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## SHORT STORY

LD Maggie Tepanua sat on the edge of the step in front of the hotel, her face an impenetrable brown mask, and her eyes a mist of far-off dream. Two thick plaits of iron-grey hair hung down her shoulders, tied at the ends with knots of red ribbon. Maggie loved bright colour. The man's hat she wore sitting straight on top of her head was a rusty-black old felt cast-off someone had once given her in exchange for a kit of kumaras.

As she sat there, hands cupped under the bowl of a pipe, drawing in long fragrant fumes of Dark Havelock, she looked like a Goldie painting. A bright check rug was drawn across her shoulders and the fringes made a splash of

colour against the sombre brown skirt she was wearing. Her feet were encased in a pair of men's boots, size 10nice and comfortable. Maggie hated boots and when she was compelled by decorum to wear them, as for in-stance on the occasion of the weekly expedi-tion to "town" she provided for the comfort of her feet by wearing boots at least three sizes too big.

Another Maori woman ioined her. Maggie moved along to the edge of the step to make room for her to sit down. They exchanged greetings and conventional enquiries, then with quiet dignity Maggie offered the newcomer her plug of tobacco.

## REET CORNER

Written for "The Listener" by A. E. BATISTICH

There was style to Sadie. Her hair hung down to her shoulders, one side of it almost obscuring her left eye. as the film stars wore it. Her generous mouth was bright red from a liberal application of lipstick, and her fingernails were red to match.

She was up to him now. Slanting her eyes provocatively in his direction, she said, through the corner of her mouth, 'Lo: Rangi."

Rangi grinned back, manoeuvred a piece of chewing-gum out of his way and replied, "Hi-ya, Sade."



"As she sat there, hands cupped under the bowl of a pipe, she looked like a Goldie painting"

A brown hand felt among the . a few minutes she was drawing away at the pipe.

Sadie Topia saw them from the corner of her eye as she minced her way across the street. Her feet hurt. They were squeezed into bright red patent leather pumps with three-inch spike heels, but she felt smart in them.

She was glad she wore them, especially when she saw Rangi Thompson making his way down the street.

Good-looking fellow, Rangi.

Perhaps she could get him to take her to the dance to-night. Her eyes gleamed in anticipation. What would the others say, if they saw her coming to the dance with Rangi Thompson!

Rangi saw her coming and waited for her, lounging carelessly against the verandah post in front of the hotel, a half-smoked cigarette hanging loosely from his underlip.

Not a bad piece, this Sadie. He eyed her speculatively as she came towards him. His father was at him to get married, but he was not going to get tied up to that fat Dulcie Kawhia. Now Sadie would be a different proposition.

The two old women sat there looking kumeras and from the bottom of the at the boy and the girl. Sadie turned flax kit an old pipe was unearthed. In her back rudely on them-the old hags! As he looked at her a question

formed itself in Rangi's mind. "Where you going to-night, Sadie?"

She lifted her eves up to him innocently: "Oh! I don't know, maybe I, go to the dance."

"Who you going with?"

"Oh! I don't know yet. Lots of fellows asking me."

"What about you come with me?"

Sadie closed her eyes in satisfaction. "Perhaps."

She opened them again and looked up at him through slumbrous lashes, giving him the Kaikohe version of 'the look," at the same time toying ostentatiously with the glass beads she was wearing.

"Where 'you get those?"

Rangi had caught on.

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

The rejoinder fired him. vould," he came back "Yes, I would," he came back jealously, where you get them?"

"What you getting excited for-they not much: only cheap things. I see much nicer ones in the shop just now." "Where?"

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