TORO GO HOME!

WODOU'D BITECO

I was stowing cargo into the Goose when Corky came trotting up onto the dock waving and shouting. It was not the best time to interrupt me. I'd been tasting the delights of Apia, the Paris of the Pacific, the night before, and I had a hangover that was trying to break through my skull and out my ears; and along with the cases of champagne, whiskey and caviar for Louie sitting on the dock, there was a man-sized package wrapped up in burlap bags that kept getting in my way. No matter what I did, no matter where I put it, that thing managed to be first on line to be stowed. I was beginning to think it had a life of its own. I didn't even remember having seen it before.

"Hey, Jake!" Corky yelled, making the drums in $\ensuremath{\mathsf{my}}$ head work overtime.

"Yes, Corky," I said, very softly. "Tell me, but...quietly." $\label{eq:condition}$

Corky's round face screwed up in concern. "Ya shouldn't oughta drink, Jake. You know what that does..."

I closed my eyes. It didn't help. "Yeah, I know what it does. Tell me, while I was on the town, did I contract for this...this..." I waved at the burlap-wrapped object.

"Oh no, that was me. There was this guy who said he wanted it to go to Matuka, and since we're passing by there on our way home..." Corky's voice trailed off. "We're not passing by Matuka?"

"Matuka's in the Japanese mandate, Corky," I

reminded him.

"I...I know that, Jake," he stammered, but there was still a puzzled look on his face.

"So why did you agree to haul it?"

He hesitated a moment before answering. "It seemed really important. And he paid me double our rate."

"Double?"

Corky nodded eagerly and I shrugged in defeat. We needed the money. But I had the feeling that wasn't the only news he had for me.

"What else sent you running down here?"

Corky blinked. "Oh...yeah." He reached into a back pocket and came up with a limp but official-looking document. "That's a message from Government House. There's a couple of people stranded on Fatu Hiva and they want us to pick them up and bring them over to Boragora so they can catch the plane to Manila."

"What?" I squeaked softly, so as not to disturb the hangover. "Who are these people, and who do they think I am?" $\,$

"I dunno, but we're the only plane outa here today, and they say there's a storm comin' up. Guess I better start the Goose, huh, Jake?"

"First help me get this thing in. God, it's

heavy! What is it?" logether we heaved it into the Goose and wedged it into a corner where it stuod, shrouded in its burlap wrappings, as if glaring at us through sightless unseen eyes.

"There was this guy in the bar," Corky said, as if that were explanation enough. "He said it was a tiki, and it belonged on Matuka." Corky's thought processes sometimes baffled me, but if it belonged on Matuka, then the princess would pay for haulage. I thought about that all the way to Fatu Hiva.

Fatu Hiva was your typical atoll, a tiny speck of coral stuck in the middle of the Pacific. The lagoon was clear of boats, and on the standard bamboo dock were not two, but four Europeans, plus the usual crowd of chattering Polynesians and a pair of semi-French officials in grubby uniforms.

I looked accusingly at Corky. "I thought you said there were a couple of people. As in two." \cdot

They sure did, about ten tons of it, all up and down the dock. Most of it belonged to the long, skinny Norwegian with the long name, and his shy blonde wife. Boxes, crates, gallon jugs with preserved animals in them; and I was supposed to fit all that into the Good? I told them the score.

"Look, Mr. Hey -- Hye--" I gave up on it.

"Call me Thor." He smiled at me and offered a hand. He and his wife were dressed in the khaki safari clothes that every European seems to wear as soon as he or she leaves Europe.

"Yeah, okay, Thor. You can't take all this stuff with you. Where am I supposed to put it?" I waved at the almost full cargo hold. "I'm overloaded as it is. Some of this will just have to stay behind and get shipped back later."

Thor's smile vanished. "But that is impossible. I have been here six months collecting specimens for the Oslo Museum. If I return empty-handed, it will appear as if I have been wasting my time and using the museum's money to make myself a honeymoon with my wife." He looked down at his bride, who smiled bravely back up at him.

"At least you got something to show for your work," the other man growled. He was a complete contrast to Thor: dark, with three days' worth of beard showing, dressed in a leather jacket and whipcord pants. There was a bullwhip coiled at one hip and a businesslike pistol in a holster on the other. He looked like a good man to have on your side in a fight, and a bad one to meet at the wrong end of a dark alley. The woman with him was a petite brunette, dressed in a pair of bright red slacks and a white blouse embroidered with red. They travelled light, I was glad to see, with only one duffle bag between them.

I checked my manifest. "You're Jones?"

"Indiana Jones. This is my wife, Marion." He

turned back to the Norwegian. "Yeah, I've been all over the islands tracking down rumors of the Gold Collar of Tiki."

I must have let out a groan or something. What I was thinking was: Not again! I'd had my fill of chasing down legends of King Solomon's Mines, gold monkeys, or whatever, but if this guy wanted to waste his time, that was no skin off my nose. I just wish he hadn't chosen the Goose to do his chasing in.

Jones looked at me. "Something wrong, Captain?"

"It's Jake Cutter, and the only thing wrong is inside the head of anyone who actually believes in the Gold Collar of Tiki." Jack poked his head out of the Good and yapped his agreement. "It's like the Lost Dutchman Mine, or maybe the Ark of the Covenant. Everyone thinks it's out there, somewhere...but no one's ever really seen it."

"But they've heard of it," Jones said eagerly.
"I've heard versions of the legend all over the
Pacific. Almost the same words every time. Tiki
came from the lands beyond the Setting Sun, and he
wore a collar of pure gold around his neck, like
the sun. And when he left to go to his Father, the
Sun, he took the collar and gave it to his children, and now it belongs to the Children of Tiki--"

"--but the white men came, and they chased the Children of Tiki from their homes, and took them far away, to the Rising Sun, and they took the collar with them, hid it away, and no one knows where it is but Tiki himself. At the appointed time he will come and take it again," Thor finished the story for him.

Jones stared at him suspiciously. "Are you after it, too?"

"Oh, no, I am a naturalist. I have made a study of the plants and animals of these islands, and have made very interesting conclusions concerning the origins of some of the species of Polynesia. But I will not publish until I am quite certain of my findings. My adopted father on Tahiti told me the tale of Tiki. It has...intriguing ...aspects."

"I'm more interested in some of the intriguing aspects of this collar," Jones said. "Legends exaggerate, of course, but aside from its monetary value, Tiki was supposed to have given the collar some of his 'mana', the spiritual power that made him a leader and a god. It's supposed to be able to open the mind to see the past and the future."

"About that I could not say," Thor said stiffly. "But if it exists, it belongs with its people, here on the islands."

"After it's been studied, of course," Jones said.

"That, too," the Norwegian agreed.

Corky and I left the two of them to their arguments and got a couple of the locals to help us load as much as we could of Thor's stuff onto the

Goose, without overloading it. 'All the while we kept an eye on that blasted Tiki-thing. It sat in its corner, as if it were silently mocking us. Nobody wanted to go near it, and for no good reason that I could tell. Somehow I felt that it shouldn't be roughed up or touched in any way.

We got everything stowed away, but I didn't like it. "This bird has as much as it can hold," I stated. "And if you'll just take a look over there, a storm's blowing up. So I think we'd better start praying, folks."

Thor helped his wife, Liv, into the plane. Jones and his gal squeezed into the seats next to them, and we were off, in a manner of speaking. The engines were kicking and sputtering, and our tail dragged and for all the visibility I had in that cloud bank we could have been six feet under the water or six feet over it.

"Hey, Jake, don't forget about Matuka." Corky had to remind me.

"Matuka? I thought we were going to 8oragora," Jones said.

"I've got a delivery to make first. Corky, radio the princess and tell her her package is being delivered, assuming we can make it with a whole plane!"

Corky pushed and pulled at the radio. "Jake, it's out!"

"Let me try." That was Marion Jones, the little brunette. She wriggled into the space between the two seats and twisted a knob or two. Then she hit it a few times and said, "Now try."

"This is Cutter's Goose, calling Matuka. Come in, Matuka!" I yelled into the radio.

"I got a package, Matuka," I shouted.

"Package? What package?" That was another voice, female, one that I knew very well.

"Yours, Princess. Orders were to ship it to Matuka."

"I ordered no package to be flown in. I have my own fleet to provide all my needs. Of course, I am always ready to welcome you..."

"Princess, I got a large package that was supposed to go to Matuka from Apia, and if it isn't yours, whose is it?"

"Jake Cutter, this is a very foolish joke someone is playing. I will not accept any package from Apia!" The radio shut down.

I turned to Corky. "I thought you said this thing was to go to Matuka."

Corky twisted up his face in a spasm of thought. "I think I got that a little confused,

Jake. The guy in the bar said the package wanted to go to Matuka."

"Did the package mention who was supposed to get it?" I asked, while the *Goos*e bobbled up and down on the air pockets and Liv turned green and Jack hid under a seat.

Corky looked blankly out the window. "I don't think he did. We had a few beers. you know how it is..."

"Yeah." And I did. In fact, I'd had more than a few beers, so I was as much to blame for this mess as Corky.

"What is the thing, anyway?" Jones asked.

"The guy said it was a tiki. Or did he say it was Tiki?" Corky looked puzzled.

"That is quite a difference," Thor put in. He was holding up better than the plane. "A tiki is an idol, but Tiki is another matter."

"Whatever it is, it's gonna wind up in the drink if we don't get some better weather," I muttered. "Our pressure's dropping and the winds out there are blowing up, so we'll wind up back on Fatu Hiva if we're not careful. There's no way we can make Matuka at this rate. We'll have to pick some spot and land, sit it out and hope one of Koji's ships doesn't find us first and shoot us out of the water."

"Who is this Princess Koji?" asked Jones. His wife gave him a dirty look.

"She's a local warlord, or maybe it's warlady? She runs a fleet of ships and has varied business interests in and around the Marivellas." I didn't mention a few more personal things I knew about the princess, like about her being half Japanese, or her having a really murderous family. That had nothing to do with the business at hand, which was trying to find a place to land the Goose without sinking to the bottom of the Pacific, lock, stock and Tiki.

"If this Tiki really wants to get to Matuka, it had better do something about it," mused Jones, glancing back into the piles of boxes, where the burlap thing stood.

"Come, Mr. Jones..." began Thor.

"It's Doctor Jones, if you want to be formal about it. I've seen a lot of strange things in this world, and it's just possible that the package might have its own reasons for getting to Matuka or wherever, and it might want to give us a hand in getting it there."

"Are you seriously suggesting...?"

"I'm just saying..."

But I wasn't listening any more. Something very odd was happening to the weather outside the Goose. I know the Pacific, and I know Pacific weather can be weird, but what happened was beyond weird. The wind, which had been blowing us back-



wards, suddenly went into reverse.' Instead of a nose wind blowing westward, I found the plane was being shoved along by an east wind! It was as if some giant hand were shoving us onward toward Matuka.

Jones looked at Thor and then over his shoulder at the burlap thing. I concentrated on holding course for the princess's estate, but I'll be damned if that tail wind didn't shove us completely over the island and around to the other side.

The clouds parted and I could see a lagoon below. I'd been on the princess's little hideaway a couple of times, but I'd stuck close to her playgrounds. With Koji's warriors around, wandering off wasn't too healthy, and there were always a few stray Japanese lurking in the bushes who might not share her ideas of hospitality. So I'd never seen this part of Matuka before. I slid the Goose gently into the lagoon, opened the hatch, and popped up for a look around.

There wasn't much to see. Palm trees, bamboo, assorted greenery that was probably spiky and thorny, lots of pink coral sand and blue water. A typical lagoon in the Pacific. We might have been back on Fatu Hiva, except there weren't any docks, or any people in sight.

Jones and Marion were the next ones out, and then Thor helped Liv out. Corky and Jack stayed on the Goose, as the five of us waded through the water to the beach.

"And I don't see any reception committee," Jones added. "Someone should take charge of Tiki. Maybe we'd better get him out, onto the beach."

"Why not?" I was starting to get pretty tired of this scruffy-looking character, with his pipe dreams and Tikis, but here we were on Matuka, so we might as well deliver the package.

"Do you realize what you've been carting, Cutter?" Jones asked as we started back to the Goose. "I've been following Tiki's trail clear across these islands, starting at Pitcairn and working my way north and east. He's the culture hero of the Polynesians."

"The what?" I asked, feeling stupid.

"The one responsible for culture," Thor explained, as if to a first-grade child. "He was supposed to be the ancestor of all the peoples of the Polynesian Triangle. He came from the Lands of the Setting Sun, bringing food with him: sweet potatoes, coconuts, and taro. And on Easter Island, he brought writing."

"I didn't get that far," Jones confessed. But I'm pretty sure Tiki existed. And I'm getting a very bad feeling about this thing." He looked into the cargo hold, where the burlap thing stood. It had shifted around somehow, until it was now in a clear path to the hatch. Between Corky and Jones inside, and me and Thor outside, and with the two women shouting directions from the beach, we worked

Tiki loose and managed to haul him onto the sand. He was a lot lighter than he looked; maybe made of tufa? Thor and Jones looked at each other, as if daring each other to be the first to touch it.

"Oh, what the Hell!" I stepped forward and tore off the burlap wrappings. The five of us on the beach looked at the face of the man who had brought humanity to the Pacific Islands a thousand years ago, at least according to the legends.

The statue must have been life-sized. Tiki had been tall, as islanders go, at least as tall as I, and from the traces of paint left on the weathered stone, he'd had a yellow beard trimmed to a neat point. His eyes, represented by inlaid lapis lazuli, had been blue. His nose jutted out in a sharp Viking profile. He'd been carved wearing a short tunic, his hands on his belt, holding a symbol that looked vaguely familiar.

"Tiki," breathed Jones and Thor together.

Corky broke the spell, shouting from the Goose, "Hey, Jake! Ya got company!"

We sure had. They were marching around the beach from the other side of the lagoon, about twenty of them, wearing embroidered loincloths that looked a lot like the one Tiki was wearing, and carrying nice, sharp spears. I didn't know whether the princess had sent them or not, and I wasn't about to ask them.

"Let's get out of here!" I yelled, just as the man in the lead hurled his spear in my direction.

"Marion!" Jones shouted. "Get Liv to the plane and get that princess woman!" He shoved his wife down the beach and pulled out his pistol. Thor grabbed for his hands.

"What are you trying to do, kill us all? How do you know they are not friendly?"

"They just threw a spear at us. That's not friendly." Jones had the whip out by now. The next spear that snaked by was neatly diverted. I heard the Goode revving up behind us. Another spear headed in my direction. I tried to duck, but it wasn't far enough. The next thing I knew, someone had sliced my head open and I was falling, falling into a black, black hole...

"Cutter! Jake! Hey, wake up!" Someone was slapping my face with a wet noodle. I opened my eyes to see the unshaven features of Indiana Jones.

"What happened?" I mumbled.

"Reinforcements," Jones said glumly. "I thought you said you had a friend on this island."

"I don't think these are Princess Koji's people," I said through the red haze in my head. "She's got a small army of samurai and ninjas, not Polynesians. Maybe she was right. Maybe that wasn't her statue after all." I looked around to see where I was. As far as I could tell, it was just a grass/bamboo hut of the kind found all over the Pacific. There wasn't anyone in it but the three of us, and something told me that we weren't going anywhere just yet. I could hear Polynesian chatter just outside the door.

Thor stood at the door and listened intently. "I can understand some of their dialect. It's quite ancient, almost unique."

Jones nodded. "That's one thing I wish I had time for, getting the local lingo."

Thor looked disapprovingly at him. "Now I remember who you are. You are Dr. Jones who wrote the article on the Ark of the Covenant, but you had no proof that you actually had found it."

Jones sighed. "I found it, all right, but the damned government's got it locked up somewhere. Thor, I don't like hit-and-run tactics--"

"Guys, could we discuss professional ethics another time?" I said weakly, trying to sit up. "If you can understand them, Thor, maybe you can tell what they've got in mind for us? Long pig?"

"I do not believe we are on the menu, if that is your worry," the Norski said with a brief smile. "But I have some doubts as to our fate. They have taken the statue of Tiki from the beach and brought it to this village. There will be a ceremony of some kind."

"What kind?" I asked. "We brought it here; hell, it even helped us. It wouldn't want us to be...well, human sacrifices? I thought that was reserved for virgins, anyways."

"That sure lets us out!" Jones said with a guffaw.

Thor blushed. "We are, after all, on honey-moon," he reminded me. $% \begin{center} \end{center} \begin{center} \begin{center$

"Speaking of honeymoons, did your wives get away in time?" I asked. $% \begin{center} \begin{ce$

"I am certain your co-pilot took them away in the aeroplane," Thor said. "There are no native women here. This is a men's camp. The ceremony will be a right of passage for the boy, to be initiated into the society of men."

"Oh, grand." I wasn't thrilled to hear that, either. Some of these people have pretty elaborate ideas about courage and bravery in the face of death, and they're not above using a captive to demonstrate what not to do under torture, but I kept those thoughts to myself. No need to upset the paying customers. I still had to get those two onto the plane to Manila with their wives and their assorted baggage.

There was a frenzied banging of drums, and we all watched from the doorway of the hut as the head spear-thrower marched out of another hut and made a speech.

Thor translated. "Tiki has come back to us, from the Setting Sun, as he said he would. We shall welcome Tiki to us!" There was a chorus of singing, and more drums.

Two guards reached in, grabbed us and marched us outside and up to the statue. All around us were tall, well-muscled young men wearing strips of embroidered cloth around their middles, strips of cloth around their heads, and nothing but palm oil in between. Each of those tall, brave young men carried a nice sharp knife and a nice sharp spear.

Jones' hands dropped for his whip, which wasn't there. These people might be primitives, but they weren't fools. The whip and two guns -- Jones' and mine -- lay at the base of the statue.

The chieftain made another speech, which Thor translated. "He says that we have brought Tiki to them, and that the best thing for us to do is join Tiki." $\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{2} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{1}{2} \left($

"I don't like the sound of that," I muttered.

"He says we will go back to the place where Tiki dwells, to tell Tiki that his children are still faithful to the old ways." Thor looked unhappy. "I'm not sure of that word. In Tahiti it means 'to join in the spirit'."

"You mean they want us to go where the spirits go?" asked Jones.

"Not just virgins," I joked.

The chief was speaking again. He waved at the sky, where the brilliant sun was edging toward the horizon. "He says that Tiki came from the Setting Sun, and so shall we go to the Setting Sun, to join with Tiki," Thor translated.

"I don't suppose you can get him to change his mind," Jones remarked. $\hfill \hfill$

"Thor, talk to them," I said urgently. It seemed to me that I heard a slight whisper of sound, somewhere in the far distance. "Jones, can you sort of edge over to the statue? To where they've put the guns?"

"You have something in mind?"

"Just listen." I concentrated on that faint buzzing noise in the distance that wasn't so faint now.

Thor coughed and spoke in Polynesian with his sing-song Norwegian accent. The chieftain gasped and stared at him.

"What did you tell him?" I asked.

"I said that I was called Terai Teroo, which is Blue Sky, and that I had come from Tiki," Thor said. "But I might have made a small mistake. Now they think that I αm Tiki, or perhaps one of his direct descendants. This is most embarrassing. I did not intend to impersonate a deity."

"Just keep stalling them, pal," I told him.
"And leave the rest to Jones and me." And Corky and the princess, I thought silently.



Jones and I started edging around the statue, while Thor made another speech, and an old man came out of the chief's hut, and we saw what he was wearing.

Around the neck of that wizened priest lay a gleaming yellow gold breastplate. It was made of separate plates hinged together, like the ones in ancient Egypt, so that it could lie flat across his collarbone and shoulders. I could hear Jones' breath hiss as the old man came up to the three of us, and we could see that each of those separate plates had symbols on it, writhing snakes and weird-looking animals etched onto the gold. The old man looked at me, and then at Jones, and finally at Thor.

Then he said something in his cracked voice that had the chief gripping his spear. Finally, he untied the string that held the collar around his neck and took it off, and handed it to Thor.

Jones and I must have looked like jackasses, gaping at the long Norwegian. His eyes had glazed over, as if he were in a trance. He took the thing, put it around his neck, and faced into the sun, looking up past the statue--

Right at the Goose and the two Zeros that were zooming down upon us!

"Duck!" I yelled. Jones dived at the base of the statue for his gun. I followed him, rolling over so I could snap off a shot. The two planes dove, spitting bullets, while those tail, fine Polynesians ran for cover. Luckily, most of them made it!

The Japs pulled out of their dive, and made a long slow circle to try for another strafing run. For a minute I forgot those natives had wanted to kill us. All I could think was that they were sitting ducks, dead meat, and what right did those Japs have to slaughter them? And then--

Don't ask me how or why it happened. I can only tell what I saw. And what I saw was this:

The Japanese planes started down again, firing bullets all over the landscape. And the statue's lapis lazuli blue eyes glowed and seemed to blaze up as I watched. And the planes started to glow, too, with a weird, blue flame.

And they blew up in midair, raining debris all over the island, while Thor stood there, staring into the sun with that collar around his neck, as if he were blinded by the glare.

And then it was all over. The old priest came out of his hiding place and Thor took off the Collar of Tiki and bowed deeply to him. The chief said something, and the whole lot of them sort of faded into the greenery, just as Corky and the two wives smashed their way into the village, and Jack pranced along beside them, yipping and yapping, as if he'd done it all himself. And right behind Jack, in all her finery, trailed Princess Koji herself, and her constant companion and pain-in-the-neck, Todo, the Samurai.

"Marion!"

"Indy!"

"Liv!"

"Thor!"

The newlyweds were reunited, with the usual rejoicings.

The princess looked me over. "So, you are not dead. Good. Life would lose a great deal of its savor if there were no Jake Cutter in it."

I managed a bow and a smile. "Thank you, Princess."

"Of course, a great deal of credit must be given to that resourceful young woman over there. She got into my bedroom and held me captive until I promised to send help to you."

I looked over at the Joneses. Keeping up with them would be quite a feat! The Norwegians were a little more restrained.

"Jake, we gotta get going," Corky reminded me.
"The plane to Manila's gonna leave in three hours.
We gotta get these people and their stuff onto
it...uh, did I forget something?"

"No, Corky, you did fine!" I walked over to the statue. It was just a stone thing, now, with set-in blue stones for eyes, but I saluted it just the same. Whoever he was, Tiki had a lot of moxie.

"Yes, I shall see it is properly cared for," the princess told me, as if I had spoken aloud. "I had not know that the Children of Tiki were using my island. Now that I know we are under such protection, I shall be doubly careful not to disturb their peace." She looked at the statue as she spoke. It might have been one last ray of sunlight that caused those blue eyes to shine so brightly... and then, maybe not.

Without that stone statue, the Goose seemed practically empty. Jones and Thor argued all the way back to Boragora.

"You had it! You could have taken it!"

"I could not have done so, Dr. Jones. It was not mine to take." Thor held Liv's hand very tightly. "When I get back to Oslo I will publish my study on Polynesia, and then I must begin a new project."

"Thor?" Liv quavered. "You were doing so well. They were going to make you curator."

"There is something else I must do," Thor said. He had that faraway gleam in his eyes that I had seen when he wore the Collar of Tiki.

Jones said, "It's the collar! They said it had the power to read the past and the future..."

"Such is the legend," Thor said.

"I've got to know!" Jones pressed him. "What

did you see when you wore it?"

"I...I am not sure. But I think...it was Tiki. He was there, a tall man, with a yellow beard and blue eyes, sailing on the blue ocean." Thor turned to Jones. "Tell me, Dr. Jones, where do you think the Polynesians came from?"

"Huh?" The American looked stunned. "No one knows. Malaysia? China?"

"But that collar was not Chinese or Oriental in any way. Those glyphs...the technique of the statue...its pose...and Tiki came from the land of the Setting Sun. What is beyond Polynesia?"

"One helluvalot of water!" Corky commented.

"But beyond the water? What then?" The young Norwegian's blue eyes burned as brightly as Tiki's.

Jones looked shocked. "You're talking South America!"

"Why not? The same domestic plants, sweet potatoes and coconuts, which cannot travel over salt water. And the glyphs, the same as the ancient Maya? And the same legends of gods who came

from the sun, and vanished over the ocean?"

"And just how did they get here?" asked Marion, who had been trying to referee all this time. "Don't tell me they flew!"

"They had rafts," Thor said stubbornly. "The Spaniards left records of them when they conquered Peru. They had balsa wood rafts."

Jones shook his head. "Well, kid, you just try sailing across the Pacific on a balsa wood raft!"

Thor looked down at the vast expanse of water beneath us. "Perhaps I shall," he murmured, just loud enough for me to hear.

Well, that was it. We got down to earth -- or water, if you want to be technical -- just in time for Jones and...wait, I've got it written down somewhere, Heyerdahl, that was the name. Thor and Liv Heyerdahl. They got on their plane, and I waved them off, with all their specimens and their gallon jugs and their crates. And later I wondered if I'd dreamed the whole thing. Maybe someday I'll go back and ask Tiki. Maybe...someday...

