

Philadelphia Phase

By PHILIP WYLIE



For Americans, too, in the crippled cities, these were times of great stress and hardship. There was an enormous job to be done—a job that took determination, and courage, and love.

NEXT." The major spoke in Russian. He did not bother to look up. The line trudged a step closer to his desk—a human serpent with a thousand feet.

"Name," said the major, reaching for an Assignment Form.

"Tatyana Veelenskaya." The voice was deep, resonant, and female.

There were almost as many women as men in the line. He began to write, smiled a little, and looked up at last. She was about twenty-five, he thought. Beautiful. As if to keep on guard, he glanced past the line to the windows and to the desolation beyond—the desolation of his own city, Philadelphia. His jaw set.

"Occupation." His voice was cold.

She followed his gaze. Then she turned from the dreadful scene and her eyes were full of sorrow. "It might be Rostov, where I was born. Or Murmansk. Or Moscow." She said it in English and without too much accent.

He nodded stiffly. "Yes. Your occupation?" he repeated.

She tugged a worn sweater closer around herself; the great room in the warehouse was cold and the square miles of wreckage seemed to make her shiver. She answered, "I am a locomotive engineer."

The major couldn't get used to it, even though he had seen it in Russia while he had been there with the Army. They were steelworkers. They ran ships' engines. They were locomotive engineers. They—the women of Russia. Under "Remarks" he scribbled: *English good.*

He said, "Fair enough. You'll be assigned to one of the switching engines down there." He gestured toward the windows. "Millions of tons of rubble to move."

"I will like that. I will like to help clear away this—this shambles your country and mine have made."

"Your country," he said severely.

She answered softly, "Yes. My country. *We* were wrong."

He looked at her for another moment. Was her very softness of tone a kind of sarcasm? Russia was beaten. But was Communism dead? She was the only beautiful woman he had seen that long morning, and the only one who spoke good English. She would be an ideal agent for some plan to infiltrate postwar America with new discontents, new cells of Communists, a new underground. He wondered if he should send her back for an extra screening. Major Robert Blake was not sure of the advisability of importing from Russia several hundred thousand technicians to help rebuild the city,

men and women who had been invited by the UN to study U.S. methods of construction.

Before the war, Robert Blake had been a banker, and conservative. His father's bank was somewhere in the middle of the ruin that had been all of Philadelphia between the Schuylkill and the Delaware Rivers until the bomb fell in '53. The bank lay in that landscape of frozen debris, and so did the bodies of his father, his sister and his brother. They'd been downtown that afternoon. His mother hadn't lived to see the atomic war.

"How did you learn English?" he asked the Russian girl.

A flush stole into her cheeks but her eyes did not waver. "Our government," she replied, "expected to defeat the capitalist nations. Some of us were trained in English to be among the forces occupying your country. I was one. You learned Russian. For the same reason, yes?"

He stared at her. "I was the head of the foreign department of my father's bank. I speak French, German, Dutch, Polish and Russian. I learned them in college. I learned them because languages interested me. I learned them because we Americans like to get acquainted with other people and to do business with them, not because we plot to enslave them. You were brought here to learn and then be returned. (Continued on page 110)

He looked at her, wondering how a woman in grimy overalls could still be so attractive



TROUBLE at TUAVITI

Far out in the South Pacific, one primitive islander, who knew how to distinguish strength from bluster, robbed the enemy of a base that might have been used in the destruction of the United States

By JOHN SAVAGE

A MILLION men in swivel chairs have dreamed of Tuaviti, without even knowing its name. They've seen the white lace of foam that lies on the water over the reef. They've seen the pale-green lagoon, the lavender sand, the beautiful people, the coconut fronds stirring in the Trades. And they've said it was too good to be true. "Those South Sea Island paradises used to exist, sure, but then came Captain Cook, and then came the whalers, then civilized diseases, and then the second and third World Wars. It's all ruined now."

As a matter of fact, it's not. Not ruined—but not quite the fulfillment of the escapists' dream, either; not quite the perfect hiding place.

During the second World War, the atoll of Tuaviti was lucky. Its strategic importance was zero. Its harbor was worthless. It didn't have half enough level land for an airstrip.

But, in a sense, the third World War began at Tuaviti. In a sense, the Soviets lost the war at that pinpoint on the Pacific map, three days before the attempted assassination of Tito—the Soviets' greatest miscalculation, which touched off the terrible global conflict.

After the second World War, except for the attentions of a certain young American missionary, Tuaviti and its forty-odd people lived on undisturbed until the spring of 1952. Then something happened. It happened because strategic importance changes with changing weapons. It happened because good luck can't last forever.

The day of the Soviet intrusion began as peacefully as any other day. At six thirty, the Reverend Matthew Lincoln woke up, dressed himself in sneakers, shorts and a T-shirt, and—noting that his wife was still asleep—stepped quietly out onto the veranda. He squatted there in the cool sunshine and yawned contentedly. Being a sensible young man and a great believer in never racing his motor, he made no further move for several minutes.

Matthew Lincoln was a bronzed and bony American of thirty-one. His reddish-blond hair was cut very short (although he had never succeeded in getting his wife to cut it short enough to suit him), and his eyebrows were tufts of coppery red. The eyebrows made his face look craggy and faintly boyish at the same time. Usually he was smiling, but this morning he was not wide enough awake to look anything but amiably blank.

He allowed five minutes for his blood to start moving. Then he stepped down from the veranda and started walking briskly along the curving beach.

A hundred yards from home he met the Kanaka whose name was John-Enoch. The tall brown man had already finished his morning's fishing and was draping his palm-fiber net over sticks thrust into the sand.

"Good morning, John-Enoch," Matthew said.

John-Enoch smiled and stood up. "Good morning, Shepherd," he said. Matthew was used to this title. He had thought it best to teach the islanders the English word "shepherd" instead of the Latin word "pastor."

The reef fish John-Enoch had caught were lying on a taro leaf on the sand. Matthew looked down



WARD BRACKETT

The antenna turned lazily, carefully following every move the missile made. No, not following. It was guiding it!

at them and made the mistake of saying, "Nice fish."

The fish were beautiful, all right. They made a glistening bouquet of red, black, silver and blue. But Matthew realized he should have known better than to admire them aloud.

John-Enoch slipped both hands under the leaf, raised it, and offered it to him. "You take. I give," he said.

The silent explosion in Matthew's head was his version of what would have been profanity in a less godly young man. He had to accept the confounded fish now, and John-Enoch's family would have none. Unless he could pull a fast one . . .

Suddenly Matthew smiled. He accepted the fish, bowed slightly, took three steps away, and then came back. "Now you take, my brother. I give."

It wasn't exactly fair, and it was too much for John-Enoch. With a confused look, he took the fish and put them back on the sand. Then he nodded slowly, grinned, and seemed to dismiss the matter. "I wish you a happy walking, Shepherd," he said, and Matthew left him.

The pastor walked another two hundred yards along the beach and then took the trail that led up to the top of Tuaviti's only mountain. He reached the summit twenty minutes later and sat down on the worn stone that was his place of morning prayer. Beside him, in a wild orange tree, two myna birds were lazily scolding each other. It was a restful sound.

Matthew prayed aloud, in a low voice, asking for continued blessings on the forty-three inhabitants of the island. He asked also, as he often did, for perfect humility in himself. "After all, Heavenly Father, when a man walks around with people calling him 'Shepherd' all day, he runs a certain risk. Please help me keep it clear in their minds and my own that the only Shepherd who really counts is You. Amen."

He got up off the rock and looked around him. The little mountaintop afforded a perfect view of the rest of the island. Matthew was standing on one end of a green crescent half a mile long and three hundred yards wide at its widest point. The crescent was really part of a complete circle, but the rest of the circle was under water, even at low tide. Among the coconut trees below him, he could see the palm-thatched beehive roofs of the houses, each with a square of white canvas beside it to catch the rain water. He looked out along the reef and saw that there were three or four natives in their outrigger boats, still casting their nets.

Then he let his eyes move off idly toward the horizon. In all directions the sea was glassy smooth, deep blue, and friendly. The trade wind from southeast to northwest was only a delicate breeze at this hour of the morning, and nothing ruffled the indigo serenity of the water. His gaze moved carelessly back to the natives who were fishing.

And then he saw something.

At first he thought it was a white sea bird, skimming low over the water. A second later he realized that the thing itself was black; what had caught his eye was the white triangle of wake that followed it. He guessed he must be looking at the protruding fin of some very large fish. It was at least a mile away, and he couldn't see it clearly, but it seemed to be tall and slender—almost too tall for a fin. Could hardly be anything else, though.

He watched it as it moved silently along and began, in a slow curve, to circle the island. He could ask the fishermen about it when they came in, but probably they wouldn't have seen it, being so low in their boats and so busy with fishing.

Matthew shrugged, turned, and went down the path again. On the beach at the foot of the mountain, he stripped off all his clothes except sneakers and shorts and walked out into the water. Sneakers were unhandy for swimming, but if you didn't wear them the coral would cut your feet to pieces, unless you had superior feet, like the natives.

Matthew thought of the islanders as he swam, and particularly of John-Enoch. He chuckled, remembering his own victory in the matter of the fish.

After his swim, he trotted up and down the beach for a minute or two, to dry off, and then got dressed again and walked back to the house.

On the floor of the veranda, beside the front door, lay a fresh taro leaf with John-Enoch's fish on it. All of them.

Matthew sighed, picked up the leaf with both hands, and walked into the house. Janet was awake now, sitting on the edge of the bed, looking tousled and beautiful. (Continued on page 124)

The Soviet officer looked annoyed for a minute, then put on an unconvincing smile. "We come to ask for hospitality," he said abruptly