



After a dinner at the Ela Beach Hotel, Molly and Eban sat and relaxed over a drink. "That was quite a day," said Eban, "I didn't expect that we would return to so many changes in the short time we were away!"

Actually, the changes had been taking place over the past few months, but were not noticed by Molly and Eban because of their preoccupation with each other and their plans for marriage. Port Moresby was experiencing an influx of visitors, both official and commercial. Ships coming into the harbour were carrying all manner of cargo, from military to civilian, and dock and warehouse space was becoming a premium item.

In town, roads were being improved leading to the outskirts, and houses were being built in likely and unlikely spots. Military buildings that were no longer needed were transferred to the provisional government or leased or sold to civilians and to corporations. In general, the military presence was diminishing while the civilian population was increasing.

Not only was the European population expanding, but the native population was emerging as a force in the politics of the area. Many of the indigenous people had been sent to Australia for advanced education, and a lot of the people of the islands to the north of Papua had to begun to participate in talks about the plans for independence as outlined by the UN Mandate. Expatriates were chagrined and amazed that the Native population was taking such an intelligent viewpoint of the proposed constitution.

From the native point of view, everything revolved around the villages, and the administration view around districts, which were formed by ANGAU. The two philosophies

were quite different, and would take a long time to adjust to a common viewpoint. Another factor complicating the situation was the lack of employment for the young men who had formerly worked for the allied forces as carriers, guides, and policemen during the war.

Young men from the villages had in many cases learned new skills, and even though at many times their service was hard, they had medical treatment, fairly good food, and gifts given to them from Allied soldiers. Some had acquired a taste for American cigarettes and all, at some time or another had shared in captured supplies that the Allies had little regard for except as souvenirs. In essence, they had learned a new lifestyle that was far distant from the village life they had come from.

So they congregated in the larger towns hoping to reap the benefits that the end of the war seemed to promise. Whenever some strayed over the line and tried to act like the Europeans, they were repulsed, and branded as Rascals by the European populace. Some eventually returned to their villages, but many took up a new home and life on the outskirts of the town.

Without the restraining influence of a formal village ethic, problems of authority began to arise which set these groups even more apart from the expatriate white population. Scores of merchants, traders, and entrepreneurs were arriving daily in Port Moresby, and most of them had no previous experience with dealing with the indigenous population. Where the old "New Guinea Hands" knew and respected the customs and manners of the native population, the new expatriates were full of the old ideas of white supremacy, and did not hesitate to state their views.

Encounters between the new expatriates and the Papuans were frequent, and sometimes led to harsh words on both sides. The result was an increasing gap between the "Europeans" and the indigenes that even rose to government levels. Eban was called on more and more to mediate disputes, and soon was losing friends on both sides.

One evening while sitting with some friends over a drink in the Ela Beach hotel, he overheard some new expatriates at the next table talking about the women in Port Moresby. "For the most part they seem to be regular women," the one man said, "but I have heard that lot of them are taking up with the black boys!"

"That's a bloody shame," his mate replied, "a white woman living with a nigger ought to be against the law. I saw one the other day and she had her arms around this guy who looked like he had just come down from a tree!"

"And to think," said the first talker, "that these monkeys want to be independent when most of them can't even write their own name. I guess they want a white woman so they can feel they are equal to us!"

Eban's face went pale as he overheard this conversation, and his friends noticed it. He finished his drink and announced that he was calling it a day and heading for home. As he got up to leave, he paused for a second at the expatriates table, and looked at each of their faces for a few seconds before going to the door. He didn't say a word, but his stern looks caused the two men to suspend their conversation, and look around the room.

The people at Eban's table were looking at them too, and when they turned back to their drinks their conversation was muted. "What the bloody Hell was that all about?" the first man asked the other. "I'll wager he was a half-caste and didn't like what we were talking about." his cobbler replied. "He shouldn't be in here drinking with the white people, and they shouldn't be selling him liquor in any event."

As the people at Eban's table were still staring at them, the pair finished up their drinks, and immediately departed from the lounge. When they left, Les Jones turned to Jack Ward and said, "I don't like some of the new people who are coming here. They are going to cause trouble."

As Eban walked to his home, he was wondering if Molly had been exposed to any such talk, and resolved to ask her at the first opportunity. He recalled Yagi's talk in the market in Madang, and wondered if any such incidents had occurred since coming back to Moresby.

A smiling Molly greeted him at the door, and immediately softened the foul mood that Eban was in. She had spent the day unpacking the things that were sent up from the warehouse in town, and started to show Eban their new possessions. She had a tea set from her mother, and some silverware that her sister said would be too much bother to polish. Some pictures of Rockhampton were hung on the walls, and a few small carpets were placed on the floor.

"I couldn't resist making this place look more like home." said Molly. I'm tired of living in a dorm-like place and want to feel that my house is my own."

"I guess you miss Rocky, don't you?" Eban replied, "I must confess that I sometimes miss Madang and all the familiar places and people. If you want, we can apply for leave for you and you can go and visit your sister."

"Oh no, Eban, I meant that I miss Madang too. It felt like home to me when we were there, and I felt that your father was family." Molly hugged Eban and confessed that she had never been as happy as the time she spent at Bundaberg.

This was the opening that Eban had been looking for, to ask Molly about how she had been treated since their marriage. Molly thought a while before answering, and then said "I've never had any but kind words from my old friends, but some of the new expatriates and their wives have at times been less than kind."

Eban had noticed that Molly was going less and less to the Ela Beach Club, but thought it was just because the two of them were too busy to do much socialising lately.

"Moresby is getting to be too crowded these days, and a different class of people are moving in. All they can talk about is commerce and government, and seem to not look at this beautiful land as a wonderful place to be in." Molly said that Madang was more like 'Rocky' in the "old" days, when everyone knew each other.

That night as they lay in bed, they talked awhile about the home in Madang, and tenderly held each other in a wave of nostalgia. When they finally went to sleep, it was with the feeling that the Honeymoon had never really ended, and the future would only get better.

During the next few weeks, they both became immersed in their work, and hardly noticed the passage of time. One day Les Jones called Eban to his office and introduced him to a man who was slated to be the resident commissioner of Madang Province. Henry Thomas had worked in the Northern Territory of Australia, and was now posted to Northern New Guinea to organise a formal government in the area around Madang.

"Les tells me that you are from Madang," he said, "and we were wondering if you would like to join me in organising a school system there? Would you consider the job of Education Commissioner for the Province?"

The smile that broke out on Eban's face foretold his answer before he could speak. "Well, of course," he said. "I'll have to talk to Molly, but I think she would consider it if she were able to teach there." They discussed many more details, and finally parted after Eban promised an answer in the next few days.

Word had gotten around the school, and when Eban finally got together with Molly, she had heard rumours about the meeting, and was full of questions for Eban.

"Oh Eban, this could be wonderful," Molly enthused, "We could finally get a home in a place that we both like, doing the things we like!" The matter was really settled before they began a discussion of the pros and cons.

Two days later Eban met with Les Jones and Henry Thomas and indicated he would accept the offer, with the proviso that Molly be considered for a job in the Madang area. With a strong recommendation from Les Jones, Thomas agreed that Molly would have a say in the formation of a primary school in Madang town.

Because Thomas would need time to settle his affairs in the Northern Territory and arrange for his wife and family to join him, he would be unable to go to Madang for a few months, and asked if Eban and Molly could go there soon and act for Thomas until he arrived.

Pat and Aileen had been keeping abreast of things via the rumour route, and offered to help Molly get ready as soon as she wanted. Eban contacted his father, and arranged to stay at the plantation till he could get permanent housing.

The days passed at a whirlwind pace until finally they got on a plane and arrived late one day at the Madang airstrip. Samuel was there in the Jeep to pick them up, and soon they were greeting Paul on the verandah of the house. "Come on in," Paul cried, "The room is ready, and I am anxious to hear all about what's been going on!"

While Eban carried the bags into their room, Molly walked over to Cocky's cage, and soon was holding the bird on her arm. "Do you still remember me?" she asked. "Hello Molly" was the bird's reply as he extended his crest and kissed Molly's cheek.

Eban began to tell Paul about the latest doings in Moresby, and his and Molly's decision to move to Madang and make their home there. Paul told Eban that Brian McGregor had moved into larger quarters in a former army headquarters in Jomba at Jacunda Point a few kilometres south of the marketplace. He had told Paul that this was to be the province headquarters as soon as the new Commissioner arrived.

Paul offered to house the couple at Bundaberg, but Eban said that he would rather find a place in town nearer to the headquarters and the new school. When Molly joined them, she said she was going to just relax for a few days before going into town. After talking for a few hours after dinner, they went to their room and unpacked before going to bed. they were both tired after the day's events, and slept soundly till they were awakened by the sounds of the kitchen crew bustling about in the morning.

Eban and Paul took off in the jeep for town, and Molly stayed at the plantation while Samuel's wife, Sarah washed out some clothes for Molly. While the clothes were drying, Sarah showed Molly where their house was, and introduced her to some of the other Plantation women. There was a small stream near the plantation that had been dammed to make a fairly large pond, where the mothers took their children to play while the mothers cooled off in the water.

Molly marvelled at the way the women would walk into the water slowly rolling up their dresses in a modest manner till they were in the water up to their necks. Some of the women went in without raising their clothes, and relied on the evaporation of the water to cool them off. The children, of course, went in nude, and splashed around while their mothers watched.

Molly had kept up with her pidgin and was able to talk with and understand most of what was being said. She noted some speculation about when she was going to be pregnant, and whether Eban was up to the task of impregnating her. She assured Sarah that she was not yet ready for motherhood, as she wanted to teach school for a while before having children. Several of the women offered her the native herbs that the women used after intercourse to prevent pregnancy, and assured Molly that even if Eban did not take measures these herbs would protect her.

Molly had been wisely instructed to not interfere with the kitchen staff, and allowed herself to be served a light lunch on the verandah after they returned to the house. She played with Cocky for a while before getting out some papers she wanted to read about the primary

school system proposed by the Provincial Government. She concluded that it would be a good idea to talk to Ann Dale about the Lutheran school before venturing to visit the Government school nearby. Even though most of Madang took a sleep in the warm part of the day, Molly determined that she would forego this luxury before it became a compelling habit.

In the late afternoon Paul came home and reported that Eban was still in town and would be given a ride with Brian McGregor when they were finished with their business. Shortly before dinner, Eban showed up driving a military jeep that Brian had procured for him. It seemed that the Kiap had a priority to acquire surplus military equipment for the Provincial Government, and a jeep in fairly good condition had become available.

He reported to the others that the Government building was in fairly good shape, and was even equipped with desks and chairs as well as a petrol-operated electric system and several radio telephones for external use, and battery-operated phones within the building. The municipal electric system was being repaired, and some of the water pipe-lines were being fixed. Many of the homes near the market had been repaired, and some were being offered for sale.

The next morning Molly went into town with Eban in their new vehicle, and Molly was left off at the market after promising to meet Eban at noon for lunch at the Hotel. When she walked through the market she was surprised at how many of the vendors greeted her with big smiles. One of the women who she remembered from Bilbil greeted her as sister, and insisted on giving her some beautiful ripe pineapples as a gift. Molly was embarrassed that she had no gift to give in return, but was profuse in her thanks.

She asked about Yali, and was told that he had gone to an area away from Madang and was rumoured to have been in trouble with the authorities for taking money from the people for his own purposes. There were still many of his followers about, she was told, but as they refused to work, and had left the church, were not being treated well by their neighbours.



Employment had picked up as the plantations came back in full operation, and there were many new buyers coming to the market to buy the produce that was brought there every day.

In town, as Eban had reported, rebuilding was going on at a great pace. Paul's sawmill output was being supplemented by cargo ships delivering lumber from Australia and other places as well as all the other building supplies that were necessary. In addition, surplus army stores from the allies were being sold to qualified buyers who could demonstrate that the battles had resulted in destruction of their properties.

Many of the shopowners and businessmen who had operated during the Japanese occupation had left Madang after the conclusion of the war, and their properties were being offered for sale. After Molly revealed that she and Eban were looking for a home in town, a number of people told her of properties that she might want to consider.

Molly walked over to the newly-opened branch of the Bank of New South Wales, and asked the manager if he knew of any properties that would be desirable. He gave her a list of five houses that the bank had an interest in that he thought might be worthy of consideration.

Molly took the list, and determined to look at those that were near the centre of town, in a location that would require very little travel to reach the government center. The farther she walked from the bank towards the Government Center, the nicer the homes became. Along Coronation Drive was a home that was formerly owned by a German Planter that had left after the town was liberated. The house was in fairly good condition with many improvements put in by the former owner.

Molly walked into the front yard to the door of the house. It was locked, and the glass was covered so that she could not see inside, so she turned around and looked out across the front yard to the sea across the road. Astrolabe Bay glistened in the afternoon sun, and the sound of the surf hitting the sea wall was wafted to her ears. The road in front of the house

was not paved, but was clean and level. Palm trees lined the road, and old fronds were scattered on the edge.

Molly left the house and continued along the road, but was conscious of the road noises along the main road compared to the quiet along Coronation road. She passed a few houses along the main road, but her thoughts kept going back to the house she had just left. It was getting close to midday, and she started back to meet Eban for lunch at the Hotel.

Eban was there to greet her, and when she told him about the house, he suggested that she go to the bank and ask for a key. "Try to get in and take a look at the inside, and if it looks acceptable, we'll ask for details about the price," he said.

After they had eaten, they strolled over to the bank, and after talking to the manager, were given a set of keys. Eban drove Molly back to the house and unlocked the door and they both went in. Surprisingly, the house was almost completely furnished, and except for a lot of dust and some litter, in surprisingly good shape. The grounds were unkempt, and some outside shutters were damaged, but the structure was sound and seemed to need only "Tender Loving Care."

Molly was enchanted. "Oh, Eban," she exclaimed, "this place would be just wonderful, I would love to fix it up and make it our home!"

Eban agreed, but was more cautious in his reaction. "First we will have to see how much it will cost, and then let Paul see what he can find out about it." Molly told Eban to leave her there while he went back to work, and promised to return the keys to the bank after a more detailed examination.

Molly looked in the outbuildings and saw that they had been vandalised but still serviceable, and that the water pump and controls had been removed from the well. Inside, the kitchen seemed to be quite modern, and electric wiring had been done to all the rooms.

The entire house was European in its facilities, and built of sturdy materials that had obviously been shipped in from overseas.

After a while Molly left and went back to the bank to return the keys. The manager greeted her and said, "I'm hoping that the place will be bought by someone who will fix it up, but most of the people who can afford it are the planters who don't want to live in town. The owners are anxious to sell, and I think they will entertain an offer that is fairly realistic."

When Molly pressed him for a figure, he hesitated but said that it could probably be purchased for a lot less than it was worth. "The Bank would probably hold a bond for the purchase of that house, if enough funds were advanced to satisfy the sellers."

When Eban picked her up after he had finished work, he rode back to Bundaberg discussing the house all the way. When Paul came in to join them at dinner, they told him all about their adventure, and Paul told them what he knew about the house.

"Just before the War," Paul said, "Old Christen Wallen had the house built for the woman who was coming over to be his bride. He was the manager of the Leer plantation for the German Hamburg Trust, and had just brought in a large harvest of copra that sold at a good price. He had building materials brought in from New Zealand, and furniture from Sydney to do it up in style.

The house was finished just a few weeks before the Japanese invasion, and as Germany and Japan were allies, Wallen's bride-to-be was unable to leave Germany and Wallen was allowed to continue to operate his enterprise without any but minimal interference. As the tide changed and Japanese forces were withdrawn, Wallen asked to leave, but was put into a detention camp with other German Nationals. When the war ended, he was repatriated back to Germany and forced to leave his house and belongings behind.

With his business gone, and no hope of returning to Madang, he arranged for the bank to sell his home in hopes of recuperating some of his losses. Paul thought about buying the property after the war, but decided his money would be best used to rebuild Bundaberg. He promised to talk to the bank manager and see if there was any possibility that Eban and Molly could make the purchase.

The next day, while Molly waited anxiously at home, Paul talked to the bankers and arranged that with his guarantee the bank would allow Eban and Molly to buy the home at a fair price.

Molly was ecstatic, and insisted that they go to town immediately, and take another look at their new home. It would take at least a week for a new pump and electric lines to be installed, and then if the financial arrangements were completed, they could move in.

The next week dragged on for Molly, but Eban and Paul worked at a fever pitch to finish the deal. When the final papers were signed, and the utilities were operating, Molly and Eban celebrated with a glass of wine on the front verandah of their new house. A close examination of the interior revealed to Molly that there was a large amount of furniture that only needed a good scrubbing. In the cooking area to the rear of the house, Molly discovered a number of pots from Bilbil as well as several copper and iron pots from Germany.

While Molly was preoccupied with getting the house ready, Eban was organising things at the District office in preparation for the arrival of Henry Thomas. He embarked on a program of visiting all of the mission and the state schools, and noted their methods and makeup. The primary school in Madang was close to his office, as was the Lutheran School where Ann Dale taught.

When he arrived at the Lutheran school Ann Dale said "I was wondering when you were going to visit us! Molly has been over here a few times and we have had interesting talks about this school and the state schools you are planning for."

Eban told her that Molly was impressed by the school, and had expressed some concern about the lack of female students. "Both Molly and I agree that more girls should be encouraged to attend the school, and at the same time we wonder why the female student body is so small? Is it that the tuition is too great, or is there some other reason?"

"Tuition is one great factor, because the parents usually feel that it is more important for the boys to be educated because there is no reason for the girls to learn just for the sake of learning." Ann went on to explain that parents felt that a girl need only know what her mother could teach her, and that sending her to school would take away her contribution to the family garden. "I have talked to Molly about that matter, and she says we at the school should make a greater effort to educate the parents in the practical value of having an educated daughter."

When Eban returned home that night he told Molly of the conversation with Ann, and asked her for her opinion. "Well," said Molly, "I was thinking about the women from the Massim area who have made a practise of educating their daughters at an early age. In Moresby I met several Massim girls who had been educated through the twelfth grade, and were even thinking of going on with their education. Most of the girls had been educated in Mission schools, in spite of high tuition fees." Molly said that one of the factors was the Massim tribal system that divided garden work between the men and the women, and made the decision of who to send to school one of aptitude rather than tradition.

She pointed out that a Massim woman had been elected to be a Local Government Councillor, and another was nominated to the Legislative Council. "I think they are just taking advantage of the best students in the village regardless of sex. Their society gives much more rights to women than most of the villages around here!"

Molly told Eban about the girl, Helen, who had made the beautiful Meri blouse that was given to her when she joined the Bilbil clan. Helen was not needed in the gardens because the Bilbil people were potters and only planted small tracts, trading pots for most of the food they

needed. Molly had talked to Helen several times, and was fascinated with her general knowledge and her love for learning. She was sure that a tertiary education would not be wasted on Helen.

So Eban concluded that it was not only tuition that was keeping the female student population down, but the lack of understanding of the parents for the worth of educating a girl beyond the standard six grades. He noticed that it was only when a dedicated teacher like Ann Dale intervened, that female students were allowed to regularly attend school.