'm not putting on an act when I say Cherry and I don't want cars a block long, monstrous houses or top-heavy bank accounts. If we turned *Wanaao* into a big resort, *it would run us, own us*, instead of us running and owning it."

She looked wistfully at her uncle, hoping he would understand.

"Wealth means—security," Uncle Archibald said in his stiff way.

"Uncle Archie," Gay's face was filled with the radiance bred of absolute sincerity, "you're enormously wealthy but I wonder if you've ever felt on tiptoe inside, full of bubbles and glee, as Cherry and I do, and as Dad did when he was with us?"

A silent tumult was reflected in the elderly man's face, as if, for the first time, he fully realized how thinly, how superficially he had lived, despite the pomp and magnificence that surrounded him and safeguarded him from the buffetings, the magnificent hazards and battles, of less secure lives.

“I doubt if I ever have,” he admitted, finally, looking as if he felt poor and forsaken, as if he had missed some bright train which had taken his nieces, and others who looked at life through the same brightly colored glasses, to shining destinations which his kind did not know. “You’re happy, I see that. You *know* what you want, which is more than most people do.”

He looked down at the girls, seated side by side on the old couch.

“Oh, Uncle Archie, don’t look so sunk!” Gay begged.

Rising, she went to him and put her hand impulsively on his arm.

“I—I envy you both!” he said. “Promise me one thing. If you ever need assistance of any sort, a loan, money for some investment in—*happiness*,” he smiled faintly and wistfully, “you’ll come to me.”

“We—promise,” the girls chorused, and Cherry walked swiftly to where he and Gay stood.

He put an awkward arm around each and stood for a moment as if he did not quite know himself, as if somewhere deep inside him a new man was stirring which ached to break its cocoon and see light.

“Well,” he said, after a moment, “I must be off.”

“Don’t worry about us, Uncle Archie, or think any more about the road.” Gay laughed. “We’re set for life. Haleakala will always be there; people will always come to see Hawaii and we’ll get our share of the tourist trade to satisfy our funny ideals of happy living.”



CHAPTER XXI

OUT OF THE BLUE

“I SIMPLY can’t realize that in less than three weeks it’ll be Christmas again,” Gay remarked one Sunday morning as she and Cherry sat on the front steps in their *kimonos*, enjoying early coffee.

“Yes,” Cherry said, rapturously. “And we have as much to be happy about as last year when we got *Wanaao*. Things have gone splendidly. Our way’s clear.”

Gay and Cherry sat without talking, as people do who share common dreams and goals, who have battled together, and triumphed over obstacles shoulder to shoulder.

The morning was deliciously warm and balmy, the air heavy with the slowly dissipating fragrance of night flowers. Mynah birds consulted noisily in the pasture, doves cooed in the trees which cut the grass into alternate patches of sunlight and shadow. A delicate breeze traveled by, stirring banks of blossoming ginger. At the far end of the lawn, Nakashima was wandering about, doing things unnecessary on a Sunday—nipping off a wilting flower, inspecting a bud due to open, picking up a stray leaf fallen on the ground over night. His tall, angular figure, wrapped in a faded blue cotton kimono, moved to specific spots as if manipulated by unseen strings but intangible contentment enveloped his every motion.

“Look at the old idiot,” Cherry said fondly, “puttering ’round like a mother with an only child. You’d think he *owned* this garden.”

Gay nodded and poured out second cups of coffee, which they sipped in silence. After a little while, Ah Sam strolled across the garden and joined

Nakashima. They stood chatting and smoking luxuriously in the widening peace of the sun-drenched morning.

“Hawaii is the land of *Aloha*,” Gay said dreamily. “Isn’t it wonderful when you come to think about it, Cherry? There’s only one word of greeting between all the races living here, *Aloha—my love to you!* It has been said billions and billions of times.”

Footsteps sounded at the far end of the *lanai* and Uncle Bellowing came lumbering toward them. Lowering his bulk, he seated himself on the top step.

“How about fetching another cup and giving me some coffee?” he suggested.

Gay fetched one.

“What a morning!” Uncle Bellowing remarked when his cup had been filled and liberally trimmed with cream and sugar.

“Yes,” Gay said softly. “It seems as if God were leaning over the world, breathing His love into it.” Her face was radiant.

“Boys coming to breakfast today?” Uncle Bellowing asked after a while.

“Yes, they said so,” Cherry answered.

Uncle Bellowing glanced at his watch. “Well, you’d better scram. It’s seven-thirty. Naps and Davie will be heaving in any minute.” He exhaled a great, windy sigh. “Isn’t it a dividend to have the place empty of people—till after New Year’s?” he added in a big, pleased way.

“Bliss!” Cherry agreed.

When Gay and Cherry returned, freshly showered and in clean riding togs, Naps and Davie were lolling on the *puune*. Seeing the girls, they jumped up.

“A Day of Days!” Naps exulted. “What’ll it be—the beach or the Piholo pool?”

“Why not let nature take its course?” Davie suggested.

“Good enough,” Naps agreed.

Uncle Bellowing joined them and they sat down at the round table in the *lanai*, beautiful with flowers Suma had gathered and arranged in her magic fashion. Hana served breakfast happily. Every so often Ah Sam popped his head through the swinging door to inquire if the popovers could be excelled, or the omelette topped.

“You’ll know when you see our plates, you old coot,” Naps called.

Davie smiled across the table at Gay. There was a vital intensity to him, even when he was absolutely still. He tingled with life to his fingertips but

the poised, princely bearing he had acquired from long association with Polynesians hid the fire leashed in the depths of his being. He never hurried, but was swift in results. His laughter came from his heart, and when he looked into a person's eyes, life went more buoyantly on its way.

Their leisurely breakfast over, the four young people mounted and rode off down the driveway, two by two. Uncle Bellowing, standing at the top of the steps, shook his head and gave a gusty, though not unhappy, sigh. "Gay and Davie—Cherry and Naps, adventure bound," he announced to the world at large.

He turned as a small echo of his sigh came from behind him. But Hana was smiling as she, too, watched the disappearing pairs of figures.

"*Aloha—my love to you,*" she said meaningfully.

Just then the young riders wheeled and, forming four abreast, galloped off down the road, lustily singing a gay *paniolo* quartette.

Uncle Bellowing chuckled. "Not for a while yet, anyway," he declared. "Too busy catching up on fun."

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

[The end of *Bright Spurs* by Armine von Tempski]