

her say it incisively there in the moonlight he felt the injustice of it very keenly.

"Look here," he began. "Why won't I see you?" And then he found himself believing all sorts of things which seemed true at the moment. He was begging her to leave it all. He was begging her to stay with him, but she knew better, and she was hardly listening to him.

"Under the trees," she said, "when you were going to the plane, I should have waited until your back was turned, but I couldn't. Now, do you understand?"

"That has nothing to do with you and me," he told her.

"Oh, yes," she answered, "everything. You see what I was planning?" She nodded toward the fire, but her voice was very low. "He thinks we have what we all wanted. I was planning to get it later. That would have been more important than you. I can't be different from what I am, and you can't either. Don't you see? You'll be going back to your country and I'll be going back to mine."

"We can chuck it all," he told her.

"Oh, no, we can't," she said. "You'll never mean that again—not after what you did tonight. You can look anyone in the eye and you can just remember. . . . But there's still a little while. We're not back yet."

"No," he said, "not yet." He hesitated. "When this war is over—and it will be over sometime—I'll be looking for you. I couldn't help it."

The moonlight struck her face as she turned toward him, just as though she had moved nearer to him from the dark.

"You'll wait," she asked him, "will you?"

And he told her he would wait, and she looked surprised at first, and then she smiled.

"It's queer," she said, "I never thought of that—I mean about sometime when there might not be war—when the lights might be lit again. I live in the present—all of us have to. Perhaps it's better not to look too far ahead."

"I'll be looking for you," Bob Bolles said again.

"Will you?" she asked him again. "Well, I'll be very glad and I'll be looking for you too."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

HE WANTED to get away, to leave there, and he was deathly afraid that Tom would not come back, but Bob Bolles saw the *Thistlewood* just a few minutes after he saw the first streaks of light on the horizon. He must have made the island in the dark and have been standing outside waiting for the morning,

for almost as soon as Bob saw the silhouette, just beyond the reef, she started under power and began heading for the narrow channel. He was afraid at first that Tom might get into trouble, but Tom remembered the bearings. Tom was a good sailor. By the time the anchor splashed, the beach and the water beyond it were faintly pink in the sunrise and all three of them walked down to the water's edge. Although Mr. Moto was most polite, it was clear that he was very anxious to see the last of them. His face was several shades paler and Bob could tell that Mr. Moto's shoulder pained him.

"Come aboard and have something to eat," Bob said.

"No, thank you very much, please," Mr. Moto answered. "It is so very important for you, I think, that you should go before my friends arrive. We want no more difficulties, do we?" And Mr. Moto laughed. "Please call your boatman now. Tell him to come ashore at once, please." And Bob Bolles called to Tom across the water.

"Come on, Tom," he called. And they stood watching the dinghy come toward them. They did not speak until the bottom of the little rowboat scraped against the sand and until Tom stepped into the water and pulled the bow up on the beach.

"Well," Bob said, "I guess this is good-by. It's nice to have seen you, Mr. Moto." Then he was aware of a change in Mr. Moto's manner. Mr. Moto's smile had grown more mechanical. His eyes had grown more watchful and Bob knew there was something else. He knew it was not finished yet.

"So nice to have met you," Mr. Moto said. "Some other time again, when it is pleasanter, I hope. You must step aboard at once, please. The farther you are away so much the better for you, I think."

"All right," Bob said, and he turned to help Mrs. Kingman. "You'd better sit in the stern," he said. "Tom and I can push her off." And then Mrs. Kingman gave a sharp surprised little cry. Mr. Moto had backed away from them. He had jerked his automatic pistol from his pocket.

"Here," Bob said. "What's that for?"

Mr. Moto stood with his feet carefully braced in the sand and the clean fresh light glittered on the gold of his front teeth.

"No," he said quickly, "it is all right. Just a precaution, please, in case you should be angry at what I have to say."

"Why," said Mrs. Kingman, "why — what's that? Haven't we said everything?"

Mr. Moto shook his head at her and his voice sounded less polite.

"Mrs. Kingman, please," he said, "I kept it for the last. I hope so very much you know what I mean."

"Why, no," said Mrs. Kingman. "What do you mean?"

Mr. Moto looked down at his pistol and back at her.

"Excuse me, please," he said. "I think you have been so very nice and clever, Mrs. Kingman, through it all. I should be so sorry if you should leave thinking I was so stupid, please."

"But, Mr. Moto, I don't think you're stupid," Mrs. Kingman said.

"Oh," said Mr. Moto and he laughed, "so sorry I must be so impolite as to disagree when everyone has been so nice. You and Mr. Kingman both thought I didn't know."

"Why, Mr. Moto," Mrs. Kingman said, "know what?"

The gold in Mr. Moto's teeth glistened and he laughed, but not politely.

"It was so clever about the turbo supercharger, Mrs. Kingman," he said. "I know so very well it was not the turbo. Please do not bother to come back to get the rest of what is in the plane. I only want to say my friends and I shall get it, please. The Nipponese Intelligence is not as bad as that. It is Beam 21 A Night Combat please, Mrs. Kingman."

"Oh—" Mrs. Kingman began, but Mr. Moto stopped her.

"So sorry to distress you," Mr. Moto said, and he took a short step toward them. "That is all, I think, please. Into the boat at once. You too, Mr. Bolles. *Boy san*, push it off. Good-by."

The bottom of the dinghy grated on the sand as Tom pushed off, wading beside it. Then he stepped in and picked up the oars and began to row. From the center thwart where he was sitting Bob Bolles could see Mr. Moto still standing close to the water. Mrs. Kingman sat in the stern with her back turned toward the beach. She did not speak, but her face was lighted by a faint malicious smile and Bob could see that she was very happy.

"Good-by," Mr. Moto called. "So sorry for you, but good luck."

"Tom," Bob whispered, "put your back in it! Row like hell!"

"No," Mrs. Kingman said softly, "don't hurry. It's better he shouldn't know." Then she smiled at Bob and she seemed to have forgotten all about the island.

"Look at the color of the sea," she said.

THE END

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LAST LAUGH, MR. MOTO

"Even when he heard the footsteps that night—and he had not heard them until they were just behind him—he remembered most clearly what a pleasant night it had been, and how well he had played his hand of four spades, doubled and redoubled. Of course they had meant to kill him as soon as he left the table, but it was those small aspects which remained more vivid than the rest. . . ."

In the beginning Bob Bolles, an impoverished ex-Navy pilot, hadn't thought of anything but how lucky he was to get the job when the rather strange Mr. Kingman chartered his boat for a trip to Mercator Island. By the time they arrived at that little speck in the Caribbean, however, he suspected that he was never meant to come back alive. When Mr. Moto suddenly appeared on the scene, it seemed for a moment as if the situation had changed. But Bob soon learned that Mr. Moto's plans were only slightly less murderous than Mr. Kingman's, and that when they were both finished with what they wanted to do, their attention would again turn toward the problem of killing Bob Bolles.

