



*"I'll get it for you one way or another,"
he said. She turned and faced him.
"Don't take any more risks for us, Joe"*

The sunlit hours, the ever present

danger—these were Jean's

memories. But stronger than memory

was the love that would take her on

this journey back to Joe



The Legacy

PART ONE OF TWO PARTS

JAMES MACFADDEN died in March 1905, leaving the bulk of his money to his son Douglas. I am the senior partner in the firm of Owen, Dalhousie and Peters; I took Douglas Macfadden on to my list of clients and forgot about him in the pressure of other matters.

One afternoon in January 1947 I got a telegram from Ayr in Scotland. It read, "Regret Mr. Douglas Macfadden passed away last night please instruct re funeral."

DOYLE, Balmoral Hotel, Ayr"

I had to search my memory, I am afraid, to recollect through the war years who Mr. Douglas Macfadden was and then I had to turn to the file and the will to refresh my memory with the details of what had happened to this family estate.

I got my secretary to bring me the Macfadden box and I read the will through again and went through some other papers and my notes on the estate. Finally I reached out for the telephone directory and called up the firm of Pack and Levy Ltd. to find out what they knew about Miss Jean Paget.

Presently I got up from my desk and stood for a time looking out of the window at the bleak gray January London street. I like to think a bit before taking any precipitate action. Then I turned and went through into Robinson's office and showed him the papers.

I stood warming myself at his fire till he had finished reading them.

"I've found the heir," I said.

"You've found the nephew?"

"No," I said. "It's the niece. The nephew's dead."

He laughed. "Bad luck. That means we're trustees for the estate until she's thirty-five, doesn't it?"

I nodded.

"How old is she now?"

I calculated for a minute. "She should be about twenty-six or twenty-seven."

"Old enough to make a packet of trouble for us."

"I know."

"Where is she? What's she doing?"

"She's employed as a clerk or typist with a firm of handbag manufacturers in Perivale," I said. "I'm just about to concoct a letter to her."

He smiled. "Fairy godfather."

"Exactly," I replied.

I went back into my room and sat for some time thinking out that letter; it seemed to me to be important to set a formal tone when writing to this young woman for the first time.

She rang me up two days later. She had quite a pleasant voice, the voice of a well-trained secretary. She said, "Mr. Strachan, this is Jean Paget speaking. I've got your letter of the twenty-ninth. I wonder—do you work on Saturday mornings? I have a job, so Saturday would be the best day for me."

I replied, "Oh yes, we work on Saturday mornings. What time would be convenient for you?"

"Should we say ten-thirty?"

I made a note upon my pad. "That's all right. Have you your birth certificate?"

"Yes, I have that. Another thing I have is my mother's marriage certificate, if that helps."

I said, "Oh yes, bring that along. All right, Miss Paget, I shall look forward to meeting you on Saturday. Ask for me by name, Noel Strachan."

She was shown into my office punctually at ten-thirty on Saturday. She was a girl or woman of a medium height, blond. She was good-looking in a quiet way; she had a tranquillity about her that I find difficult to describe except by saying that it was the grace that you see frequently in women of a Scottish descent. I got up and shook hands with her and gave her the chair in front of my desk and went round and sat down myself. I had the papers ready.

"Well, Miss Paget," I said. "I take it that you are the daughter of Arthur and [continued on page 121]"

BY NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATOR: DOROTHY MONET

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THE BOOK VERSION IS SOON TO BE PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM MORROW & CO.

The Legacy

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Jean Paget, who lived in Southampton and Malaya?"

She nodded. "That's right. I have the birth certificate and Mother's birth certificate, as well as her marriage certificate." She took them from her bag and put them on my desk with her identity card.

I opened these documents and read them through carefully. There was no doubt about it; she was the person I was looking for. I leaned back in my chair presently and took off my spectacles. "Tell me, Miss Paget," I said. "Did you ever meet your uncle who died recently? Mr. Douglas Macfadden?"

She hesitated. "I've been thinking about that a lot," she said candidly. "I couldn't honestly swear that I have ever met him but I think it must have been he that Mother took me to see once in Scotland, when I was about ten years old. We all went together, Mother and Donald and I. I remember an old man in a very stuffy room with a lot of birds in cages. I think that was Uncle Douglas but I'm not quite sure."

"Tell me about your brother Donald, Miss Paget," I asked. "Is he still alive?"

She shook her head. "He died in 1943, while he was a prisoner. He was taken by the Japs in Singapore when we surrendered and then he was sent to the railway."

I was puzzled. "The railway?"

SHE looked at me coolly and in her glance I thought I saw tolerance for the ignorance of those who stayed in England. "The railway that the Japs built with Asiatic and prisoner-of-war labor between Siam and Burma. One man died for every railroad tie that was laid and it was about two hundred miles long. Donald was one of them."

There was a little pause. "I am so sorry," I said at last. "One thing I have to ask you, I am afraid. Was there a death certificate?"

She stared at me. "I shouldn't think so."

"Oh . . ." I leaned back in my chair and took up the will. "This is the will of Mr. Douglas Macfadden," I said. "I have a copy for you, Miss Paget, but I think I'd better tell you what it contains in ordinary nonlegal language. Your uncle made two small bequests. The whole of the residue of the estate was left in trust for your brother Donald. The terms of the trust were to the effect that your mother was to enjoy the income from the trust until her death. If she died before your brother attained his majority, the trust was to continue until he was twenty-one, when he would inherit absolutely and the trust would be discharged. If your brother died before inheriting, then you were to inherit the residuary estate after your mother's time, but

in that event the trust was to continue till 1956, when you would be thirty-five years old."

She hesitated and then she said, "Mr. Strachan, I'm afraid I'm terribly stupid. I understand you want some proof that Donald is dead. But after that is done, do you mean that I inherit everything that Uncle Douglas left?"

"Broadly speaking—yes," I replied. "You would only receive the income from the estate until the year 1956. After that, the capital would be yours to do what you like with."

"How much did he leave?"

I picked up a slip of paper from the documents before me and ran my eye down the figures for a final check. "After paying death duties and legacies," I said carefully, "the residuary estate would be worth about fifty-three thousand pounds at present-day prices. I must make it clear that that is at present-day prices, Miss Paget."

She stared at me. "Fifty-three thousand pounds?"

I nodded.

"How much a year would that amount of capital yield, Mr. Strachan?"

I glanced at the figures on the slip before me. "Invested in trustee stocks, as at present—about £1550 a year, gross income. Then income tax has to be deducted. You would have about nine hundred a year to spend, Miss Paget."

"Oh . . ." There was a long silence; she sat staring at the desk in front of her. Then she looked up at me and smiled. "It takes a bit of getting used to," she remarked. "I mean, I've always worked for my living, Mr. Strachan, I've never thought that I'd do anything else unless I married, and that's only a different sort of work. But this means that I need never work again—unless I want to."

She had hit the nail on the head with her last sentence. "That's exactly it," I replied. "Unless you want to."

"I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have to go to the office," she said.

"Then I should go on going to the office," I observed.

She laughed. "I suppose that's the only thing to do."

I leaned back in my chair. "I'm an old man now, Miss Paget. I've made plenty of mistakes in my time and I've learned one thing from them, that it's never very wise to do anything in a great hurry. I take it that this legacy will mean a considerable change in your circumstances. If I may offer my advice, I should continue in your present employment for the time, at any rate, and I should refrain from talking about your legacy in the office

[continued on page 130]

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The Legacy

from page 121

just yet. For one thing, it will be some weeks before you get possession even of the income from the estate. First we have to obtain legal proof of the death of your brother and then we have to obtain probate and sell a portion of the securities to meet estate and succession duties. Tell me, what are you doing with this firm Pack and Levy?"

"I'm a shorthand-typist," she said. "I'm working now as secretary to Mr. Pack."

"Where do you live, Miss Paget?"

She said, "I've got a bed-sitting-room at No. 43 Campion Road. I've been there over two years now, ever since I was repatriated. I was out in Malaya, you know, Mr. Strachan, and I was a sort of prisoner of war for three years. Then when I got home I got this job with Pack and Levy."

I MADE a note of her address upon my pad. "Well, Miss Paget," I said, "I will consult the War Office on Monday morning and obtain this evidence about your brother as quickly as I can. Tell me his name and number and unit." She did so and I wrote them down. "As soon as I get that, I shall submit the will for probate. When that is proved, then the trust commences and continues till the year 1956, when you will inherit absolutely."

She glanced at me and said mischievously, "I made some inquiries about this firm."

"Oh . . . I hope they were satisfactory?"

"Very." She did not tell me then what she told me later, that her informant had described us as "solid as the Bank of England and as sticky as molasses." "I know I'm going to be in very good hands, Mr. Strachan."

I inclined my head. "I hope so. After you've thought things over for a day or two I am sure that there will be a great many questions to which you will want answers. Would you like to come and see me again?"

She said, "I would. I know there'll be all sorts of things I want to ask about, but I can't think of them now. It's all so sudden."

I turned to my engagement diary. "Well, suppose we meet again about the middle of next week." I stared at the pages. "Of course you're working. What time do you get off from your office, Miss Paget?"

She said, "Five o'clock."

"Would six o'clock on Wednesday suit you, then? I shall hope to have got somewhere with the matter of your brother by then."

She said, "Well, that's all right for me, Mr. Strachan, but isn't it a bit late for you? Don't you want to get home?"

I said absently, "I only go to the club. No. Wednesday at six would suit me very well." I made a note upon my pad and then I hesitated. "Perhaps if you are doing nothing after that you might like to come on to the club and have dinner in the Ladies' Annex," I said. "I'm afraid it's not a very gay place but the food is good."

She smiled and said warmly, "I'd love to do that, Mr. Strachan. It's very kind of you."

I got to my feet. "Very well, then, Miss Paget—six o'clock on Wednesday. And in the meantime, don't do anything in a great hurry. It never pays to be impetuous . . ."

In the club that evening I had a little talk with a Home Office man about the procedure for establishing the death of a prisoner of war and on Monday I had a number of telephone conversations with the War Office and the Home Office about the case.

When Jean Paget came to see me on Wednesday evening I was ready to report the progress I had made. "I've got your brother's death certificate," I said and I was going on to tell her what I had done with it when she stopped me.

"What did Donald die of, Mr. Strachan?" she asked.

I hesitated for a moment. I did not want to tell so young a woman the unpleasant story I had heard from the Home Office. "The cause of death was cholera," I said at last.

She nodded, as if she had been expecting that. "Poor Brother," she said softly. "Not a very nice way to die."

I felt that I must say something to alleviate

her distress. "I had a long talk with the doctor who attended him," I told her. "He died quite peacefully, in his sleep."

She stared at me. "Well then, it wasn't cholera," she said. "That's not the way you die of cholera."

I was a little at a loss in my endeavor to spare her unnecessary pain. "He had cholera first, but he recovered. The actual cause of death was probably heart failure induced by the cholera."

She considered this for a minute. "Did he have anything else?" she asked.

Well, then of course there was nothing for it but to tell her everything I knew. I was amazed at the matter-of-fact way in which she took the unpleasant details and at her knowledge of the treatment of such things until I recollected that this girl had been a prisoner of the Japanese in Malaya too.

When I was a young man girls didn't know about cholera or great ulcers and I didn't quite know how to deal with her. I turned the conversation back to legal matters where I was on firmer ground and showed her how her case for probate was progressing. And presently I took her downstairs and we got a taxi and went over to the club to dine.

I had a reason for entertaining her that first evening. It was obvious that I was going to have a good deal to do with this young woman in the next few years and I wanted to find out about her. I knew practically nothing of her education or her background at that time; her knowledge of the tropics, for example, had already confused me. I wanted to give her a good dinner with a little wine and get her talking; it was going to make my job as trustee a great deal easier if I knew what her interests were and how her mind worked. And so I took her to the Ladies' Annex at my club, a decent place where we could dine in our own time without music and talk quietly for a little time after dinner.

I showed her where she could go to wash and tidy up and while she was doing that I ordered her a sherry. I got up from the table when she came to me and gave her a cigarette and lit it for her. "What did you do over the week end?" I asked as we sat down. "Did you go out and celebrate?"

She shook her head. "I didn't do anything very much. I'd arranged to meet one of the girls in the office for lunch on Saturday and to see the new Bette Davis film at the Curzon, so we did that."

"Did you tell her about your good fortune?"

SHE shook her head. "I haven't told anybody." She paused and sipped her sherry; she was managing that and her cigarette quite nicely. "It seems such an improbable story," she said, laughing. "I don't know that I really believe in it myself."

I smiled with her. "Nothing is real till it happens," I observed. I thought for a moment. "May I ask a very personal question, Miss Paget?"

"Of course."

"Do you think it likely that you will marry in the near future?"

She smiled. "No, Mr. Strachan, I don't think it's very likely that I shall marry at all. One can't say for certain, of course, but I don't think so."

I nodded without comment. "Well then, had you thought about a university course?"

She shook her head. "I couldn't go back to school again now. I'm much too old."

I smiled at her. "Not quite such an old woman as all that," I observed.

For some reason the little compliment fell flat. "When I compare myself with some of the girls in the office," she said quietly, and there was no laughter in her now, "I know I'm about seventy."

I was finding out something about her now but to ease the situation I suggested that we should go in to dinner. When the ordering was done I said, "Tell me what happened to you in the war. You were out in Malaya, weren't you?"

She nodded. "I had a job in an office, with the Kuala Perak Plantation Company. That

was the company my father worked for, you know. Donald was with them too."

"What happened to you in the war?" I asked again. "Were you a prisoner?"

"A sort of prisoner," she said.

"In a camp?"

"No," she replied. "They left us pretty free." And then she changed the conversation very positively and said, "What happened to you, Mr. Strachan? Were you in London?"

I could not press her to talk about her war experiences if she didn't want to and so I told her about mine—such as they were.

With the coffee after dinner I tried her out on the arts. She knew nothing about music, except that she liked listening to the radio while she sewed. She knew nothing about literature, except that she liked novels with a happy ending. She liked paintings that were a reproduction of something that she knew but she had never been to the Academy. She knew nothing whatsoever about sculpture. For a young woman with nine hundred pounds a year, in London, she knew little of the arts and graces of social life, which seemed to me to be a pity.

In the following weeks while probate was being granted I took her to a good many things. In the course of these excursions she came several times to my flat in Buckingham Gate; she got to know the kitchen and made tea once or twice when we came in from some outing together.

I had arranged a little jaunt for her one Sunday in April. She came to the flat just before lunch, dripping in her dark blue raincoat, carrying a very wet umbrella. I took the coat from her and hung it up in the kitchen. We stood watching the rain beat against the Palace stables opposite, wondering what we should do instead that afternoon.

We had not got that settled when we sat down to coffee before the fire after lunch. I had mentioned one or two things but she seemed to be thinking about other matters. Over the coffee it came out and she said, "I've made up my mind what I want to do first of all, Mr. Strachan."

"Oh?" I asked. "What's that?"

She hesitated. "I know you're going to think this very odd. You may think it very foolish of me, to go spending money in this way. But—well, it's what I want to do. I think perhaps I'd better tell you about it now, before we go out."

It was warm and comfortable before the fire. Outside the sky was dark and the rain streamed down on the wet pavements.

"Of course, Jean," I replied. "I don't suppose it's foolish at all. What is it that you want to do?"

She said, "I want to go back to Malaya, Mr. Strachan. To dig a well."

I SUPPOSE there was a long pause after she said that. I remember being completely taken aback and seeking refuge in my habit of saying nothing when you don't know what to say. She must have felt reproof in my silence, I suppose, because she leaned toward me and she said, "I know it's a funny thing to want to do. May I tell you about it?"

I said, "Of course. Is this something to do with your experiences in the war?"

She nodded. "I've never told you about that. It's not that I mind talking about it but I hardly ever think about it now. It all seems so remote, as if it were something that happened to another person, years ago—some-

thing that you'd read in a book. As if it weren't me at all."

"Isn't it better to leave it so?"

She shook her head. "Not now, now that I've got this money." She paused. "You've been so very kind to me," she said. "I do want to try to make you understand."

Her life, she said, had fallen into three parts, the first two so separate from the rest that she could hardly reconcile them with her present self. First, she had been a schoolgirl living with her mother in Southampton. They lived in a small three-bedroomed house in a suburban street. There had been a period before that when they had all lived in Malaya but they had left Malaya when she was eleven and her brother Donald was fourteen, and she had only confused memories of that earlier time. Her father had been living alone in Malaya when he met his death.

They lived the life of normal suburban English children; school and holidays passing in a gentle rhythm. One thing differentiated them slightly from other families, in that they all spoke Malay. The children had learned it from the amah, of course, and their mother encouraged them to continue talking it in England, first as a joke and as a secret family language, but later for a very definite reason. When Arthur Paget drove his car into the tree near Ipoh he was traveling on the business of his company and his widow became entitled to a pension under the company scheme. He had been a competent and a valuable man. The directors of the Kuala Perak Plantation Company, linking compassion with their quest for a first-class staff, wrote to the widow and offered a position to the boy Donald as soon as he became nineteen. This was a good opening and one that they all welcomed; it meant that Donald was headed for Malaya and for rubber planting as a career. The Malay language became a matter of importance in giving him a good start, for very few boys of nineteen going to the East for their first job can speak an Oriental language.

Jean left school at the age of seventeen and went to a commercial college in Southampton and emerged from it six months later with a diploma as a shorthand-typist. She worked then for about a year in a solicitor's office in the town but during this year a future for her in Malaya was taking shape. Her mother had kept in contact with the chairman of the Kuala Perak Plantation Company and the chairman was very satisfied with the reports he had of Donald from the plantation manager. Unmarried girls were never very plentiful in Malaya and when Mrs. Paget approached the chairman with a proposal that he should find a job for Jean in the head office at Kuala Lumpur it was considered seriously. Here was a girl who was not only of a family they knew but who could also speak Malay, a rare accomplishment in a shorthand-typist from England. So Jean got her job and she left for Malaya in the winter of 1939.

For over eighteen months she had a marvelous time. Her office was just round the corner from the Secretariat. The Secretariat is a huge building built in the more spacious days to demonstrate the power of the British Raj; it forms one side of a square facing the club across the cricket ground, with a perfect example of an English village church to one side. Here everybody lived a very English life with tropical amenities: plenty of leisure, plenty of games, plenty of parties, plenty of

[continued on page 132]

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Line 3 individual salad bowls with lettuce. Place mound of cottage cheese in each bowl and top with 2 drained peach halves. Garnish each salad with 3 ripe olives, and a few crisp carrot and celery sticks stuck into cottage cheese. Serve with or without dressing. Delicious with Ry-Krisp.

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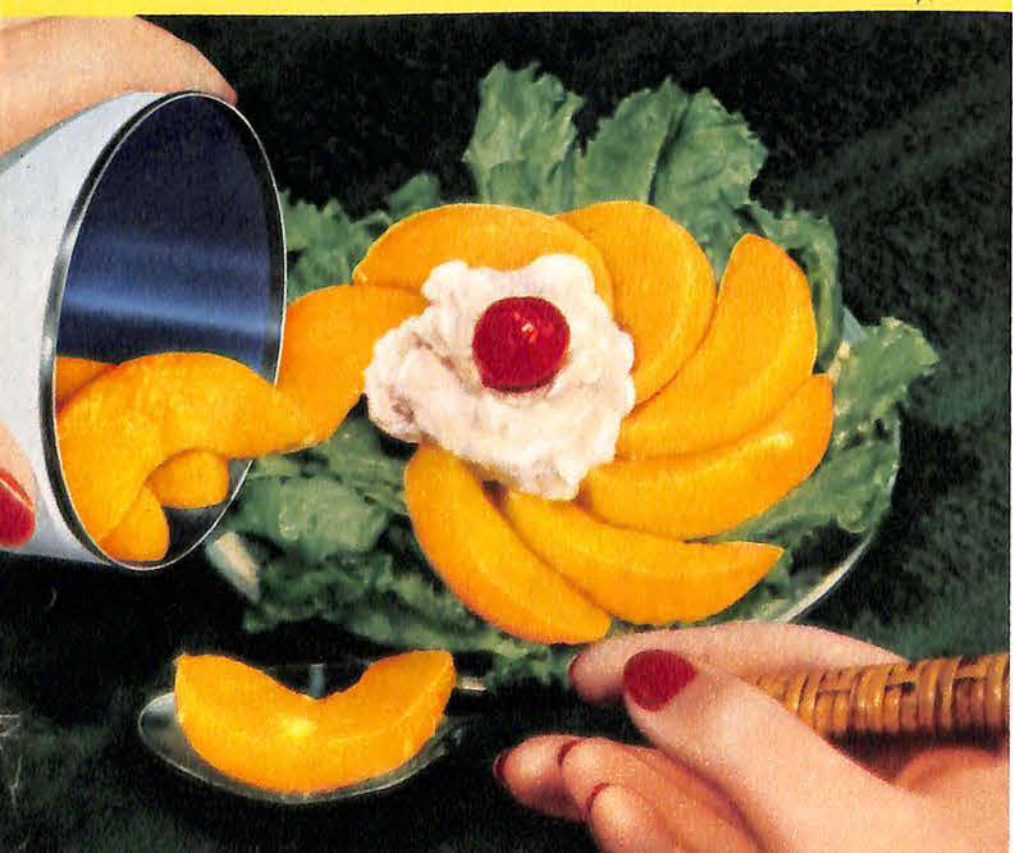
Encore Salad with Cream Cheese

- 1 No. 2½ can sliced cling peaches
- 1 3-oz. package cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- ½ teaspoon grated orange rind
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Lettuce

Drain peaches. Soften cheese at room temperature with a fork and gradually blend in orange juice, sugar and orange rind. Whip until fluffy. Arrange peach slices, sunburst fashion, on garnished salad plates; center with cream cheese. Top each salad with a cherry if desired.

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When war came with Japan it hardly registered with her as any real danger, nor with any of her set. December 7, 1941, brought America into the war; it meant nothing to the parties in Kuala Lumpur except that young men began to take leave from their work and to appear in uniform, itself a pleasurable excitement. Even when the Japanese landed in the north of Malaya there was little thought of danger in Kuala Lumpur; three hundred miles of mountain and jungle was itself a barrier against invasion from the north.

Soon the married women and the children were evacuated to Singapore, in theory at any rate. As the Japanese made headway down the peninsula with swift encirclements through jungle that no troops had ever penetrated before, the situation began to appear serious. There came a morning when Jean's chief, a Mr. Merriman, called her into the office and told her bluntly that the office was closing down. She was to pack a suitcase and take the first train to Singapore. He told her to report there for a passage home.

THE serious nature of the position was obvious to everyone by then. Jean went to the bank and drew out all her money, about six hundred Straits dollars. She did not go to the station, however; she went to Batu Tasik to see Mrs. Holland.

Batu Tasik is a place about twenty miles northwest of Kuala Lumpur and Mr. Holland was a man of forty, the manager of an open-cast tin mine. He lived in quite a pleasant bungalow beside the mine with his wife Eileen and their children—Freddie, aged seven; Jane, aged four; and Robin, who was ten months old. Eileen Holland was a comfortable motherly woman between thirty and thirty-five years old. The Hollands never went to parties or to dances; they were not that sort. They stayed quietly at home and let the world go by them. They had invited Jean to come and stay with them soon after she arrived and she had found their company restful. She had been to see them several times after that and once, when she had had a slight attack of dengue, she had spent a week with them recuperating. In Kuala Lumpur on the previous day she had heard that Mr. Holland had brought his family into the station but had been unable to get them on the train, so they had all gone home again. Jean felt she could not leave without seeing the Hollands and offering her help with the children.

Jean got to Batu Tasik fairly easily in a native bus; she arrived about lunchtime and she found Mrs. Holland alone with the children. All trucks and cars belonging to the mine had been taken by the army and the Hollands were left with nothing but their car with one tire worn down to the canvas and one very doubtful one with a large blister on the wall. Mr. Holland had gone into Kuala Lumpur to get two new tires; he had gone in at dawn and Mrs. Holland was already in a state of flutter that he had not come back.

Bill Holland did not come till nearly sunset and he came empty-handed. All tire stocks in Kuala Lumpur had been commandeered. He had found out, however, that a native bus was leaving for Singapore at eight in the morning and he had reserved seats for his family on that. He had had to walk the last five miles for lack of any other transport and walking five miles down a tarmac road in the middle of the afternoon in the heat of the tropics is no joke; he was soaked to the skin, had a raging thirst and was utterly exhausted.

They decided to leave at dawn, which would give plenty of time to get to Kuala Lumpur before eight. Jean stayed the night with them in the bungalow, wakeful and uneasy.

They were all up before dawn and loading up the car in the first gray light; with three adults and three children and the luggage for all of them, the car was well loaded down. Mr. Holland paid the boys off and they started down the road for Kuala Lumpur but before they had gone two miles the tire that was showing canvas burst. There was a strained pause then while they worked to put the spare on, the one with the blister on the wall; this took them for only another half-mile before going flat. In desperation Mr. Holland went

on on the rim; the wire wheel collapsed after another two miles and the car had run to its end. They were then about fifteen miles from Kuala Lumpur and it was half-past seven.

Mr. Holland left them with the car and hurried down the road to a plantation bungalow about a mile away; there was no transport there and the manager had left the day before. Each of the adults took one child and, carrying or leading it, they set out to walk the five miles home again, leaving the luggage in the car, which they locked.

They reached home in the first heat of the day, utterly exhausted. An hour later they were roused by a truck stopping; a young officer came hurrying into the house.

"You've got to leave this place," he said. "How many of you are there?"

Jean said, "Six, counting the children. Can you take us into Kuala Lumpur? Our car broke down."

The officer laughed shortly. "No, I can't. The Japs are at Kerling or they were when I last heard. They may be farther south by now." Kerling was only twenty miles away. "I'm taking you to Panong. You'll get a boat from there to get you down to Singapore." He refused to take the truck back for their luggage, probably rightly; it was already loaded with a number of families who had messed up their evacuation.

Kuala means the mouth of a river and Kuala Panong is a small town at the entrance to the Panong River. By the time the truck reached this port it was loaded with about forty men, women and children picked up for forcible evacuation from the surrounding estates. Most of these were Englishwomen, the wives of foreman engineers. Few of them had been able to realize the swiftness and the danger of the Japanese advance.

The truck halted at the District Commissioner's office and the subaltern went inside; the D.C. came out, a very worried man, and looked at the crowded women and children and the few men among them. "Lord," he said quietly as he realized the extent of the new responsibility. "Well, drive them to the accounts office over there; I'll try to get something fixed up for them."

The party were unloaded on the veranda of the accounts office and here they were able to stretch and sort themselves out a little. Jean and Bill Holland left Eileen sitting on the veranda with her back against the wall with the children about her and walked into the village to buy what they could to replace the luggage they had lost. They were able to get a feeding bottle for the baby, a little quinine, some salts for dysentery and two tins of biscuits and three of tinned meat; they tried for mosquito nets but they were all sold out. Jean got herself a few needles and thread and, seeing a large canvas haversack, she bought that too. She carried that haversack for the next three years.

TOWARD sunset the *Osprey* turned into the river. The *Osprey* was the customs launch that ran up and down the coast looking for smugglers from Sumatra across the Malacca Strait; she was a large Diesel-engined vessel normally stationed at Penang, a powerful seagoing ship. The D.C.'s face lit up; here was the solution to his problems. Whatever was the mission of the *Osprey*, she must take his evacuees on board and run them down the coast out of harm's way. Presently he left his office and walked down to the quay to meet the vessel as she berthed, to interview the captain.

She came closer and he saw that she was loaded with troops, small stocky men in gray-green uniforms with rifles and fixed bayonets taller than themselves.

The Japanese came rushing ashore and arrested him immediately and walked him back up the jetty to his office with guns at his back, ready to shoot him at the slightest show of resistance. But there were no troops there to resist. The Japanese spread out and occupied the place without a shot; they came to the evacuees sitting numbly on the veranda of the accounts office. Immediately, with rifles and bayonets leveled, they ordered these people to give up all fountain pens and wrist watches and rings. Advised by their menfolk, the women did so silently and suffered no other molestation.

"Twelve or fifteen miles, I should think. Some of us will never get that far."

Jean said, "We'd better do what the soldiers do, have a rest every hour. Hadn't we?" "If they'll let us."

It took an hour to get the last child out of the latrine and get the women ready for the march. The guards squatted on their heels; it was a small matter to them when the march started. Finally Captain Yoniata appeared again, his eyes hard and angry. "You walk now," he said. "Womans remaining here are beaten, beaten very bad. You do good thing and be happy. Walk now."

There was nothing for it but to start. They formed into a little group and walked down the tarmac road in the hot sun, seeking the shade of trees wherever it occurred. Jean walked with Mrs. Holland, carrying the bundle of blankets slung across her shoulders as the hottest and the heaviest load, and leading the four-year-old Jane by the hand. Seven-year-old Freddie walked beside his mother, who carried the baby, Robin, and the haversack. Ahead of them strolled the Japanese sergeant; behind came the three privates.

The women went very slowly, with frequent halts as a mother and child retired into the bushes by the roadside. There was no question of walking continuously for an hour and then resting; the dysentery saw to that. For those who were not afflicted at the moment the journey became one of endless wearisome waits by the roadside in the hot sun. Within the limits of their duty the Japanese soldiers were humane and helpful; before many hours had passed each soldier was carrying a child.

SLOWLY the day wore on. The sergeant made it very clear at an early stage that there would be no food and no shelter for the party till they got to Ayer Pechis and it seemed to be a matter of indifference to him how long they took to get there. They seldom covered more than a mile and a half in the hour, on that first day. As the day went on they all began to suffer from their feet, the older women especially. Their shoes were quite unsuitable for walking long distances and the heat of the tarmac swelled their feet, so that before long many of them were limping with foot pains. Some of the children went barefoot and got along very well.

Jean took her own shoes off; her feet ceased to pain her though from time to time the tarmac grits hurt her soft soles.

They stumbled into Ayer Pechis about six o'clock that evening, shortly before dark. This place was a Malay village which housed the labor for a number of rubber plantations in the vicinity. The latex-processing plant of one stood near at hand and by it was a sort of palm-thatch barn, used normally for smoking sheets of the raw rubber hung on horizontal laths. It was empty now and the women were herded into this. They sank down wearily in a stupor of fatigue; presently the soldiers

brought a bucket of tea and a bucket of rice and dried fish. Most of them drank cup after cup of the tea but few had any appetite for the food.

With the last of the light Jean strolled outside and looked around. The guards were busy cooking over a small fire; she approached the sergeant and asked if she might go into the village. He understood that and nodded; away from Captain Yoniata discipline was lax.

In the village she found one or two small shops selling clothes, sweets, cigarettes and fruit. She saw mangoes for sale and bought a dozen, chaffering with the Malay woman over the price to conserve her slender cash. She ate one at once and felt better for it; at Kuala Panong they had eaten little fruit. She went back to the barn and distributed her mangoes to Eileen Holland and her children and to others, and found they were a great success.

The barn was full of rats, which ran over them and round them all night through. In the morning it was found that several of the children had been bitten.

They woke aching in new places with the stiffness and fatigue of the day before; it did not seem possible that they could march again. The sergeant drove them on; this time the stage was to a place called Asahan. It was a shorter stage than the day before, about ten miles, and it had need to be, because they took as long getting to it. This time the delay was chiefly due to Mrs. Collard. She was a heavy woman of about forty-five. She had suffered from both malaria and dysentery at Panong and she was now very weak.

When they finally reached Asahan she was practically incapable of walking alone. Their accommodation was another rubber-curing barn. They half-carried Mrs. Collard into it and sat her up against the wall, for she said that lying down hurt her and she could not breathe. Half an hour later she died.

That evening in the flickering light of the cooking fire outside the barn Mrs. Horsefall and Jean held a conference with the sergeant, who spoke only a very few words of English. They illustrated their meaning with pantomime. "Not walk tomorrow," they said. "No. Not walk. Rest—sleep—tomorrow. Walk tomorrow, more women die. Rest tomorrow. Walk one day, rest one day."

It would be necessary to bury Mrs. Collard in the morning. This would prevent an early start and would make a ten-mile stage almost impossible. They seized upon this as an excuse. "Tomorrow bury woman in earth," they said. "Stay here tomorrow."

They had to leave it so, uncertain whether he understood or not; he squatted down on his heels before the fire with the three privates. Later he came to Jean, his face alight with intelligence. "Walk one day, sleep one day," he said. "Womans not die." She nodded vigorously and she called Mrs. Horsefall and they all nodded vigorously together, beaming with good nature. [continued on page 136]

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2.-3.



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In the morning they buried Mrs. Collard. There was no burial ground at hand but the Malay headman showed them where they could dig a grave, in a corner of the compound, near a rubbish heap.

Captain Yoniata turned up about midday, driving into Kuala Lumpur in the District Commissioner's car. He stopped and got out, angry to find that they were not upon the road. He abused the sergeant for some minutes in Japanese; the man stood stiffly to attention, not saying a word in explanation or defence. Then he turned to the women. "Why you not walk?" he demanded angrily. "Very bad thing. You not walk, no food."

Mrs. Horsfall faced him. "Mrs. Collard died last night. We buried her this morning, over there. If you make us walk every day like this; we shall all die. These women aren't fit to march at all. You know that."

"What woman die of?" he inquired.
"She had dysentery and malaria, as most of us have had. She died of exhaustion after yesterday's march. You'd better come inside and look at Mrs. Frith and Judy Thomson. They couldn't possibly have marched today."

HE WALKED into the barn and stood looking at the two or three women sitting listless in the semidarkness. Then he said something to the sergeant and went back to his car. At the door he turned to Mrs. Horsfall. "Very sad woman die," he said. "Perhaps I get a truck in Kuala Lumpur. I will ask." He got into the car and drove away.

His words went round the women quickly; he had gone to get a truck for them and they would finish the journey to Kuala Lumpur by truck; there would be no more marching. Things weren't so bad, after all. Their appearance was a great concern to them that afternoon. Kuala Lumpur was their shopping town where people knew them; they must get tidy before the truck came for them.

Captain Yoniata appeared again about an hour before sunset; again he spoke to the sergeant, who saluted. Then he turned to the women. "You not go to Kuala Lumpur," he said. "You go to Port Swettenham and then ship to Singapore."

There was a stunned silence. Then Mrs. Horsfall asked, "Is there going to be a truck to take us to Port Swettenham?"

He said, "Very sorry no truck. You walk slow, easy stages. Two days, three days, you walk to Port Swettenham. Then ship take you to Singapore."

From Asahan to Port Swettenham is about thirty miles. She said, "Captain Yoniata, please be reasonable. Many of us are quite unfit to walk any further. Can't you get some transport for the children, anyway?"

He said, "Englishwomans have proud thoughts always. Too good to walk like Japanese womans. Tomorrow you walk to Bakri." He got into his car and went away; that was the last they ever saw of him.

Bakri is eleven miles in the general direction of Port Swettenham. The change in program was the deepest disappointment, the more so as it showed irresolution in their destiny.

There was nothing for it and next morning they started on the road again. They found that two of the privates had been taken away and one remained to guard them, with the sergeant. This was of no consequence to their security because they had no desire to attempt to escape, but it reduced by half the help the guards had given them in carrying the younger children, so that it threw an extra burden on the mothers.

That day for the first time Jean carried the baby, Robin; Mrs. Holland was walking so badly that she had to be relieved. She still carried the haversack and looked after Freddie but Jean carried the bundle of blankets and small articles and the baby, and led Jane by the hand. She went barefoot as before; after some experiments she found that the easiest way to carry the baby was to perch him on her hip, as the Malay women did.

They slept that night in Bakri and marched

again next day toward a place called Dilit; this was mostly a day spent marching down cart tracks in the rubber plantations. The tracks were mostly in the shade of the trees and this made it pleasant for them and even the older women found the day bearable. They had some difficulty in finding the way. Jean could understand the Malay women rubber tappers and could converse with them, but having got the directions she had some difficulty in making the sergeant understand. She developed a sign language which the sergeant understood. From that time onward Jean was largely responsible for finding the shortest way for the party to go.

At Dilit there was no accommodation for them and no food. The place was a typical Malay village, the houses built of wood and palm thatch. The village had rice and could prepare a meal for them but the headman wanted payment and was only with difficulty induced to agree to provide rice for so many on the word of the sergeant that they would be paid some day. He agreed to move the people from one house, so that the thirty prisoners had a roof to sleep under on a floor about fifteen feet square.

They rested all next day and then marched to Klang, three or four miles outside Port Swettenham. Here there was an empty schoolhouse; the sergeant put them into this and went off to a Japanese encampment near at hand to report and to arrange rations for them.

Presently an officer arrived to inspect them, marching at the head of a guard of six soldiers. This officer, whom they came to know

as Major Nemu, spoke good English. He said, "Who are you people? What do you want here?"

They stared at him. Mrs. Horsfall said, "We are prisoners, from Panong. We are on our way to the prisoner-of-war camp in Singapore. Captain Yoniata in Pa-

non sent us here under guard to be put on a ship to Singapore."

"There are no ships here," he said. "You should have stayed in Panong."

It was no good arguing, nor had they the energy. "We were sent here," she repeated dully.

"They had no right to send you here," he said angrily. "There is no prison camp here."

There was a long awkward silence; the women stared at him in blank despair. Mrs. Horsfall summoned up her flagging energy again. "May we see a doctor?" she asked. "Some of us are very ill. One woman died upon the way."

"What did she die of?" he asked quickly. "Plague?"

"Nothing infectious. She died of exhaustion."

"I will send a doctor to examine you all. You will stay here for tonight but you cannot stay for long." He turned and walked back to the camp.

A new guard was placed upon the schoolhouse; they never saw the friendly sergeant or the private again. They stayed in that schoolhouse under guard, day after day.

JEAN PAGET crouched down on the floor beside the fire in my sitting-room; outside a change of wind had brought the London rain beating against the window.

"People who spent the war in prison camps have written a lot of books about what a bad time they had," she said quietly, staring into the embers. "They don't know what it was like, *not* being in a camp."

They stayed in Klang eleven days, not knowing what was to become of them. Major Nemu allocated one corporal to look after them and told them to walk to Port Dickson. He said that there might be a ship there to take them down to Singapore; if there was not they would be walking in the general direction of the prison camps.

That was about the middle of March 1942. From Klang to Port Dickson is about fifty miles. It took them till the end of the month;

[continued on page 138]

"Molly, this mealy morsel
sure tickles my taster...
is it hard to make?"

"Heavenly days no, McGee!
And I always make it
with Star-Kist Tuna
-it's the best!"



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Molly McGee's STAR-KIST TUNA POT PIE (about 15¢ per serving)

- 1½ cups diced carrots
- 1½ cups diced potatoes
- 3 tablsp. chopped onion
- Milk
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- ½ cup flour
- 1 No. ½ can Star-Kist Tuna
(Fancy Solid Pack or
Chunk Style)
- 1 cup canned peas

Cook carrots, potatoes and onions until just tender in liquid from can of peas. Drain off liquid into measure; add oil from tuna and enough milk to make 2 cups of liquid in all. Now, melt butter, blend in flour and add this liquid stirring constantly until thickened. Pour over cooked vegetables, add tuna, peas and season to taste. Turn into 1½-quart greased casserole, cover with pie crust, biscuit dough or buttered crumbs. Bake at 425° F. until crust is done. Serves 6.



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they had to wait several days in one village because Mrs. Horsefall went down with malaria and ran a temperature of a hundred and five for some time. She recovered and was walking, or rather tottering, within a week, but she never recovered her vigor and from that time onward the leadership fell more and more upon Jean's shoulders.

By the time they reached Port Dickson their clothes were in a deplorable condition. Jean and Mrs. Holland had nothing but the thin cotton frocks that they had worn since they were taken; these were now torn and ragged from washing. Jean had gone barefoot since the early stages of the march and intended to go on without shoes: she now took another step toward the costume of the Malay woman. She sold a little brooch for thirteen dollars to an Indian jeweler in Salak and with two of the precious dollars she bought a cheap sarong.

A sarong is a skirt made of a tube of cloth about three feet in diameter; you get into it and wrap it round your waist like a towel, the surplus material falling into pleats that permit free movement. When you sleep you undo the roll around your waist and it then lies over you as a loose covering that you cannot roll out of. It is the lightest and coolest of all garments for the tropics and the most practical, being simple to make and to wash. For a top, she cut down her cotton frock into a sort of tunic which got rid of the most tattered part, the skirt, and from that time she was cooler and more at ease than any of them. At first the other women strongly disapproved of this descent to native dress; later most of them followed her example.

There was no haven for them at Port Dickson and no ship. They were allowed to stay there for about ten days. The Japanese commander then decided that they were a nuisance and put them on the road to Seremban.

At Siliau, between Port Dickson and Seremban, tragedy touched the Holland family. Jane died. The child had developed fever during the day's march and one of the two Japanese guards they had at that time had carried her for much of the day. Their thermometer had been broken in an accident a few days before and they had now no means of telling the temperature of malaria patients, but she was very hot. They had a little quinine left and tried to give it to her, but they could not get her to take much of it till she grew too weak to resist and then it was too late. At Siliau Jean and Eileen Holland stayed up with her, sleepless, fighting for her life in that dim smelly place. On the evening of the second day she died.

Mrs. Holland stood it far better than Jean had expected that she would. "It's God's will, my dear," she said quietly, "and He'll give her daddy strength to bear it when he hears, just as He's giving us all strength to bear our trials now." She stood dry-eyed beside the little grave and helped to make the little wooden cross. Dry-eyed she picked the text for the cross: "Suffer little children to come unto Me." She said quietly, "I think her daddy would like that one."

Jean woke that night in the darkness and heard her weeping.

SEREMBAN lies on the railway and they had hoped that when they got there there would be a train down to Singapore. They got to Seremban about the middle of April but there was no train for them; the railway was running in a limited fashion but probably not through to Singapore. Before very long they were put upon the road to Tampin.

They stayed at Tampin for some days and got so little food there that they practically starved; at their urgent entreaty the local commandant sent them down under guard to Malacca, where they hoped to get a ship. But there was no ship at Malacca and the officer in charge there sent them back to Tampin. They plodded back there in despair; Judy Thomson died. To stay at Tampin meant more deaths, inevitably, so they suggested it was better for them to continue down to Singapore on foot and a corporal was detailed to take them on the road to Gemas.

In the middle of May, on the way, Mrs. Horsefall died. Mrs. Frith, who was over fifty and always seemed to be upon the point of death and never quite made it, took over

the care of Johnnie Horsefall and it did her a world of good; from that day Mrs. Frith improved and gave up moaning in the night.

The Japanese town major at Gemas, a Captain Nisui, had known nothing about them till they appeared in his town. This was quite usual and Jean was ready for it; she explained that they were prisoners being marched to camp in Singapore.

He said, "Prisoner not go Singapore. Strict order. Where you come from?"

She told him. "We've been traveling for over two months. We must get into a camp or we shall die. Some of us have died upon the road already. We must get into camp at Singapore. You must see that."

"Very sad for you," he said. "I tell you where you go tomorrow."

The news meant very little to the women; they had fallen into the habit of living from day to day. "Looks as if they don't want us anywhere," Mrs. Price said heavily.

Mrs. Frith said, "If they'd just let us alone we could find a little place like one of them villages and live till it's all over."

Jean stared at her. "They couldn't feed us," she said slowly. "We depend upon the Nips for food." But it was the germ of an idea and she put it in the back of her mind.

Captain Nisui came the next day. "You go now to Kuantan," he said. "Woman camp in Kuantan, very good. You will be very glad."

Jean did not know where Kuantan was. She asked, "Where is Kuantan? Is it far away?"

Behind her someone said, "It's hundreds of miles away. It's on the east coast."

"Okay," said Captain Nisui. "On east coast."

THEY left Gemas in the last week of May. None of them really believed that there were prison camps for them at Kuantan.

"He just wants to get rid of us," Jean said wearily. "They don't want to bother with us—just get us out of the way."

They went on for a week, marching about ten miles every other day; then fever broke out among the children. They never really knew what it was; it started with little Amy Price, who came out in a rash and ran a high temperature, with a running nose. It may have been measles.

At Bahau four children died: Harry Collard, Susan Fletcher, Doris Simmonds, who was only three, and Freddie Holland. Jean was most concerned with Freddie, as was natural, but there was so little she could do. She guessed from the first day of fever that he was going to die; by that time she had amassed a store of sad experience. There was something in the attitude of people, even tiny children, to their illness that told when death was coming to them—a listlessness, as if they were too tired to make the effort to live. By that time they had all grown hardened to the fact of death. Grief and mourning had ceased to trouble them; death was a reality to be avoided and fought, but when it came—well, it was just one of those things. After a person had died there were certain things that had to be done, the straightening of the limbs, the grave, the cross, the entry in a diary saying who had died and just exactly where the grave was. That was the end of it; they had no energy for afterthoughts.

Jean's care now was for Mrs. Holland. After Freddie was buried she tried to get Eileen to care for the baby; for the last few weeks the baby had been left to Jean to feed and tend and carry, and she had grown very much attached to him. With both the older children dead, Jean gave the baby, Robin, back to his mother, not so much because she wanted to get rid of him as because she felt that an interest must be found for Eileen Holland, and the baby would supply it. But the experiment was not a great success; Eileen by that time was so weak that she could not carry the baby on the march; and she could not summon the energy to play with him. Moreover, the baby preferred the younger woman to his mother, having been carried by her for so long.

"Seems as if he doesn't really belong to me," Mrs. Holland said once. "You take him, dear. He likes being with you."

As was common on this journey, they found the Japanese guards to be humane and reasonable men, uncouth in their habits and mentally

far removed from western ideas, but tolerant to the weaknesses of women and deeply devoted to children. For hours the sergeant would plod along carrying one child piggy-back and at the same time carrying one end of the stretcher, his rifle laid beside the resting child. Mrs. Frith had lived in Malaya for about fifteen years; she could only speak a few words of the language but she had a considerable knowledge of the country and its diseases. She was quite happy that they were going to Kuantan. "Nice over there, it is," she said. "Much healthier than in the west and nicer people. We'll be all right once we get over there. You see."

As time went on, Jean turned to Mrs. Frith more and more for comfort and advice in their predicaments.

At Ayer Kring Eileen Holland came to the end of her strength. The headman turned the people out of one house for them, as had been done several times before. They laid Mrs. Holland in a shady corner and made a pillow for her head and bathed her face. She took a little soup that evening but refused all food. She knew herself it was the end.

"I'm so sorry, my dear," she whispered late in the night. "Sorry to make so much trouble for you. Sorry for Bill. If you see Bill again, tell him not to fret. And tell him not to mind about marrying again. It's not as if he was an old man."

An hour or two later she said, "I do think it's lovely the way Baby's taken to you. It is lucky, isn't it?"

In the morning she was still alive, but unconscious. They buried her in the Moslem village cemetery that evening.

At Ayer Kring they entered the most unhealthy district they had passed through yet. It took them eleven days to get through the swamps to higher ground.

They came to a very jungly village on a hilltop; they never learned its name. This village was cool and airy, and the people kind and hospitable; they gave the women a house to sleep in and provided food and fresh fruit. They stayed there for six days reveling in the fresh cool breeze and the clear healthy nights and when they finally marched on they were in better shape.

FOUR days later, in the evening, they came to Maran. And there, in front of them, they saw two trucks and two white men working on them while Japanese guards stood by.

They marched quickly toward the trucks, which were both heavily loaded with rails and railway ties. One truck was jacked up and both of the white men were underneath it working on the back axle. They wore shorts and army boots without socks; their bodies were brown with sunburn and very dirty. But they were healthy and muscular men, lean, but in good physical condition. And they were the first white men that the women had seen for five months.

They crowded round the trucks. One of the men lying on his back under the axle glanced at the bare feet and the sarongs within his range of vision and said slowly, "Tell the Nip to get those boong women shifted back so we can get some light."

Some of the women laughed and Mrs. Frith said, "Don't you go talking like that about us, young man."

The men rolled out from under the truck and sat staring at the women and the children, at the brown skins, the sarongs, the bare feet. "Who said that?" asked the younger man. "Which of you speaks English?" He spoke deliberately in a slow drawl, with something of a pause between each word.

Jean said, laughing, "We're all English."

He stared at her, noting the blond hair, the brown arms and feet, the sarong, the brown baby on her hip. There was a line of white skin showing on her chest at the V of her tattered blouse.

"We're prisoners," she said.

He got to his feet; he was a dark-haired powerfully built man about twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. "Dinky-die?" he said.

She did not understand that. "Are you prisoners?" she asked.

He smiled slowly. "Are we prisoners?" he repeated. "Oh my word."

There was something about this man that

she had never met before. "Are you English?" she asked.

"No fear," he said in his deliberate way. "We're Aussies."

She said, "Are you in a camp here?"

He shook his head. "We come from Kuantan," he said. "But we're driving trucks all day, fetching this stuff down to the coast."

She said, "We're going to Kuantan, to the women's camp there."

He stared at her. "There isn't any women's camp at Kuantan," he said slowly. "There isn't any regular prisoner camp at all, just a little temporary camp for us because we're truck drivers. Who told you that there was a women's camp at Kuantan?"

"The Japanese told us. They're supposed to be sending us there." She sighed. "It's just another lie."

"The bloody Nips say anything." He smiled slowly. "I thought you were a lot of boongs—Malays," he said. "You say you're English, dinky-die? All the way from England?"

She nodded. "That's right. Some of us have been out here for ten or fifteen years, but we're all English."

"And the kiddies—they all English too?"

"All of them," she said.

HE SMILED slowly. "I never thought the first time that I spoke to an English lady she'd be looking like you."

"You aren't exactly an oil painting yourself," Jean said.

"Where do you come from?"

Mrs. Frith said, "We got took in Panong, over on the west coast."

"But where did you come from now?"

Jean said, "We're being marched to Kuantan."

"Not all the way from Panong?"

She laughed shortly. "We've been everywhere—Port Swettenham, Port Dickson—everywhere. Nobody wants us. I reckon that we've walked nearly five hundred miles."

"Oh my word," he said. "That sounds a crooked deal to me. How do you go on for tucker, if you aren't in a camp?"

Jean did not understand him. "Tucker?"

"What do you get to eat?"

"We stay each night in a village," she said. "We'll have to find somewhere to stay here. Probably in a place like this it'll be the school. We eat what we can get in the village."

He swung round to the other. "You heard about the deal that they got?" he said. "Been walking all the time since they got taken. Never been inside a prison camp at all."

"They've been telling me," the other said. The first man turned back to Jean. "What happens if any of you get sick?"

She said cynically, "When you get sick, you get well or you die. We haven't seen a doctor for the last three months and we've got practically no medicines left, so we mostly die. There were thirty-two of us when we were taken. Now we're seventeen."

The Australian said softly, "Oh my word." Jean said, "Will you be staying here to-night?"

He said, "Will you?"

"We shall stay here," she said. "We shall be here tomorrow too, unless they'll let us ride down on your trucks. We can't march the children every day. We walk one day and rest the next."

He said, "If you're staying, Mrs. Boong, we're staying too. We can fix this axle so as it will never roll again, if needs be." He paused in slow thought. "You have no medicines?" he said. "What do you want?"

She said quickly, "Have you any Glauber's salts?"

He shook his head. "Is that what you want?"

"We haven't any salts at all," she said.

"We want quinine and something for all these skin diseases that the children have. Can we get those here?"

He said slowly, "I'll have a try. Have you got any money?"

Mrs. Frith snorted. "After being six months with the Japs? They took everything we had. Even our wedding rings."

Jean said, "We have a few little bits of jewelry left, if we could sell some of those."

He said, "I'll have a go first and see what I

[continued on page 160]

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Ingredients:
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2 1/2 cups sifted cake flour
4 tsp. baking powder (5/8 if tartaric type)
1 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla
4 egg whites
2 sq. unsweetened chocolate, melted

Step 1: Put Swift'ning in bowl. Sift in flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Add 3/4 cup of the milk, and vanilla. Beat 2 minutes on medium speed of electric mixer, or by hand using 150 strokes per minute. Throughout mixing time keep batter scraped from

sides and bottom of bowl with rubber scraper. Scrape bowl and beaters.

Step 2: Add unbeaten egg whites and remaining 1/4 cup milk. Beat for 2 min. Scrape bowl and beaters. Pour 1/2 of batter into one pan; add melted chocolate to remaining batter and pour into other pan. Bake about 28 min. or until done. Cool.

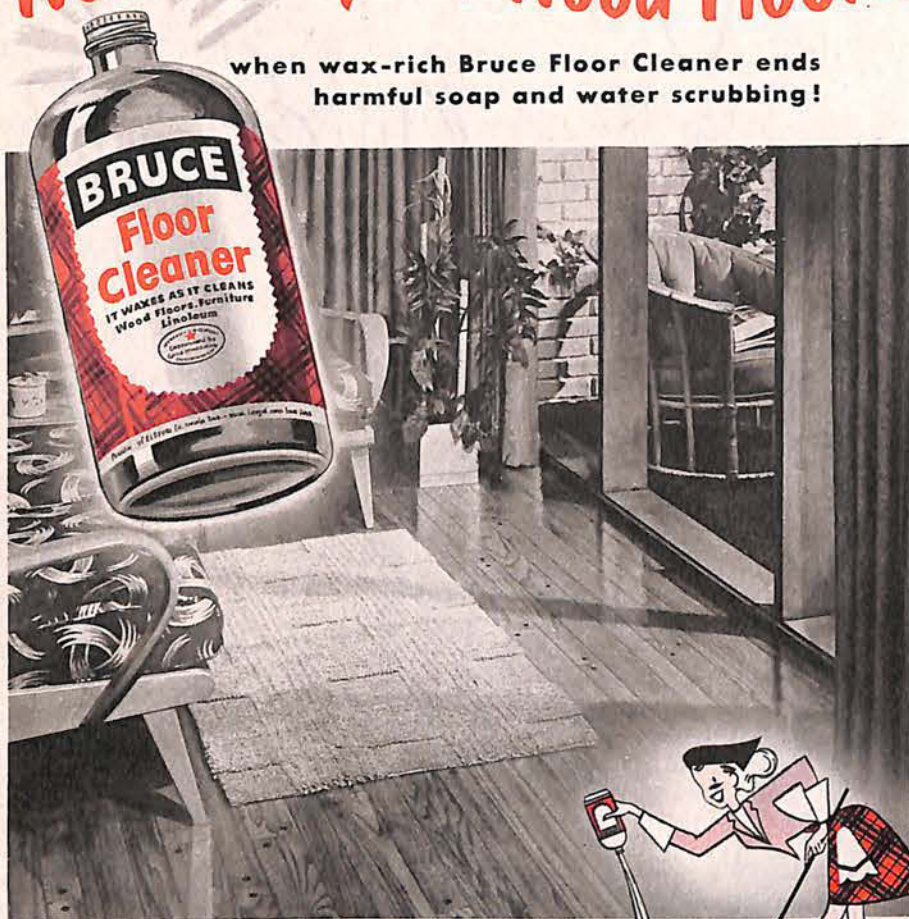
Fill and frost with chocolate frosting, placing dark layer at the bottom. Mark top into squares and cover alternate squares with coconut.



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The Legacy

from page 139

can do. You get fixed up with somewhere to sleep and I'll see you later."

"All right."

At the trucks the Aussies got back to their work. With heads close together under the axle, the man that Jean had talked to said, "I never heard such a crook deal, Ben. What can we do to fix this so we stay here tonight? I said I'd try to get some medicines for them."

They worked on for a little.

"How you going to do that?"

"Petrol, I suppose. That's the easiest."

It was already growing dark when they extracted four feet of heavy metal shafting from the back axle; they showed it, dripping with black oil, to the Japanese corporal in charge of them as evidence of their industry. "Truck here tonight," they said. The guard was suspicious but agreed; indeed, he could do nothing else.

The dark-haired man left the trucks and in the half-light slipped quickly down behind a row of houses and came out into the street toward the end of the village. Here there was a Chinese who ran a decrepit bus.

In his deliberate manner the Aussie said quietly, "Johnnie, you buy petrol? How much you give?" It is extraordinary how little barrier an unknown language makes between a willing buyer and a willing seller. At one point in the negotiation they resorted to the written word, and the Australian wrote "Glauber's salts" and "quinine" and "skin disease ointment" in block letters on a scrap of paper.

IN THE darkness, later in the night, the Aussie came to the schoolhouse where the women were. One of the Japanese soldiers was supposed to be on guard all night but in the five weeks that they had been with this pair of guards the women had not shown the slightest inclination to escape and their guards had long ago given up watching them at night. The Australian had made sure where the soldiers were, however, and when he had seen them squatting with the truck guards he came silently to the school.

At the open door he paused and said quietly, "Which of you ladies was I talking to this afternoon? The one with the baby."

Jean was asleep; they woke her and she pulled up her sarong and slipped her top on and came to the door. He had several little packages for her. "That's quinine," he said. "I can get more of that if you want it. I couldn't get Glauber's but this is what the Chinese take for dysentery. If it's any good, keep the label and maybe you could get some more in a Chinese drug shop."

She took them gratefully from him. "That's marvelous," she said softly. "How much did it all cost?"

"That's all right," he said in his deliberate manner. "The Nips paid but they don't know it."

She thanked him again. "What are you doing here?" she asked. "Where are you going with the trucks?"

"Kuantan," he said. He told her that there were six of them driving six trucks for the Japanese; they drove regularly from Kuantan up country. They sometimes failed to return to Kuantan before dark; when that happened they spent the night in a village.

He had been taken prisoner in Johore and had been driving trucks from Kuantan for about two months. "Better than being in a camp," he said.

She sat down on the top step that led up to the school and he squatted down before her on the ground. His manner of sitting intrigued her, because he sat down on one heel somewhat in the manner of a cowboy, but with his left leg extended. "Are you a truck driver in Australia?" she asked.

"No fear," he said. "I'm a ringer."

She asked, "What's a ringer?"

"A cattlerider," he said. "I was born in Queensland. My dad, he came from London. He came out to Queensland to work and met Ma. I've been working over to the west, on a station called Wollara. That's about a hundred and ten miles southwest of Alice Springs."

She smiled. "Where's that?"

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"Alice," he said, "is right in the middle of Australia."

She said, "I thought the middle of Australia was all desert."

He was concerned at her ignorance. "Oh my word," he said deliberately. "Alice is a bonza place. Plenty of water in Alice; people living there, they leave the sprinkler on all night, watering the lawn. That's right, they leave the sprinkler on all night. Course, the Territory's dry in some parts but there's usually good feed along the creeks." His slow even tones were strangely comforting. "You go to a place like that and you'll find little diggings all over in the sand, where the kangaroos have dug for water. They know where to go."

"How many cattle have you got?"

"About eighteen thousand when I come away," he said. "It goes up and down, according to the wet, you know."

"Eighteen thousand? But how big is it?"

"Wollara? About two thousand seven hundred."

"Two thousand seven hundred acres," she said. "That's a big place."

He stared at her. "Not acres," he said. "Square miles. Wollara's two thousand seven hundred square miles."

She was startled. "But is that all one place—one farm, I mean?"

"It's one station," he replied. "One property."

"But however many does it take to run it?"

His mind ran lovingly around the well-remembered scene. "There's Mr. Duveen, Tommy Duveen—he's the manager, and then me—I'm the head stockman, or I was. Tommy said he'd keep a place for me when I got back. I'd like to get back to Wollara again, one day . . ." He mused a little. "We had three other ringers—whites," he said. "Then there was Happy and Moonlight and Nugget and Snowy and Tarmac . . ." He thought for a minute. "Nine boongs we had," he said.

"Nine what?"

"Black boys—black stockriders. Abos."

"But that's only thirteen men," she said.

"That's right. Fourteen if you count Mr. Duveen."

There was a short silence; over their heads the flying foxes swept in the moonlight with a dry rustling of leathery wings. "Eighteen thousand cattle . . ." she said thoughtfully.

They sat together for over an hour, talking quietly at the entrance to the schoolhouse. At the end the ringer got up from his strange posture on the ground and said, "I mustn't stay any longer, case those Nips come back."

JEAN got to her feet. "It's been terribly kind of you to get us these things. You don't know what they mean to us. Tell me, what's your name?"

"Joe Harman," he said. "Sergeant Harman—Ringer Harman, some of them call me."

He hesitated. "Sorry I called you Mrs. Boong today," he said awkwardly. "It was a silly kind of joke."

She said, "My name's Jean Paget."

"That sounds like a Scotch name."

"It is," she said. "I'm not Scotch myself but my mother came from there."

"My mother's family was Scotch," he said.

"They came from Inverness."

She put out her hand. "Good night, Sergeant," she said. "It's been lovely talking."

He took her hand; there was great comfort for her in his masculine handshake. "Look, Mrs. Paget," he said. "I'll try to get the Nips to let your party ride down on the truck with us. In any case I'll see you on the road again before you get to Kuantan and I'll make darn sure there's something wrong with the truck. What else do you want?"

"Soap," she said. "Could you possibly get us soap?"

"Should be able to," he said.

"We've got no soap at all," she observed.

"I've got a little gold locket that one of the women had. I was going to see if I could sell that here and get some soap."

"Keep it," he said. "I'll see you get soap."

"We want that more than anything, now that you've got these medicines for us."

"You'll have it." He hesitated and then said, "Sorry I talked so much, boring you with Australia and all that. There's times

[continued on page 162]



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THE ANTISEPTIC THAT RELIEVES PAIN INSTANTLY

when you get down a bit—can't make yourself believe you'll ever see it again."

"I wasn't bored," she said softly. "Good night, Sergeant."

"Good night."

In the morning Jean showed the women what she had. "I heard you talking to him ever so long," Mrs. Price said. "Nice young man, I'd say."

"He's a very homesick young man," Jean said. "He loves talking about the cattle station he comes from."

"Homesick!" Mrs. Price said. "Aren't we all?"

The Australians had a smart argument with their guards that morning, who refused point-blank to let the women ride.

FROM Maran to Kuantan is fifty-five miles. The women that day began the march down the tarmac road. Jean had looked for Joe Harman's truck all day expecting to see it returning; she did not know that it had been stranded overnight, short of petrol, and was a day late in the return journey. They stayed next day at Buan in a shed; the women took turns with Jean watching for the truck. Their health already was somewhat improved; the medicines were having an effect. The country too was growing higher and healthier and the more imaginative of them were already saying they could smell the sea. And finally their contact with the two Australians had had a marked effect on their morale.

They did not see Joe Harman's truck as it passed through. Instead a Malay girl came to them in the evening with a brown paper parcel of six cakes of soap; it was addressed to Mrs. Paget. Written on the parcel was a note which read:

Dear Lady,

I send some soap which is all that we can find just at present but I will get more later on. I am sorry not to see you but the Nip won't let us stop. Look out for us on the way back and I will try to stop then.

JOE HARMAN

The women were delighted. "Mechanics' soap," said Mrs. Warner, sniffing it ecstatically. "You can just smell the carbolic in it! My dear, wherever do you think they got it?"

"I'd have two guesses," Jean replied. "Either they stole it or they stole something to buy it with." In fact, the latter was correct. At Pohoi their Japanese guard had taken off his boots to wash his feet at the village well; he washed his feet for about thirty seconds and turned round, but the boots had vanished; it could not have been either of the Australians because they both appeared immediately from the other direction. The mystery was never cleared up. Ben Leggat, however, was most helpful and stole a pair from a sleeping Japanese and gave them to their guard, who was so relieved that he gave Ben a dollar.

The next day the women marched to Berkapor, where they were accommodated in a large shed beside the road and just before dusk the two familiar trucks drew up in the village, driven by Ben Leggat and Joe Harman. As before, they were headed for the coast.

Jean and several of the others walked across the road to meet them, with the Japanese sergeant; the Japanese guards fell into conversation together. Joe Harman turned to Jean. "Ben's got a pig."

"A pig?" They crowded round Ben's truck. The corpse was lying upon the top of the load, a black long-nosed Oriental pig, somewhat mauled. Ben, whose truck was in the lead, had found this pig upon the road and had chased it with the truck for a quarter of a mile. The Japanese guard beside him had fired six shots at it from his rifle and wounded it and so enabled Ben to run over it with one of the front wheels. They had stopped and Harman coming close behind them had stopped too and the two Aussies and the Japanese guards had heaved the pig onto the load and got moving again before the infuriated Chinese storekeeper had caught up with them to claim his property. Harman said quietly to Jean, "We'll have to let the Nips eat all they can and carry away a bit. Leave it to me; I'll see there's some for you."

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