



Eban told his father and Molly that Yali and his followers had almost a religious fervour that would continue until they became tired of waiting for the promised kago. A few of the missionaries that Eban had spoken to shared his opinion.

He advised his father to try to offer some sort of inducements to keep the workers loyalty. Perhaps some laplap cloth at prices below that charged at the market, and new machetes for the field workers and let them keep their old ones. In this way, Eban said, some of the benefits of kago would be realised by sticking with the planters. Paul agreed that after talking to the other planters he would suggest trying some of Eban's ideas.

Later in the afternoon when they decided to go back to the plantation, they made a stop at Bilbil village so that Molly could see where Eban's mother had come from. While they were there Paul showed Molly around while Eban talked to the villagers about their thoughts about Yali. Because Bilbil was unique in its pottery industry, they knew the value of trade and of working together for a common aim.

The men were as much involved in pottery making as the women. While the women shaped and decorated the pots, the men found the clay beds and transported the material and tended the fires for baking. The canoes they made were essential in taking the pots to other locations for barter. The homes in the village were well constructed and maintained, and their gardens, while small, were well tended and very productive.

Some of the women asked Eban who Molly was, and if she was going to be Paul's new wife. When Eban explained that Molly was going to marry him, there were many murmurs of

approval. As Eban had never lived in the village, as his mother had, he was not treated just as a relative, but as a special person. All of the villagers knew of his heritage, and treated him with special respect.

When they finally left, Molly was presented with a finely decorated pot, presented by the luluai's wife, who with the other women surrounded Molly as she walked to the jeep. Eban heard some ribald remarks delivered good-naturedly as he climbed in beside Molly.

That evening after tea, Paul and Eban discussed the Yali situation again, and Eban decided to go to town again and see what more he could find out. He suggested that Molly come along and visit the Lutheran school in town while he was busy. Molly readily agreed as she was anxious to do some exploring on her own.

The next morning Eban and Molly left Paul to catch up with some planting work as they took the jeep to town. Eban had met the head of the Lutheran school when he last visited Madang, and he introduced Molly and left her while he went to the market.

Yali was again holding forth under one of the market trees, and had a fairly large crowd listening to him. Word had gotten to Yali about who Eban was, and as soon as Eban squatted down to listen, Yali began directing his remarks in Eban's direction.

Speaking to the crowd in pidgin, he said the Eban was a good example of how to profit by cargo. He pointed out Eban's jeep and his fine clothes. He said that Eban's father was profiting from taking the cargo that rightly belonged to the workers and using it for himself. "Can you," he asked, "go to the administration and get supplies left by the Japanese? No! The Europeans are keeping it all to themselves and letting us get only the things that are no longer useful!"

"And another thing," he continued, "If you dare to look at a white woman in any way you will be caned or jailed! Why this man Eban was walking around the market yesterday with a woman that you or I could not touch!"

Eban struggled to keep his expression neutral, but was fuming inside. He wanted to challenge Yali, but knew that this would do no good. Yali went on with his speech, and pointed out that many of the bearers who worked for the army during the war were never given some of the money owed them, and that those who had been in hospital were now ignored by the administration.

"The white man is taking everything that is ours," Yali continued, "There are huge piles of cargo that the soldiers are guarding so that only the white man can get to the things that are rightfully ours."

By now, some of the audience was staring at Eban in a not very friendly way. When the meeting finally broke up, some of the men who knew Eban asked him if Yali was speaking the truth. Everyone had seen Eban and Molly, and someone from Bilbil had reported that Eban and Molly were to be married.

When Eban confirmed the report, several people smiled in approval, but others pointed out that Yali had been right - Eban was just like the other expatriates in getting all the cargo that was due the natives. "His father is white, and now Eban wants to be white and forget about his mother! He is going to steal your cargo to keep his white woman happy!"

"I have never forgotten my mother, and I have never forgotten who I am!" Eban proclaimed as he went on to tell the others that Yali was only looking to get cargo for himself, and not share it with the rest. He pointed out that Yali asked for money at the end of each speech to "help fight the greedy white man."

"If cargo is truly coming from the gods or the spirits, why does Yali need money? Does he think the spirits can be bought like a common labourer? Cargo comes to those who work for it just like the seeds in your gardens. If the women don't take care of the garden it will die and you will have nothing to eat at harvest time!" Eban reminded them of his home village of Bilbil, and how they prospered from their own efforts.

"If the people of Bilbil sat on their heels and waited for the spirits to make their pots, they would all starve or have to work in the copra sheds." Eban went on to explain that the whites paid large head taxes so that the government could make things that were sent to the soldiers during the war. "It was not the spirits that sent the rice and tinned beef, but the people back in the white's home villages that worked hard to make the things that the soldiers needed.!"

When the crowd finally broke up, it was evenly divided as to who was the victor, Yali or Eban, but each side was more firmly convinced that their side was right. Eban knew that this was only the start of a long battle with Yali, and hoped that it would not end with a blood feud.

Meanwhile, Molly was enjoying herself observing at the Lutheran school. While there were not as many educational aids as in the Moresby school, here the classes had a good number of girls enrolled. The missionaries had tried hard to make the school coed and offered the inducement of practical instruction for the girls in basic health procedures as well as cooking, sewing and gardening information.

The Headmaster explained that the girls would all be taught the traditional things such as making bilums at home, but were seldom shown the mysteries of ciphering and writing except at the pleasure of the Luluai. The school had several basic sewing machines and the older girls were shown how to use them to avoid the tedious traditional hand stitching.

Molly was taken to a few of the classes for the older pupils and asked to address the students in her limited pidgin. As a lot of the students had only learned pidgin themselves, it

was relatively easy for Molly to communicate. She allowed some of the students to touch her hair when she found out that many of them had never seen a white woman except for the drably- dressed missionaries.

During their PT time, Molly joined the class in a spirited game of soccer in which she was as inept as most of the pupils. The teachers were watching and marvelling at the way Molly was able to communicate with the students on all levels. Most of the missionary teachers had never involved themselves in PT except to lead a session of callisthenics.

When PT was finished, several of the students asked Molly to tell them about her school, and before Molly started, the teacher explained that they meant the Australian school, not Moresby. Molly described the Rockhampton Grammar School as best she could, and was besieged with question about uniforms and books. She tried to explain girl's field hockey and the way the whole school turned out for matches with other schools.

At the end of the day when Eban came to pick her up, she showed her obvious enthusiasm and commented to Eban that she would love to teach in such a school. When Eban told her that the administration was planning on opening a large school in Madang, she said that she would be glad to transfer if she could still be with Eban.

Back at the plantation Paul had taken a truck and driven to the Army Depot to look at a portable sawmill that was going to be declared surplus and available in the area. He was aware of large stands of hardwood in the remote areas of the plantation bordering on the Gogol forest .

Paul had been having difficulties purchasing timbers for construction of new copra drying sheds, and decided to look into cutting his own lumber if he could mill it himself. He had two workers who had been taught by the Army how to work in a sawmill, and thought he would use them to get started.

At the depot he found the sawmill, consisting of a couple of chain saws, a drive table, and a large band saw. He negotiated a price and arranged to have it trucked to the plantation where he would have a technician from Moresby come and set it up.

As all of the other plantations as well as the business people in town were now having lumber shipped in from other areas, Paul was sure that he could sell whatever he did not need for his own use. There were rumours of another sawmill going to start at Wewak, financed by a firm that had ties to Japanese investors. There were also rumours that the government was going to set up strict regulations about the harvesting of forest products in the near future.

For the balance of their stay in Madang, Molly and Eban took a holiday, and with Paul's permission, used the jeep every day on an excursion to see the countryside. After visiting other plantations in the area, they went to the mission near Alexishafen to visit the people who had helped to rescue Alex. They not only received the warm blessings of the Pastor, but an offer to marry them on the spot if they so desired.

The next morning Eban arranged for a launch and Molly packed a picnic lunch for a day on one of the off-shore Islands near Madang. On the way out of the Harbour a school of dolphins accompanied them with spectacular jumps that made Molly laugh with joy. When they arrived at the Island, they were the only visitors, and decided to have a bathe while waiting for their tea water to boil.

They changed into their bathing gear and met in the cool clear water just at the edge of a coral reef. Eban tried to teach Molly to dive, but soon discovered that holding Molly in his arms was more fun than the lessons. At the same time, Molly had lost all interest in marine biology, in favour of human anatomy. Eventually both slipped off their bathing gear, and spent a pleasant half hour admiring each other's body in a natural state.

Reluctantly, after a blissful time, they put their clothes back on, and went back to shore to eat their lunch while their launch pilot went off looking for some Kina shell to bring to Molly. After lunch they lay on the warm sand, and talked about the many things they had to do when they returned to Moresby.

They decided to get married as soon as possible after Molly could inform her sister, and Eban could make arrangements for a house for them to live in. It was nice to spend a day of devoting their attention to each other and at the same time take in the natural beauty of the Madang area. The launch pilot had been a boyhood friend of Eban's and was now one of Paul's most trusted employees.

When they arrived back at the plantation, they told Paul of their decision as to the wedding so that he might plan to come when a final date was set. Paul said that the first item on his agenda would be to enlarge the house and make suitable quarters for Molly. He was enthusiastic about another woman around after all the years since Eban's mother died, and was looking forward to modernising the house now that the wartime threats were over.

Two days later the engaged couple returned to Moresby, luckily on a Friday evening, just before sundown. Molly's arrival at the dorm was a gala event. Both Pat and Aileen started to question Molly before she could even put her valises into her room. "Well, tell us all about it!," was Pat's question, and Aileen was clamouring for the answer to what Eban's father thought.

Pat brought out a bottle of Gin and some lemon squash, and they sat down at the kitchen table after drinks were made and Molly told her story in spite of constant interruptions and requests for details at each point. She tried to get in some questions of her own about events at the town and school whilst she was away, but finally demurred and finished her own story till the questions ran out.

Planning a wedding was a subject that everyone but Molly seemed to be an expert on. Ideas came fast and furious, and Molly finally just resigned herself to sitting back and listening. The next afternoon the other girls went to the Ela Beach club, while Molly unpacked and took care of her washing. She then sat at her desk and composed letters to her sister, her minister in Rockhampton, and the Headmaster of the Grammar School.

She offered to pay the way for her sister to come to the wedding, but, as Pat was expecting a baby, was not sure that she would be able to attend. Pat and Mick had by this time settled on a sheep station not far from Melbourne and were struggling to build up a flock that would produce the finest merino fleece possible.

When she wrote to her minister, she pointed out Eban's heritage, and also the fact that he had been educated in church schools as well as the university in Brisbane. She mentioned that Eban's father had come from Brisbane, and was now a respected member of the expatriate community in New Guinea, Molly felt that she no longer had any real ties to Australia other than her sister, and asked for a blessing on her marriage.

To the Headmaster of the Grammar School, she told of her enthusiasm for her job, and her desire to do as much as possible to further the education of the native population. She said that she and Eban shared like ideas and felt that they could overcome any adverse reaction that they might encounter.

Both Carol Ward and Sally Jones were incurably romantic, and threw themselves into Molly's affairs with a motherly lack of caution. When they heard from Alec that the wedding would probably take place on the Airbase, they immediately besieged Alec with all sorts of plans for making it a gala affair.

Molly soon asked Pat to be her Maid of Honour, and Aileen was pleased to be asked to be the Bridesmaid. Eban, in turn, asked Alec to be his Best Man, and Les Jones enthusiastically

accepted the honour of being the bride's sponsor. It was a wonder that any educational work was accomplished at the school once wedding plans were underway!

Meanwhile Eban was searching for a house in Moresby, and finding very little available, He was also trying to purchase an automobile, which was even more of a task. The entire wedding took on the appearance of a community event and was the topic of conversation in every club and pub where either of the pair was known.

There seemed to be little doubt about the affection the pair had for each other, but there was much discussion about how they would be received by other expatriates. There were many horror stories about white women marrying Papuan men, but this marriage did not quite fit that role because Eban was not pure Papuan. Some people pointed out that neither was he pure white, and that could cause a problem.

Politically it was a tossup as to whether the marriage would be good or bad. Talk of independence was rife in the country, and everyone of the white community thought that Eban would be the one to play a major role in that. The native population had mixed reactions. Cargo cultists did not like Eban, and to other factions he was nothing more than another expatriate.

Official philosophy was on the side of letting the indigenous population do the planning for independence but with the Australian government keeping a firm hand on the actual running of things ...."for the time being."

As far as the Education Department was concerned, they felt they had a gem in Eban. Here was a bridge between the two cultures, and one that was philosophically more white than Papuan.

Unbeknownst to Eban high level discussions had already been held on the advisability of posting Eban to the North side of the Island where his knowledge and influence was greater

than in Moresby. Les Jones was aware of these discussions, as he was aware of Molly's statements about wanting to teach in Madang.

Paul Edwards was well regarded by the ANGAU people and had a reputation with the natives of being a fair and benevolent man. His and Eban's actions during the war were well known and demonstrated a solid allegiance to the Crown. The battle over education with the German missionaries was now almost won due to the work Eban had done in convincing them to accept English and Pidgin as the lingua franca. The way was almost clear for a standard educational system in Madang.

Meanwhile, plans for the wedding were moving along at a great pace. As this was to be the first non-military wedding performed at the base, everyone watched the planning critically. A volunteer crew formed to decorate the Officer's club with flowers and drapes, and a fancy alter was built by the engineers at one end of the dance floor.

As yet, the wedding date was not set, as Molly hadn't heard from her sister in Melbourne, or from the Headmaster of the Rockhampton Grammar School. She had a letter from the minister of the Methodist church, that told her that he was dispatching a note to the Chaplain of the Airbase asking for help to facilitate things for Molly.

In a haze of confusion and anticipation, Molly and Eban got together with Alec and decided that they would be married as soon as possible after hearing from her sister.

Les Jones called Eban into his office one evening, and asked if Eban was ready for marriage. Eban bristled a bit, and asked Les what he meant by that question. "Well," said Les, "I have heard some talk from some people wondering if you will be satisfied to stay with the school system after you take a wife." Jones went on to explain what he had heard about the proposal to send Eban to Madang to facilitate the opening of a new state school there in order to counteract the workings of the Mission schools.

Eban replied that he would certainly consider favourably going to Madang, but wondered if Molly was ready to leave the "civilisation" of Moresby for such a small town, and give up her teaching position.

At that period of time New Guinea, and Moresby in particular was in a state of indecision about the future. Predictions about the future were constantly being revised, and many people were not sure of what their place would be in the new politics.

The expatriates were beginning to take a new look at the indigines, and the natives were worrying about how they could meet the task of eventual self-rule. Those in charge of the Education Department were being challenged to come up with new plans for education, and indeed, there was even talk of eventually forming a university.

While Eban was on the very perimeter of these talks, he was occasionally approached by various officials who sought his opinion on matters that concerned natives. As a "half-caste", Eban's status had always been at the whim of the way any official or edict was worded. The new philosophy that was slowly emerging made his status more rather than less desirable, as the expatriates felt their slowly eroding position not boding well for the future.

Molly cautioned Eban about taking the advice of others too seriously. She pointed out that most of the advice givers had a personal stake in the future, and were trying to make sure their future would be safe. While Eban's loyalties were on the side of his father, he was also aware of a strong cultural tie with his mother's family.

In the end, it was decided to take a wait-and-see attitude before making any commitment one way or another. Besides, there was more and more the pressing business of making the marriage an accomplished fact. Everyone was pressing the couple for a definite date, and when Molly finally heard from her sister, there was no more reason to wait.

Molly's sister, Pat, not only gave her and Mick's blessing to the union, but enclosed a sizeable cheque for a wedding present. It seemed that the wool market was extremely good, and Pat and Mick wanted to show their appreciation for Molly's understanding when they were married. Pat also announced said that she was pregnant she would be unable to attend any ceremony, but would be there in spirit.

The wedding date was set for a month hence after consultation with the preacher, Alec, the wedding party, and (it seemed) the community at large. Paul Edwards was informed over his newly-installed phone line, and immediately started to make arrangements for coming to Moresby for an extended visit.

Paul's sawmill enterprise was now installed, and test runs were successfully completed under the supervision of a Sepik man who had worked in a sawmill run by the Japanese army. With the help of two surplus trucks that had winches on the front bumper, logs were snaked out of the cutting area and loaded for transport to the mill.

At first, all the output went for Paul's needs, but now gradually Paul was selling some timbers to contractors in Madang for rebuilding near the dock area. The Army engineers who were in charge of the surplus stores helped Paul get more and more equipment as they were some of Paul's most demanding customers. Bundaberg Plantation was growing to the point that an office in town was necessary, and Paul spent half of his time in that location.

Production of copra and coffee was very good as the workers were now supplied by a company store that was well stocked, and a medical facility that took care of basic health needs. In spite of Yali's influence in other areas of Madang, Paul's workers remained loyal and their children were well represented in the local mission schools.

Not only was Paul anxious to attend the wedding, but he was anxious to come to Moresby to take care of business matters connected with the Plantation, and renew acquaintanceships with officials he had dealt with during the war.

Molly was faced with dealing with the reality of the approaching ceremony. Carol Ward and Sally Jones had taken over responsibility for the actual ceremony and the reception, and Alec was given a "green light" by Commander Jones for using the Officer Club facilities for the event. The current topic of intense discussion was clothes. For Molly the choice was either a frock or a formal wedding dress. For Eban, it was decided that formal wear of a mess jacket would be not only correct but readily obtainable.

Molly's choice was rather limited by the lack of a good draper's shop, and a choice of materials. Sally Jones had been married right before the war, and still had her wedding gown carefully packed away. Carol Ward had been married after the start of the War in a simple ceremony in a borrowed gown. Sending to Australia for a gown was deemed to be too risky, and so it was finally decided that a seamstress would be engaged to alter Sally's gown for Molly.

Eban was able, with the help of Alec, to get the loan of proper attire from various officers at the Drome who had saved ceremonial clothes in hopes of more formal times. Pat and Aileen solved their own problems with similar frocks scrounged from friends and co-workers. The owner of the Ela Beach Hotel managed to get two cases of French Champagne through a pilot who flew a regular run to Tahiti. The chef at the officer's club was determined, with the help of the hotel chef to plan a menu that could not be surpassed on the Island.

Two weeks before the wedding Molly was given a surprise shower at the hotel by her friends, which was attended by what seemed to be the entire white female population of Moresby. School teachers, Nurses, and wives of administrators all were there and the amount of gifts given far exceeded the space that Molly had to store them.

A few days before the wedding Paul arrived, and set up headquarters in the Hotel where he and his friends had lived during the War. Several of the old gang were in town, and the bar

was soon doing a roaring business as war days were recalled, embellished and exaggerated dependent on the amount of drinks served. Most of the old planters felt a fatherly kinship with Eban, and insisted that he be given a proper bachelor party.

On the morning of the ceremony Molly and the other women at the dorm went into a flurry of bathing, dressing, and getting ready for the four-o'clock ceremony. Pat and Aileen were going to be driven to the club by Pat's date, Tom, while Alec was scheduled to pick up Eban at 3 p.m. Les Jones and Sally arrived at the dorm at a little after 3, and after last minute adjustments to her gown, Molly was carefully installed in the sedan Les had borrowed for the occasion.

When the various participants and guests arrived at the base, they were greeted by dress-uniformed guards and squeaky-cleaned grounds leading to the Officer's Club. The yard boys and the servers in the club were all dressed in the same colour laplaps, an army shirt and a frangipani blossom in their hair. Flowers and flags were very much in evidence as each unit on the base displayed its colours wherever it could.

The Altar that the engineers constructed was quite a bit more elaborate than Methodists are used to, but the preacher, Chaplain Tim Rawkins, took it all in stride as he saw the newly-installed red carpet that stretched from the back of the room to the foot of the Altar. The audience seemed to be equally divided between the groom's side and the bride's side, and the rear seats were full of uniforms of every description.

Finally Sally Jones took her seat in the first row, and Eban and Alec took their places adjacent to the Altar. The portable organ that had been playing incidental music became quiet for a few seconds and then started the rendition of Lowengrin's Wedding March as all stood and turned to the rear of the room where Aileen was waiting.

After Aileen was about a third of the way down the red carpet, Pat appeared, and not long after, Les Jones with Molly on his arm. Molly had a huge bouquet of orchids and was

breathhtakingly beautiful in her white gown. She had a radiant smile, and couldn't restrain herself from nodding to several people as she passed. Les was more reserved, and confessed later that he was more frightened than he had been at his own wedding.

When they reached the Altar, Les helped Molly lift her short veil, and Pat took Molly's bouquet. After Les joined Sally, the wedding party was ready with Eban and Molly in the centre flanked by Pat and Aileen on Molly's side and Alec on Eban's side. The Chaplain started the conventional ceremony which went forward without delay. Alex produced the ring on cue, and neither the bride or the groom stumbled over any part of their vows.

When the bride and groom finally kissed, a spontaneous cheer broke out from the audience much to the chagrin of the Chaplain. Molly retrieved her bouquet from Pat, and the organ broke out in the recessional as the wedding party retraced their steps to the rear of the hall. During the ceremony, the audience had been packed by most of the indigenous workers who crowded into the back of the room.

A receiving line was quickly formed, and the bridal party thanked everyone who came as well as those who had helped organise the wedding. Alec soon excused himself to supervise the reception, and after a while Molly and Eban were spirited away to an office where official papers were signed and witnessed. As all of the guests had been invited to the reception, there was no lessening of the crowd as time went on.