

RED HAIR AND BLUE SEA



by **STANLEY R. OSBORN**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY JAY LEE
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WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Palmyra, free, above the dark Rainbow is startled by seeing a hand thrust through the port of her cabin. She makes a secret investigation and discovers a stowaway. She is disappointed in his mild appearance and tells him so—she sees a man's shadow at the door—she sees a huge, copper-hued man—she sees a ten-inch knife held between green lips. There, the stowaway explains that it is a joke. But Palmyra is shaken. Next day, Burke and the brown man are up on deck. The stowaway entertains them with wild tales of an adventuresome life which his listeners refuse to believe.

Palmyra scowls more and more time with the stowaway to avoid Van and John, but when the stowaway is put ashore at Honolulu she decides she loves Van. The night the engagement is announced the Rainbow hits a reef. In the excitement which follows, John rescues both Van and Palmyra—but Palmyra thinks it is Van who saved her. After three days' rest on the uninhabited island, a well is sighted. It proves to be Pompey Burke. Burke contrives to get Palmyra on board his boat alone and the boat is under way before anything can be done. Thurston is frantic and plans to save Palmyra, although there seems no possible way. Meanwhile Pompey tells Palmyra he is going to the Isle of Palmyra with her. Burke has to put her aboard his boat and it would be dangerous to take her aboard. Olive swims to the boat and saves Palmyra. She is in fear of the stowaway.

Olive and Palmyra seem to another island from which Palmyra secretly sends a message to Van. Burke's ship approaches the island. Palmyra and Olive are in a canoe, excepting Pompey's ship and the Japanese Quoniam, which has her friends on it. Olive swims back to get water for Palmyra. Pompey makes desperate pursuit of Olive and Palmyra, even coming fire on them.

Olive's friend, the fellow Palmyra had rescued her from on the island, but there was no sign of him. The friends of Burke, Pompey, and Thurston and Van are seeking her. Now, read on.

CHAPTER VII

Thurston thrust Van aside impatiently. "The Puelikio," he said, "is demanded of the mar Martin."

Across the road a horse stood saddled. Thurston ran to it, jerked the reins free, jumped into the saddle.

The girl's father, returning at this moment, came running up.

"Rouse the beach," cried Thurston. "You, Van—the gambler, Martin—the police, Tree—you go to the mission, I'm for the Puelikio."

He whirled his horse. "Wait, wait, Thurston," implored the father. "Here, take my revolver."

"Rouse the beach and follow," came the answer, above the ring of hoofs.

For a moment the three stood, petrified, staring after him. Then they ran, in different directions, to carry out his orders.

Scarcely had they gone than two native men burst from the narrow footway and crossed to the thicket. A few seconds later, with the old women, they had rushed Palmyra over the road and into the line between the high blind wall and the salt-water marsh, where there were no eyes to see save those of the crabs that ran back and forth across the slits.

Van Buren Rutzger ran down the wharf, jumped into Thurston's boat and was pulled to the Okayama.

Commander Sakamoto turned to Van. "But my dear Mister," he said, "something is wrong. How can O-lee-vay have taken the young lady when O-lee-vay is locked up here safe aboard? But he—satisfy me he is only afraid for young lady. He means good. So I let him go unless you . . ."

Van was aghast. "Absolutely, no!" he cried.

Sakamoto shrugged. "As you say," he conceded.

He gave an order and shortly the brown man appeared on deck. Olive must have divined on whose demand he was held.

At sight of him Van's animosity flamed up. The white man sprang forward. "What have you done with her?" he demanded. Then, turning to the interpreter: "What has he done with her?"

Olive seemed at a loss. He shot forth a question, received his answer, burst into a flood of entreaty.

"He say," repeated the interpreter, "he say turn him loose. He savvy too much. Go look see. Find girl dam' too much quick."

The Japanese turned questioningly to Van.

"No!" cried the white man passionately. "No!"

The officer shrugged again. If Palmyra herself had been there she would have marvelled that Van could remain blind to the sincerity of Olive's purpose.

As for the islander, he must have adjudged the situation hopeless. With a final look of dumb pleading, he whirled, ducked past his unready guards and the clutching fingers of the others, and sprang over the starboard rail, foot first into the sea.

As Olive struck the brine Sakamoto leaped for the gangway and into his cutter, which happened to be alongside.

"Tab him with an oar," ordered the commander. But it is not so easy to jab with a long oar.

Olive made a judicious feint, dived back under the vicious thrust of the port oars, and splashed ashore. The sailors floundered close in wake.

Inland, the main road from the beach was crowding in against the river. Soon the fugitive must cross one or the other in the open. He would be seen. He would be caught.

But . . . Olive did not cross the road. He did not cross the river. Nor was he caught. Merely—he disappeared.



. . . Now, however, so suddenly she could not pull the trigger, he brought the flexible stick down with a whiplike cut across the back of her hand. The fingers . . . dropped the weapon. . .

He had lain all the while, in the river, down among the crowding water plants, only his nose up for air.

Normally the water, clear as dew, would have revealed him. But rain in the mountains, tropically copious, had raised the stream out of its banks, stained it earthy brown, dotted its surface with moving leaf and branch.

Meanwhile, John Thurston, putting his horse to a run, had soon neared the Puelikio Rocks.

A shoulder of basalt blocked the view ahead. He clambered up, had almost reached the top. Then, startlingly, the whistle of a bullet.

Thurston ducked behind a rock. "Meaning he?" he questioned.

He raised his head cautiously. Bang! A leaf cluster came fluttering, like a wounded bird, to his feet.

Across the road, opposite, a great aia tree dominated the basin behind it. From among its many trunks a wisp of white smoke had floated out.

John, in his effort to locate the enemy, risked standing up. A third bullet flattened itself against the rock.

"Seems they are here, after all," he conceded.

Regaining his horse he had galloped back to the road, with this turning movement in view, when he encountered the girl's father and seven other men. These were an advance guard. Sailors from the gunboat were following in to scour the bush.

"The lava caves," the father cried excitedly. "High in the mountains. Thurston, inland of here. Unexplored, inaccessible; a terrible hid-

ing place. My God, John, we've got to head 'em off from the caves."

Thurston told of the shooting. Thurston found what he sought—footprints.

Native men almost never wore shoes; then only shoes of cloth and rubber. But here, in the damp mould, someone had ascended toward the aia tree, descended—wearing leather.

Thurston examined the prints at length. Then, "If I'm any sort of Indian at all," he commented, "this was—Pompey Burke."

For a distance Thurston was able to ride. Then lava, clean washed, a stream, and three paths intersecting at the water.

It was well for Palmyra that she could not know what difficulties her lover had now to meet.

The bed of this stream, cast solid in one piece from nature's furnace, would have provided a test for the North Woods skill of any man. And in addition, Pompey Burke—if it were he—had taken pains to leave no mark.

Later, he found footprints again—shod and bare. Ahead large trees told of dry land.

Thurston advanced stealthily, rifle ready. The elevation took on an unusual form. He recognized it, to

his surprise, as an artificial island: one of these ruined fortresses or. An ugly light flashed into his eyes. "I ain't taking no chances this time," he explained.

As they moved forward again Ponape Burke became informative. Had been lying low here waiting an opportunity. This village was a good sort; not like the rest of the island—so dam' pious a kanaka wasn't supposed even to smoke. And from the point, a man could watch the Okayama at anchor or get away, quickly and unseen, to the hidden Lupe-a-Noa.

The one obstacle had been Olive. But they had discovered Van's antipathy; planned to get the islander out of the way through him. Graciously, Van had acted of his own accord.

For this work the man Martin had been useful, being new to the beach, unknown.

At the sea front the native men lifted Palmyra and Ponape Burke and waded with them through the thigh-deep water to the islet.

At the end of the islet farthest from shore, Ponape Burke ordered his prisoner into the last thatch. She hesitated, gave the natives one despairing glance. She hated them for their curiosity, their complaisance.

She stooped, entered the house, sat upon a mat on the pebble floor, her back against one of the posts in the circle that upheld the eaves. Burke hurried away. The brown men were crowding into the opposite side of the hut. They dropped to stare, cross legged, knee to knee, silent or whispering, those behind craning to look.

Martin came to take up the watch.

(Continued next week.)

BACHMAN NEWS

Our crowd has diminished greatly since school was out April 13th. Commencement was a great success during the last week. Several interesting plays were given with a large attendance.

Those that graduated this year were Misses Georgia Queen, Donnie Mason, Kate Vest, Louise Pittman, and Messrs. Ralph Howard, Howard Runion, John Smith, Jewel Mason, Harry Underwood and Maurice Shearer.

Miss Georgia Queen spent a few days with Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Hill last week.

Miss Beulah Queen spent Saturday with her brother.

Mr. Hyde took a number of students to Copperhill Saturday.

Miss Ora Lee Burch, a former graduate of Bachman, was married to Mr. Lester Coleman Thursday, April 19th. They are visiting his father at Ball Ground, Ga.

Mrs. Hyde and Misses Virginia Cunningham, Lucille McDowell, Mabel Clarke and Ollie Crisp visited Miss Julia Martin at the Hospital in Ducktown Sunday. She reported she was getting along nicely.

Miss Agnes Long left Friday for Charlotte, N. C. where she will be her sister.

The large girls of Bachman have been having a good time motoring to Farmer in the truck, delivering passengers.

The winners in the oratorical contest were Mr. Thomas Dockery, first prize \$10, and Miss Clara Langgood, second prize \$5.

The girls from Murphy would like to see some of their folks and friends motoring down this way. Especially Ruth Coleman.

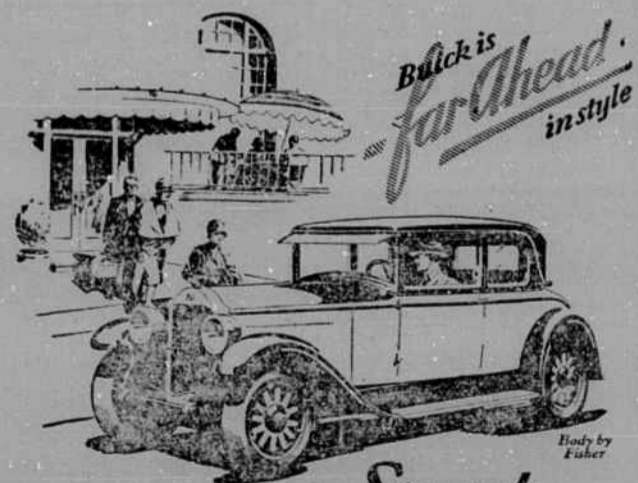
Miss Deloris Panter's mother visited her Sunday.



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