



Quickly, d'Aubigny strode across the small cabin and pulled the curtains aside, looking down at his bunk in astonishment. "Mon Dieu!" he gasped

# Point Venus

For Marianna these days alone with Jonas on the schooner were suffused with magic.

And as she felt their love deepen, she knew what she had done could not be wrong

By SUSANNE McCONNAUGHEY

**The Story:** Tahiti, in the 1880s, was struggling bitterly against French annexation, and it was their passionate interest in this cause that brought together MARIANNA MOORE, the Tahitian-born daughter of an English missionary, and JONAS BURKHAM, a handsome, reckless American.

For years, Marianna had loved Jonas, but knowing of his affair with LILY NICHOLLS, the beautiful, spoiled wife of ANTHONY NICHOLLS, a planter, she had never confessed it.

But when Marianna's father was killed in the war, Jonas arranged for her to move from the mission station at Point Venus to the inn in Papeete, and to teach in a mission school there, and Marianna felt a new sympathy between them. So she was deeply hurt when, at dawn one morning, she saw Lily Nicholls return from Jonas' schooner and steal back into her room at the inn. However, a few days later Jonas took his schooner on a scouting expedition, and in his absence Lily solaced herself by beginning a flirtation with CAPTAIN D'AUBIGNY, commander of a French corvette. When Jonas returned, he was disgusted to find Lily on friendly terms with the enemy, and Marianna knew that the affair was over.

A few nights later, as Marianna was preparing for bed, she heard a tap on her door. It was Jonas, who asked her to give him shelter until the sentries had passed. Marianna let him in and Jonas told her he was afraid the French had learned of his scouting trip for the Tahitians. A moment later, two sentries burst in and started to arrest him. To save Jonas, Marianna told the sentries he was her lover and had come to keep an assignation. They believed her and went away, warning Jonas he would be arrested if he was seen on the streets that night. Jonas was furious at Marianna for risking her reputation and tried to leave. Angrily, Marianna accused him of preferring arrest to a night in her company. "Do you really believe that?" Jonas asked, as he took her in his arms.

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**S**HORTLY after dawn Jonas rowed out to his schooner. After he had talked to Farenui, his native sailor, and instructed him in the story they both would tell the French, there was not much to do, but he made a pretense of working on deck, keeping a wary eye on the road. When he saw Marianna walking back from school he went around to the front of the cabin and settled down in the shade, his legs stretched out on the deck, his back against the bulwarks, out of sight of anyone on shore. He would have to see her before long, but he would choose his own time, when there were no prying eyes about.

He had brought a book with him, but after a time he laid it aside and stared out across the water. He'd got himself into a pretty predicament! The whole town would know that he had spent the night in Marianna's cottage; the whole town would wait for him to make the proper gesture. After all the years of cherishing his freedom, he had come perilously close to throwing it away.

He closed his eyes, remembering Marianna's sweet response, the lovely honesty of her lips. The barrier of her reserve had melted away; she had confided herself to his arms as trustingly as a child. What would Marianna expect, after the momentary tenderness she had evoked from him?

If there were no way to save her from heartbreak and disgrace except by marriage, he would have to go through with it. But would that save her?

From disgrace, perhaps, but from heartbreak—? He'd be no good for her; she was too stable, too conventional, too sensitive to link her life to one like his.

He opened his eyes, scowling. Perhaps it would not be necessary, after all. Marianna would never make any demands on him—he knew that—and there was no use getting himself into an entanglement that might be sensibly avoided. He would wait and see, he decided with an uneasy sense of relief, wait and see what happened.

Faintly, he heard the sound of the inn's lunch bell above the soft lap of the water, and some time later he saw Marianna cross the lawn and go back into her cottage. He waited about ten minutes, then dropped into the dinghy and rowed ashore.

She came at once in answer to his knock, and when she had closed the door behind him she stood for a moment leaning against it, looking at him with shy inquiry. To hide his own uncertainty, he put his arms around her and pulled her close. She clung to him tightly. "Jonas," she murmured, "Jonas."

She drew away to look at him, her fingers resting on his shoulders. "You're all right? There's been no trouble?"

"None so far. I've warned Farenui."

"Do you think the French know about Papenoo?"

"I'm afraid so. The sentries must have been following me last night. Otherwise, why did they come here?"

Her eyes were dark with alarm. "If they know you were in Papenoo, why haven't they arrested you?"

"They're probably waiting for more positive proof."

"Don't give it to them," she said passionately. "Promise me you'll be careful!"

"How can I come to any harm," he said, smiling, "with you to protect me?"

Her lips curved mischievously. "You still resent that, don't you, Jonas?"

"Furiously," he said.

A giddy happiness swirled up in her. She took his hand, and drew him over to the small sofa. She sat down beside him, still holding his hand in hers.

"And what of you?" he asked. "No regrets for your recklessness?"

Her eyes met his, direct and luminous. "No regrets," she said.

He had not known what her attitude would be, but of all the possibilities that had suggested themselves, it had not occurred to him that she would be like this. The radiance that illuminated her face, the joyous warmth of her manner, surprised him and made him oddly uncomfortable.

"You're sure?"

"Quite sure." She looked away from him, and her voice was charged with wonder. "Regrets are gone forever. As long as we're together, Jonas..." Her voice faltered, and she turned back to him just in time to see him avert his glance from hers.

He said nothing, and she saw that he intended no reply. The moment of silence stretched endlessly between them, and with a sickening sense of shock she realized its importance. She had been so foolishly sure that nothing could ever separate them again; now, without words, in a moment of terrible silence, he had shown her that she must not depend on him for anything. Casually, she drew

her hand away from his, smoothing back a lock of hair. "There's no need for regrets," she said carefully.

He saw that the dangerous moment had passed, but his evasion of it had left him curiously dissatisfied, perversely eager to make amends. Gently, he turned her face toward his, drawing his fingers along the curve of her cheek. "You have the most eloquent eyes I've ever seen," he said softly.

A wave of color flooded up into her face as she turned away. But he drew her back again, kissing her eyelids and her lips. There it was again, Marianna told herself; that suffusing tenderness. She had not imagined it after all. And yet she realized now that she could not call it forth at will. It was there for Jonas to discover in himself, as he had last night and again just now. But until Jonas himself had learned to depend on that tenderness she could only wait; wait and be thankful for moments like this.

**M**R. THOMSON, the missionary in Papeete for whom Marianna taught school, appeared so silently at the back of the classroom that she felt his presence there before she actually saw him. The children were droning through a catechism, which should please him, she thought; and since he always preferred his observation of the mission class to go unnoticed, she did not acknowledge his visit with even a nod. Usually he stayed only a few minutes, then slipped quietly away, but today he made no move to leave, even after the noon bell had sounded from the church next door, and the children had darted out into the sunshine.

Marianna followed them down the aisle between the rows of benches, smiling a greeting to Mr. Thomson. The solemnity of his look ignored her smile as patently as he disregarded her outstretched hand. She let her hand fall to her side, looking at him in uncomfortably astonishment. Thomson was a man of about forty, with a narrow, nervous face and dark, thin hair; his brown eyes were today more impenetrable than ever.

"I wish to talk to you, Miss Moore," he said. "Please be so good as to step over to my office for a few minutes."

Puzzled and oddly alarmed, she went with him across the walk in front of the church, up the steps of the house, and through the hall that led to his office. Marianna sat down in the chair he indicated, opposite his desk, feeling a curious tightness in the muscles at the back of her neck.

Mr. Thomson cleared his throat and began: "As your pastor, it is my painful duty to repeat some gossip I have just heard concerning you, Miss Moore. Perhaps I am the last to hear it, but I want to be the first to give you a chance to deny it."

Marianna, sitting with bent head, could feel the muffled, accelerated beat of her pulse throbbing in her ears.

"Is it true, Miss Moore, that Jonas Burkham spent the night, alone with you, in your cottage?"

For a moment she could not speak.

"Come," he said, "is this true?"

She raised her head with a jerk and looked him directly in the eyes. "Yes," she said.

He drew in his breath sibilantly. "So! You admit it, then!"

She did not reply.

"How long ago was this?"

"Two weeks ago."

"Am I to understand (Continued on page 55)

ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN BAUMGARTNER

## Wetling and band—as camera saw them



Seven of nation's foremost "hot" musicians, led by drummer George Wetling, produced fine, vigorous jazz for Collier's in Columbia studio

# IT'S JAZZ FOR ART'S

**G**EORGE WETTLING is a jazz drummer who decided a few years ago that he probably could express himself as well with paintbrush on canvas as he could with a wire brush on drum skins. He has been daubing his bright patches and squiggles of oil paint ever since—to his own delight, and to the equal enjoyment of a number of critics, who find his work bold and exciting.

Intrigued by this rare combination of talents, Collier's asked Wetling to try wrapping them up in one package by capturing in oils the fiery spirit of a jazz band in action. In the cheerful abstract painting on the opposite page, he has done that.

The band, gathered in a Columbia recording studio for the occasion, consisted of Wetling and six other crack jazzmen: trumpeter Bill Davison, trombonist Jimmy Archey, clarinetist Edmond Hall, pianist Joe Sullivan, guitarist Eddie Condon and bassist Bob Casey. The session proved a tremendous success. The records, now available at music shops, included two original blues numbers entitled Collier's Clambake and Collier's Climb; speaking of these pieces, George Avakian—a well-known jazz critic who supervised the technical end of the session—later commented:

"It was like old times for these veterans. They'd

cut a thousand disks before, but they played this time as though it were a first experience. They were getting honest kicks, and those two new blues, placed back to back, turned out to be one of the best jazz records we've ever released."

Photographer Charles Peterson, a former jazz musician himself, said he had never enjoyed a session more, and the musicians were equally pleased. Listening to the records later, Sullivan, who ranks among the legendary men of jazz, declared that for him it had been one of the most productive recording dates of the past 10 years.

As a matter of fact, Sullivan's own agile performance that day so impressed Wetling that at one point he exclaimed: "That guy plays like a man with eleven fingers!" Accordingly, when it came time to paint his impressions of the men and the music, George gave the pianist the symbolic extra digit. Sullivan's hands are the black, looping line at the extreme right of the picture, superimposed on the piano. Above the piano, in mauve, fly the powerful chords of Joe's improvisations.

Like most other abstractionists, Wetling squirms when asked to explain what his pictures mean. Of this one (whose title, *Jazz Is In*, can be read across the bottom of the canvas) he says:

"I was trying to get brightness, excitement, rhythm. The yellow background helps, and the black gives it punch. But the main thing was to get action, and I think I did. Like the trombone, above the drum. Well, there's more than one trombone in the painting, like one of those multi-image action photographs. And Davison's trumpet—nobody ever saw a trumpet like that. I made it all scrolls, because there's more rhythm in scrolls."

To help tie the symbols together, Wetling carried the scroll motif across the painting, from Davison's horn to Sullivan's hand. The jagged lines at the lower left are the pulsations of Wetling's own instrument, and the twisted black symbol that appears to the right of the drum, like ornamental ironwork, is Wetling himself. Some of the other men have personal symbols, too: the begoggled caricature of trombonist Archey at the left, above the green trumpet; the inverted Y of Hall's legs to the right of the guitar (topped by his blue clarinet); and, finally, the shamrock—appropriately placed close by Casey's bass and equidistant from Condon and Sullivan. The last touch—"because jazz is strictly American"—was the red, white and blue stripe across the bottom (with the colors reversed, by artist's license).

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