



# *When the Lilies Return*

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Philippine

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*Intermediate*  
*3 min read*

At the time when the Pasig flowed peacefully along between flowery banks; when its breast was not torn by puffing steamers; and when only a few clustering huts marked the present site of Manila, there grew on the banks of the river a beautiful field of lilies.

The lilies glistened like silver in the sunlight, and their sweet odor filled the air with delicious perfume. No hand plucked them from the earth, and no foot trampled out their fragrance; for an ancient prophecy had said that while the lilies stood the happiness of the people should endure.

But after a time there came dark days in the history of the Philippines. Yellow hordes swept across the water and carried all before them. The people could hardly expect to resist the invaders, for their warrior king, Loku, had profaned the word of the god, and, in the form of a lizard, was fulfilling his punishment. Their armies were weak and scattered, and the conquerors marched on in triumph.

As report after report of disaster reached Luzon, the people trembled for the safety of their fair land. Warriors gathered hastily for the defense of the nation, and all waited for the enemy to appear.

One day the water was dotted with the junks of the invaders. They came slowly down the bay, and anchored near the mouth of the Pasig.

Then from the boats poured the yellow warriors. Spears rained upon them, stones and arrows laid them low, but their numbers were countless. The people were swept back along the river banks.

Fiercely they fought, but numbers told against them. Foot by foot they were pressed back, till they stood on the border of the field of lilies, where they made their last stand. But it was to no purpose.

The invaders poured from the ships, and in one desperate charge drove back the ranks of the people, who fought and died among their sacred lilies.

All through the night the battle raged, and at daybreak, when the victorious invaders rested on their spears, the beautiful field was no more.

The lilies were crushed and torn. The bodies of dead and dying warriors lay everywhere, and the crushed flowers were stained with the blood of friend and foe. The peace of the land was lost.

Many years have passed since then. New races have come to the Islands, and new manners and customs have been introduced. The Pasig still flows on to the sea, but its banks are harnessed by bridges. Lofty dwellings and stores take the place of the little huts, and a great city marks the site of the little village.

Where once was the beautiful field is now a busy part of the great city. It is called Quiapo, after the lilies. Many of the older people remember the prophecy and wonder if the lilies will ever return.

The land is now a peaceful and contented one. Comfort and happiness may be found among its inhabitants. Perhaps the fair, strange women from the great land over the sea are the lilies. Who can tell?

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