

# **Tales of the South Pacific Study Guide**

**Tales of the South Pacific by James A. Michener**

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## **pp. 9-12, The South Pacific, pp. 13-25, The Coral Sea**

### **pp. 9-12, The South Pacific, pp. 13-25, The Coral Sea Summary**

The South Pacific— The narrator thinks about the people he met in the South Pacific while serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II. Unlike the large land battles of Europe, in the South Pacific, soldiers and navy personnel are usually stuck on small islands. Between horrible battles there is a lot of logistics work. Admiral Kester is remembered as the leader of the attack on the island of Kuralei. The narrator remembers him as having a stuck zipper and becoming enraged about it.

The Coral Sea— In mid-April 1942, the narrator is an officer sent to a small observation and plane repair station on Vanicoro Island in the New Hebrides. The station sends out regular radio reports each day on enemy planes and ships if sighted, and about the weather. One day a PBY, an amphibious seaplane arrives commanded by Lieutenant Grant, a New Zealander. The PBY flies off in search of the Japanese fleet regularly. Late in April, the PBY is shot up by Japanese planes, and one man is killed, but the plane returns and is repaired. Japanese ships are sighted soon, and an American radioman named Aberforce replaces the dead man. Another New Zealander brings in a PBY to the station, named Colbourne. In New Zealand, the population is organizing a last ditched defense of the nation. On another PBY flight, the Japanese fleet is seen heading towards the repair station. When Grant's PBY returns, it makes a crash landing and is destroyed, though most of the men escape. Only Colbourne flies out the next day, but never returns.

American planes are seen flying by and finally a radio broadcast informs the men that the Battle of the Coral Sea has begun. Radio Tokyo claims that an American aircraft carrier has sunk. After two days, a New Zealand radio report proudly reports that the Japanese fleet has been defeated and that New Zealand is saved. Lt. Grant brings out a bottle of Scotch whiskey to celebrate. There is happiness in toasts, but also sadness that so many men at the station have died. Lt. Grant makes a long drunken statement on how much the victory means to New Zealand. In Grant's outburst of emotion, that New Zealand is saved, he falls on the floor totally drunk.

### **pp. 9-12, The South Pacific, pp. 13-25, The Coral Sea Analysis**

The South Pacific— This story provides an overview of some of main characters in the stories and some foreshadowing of the direction of the action. It also makes a point of contrasting the war in the South Pacific to the more conventional fighting in Europe and



North Africa. There is a lot of waiting time for American servicemen and women on various islands between any real action. This allows for lots of shenanigans, like when Tony Fry has a TBF-plane that serves solely to haul whiskey and beer, with beer bottles painted on it. This is a little too obvious for Admiral Kester, who is trying to maintain discipline and demands that the beer design be taken off the plane. Still Tony Fry continues using his plane to make runs for booze. The narrator tries not to remember servicemen as heroes, but for their personal characteristics, like Admiral Kester getting a zipper stuck.

Coral Sea- The reader sees the tension and fear in the South Pacific after the first string of Japanese victories after their bombing of Pearl Harbor. The narrator is at a small plane repair station that is isolated. The men there have been assured that if they can stay alive they will be supplied and picked up later, though it seems that some doubts remain about this. About a dozen men have only small arms for defense there near the Coral Sea. They all suffer from malaria and the station is occasionally bombed by the Japanese. There the New Zealander Lt. Grant is quiet and unemotional, but all the time is concentrated on the real danger of attacks to New Zealand. New Zealand and Australia are on the front line facing potential Japanese air, and sea attacks. The worry is that Allied forces may be inadequate to stop the Japanese offensive from continuing further south. The small group at the station is becoming depressed as men are killed in the various flights of the seaplanes from the station.

The men have foxholes and caves to avoid bombs from frequent Japanese bombing raids. Lt. Grant reports that the Japanese fleet is heading to the Coral Sea and after that, towards New Zealand. When the battle is started in the Coral Sea, the New Zealander Colbourne looks forward to stopping the Japanese string of victories. Colbourne himself never returns from a seaplane flight and the tension at the station is huge. After Japanese forces are stopped at the Battle of Coral Sea, the men find out from a New Zealand radio broadcast. Lt. Grant tries to make a speech, but ends up dead drunk on the floor. He is relieved and released from his worries after drinking too much whiskey.



## pp. 26-49, Mutiny

### pp. 26-49, Mutiny Summary

The narrator is ordered to the island of Norfolk to deal with native objections to building a crucial airstrip there. The narrator flies there on an amphibious plane, where he and his pilot are greeted by Lieutenant Tony Fry. The narrator sees that part of the problem is that Tony is sleeping with an island girl, Lucy who tags along as Tony Fry shows the narrator the island. The two men tour the island, stopping at Teta Christian's farm after passing the stone stables built by convicts. Teta tells the story of Fletcher Christian and the Bounty people settling on Norfolk Island from Pitcairn Island. Old Teta and Lucy go with Tony and the narrator to view the old jail and town hall. A document at the town hall describes the decision to plant the pine trees on the plateau, long ago. The four people return to Teta's farm and eat and get drunk. The narrator postpones a decision to cut down the trees. Teta takes the narrator to the island cemetery in her horse-drawn wagon, seeing graves of Bounty people and of convicts. Later, they go to the mission church and Teta tells the story of her uncle Fletcher Christian, who was burned alive by natives while trying to convert them to Christianity. The narrator radios headquarters for permission to build an alternative and smaller airstrip, but this permission is denied by Admiral Kester.

The narrator returns to Teta's Farm and informs the drunken Teta that the pine trees must be cut down tomorrow. The next day a group of islanders come out to the pine trees and get a day's delay for the trees. The day after, the first pine trees are cut down and their roots have to be blasted by dynamite. That night the narrator is out at a soldier's camp when he hears an explosion. A small bulldozer is destroyed by dynamite. The narrator catches Lucy running from the site and they both go to Teta's house, where Tony Fry is getting drunk with Teta. Tony and the narrator drive Lucy home, and Tony admits that Lucy and Teta blew up the small bulldozer, obviously with his help. Tony defends himself, saying that he feels like someone who helped a Jew at Dachau fight the Nazis, although it is hopeless. Building the airstrip is inevitable, so the act of blowing up the bulldozer is viewed by Tony as a symbolic act.

### pp. 26-49, Mutiny Analysis

The narrator is an officer back at Admiral Kester's headquarters at Noumea. It is July, 1942 in the southern winter, and Norfolk Island is only about ten square miles, with a perfect place for an airstrip on the central plateau. This story is somewhat unique in the book in the richness of its references to the history of the famous mutiny on the ship Bounty. The story also refers to the movie on the same subject. This is a foreshadowing of the story, "The Strike" where the harsh commanding officer is compared with the Bounty's Captain Bligh. The wild Lt. Tony Fry is introduced as he is in the middle of a sexual relationship with Lucy, a dull under-aged girl, foreshadowing Tony Fry's future romantic escapades. The narrator hears that Norfolk Island was built up by convicts, but



the current inhabitants are from Pitcairn Island and are the descendants of the famous mutineers from the ship *Bounty*. Tony Fry's headquarters are at the house of ninety-year old Ms. Teta Christian, who demands that the pine trees on the central plateau are not cut down for an airstrip on the tiny island.

The *Bounty* descendants built their homes on the plateau, away from the convict-built buildings on the shore. Obviously they detest the history of abuse by British authorities of the convicts that were on the island. The convicts that built a beautiful bathhouse of stone are gone. The narrator is shown the Melanesian Mission building, which is a beautiful church, built by the free *Bounty* People and contrasted to the slave labor convict-built buildings. The irony is explored that the Allies, in their righteous war against Japan, have to commit a crime in chopping down the fine row of trees on Norfolk to build an airstrip. Obviously, the British Empire has had its faults and crimes going way back in this region.

Teta tells of her brothers and ancestors who died for what is right. A brother named Fletcher Christian was shot to death by a poisoned native arrow, while another relative of the same name is burned at the stake trying to convert natives to Christianity. The narrator wavers and has to radio headquarters to remember the importance of building the airstrip on Norfolk Island for safe flights from Australia and New Zealand to the base in Noumea. In a sense, the story is an exaggeration, since it seems unthinkable that an American officer would aid the actual sabotage of a bulldozer to build an airstrip. Yet, with so much whiskey around Tony Fry, such outrageous behavior could be excused as part of his usual alcoholic haze. Soon the airstrip is built, although Tony complains that none of the stone buildings built by the convicts are touched, only the islanders' pine trees.



## pp. 50-68, An Officer and a Gentleman

### pp. 50-68, An Officer and a Gentleman Summary

Ensign Bill Harbison is a Navy man who is tall, slim and capable. Bill is stationed to the island of Efate and is bored with his work. He is a recreation officer for an aircraft repair unit LARU-8. Bill asks the skipper to send him further north where there is fighting, but his request is denied. Bill censors soldiers' letters, which he finds are full of stupidity, and plays sports with the men, including baseball and basketball. He learns to play volleyball and likes the teamwork involved. Bill becomes upset when he reads that his brother-in-law is quickly promoted in the army. Bill is forced to learn to relax in his routine.

Everything changes when female nurses arrive on Efate. Bill arrives at their hospital to give the nurses fresh steaks and rescues them from poor food. Then he starts to go out with Dinah Culbert, a nurse who is about twenty years older than him. There are things to do, like visiting other islands and going to the officer's club. Then Bill reads that his brother-in-law got another promotion. Bill sulks and stops going out with Dinah, because he seeks a more attractive woman. Bill's new companion is a pretty twenty-two-year-old nurse named Nellie Forbush. Bill still asks the skipper to transfer him up north, but the skipper hints that the unit as a whole will see military action soon. After this news, Bill takes Nellie on a back road in the evening and attempts to force her to have sex. Nellie discusses her situation with Dinah Culbert asks her if Bill is married. Dinah answers that it really did not matter in her relationship with Bill. She says that Bill would not marry Nellie in any case since he is a social snob. The next morning, against her better judgment, Nellie lets Bill take her for a drive. At a stop, Nellie comments on her boyfriend back home, and Bill is provoked to try to seduce her again before a native walks by and they are interrupted. Finally, Nellie asks if they could be married after the war. Bill gets insulted and admits that he is already married.

### pp. 50-68, An Officer and a Gentleman Analysis

Bill Harbison is married to a Vassar graduate. Vass the the female school to Princeton University. It is made clear that he is a total social snob who enjoys being around people from elite schools. His wife follows him east for training and finally to San Francisco, California, where he ships out to the South Pacific. Bill is used to having adoring female attention. Although he would like to stay loyal to his marriage, he starts down a slippery slope pretty soon. When the female nurses come to Efate, the regular mess hall has not opened up yet, and Bill sets up an outdoor barbecue to gain popularity among the women. At first Bill is friendly to all the nurses. Then he goes out with a woman, Dinah Culbert, who is a lot older than him, so he feels comfortable in not getting romantically involved with her. Once he goes out with Nellie, everything is totally different. Bill takes Nellie swimming and kisses her. He may feel some guilt from this activity, because he is still asking the skipper to transfer him north to a battle zone. Nevertheless, he continues



being aggressive with Nellie. Nellie successfully resists Bill's advances and he must drive her to her hospital in silence. It's interesting that Nellie, despite this incident, is willing to go out with Bill the next day. She apparently regards such wrestling as a rough although somewhat unavoidable part of relations with men. Bill could have lied to her then and said that he was not married, or that he was but would divorce his wife and marry her, and have her. He cannot do these things because the inner snob takes over and makes him tell the truth.





## pp. 69-98, The Cave

### pp. 69-98, The Cave Summary

One morning Lieutenant Tony Fry arrives at a PT Boat base, on secret business, and seeks a cave to set up his headquarters. Tony goes out on some PT Boat patrols, and on one of these missions, Charlesworth wins a medal by setting up a situation where a number of Japanese AKA boats (troop transfer ships) are sunk. Early one morning, Tony tells the narrator and Charlesworth that a signal of a shore watcher who is located on a Japanese-occupied island is coming. The shore watcher calls himself the Remittance Man. That night Charlesworth sinks some Japanese ships and the broadcasts continue to help the PT Boats in their mission. Soon the Remittance Man brags in a broadcast about how many Japanese planes have been shot down. Still, Japanese destroyers are also blowing up PT Boats. Tony goes back to his cave and is fascinated about what keeps the Remittance Man operating under such dangerous conditions. This gets on Charlesworth's nerves, who ends up confining Tony to his quarters. After a few nights, this is relaxed, and Tony again goes out with a PT Boat. The consensus is that the Japanese will have to withdraw from Guadalcanal. PT skippers start to visit Tony in the cave, and Commander Charlesworth comes there too. Then, the Remittance Man broadcasts that two Japanese planes are searching for him and is silent.

American Destroyers arrive to replace the little PT Boats. In a battle, a Japanese destroyer slips through and is attacked by Charlesworth's PT Boat with a torpedo. The Japanese destroyer receives a minor amount of damage and flees, and Charlesworth is able to destroy some Japanese transport ships. Back at Tulagi, the men become happier as they see victory emerging. Tony and Charlesworth speculate on the courage of the Remittance Man and whether he has met a grim fate. The narrator is mad at Tony for endlessly talking about the Remittance Man, but then realizes that there is a purpose in Tony's thoughts. This is the sort of focus on another person that frees men to fight to the death and to have courage. Then one day the radioman hears the Remittance Man broadcast that he is surrounded, and a Japanese voice on the radio announces that American will die.

Back at Noumea, Tony Fry goes to Admiral Kester and requests a special mission to seek the Remittance Man. Tony goes to the island where the Remittance Man was dropped off with a landing party from a submarine, along with the narrator and Charlesworth. The Fiji Scout says that it is safe and the group heads up through the jungle. They are led to a village with human skulls on posts. All the black villagers have fled except for one man with a horrible case of elephantitis. The sick man is frightened, but calms down when he is given cigarettes and candy. In Pidgin English, the man tells of when the Japanese came and decapitated the Remittance Man and his helpers. Tony gives the sick man more gifts and returns to Tulagi.



## pp. 69-98, The Cave Analysis

The narrator is under the command of Lt. Commander Charlesworth, who heads a squadron of PT Boats on Tulagi. Tony Fry, who is against Navy discipline and the Annapolis Academy traditions, is also there under Charlesworth, which soon creates a situation of conflict. Tony Fry makes fun of the Navy and the rules and traditions of Annapolis. Tony always has plenty of whiskey available, is amusing, and is not liked by PT Boat Commander Charlesworth. PT Boats become a legend, but actually they are totally inadequate for their tasks. They have no armor and are characterized as sometimes suicide boats. Tony is directly under the command of Admiral Kester, so he has an independent mission and knowledge that radio transmissions would soon start from the coast-watcher known as the Remittance Man, to help the outgunned PT Boats.

PT Boats have to patrol the Slot every night, which is the passage to Guadalcanal, and challenge Japanese re-supply ships and sometimes larger ships such as destroyers. The PT Boats have great difficulty in performing their duty, with many of them being destroyed. They need all the help they can get, and the radio broadcast soon give them an extra edge in their crucial duty of stopping Japanese reinforcements from reaching Guadalcanal. The Remittance Man broadcasts a weather report, and then says that Japanese transports are heading down the Slot that night, along with escort ships. He gives key intelligence to stop Japanese forces on Guadalcanal. Japanese planes are also heading out to fight the Americans and allies and the Allies are told day after day what is coming in the air. Tony claims in the daytime that he would never ride on a PT Boat but at night goes out in one. He is very ironic and makes a lot of jokes, though is not afraid to fight.

Tony Fry knows that the Remittance Man is an Englishman named Anderson who is making these broadcasts. The unit is infected with a fascination on who the Remittance Man is and what his life is like. They are amazed that he actually married a black native woman, but are assured that "Andy" always knows how to get along and fit in. Anderson obviously has good relations with the natives and an extensive network of native helpers. After their initial conflict, Tony and Charlesworth begin to discuss the Remittance Man and his courage. They seem to sense that it is inevitable that he will be caught by the Japanese. The mission later to find the Remittance Man is strange, since it is already known from his last radio broadcast that he has been captured and presumably executed.



## **pp. 99-106, The Milk Run, pp. 107-117, Alligator**

### **pp. 99-106, The Milk Run, pp. 107-117, Alligator Summary**

The Milk Run— Lt. Bus Adams thinks on how the US Air force bombs a Japanese-held island and then its defenses become weak. After that, bombing the island becomes easy to attack and such missions are called milk runs, but it is still possible to be shot down. That is what happens to Bus over Segi Point. He is shot down and is the lone survivor from the plane, in the water with only a life-belt. A bunch of New Zealand P-40 planes circle him and shoot up Japanese shore batteries targeting Bus. One P-40 plane is shot down. Next, a squadron of American F4U planes takes over and drops Bus a raft. He gets a parachute dropped to him to drag in the water and keep the raft away from the Japanese on the shore. New Zealand Lt. Grant comes in a PBY seaplane to rescue Bus. Unfortunately, the PBY is hit from shore guns and Bus and the crew are all forced onto a life raft. More squadrons of planes leave and arrive. The whole PBY crew and Bus are finally rescued by Lt. Commander Charlesworth and his PT Boats. Bus is rescued and gets to hang out with Lt. Tony Fry and drink whiskey.

Alligator- After the victory at Coral Sea, Admirals plot an attack on the Japanese-held island of Kuralei. Estimates are made of the forces that will be available for the attack, depending on how successful the fighting goes in the Pacific and elsewhere. All sorts of amphibious landings are studied to get new ideas for operation. Hospital ships and other facilities are planned to serve the wounded. Ideas are formed of what to do if the initial casualties are enormous. Since the target of the operation is secret, the operation is code-named Alligator. Back in Pearl Harbor, the narrator is a courier of the secret plans and island-hops in shorter flights to the Admiral Kester's Headquarters, at Noumea, New Caledonia. Many lives are affected all over Japan and the United States by this operation. A homely girl from South Carolina is sent a marriage proposal from a marine she met only once. The marine dies in the battle, but the girl is notified by the chaplain that the marine intended to propose.

### **pp. 99-106, The Milk Run, pp. 107-117, Alligator Analysis**

The Milk Run— As the Allies capture islands, many islands are left in Japanese hands, to be gradually reduced by lack of supplies and reinforcements. These forces are weak, but can be a problem. Japanese forces are on nearby islands and able to threaten Bus in the water, but Bus is defended by US planes that shoot up a barge going out to kill him, and shoot down land-based gunners. The huge American superiority in forces is shown by the ability to send dozens of planes and ships to rescue one pilot. There is a



humanitarian side to this, as well as the practical side that skilled pilots are a scarce commodity.

Alligator- It is November 1942 and the trend towards victory is seen in all theaters of World War II. Maps are made of Kuralei and four other islands as decoy plans, including air and submarine observations. Supplies and logistics are key in the American war effort, and Captain Samuel Kelley goes to Efate in the New Hebrides, to assume command of supply operations for Alligator. Captain Kelley is the resourceful but cruel commander of the supply Depot described in the story "The Strike."

The narrator becomes a courier for battle plans sent to Pearl Harbor. He is traveling back and forth, meets Tony Fry again, but soon is without companions. Part of the narrator's protection as a courier of secret plans is that he blends in with other people and does not arouse suspicions of friend or foe. When the narrator gets to his destination, Admiral Kester studies the book, where now the objective is shown to be Kuralei, and looks over things like probable casualties and the danger of hurricanes. In fact, the range of contingencies that are studied is truly remarkable.



## pp. 118-143, Our Heroine

### pp. 118-143, Our Heroine Summary

Nurse Nellie Forbush receives in the mail a hometown newspaper story calling her "Our Heroine." Security is stepped up after a rape attempt against a woman with her boyfriend in a jeep. When Bill Harbison's plane disappears, Nellie sees how precarious life is, though a week later Bill is rescued. Nellie is happy when Dinah arranges for her to fly north to the new hospital where Dinah meets her. A dinner is given for the nurses and doctors on a French plantation, and Nellie meets Emile De Becque. Emile De Becque is in his mid forties and is known as reliable follower of DeGaulle. Then, Emile gives a dinner at his plantation that is superb. Emile takes Nellie aside and invites her to come back to his plantation for a visit.

When Nellie returns, Emile brings her to a small pavilion in a cacao grove, among singing lorikeet birds. Emile tells Nellie that he had to leave Marseilles after he killed a man who provoked him. Emile indicates what life would be like if she came to live with him. Nellie says she will think about it and goes home to write her mother. Her mother writes back with pros and cons about such a marriage, and Nellie tells Emile that she will marry him. They kiss and talk about the future. Nellie notifies the naval authorities of her decision. Emile leaves the island for a few days and Nellie hears the story of the pilot Bus Adams at dinner and Emile's daughters. A couple of days later, Nellie meets Emile at his plantation and he introduces his half-Tonkinese daughters and two of his half-Polynesian daughter. Nellie sees pictures of his half-Javanese daughters. Nellie, who is from Alabama, is upset about the half-Polynesian daughters who she considers as half black. That means she would be marrying a man who had lived openly and had children with a so-called "Nigger." With regret, Nellie announces to Emile that the marriage is off. When Emile drives Nellie out, his car is attacked by four crazed American servicemen. Emile hits them with a pipe on a chain, and the car escapes. Two of the would-be rapists are arrested.

Nellie is tormented and writes a letter to her old boyfriend in Alabama that she will marry him. Then Nellie tells Dinah that she cannot marry Emile due to his history. Dinah sees a picture of four of Emile's daughters that he gave to Nellie and comments on how lovely the girls are. Nellie realizes that she has to give up her prejudices and goes back with Dinah to tell Emile that she will marry him. Back at the plantation, Emile is singing a French song with his daughters and Nellie comes in and joins the singing.

### pp. 118-143, Our Heroine Analysis

Nellie feels quite uncertain, because of many things. She has to abandon her relationship with Bill Harbison and her friend Dinah Culbert is going north to set up another hospital. Nellie is one of a few white women among thousands of white men and knows she is vulnerable to attack. Oddly, she balances this by thinking that the bad



men are going to be bad, and the good men under tough conditions are even nicer than before. Nellie certainly does not lose her desire to meet people and to fall in love.

Nellie is sent up north and soon meets the French plantation owner Emile De Becque. Emile would have led the resistance if the Japanese had invaded the island. Nellie sees Emile at several dinners given by the doctors. What cause her to immediately fall in love with him and desire to marry him is somewhat uncertain. Perhaps the courage of the man, his good looks, strong personality and wealth is overwhelming to Nellie. Nellie is not surprised that Emile had to flee to the New Hebrides Islands for personal reason. This had already been speculated at by other people talking who are associated with Nellie. However, Emile leaves the island on a trip and soon Nellie inadvertently hears about what Emile has been doing in the islands for the last twenty years or so. Bus Adams tells of the Frenchman's daughter, and then it turns out that her father is Emile. Nellie is not sure what to think and Bus is stunned when he is told that the woman now involved with Emile is Nurse Nellie.

There is almost too much action in this story. First Nellie is confronted by Emile's black children from a Melanesian woman. This is an assault on her racial prejudices from the US's Deep South. Then, crazed US servicemen assault the car of Emile with Nellie in it, seeking to rape her. Nellie sees that this is a different world, and that her values from Alabama may not be able to tell her what to do. She finally realizes that the children are well-behaved and educated and that she has no reason to blame Emile for their existence.



## pp. 144-164, Dry Rot

### pp. 144-164, Dry Rot Summary

Joe is a young Navy man stationed on a small coral island. There are eight hundred men there and two airstrips, and Joe has been on the island for twenty-seven months. He is trying to avoid the sort of trouble that has gotten other men there arrested. Some men try to escape, while others go crazy over whiskey. Joe gets skin diseases that do not respond to treatment, until a treatment makes it finally go away. All of the men have malaria and take atabrine, but there are rumors that atabrine will destroy the men's virility until they are effectively countered by island doctors. A new skipper for the island gets Joe in trouble when the men are forced to sleep under mosquito nets. Joe refuses and is threatened with court martial. He solves his problem by setting up a fan near his bunk bed to get enough air.

Joe meets men from a Seabee flight and has a great time with Luther Billis and his friend the Professor, Hyman. The men talk about life and Joe complains about being stuck on the island. Luther promises to get Joe a girlfriend. Joe sees the men sail off and then is associated with a bootlegging ring in the shore area and is arrested. The Skipper quickly sees that Joe is innocent in the case. Joe gets his first letter from a girl named Essie Schultz. This boosts Joe's morale until she writes that she is marrying another man. Then Joe gets a letter from Luther that a new girl will soon write him. Meanwhile Joe is working on some carpentry jobs for the Skipper at his quarters. The Skipper lets Joe drink some whiskey on the sly.

Joe gets a letter from Alice Baker, who is eighteen and has no other boyfriend. Joe impresses other men when he shows them Alice's picture. Luther writes that he was in a battle and got two Japanese swords as souvenirs. There is a prayer service for the men fighting and dying in the invasion of France. Joe wants Alice Baker and the Seabee, Luther, to have a photo of him. He pays someone to illegally take his picture. Then Joe is stunned to hear that Alice Baker has died in a car accident. He wishes he could get off the island.

### pp. 144-164, Dry Rot Analysis

Joe is spending World War II on a small coral atoll that is used as an airstrip. The men live on the edge of the island, around the airstrips. Joe finds out to his shock that he has to fend for himself in getting extra water, since the Navy has not created a system to store and distribute adequate water. The main danger Joe faces on the island is to avoid going mad. Men escape the island and end up getting caught and jailed thousands of miles away. Joe is a young man, but in the United States he was already working as a shoemaker and living by himself, boarding with a married couple. Still, he is not prepared when he gets a bunch of skin diseases and then endlessly itches. There is no privacy, with men squeezed into shelters on double bunk beds. It's odd, because



one would think that it would be easy to spend the war on an island without being attacked, but it is not. Rumors assail the island, especially about the anti-malaria pill Atabrine. Men wonder if they are being slowly castrated or damaged in some other way, and only extensive propaganda can overcome these fears. It's funny to visualize big posters of Hollywood He-men stars, with the caption that they love Atabrine. In the case of the mosquito nets, the cure is worse than the disease. Joe can barely breathe with them on top of him in bed and has trouble sleeping. In the Navy there is no escaping regulations, and only by stealing a fan and setting it up does Joe get some peace and the ability to sleep well again.

In a sense, Joe takes the occasion of the visit of the Seabee Luther Billis and his friend Hyman as a chance to embark on a great fantasy. He meets the men for a couple of hours, but afterward thinks that he has a great friend. Luther gets him first one girl and then another to correspond to Joe. It seems odd, but it is true that this by-letter relationships between men and women actually can lead to marriages in some cases. However, the poor Joe has no luck, with the news of the death of Alice Baker in an auto accident. Joe faces the harsh reality that somehow he must endure his stay on the island to the end of his term or the end of the war. All of his illusions are destroyed in the irreversible effects of death of those he cares for.





## pp. 165-190, Fo' Dolla', Part I

### pp. 165-190, Fo' Dolla', Part I Summary

Atabrine Benny gives natives atabrine against the rampant malaria. Some natives want the pills to use as a yellow dye, so Benny gives them some extra ones. A Tonkinese woman nicknamed Bloody Mary is making money selling dyed grass skirts to Americans. Mary likes yelling dirty words because it helps her bargain with and handle the American servicemen. The Marines play games, provoking Mary to outbursts. American MPs are ordered to shut down Mary's trading post, but she just relocates a bit deeper in the jungle. A Navy Lieutenant is sent to tell Mary to stop, but is repelled by an outburst of her foul language. Soon Marine Lt. Joe Cable is sent to get Mary to stop her sales. Joe Cable is very stern with Mary and makes her take down her stand. Mary recognizes Joe's authority and agrees to obey.

Joe keeps visiting Mary, because she is interesting and exotic, though Mary is over fifty and ugly. Joe writes his girlfriend, a student at Bryn Mawr about Mary. Joe, like other servicemen has no companionship, and most men dread being drawn into homosexuality. Joe talks to Mary in poor French and Pidgin English. He ends up going with Atabrine Benny and Mary on a boat trip to the nearby island of Bali-ha'i. Mary's husband and family are there and all the unattached women of the New Hebrides are there for their own protection. Joe and Mary talk in the boat, with Mary telling him that he will enjoy Bali-h'ai. Unknown to Joe, Mary is leading Joe to her young daughter. Mary says hello to her family and then she and Joe go inside. A lovely Tonkinese girl of about seventeen stands against a wall, and then soon Mary and her friends disappear. Joe, with little prelude, embraces the girl. He rapidly undresses the two of them and has sex with the virgin girl. Joe and the girl named Liat walk back down the hill to the island hospital, where Bloody Mary, Liat's mother is. The French nun, Sister Clement prepares a meal and they eat along with Benny and two French ladies. Although Mary is lower than the ladies in social status, she stays since she brought the Marine Joe Cable. Joe and Liat say goodbye soon after when Joe has to leave. Meanwhile, on the nearby island of Vanicoro, primitive natives are also watching the boat.

### pp. 165-190, Fo' Dolla', Part I Analysis

Atabrine Benny is a man about fifty years-old, who enjoys his malaria control job, going around the islands giving out Atabrine pills, as he pinches the bottoms of native girls. The yellow dye is used on grass skirts that are sold to Americans. The indentured Tonkinese workers are making money selling yellow grass skirts, and the plantation owner Benoit wants the military police to crack down on it. Who knows, the truth may be that the Tonkinese workers are making more money than the plantation owners like Benoit to whom they are indentured servants. Benny sympathizes with the Tonkinese, particularly Bloody Mary. Seabees are also selling grass-skirts to Mary. Mary has learned much English from the Marines, particularly various curses. Monsieur Jacques



Benoit is a plantation owner who complains that this trade in skirts is undermining the island economy. As the story develops, Benoit has his own way of enjoying the native women of the island.

Bloody Mary's nickname comes from the betel juice dripping from her mouth. Betel is a nut that both men and women like to chew all day. Benny drives his jeep fast like the Military Police do and scares away the Marines around Bloody Mary. They think they are about to be busted, but realize it is only Benny. Soon they come back since Benny is really a friend of the woman and just playing. It's interesting that in this story there is a considerable buildup of the scene and the circumstances of people like Bloody Mary and Atabrine Benny, before the main character of the story, Marine Lt. Joe Cable comes onto the scene. The narrator describes Joe as tall, lean and attractive. He develops a friendship with Mary that is not sexual, but is a chance to show some interest in a person and avoid total boredom. The Marines are on the island and will eventually go on the attack, but now are waiting. Bloody Mary's plan is to give her daughter to Joe, though she cannot tell him this. Instead she arranges to have him go with her and Benny to Bali-ha'i. When he arrives on Bali-ha'i, Joe is in a daze looking at the bare-breasted native girls. Benny plays doctor with his atabrine pills he gives out. Joe is taken from the island crowd by Bloody Mary and taken on a walk up an island hill until the two of them arrive at a whitewashed house. There Joe is confronted with his destiny, the girl Liat. He does not flinch but immediately accepts Liat as his girl.



## pp. 190-226, Fo' Dolla', Part II

### pp. 190-226, Fo' Dolla', Part II Summary

The next morning, rain blows off the usual island mist and Vanicoro can be seen from the beach where Joe is stationed. At this point, Joe stops writing letters to his sweetheart at Bryn Mawr. That evening, the officers discuss the sudden appearance of Vanicoro Island. An officer named Eddie comments on tales of the beautiful women of the South Pacific. The officers argue if it is right for white men to have sex and marry native and Tonkinese women. Joe falsely claims that he would not do this. Joe sees Mary peddling goods but is unable to stop her that day. Not able to sleep, Joe walks in the forest and in the dark he sees Mary selling phony whiskey made from torpedo juice, but does nothing. After three days Atabrine Benny comes around and invites Joe for another ride to Bali-ha'i, and soon he is again with Liat.

After a nap, Liat takes Joe to cliffs by the ocean and talks of her life. She is supposed to marry the planter Jacques Benoit, though the marriage is delayed. Joe tells Liat that he has to go to Sister Clement's hospital to have dinner, but Liat has dinner for Joe too. Liat is angry until Joe has her come with him. Meanwhile, natives from Vanicoro plot on how to get red parachute cloth from Joe and Benny, and in this the natives succeed. Several days later there are atmospheric conditions that block Vanicoro but allow servicemen to see the island of Bali-ha'i. Joe is astounded and yells that there is Bali-ha'i, but the other men are distracted by other talking. Joe is torn between Liat and his orders to suppress Mary's trading. Soon Joe is again taking the ride to Bali-ha'i and sleeping with Liat. Before he leaves he is warned by Sister Clement that his relationship is wrong and that Liat will soon be married. Bloody Mary again waits for Joe to return, plotting to get him to marry Liat. Joe is ordered by his commanding officer to effectively stop Mary's trading. Joe is an object of ridicule, and when he takes a nap, the shrunken head is placed above his head and a noise is made. He gets up and bumps into the head in confusion.

Joe tries again to stop Mary's trading, but only gets more angry and confused. The next morning, Joe again goes to Bali-ha'i but is told by Sister Clement that Liat has already left. Joe plots with Benny to go to Jacques Benoit's plantation, before the Marines leave for battle. Benny delivers his atabrine pills to the natives and Joe sees Benoit but says little. Later, Joe avoids his fellow Marines and in the evening seeks out Mary. She calls to him and leads him to Liat. Liat tells Joe that it is too late, and her husband-to-be is coming. Joe tells her he is going to fight, and in haste the couple make love. Joe is ready to leave, and Mary outside asks Joe one more time to marry Liat. Then Jacques Benoit arrives for Liat in a jeep and Joe flees out the back window. Before Joe leaves to join the strike force, Mary publicly confronts him for using Liat and then abandoning her.



## pp. 190-226, Fo' Dolla', Part II Analysis

When Joe and Benny are about to leave, the natives from Vanicoro approach in canoes. There is a trade by sign language of pineapples for Joe's penknife, but the natives make signs that they want cloth. Benny gives them three red parachutes and the native men are overjoyed, also throwing a shrunken head to Joe. Joe dreads the savages of Vanicoro and wonders if he is having sex with a savage, but then remembers that Liat is from Tonkin China. Tonkin China is close to China, and is considered a strange but civilized place. The savages of Vanicoro are less involved with Joe's story and are mainly a foreshadowing of the story "A Boar's Tooth." That evening, Joe thinks of Liat and cannot write his fiancé. He is obsessed with Liat, though he admits that he cannot marry her, despite the delusions of Bloody Mary. Soon he is back on Bali-ha'i. The boat arrives early, and on the shore are noisy boys and girls. Joe is invited by Sister Liat to dinner at 1 pm, and is unaware that Liat sees him coming up to her house. Liat has her relatives leave and again makes love with Joe. Liat has a social triumph when Joe has lunch with her at the hospital, while the French ladies are appalled, and Sister Clement sees the relationship between Liat and Joe.

Back at Joe's camp, the soldiers talk about the rumors of white men being involved with beautiful women in the South Pacific. One man is sending his girlfriend a picture of ugly native women to dispell his girlfriend-back-home's anxiety. Joe is at this point living the dream with repeated visits to the beautiful Liat, but he dares not tell other men what is going on. Soon after, Joe sees Bloody Mary back to her trading under her favorite banyan tree. Joe stops there but leaves without throwing her out. Mary has used her daughter's affair with Joe to make sure that she can continue to sell and make money. She also plans to have Joe marry Liat.

Joe snaps under tension, and pressure from his commanding officer, and goes to Mary and closes down her trading stand. Mary asks if he will marry Liat. Joe is torn, and in a rage hits Mary, but soon Joe is again sneaking off to see Liat. Joe goes back to his base and is waiting for something to change. Then he hears that his unit will soon join the next strike force. Mary is still around urging Joe to marry Liat. The Marines in Joe's camp can see that Joe is going crazy over something, though they do not know what is the matter with him. They hang a shrunken head over him while he is sleeping. When he wakes, Joe is stunned to see the shrunken head and wonders if news of his love affair has gotten back to the Marines.

Joe sees Liat at night and they enjoy each other, but know that their love is only temporary. Then Joe finds out that Liat is preparing to marry the plantation owner Benoit, and Joe decides to visit Benoit. Benoit brags that he is getting rid of his native mistresses and marrying Liat, and the three men have a whiskey. Joe would like to protest the marriage, but sees that he has no ability or grounds to do so. The next day Joe gets his gear together and prepares to go into battle. There is a traffic jam in the parade of vehicles leaving by the Tonkinese village and Bloody Mary seeks Joe. She finds him and curses him in front of his fellow Marines, throwing the watch he gave to Liat on the floor and smashing it. Mary denounces Joe's affair with Liat, and then goes

off to sell a shrunken head. Mary is mad that her deal with Joe to give him Liat has collapsed. Any ideas of love are foreign to Mary, she just wants to have a white Marine, Joe Cable as her son-in-law.



## pp. 227-243, Passion, pp. 244-263, A Boar's Tooth

### pp. 227-243, Passion, pp. 244-263, A Boar's Tooth Summary

Passion— Dr. Paul Benoway is one of the men along with Lt. Bill Harbison, who survives a plane crash and time on a life raft. Paul is writing a letter to his wife, comparing his ordeal to that of an Aztec human sacrifice to the sun. Paul then wonders if he lacks passion towards his wife. Then, Bill Harbison stops by to show Paul a letter that needs to be put through censorship. This passionate letter is from an enlisted man named Timothy Hewitt, to his wife. It describes their kissing and sexual acts and thoughts. When Bill Harbison comes back, he asks Paul if the man writing the letter is a security risk to other men. Paul, the doctor, is asked to see Timothy Hewitt and evaluate him. Timothy, a sailor, is brought in and is nervous. The doctor explains that in civilized society, a gentleman does not write such a letter. Tim explains that at first he was having problems with his marriage. Then, he began to explain to his wife that they were there to love each other and should be frank about their love and desire for each other. After Tim assures the doctor that he will not show his letters or his wife's letters to anyone else, Paul tells him to bring his letters for censoring to him and they will be approved.

Paul lets the sailor go and goes back to his own letter. It is a straight description of what happened to him and the other men when his plane was forced down into the water. Paul wants to be more dramatic and puts back the section about feeling like an Aztec sacrifice. Before he adds more to the letter, Paul looks at Bill Harbison's letter which Bill also left for him to censor. Bill is known to have other girlfriends besides his wife. Bill writes of an entire dramatic battle that never occurred. He writes that he was saved by his love for his wife, Lenore, ending the letter, that I love you, oh my darling. Paul reflects on Bill as a true romantic soul, despite his defects of woman chasing and affairs. Paul tries to write the rest of his own letter, copying Bill's words and style. At the end, Paul realizes that this is absurd.

A Boar's Tooth— Luther Billis and Tony Fry are working together, with Luther acting as the so-called Big Dealer and Tony being the officer that helps Luther make deals. Tony is fascinated by Luther's boar tusk, and goes to find out more from the natives. The tusk has been grown in a circle and is still in its natural state, but Tony also sees one that is polished. Luther wants to get Tony over to the nearby island of Vanicoro, where the sacred pig ceremony will happen. Luther and a native boy explain the rituals around the special pig. A pig is confined on a chain and fed soft food by women. Some pigs can survive having a tusk grow back into their jawbone. At dinner, the other officers look at the tusk that Tony Fry bought, and Dr. Paul Benoway wants to buy it. Tony explains that



the native's religion centers on the growing of the tusks and suffering. The officer goes off in a rage and Tony is informed that this man has problems with his wife back home.

Tony and Luther go off in a boat with Dr. Paul Benoway and a chaplain called Chappy Jones. The Chaplain teaches comparative religion back home, and he compares the agony of the pigs and their sacrifice to Christianity. On Vanicoro, the servicemen are met by little boys who help guide them up a mountain. Luther can talk Beche-Le-Mer and the men make it to a large clearing and rest. The men climb to another village where a thin old chief starts the ceremony. Natives sit in a circle, with their women further back. There is an altar in the center and a big ironwood club to smash the pigs. A woman brings out a pig to be slaughtered after a fertility ceremony. After, the native men sing a song of praise to the man donating the pig and then the old chief smashed the boar's head, without disturbing the tusks. Several pigs are killed and then they are cut up. The American servicemen are given large chunks of the pig meat.

## **pp. 227-243, Passion, pp. 244-263, A Boar's Tooth Analysis**

**Passion**— Dr. Paul Benoway loves his wife and does not cheat on her. Yet in the long idle hours in the South Pacific he begins to suspect that his passion is lacking compared to the great lovers. Just then Lt. Bill Harbison, who is censoring letters, brings up the case of Seaman Timothy Hewitt. Hewitt is mailing out what are considered pornographic letters to his wife. Of today, they would have been considered rather mild. The man's record and appearance is normal. Timothy is told that there is something wrong with his letter, and he defends it as a special letter since it is to his wife. Tim shows the doctor a similarly passionate letter from his wife. After some thought, Dr. Benoway decides that it is really no one's business what these two married people write as long as they keep it to themselves. He agrees to censor and approve all letters from Hewitt from now on. Next Benoway looks at Bill Harbison's letter. The letter to Bill's wife is full of romantic lies. Bill writes that the seaplane he was on was shot down by Japanese, when actually it had mechanical troubles. Bill writes of his burning love for his wife, yet is currently cheating on her. Paul Benoway finally sees the irony of this, when he is copying Bill's letter at the part where it sounds like the old song, Oh, My Darling Clementine.

**A Boar's Tooth**— Luther Billis is somewhat fat and looks a bit like a pirate. He is wearing a boar's tusk and Tony wants to find out about it. The two men get into Tony's jeep and go to the native market of their island Espiritu Santo. There are lots of other goods and fruits, but Tony has the native swim to a ship and get a good boar's tusk. Tony gets sucked into the whole mystery of the circular boar's tusk, just like Luther wanted it to happen. Note that a male pig is known as a boar. When Tony gets back to his group of officers, he gets into an argument with one officer, and compares the crucifixion of Christ with the pain a pig suffers in growing the circular tusk. Just like the American officers are stuck on an island and have to go and fight, the pigs are suffering for a higher purpose. Long after they are dead, someone will remember the soldiers and sailors who fought and died in the South Pacific. The officer arguing with Tony has personal problems and cannot see what Tony is talking about.



Soon after, Tony, Luther and Chaplain "Chappy" Jones go in a boat to the island of Vanicoro. Chappy Jones knows about the pig or boar religion, which is a way he says for the natives to find a purpose for themselves in life. They live in a tropical paradise, but this way the natives get honor in a tribe by giving a pig away for sacrifice when it has beautiful ingrown circular tusks. The chaplain compares this spirit of giving with some aspects of Christianity, and compares it against the current American drive to accumulate and get things. Implied is that American practices of conspicuous consumption are out of control and should be reversed eventually.

The climb up the mountain on Vanicoro is dramatic, and there is a bit that is holy about the pig ceremony, where the chosen pig is slaughtered with hits by a club. The chiefs also cut out the pig's circular tusks, each about the size of an arm bracelet. The Americans then leave, walking down the hill with pig meat and Tony and the Chaplain each get a circular tusk. The pig meat can be traded for lots of pineapples. Overall, in the end this is American military tourism in the South Pacific. Luther lets Tony and Chappy Jones realize that a lot of fun can be had by, as the saying is, going native.





## pp. 264-281, Wine for the Mess at Segi

### pp. 264-281, Wine for the Mess at Segi Summary

The narrator recalls meeting Tony Fry at a small plane strip at Segi Point, New Georgia. There is always comfort and plenty of whiskey at Tony's Wine Mess. It is before Christmas and the big strike is approaching. Tony, along with the narrator, gets Bus Adams to fly a condemned TBF-plane called the Bouncing Belch to find some liquor. At the first stop there is no liquor, so they fly to Bougainville. When they land there is still fighting going on near the airstrip. The men end up staying on the island for a couple of days and Tony trades for two ice-making machines. The men fly to Ondonga, after being briefed on local dangers, but find no liquor for sale there either. In their next flight to Munda, the carburetor acts up. Bus barely manages to save the plane, with two flat tires in the landing. Overnight the men kill noisy crabs, and the bodies stink.

Next stop is Guadalcanal, where the rumor is that there is whiskey five hundred miles south at Espiritu Santo. Then Tony and Bus decide to fly to Luana Pori, where Tony's girlfriend Latouche is. Soon Tony, Bus and the narrator have to leave. They follow a C-47 back to Espiritu Santo and then to Guadalcanal. At this point, a wheel collapses and there is doubt that the plane can make it back to Segi Point. A mechanic makes some repairs, but trouble still looms. Tony goes and trades two cases of whiskey for a washing machine. On the flight back, Tony comments that the whiskey is in the back of the plane with him, not in the bomb bay, where it would fall out in a bad landing. Bus brings down the plane on a big strip, and after skimming the surface, lets the plane be destroyed as it lands. Still the whiskey, washing machine and Tony in the back make it out after being cut out. The men get drunk on Christmas and are told that they will lead the next strike on the beachhead.

### pp. 264-281, Wine for the Mess at Segi Analysis

At one point, the Belch plane even has beer bottles painted on it. This story is probably the height of the absurdities that Tony Fry leads the narrator and Bus Adams in to have fun in the South Pacific. The men literally risk their lives for a few cases of whiskey. For example, in their landing on Bougainville, the plane nears the airfield but it is ready to stall. It lands with two flat tires after nearly hitting someone. The men are stuck for two days as the plane is repaired. At night they hear land crabs scraping on metal. Tony goes out and kills them, but in the morning the bodies stink horribly. This type of funny story is weird, because one can barely tell that a war is going on. In fact, the war is used as an excuse to seize government property and clown around.

Next, the Bouncing Belch ends up following a New Zealander pilot early in the morning and flying high where it is cold, but the whiskey is really at Noumea. It's nice to know that Tony Fry and his crew can get nice and cold in the South Pacific by flying at 12,000 feet high. They fly to Noumea and get the coveted whiskey. Bus and Tony pretend that



they then make what is just a casual decision to fly to Luana Pori, but actually they are dying to see Latouche and the other girls at Latouche's plantation. Tony goes off with Latouche, while the narrator relaxes with bus at the American style bar. Various officers talk about the coming offensive. Latouche's sisters are there, all married or soon to marry American men. Tony would like to stay but they still have to get back to Segi Point for Christmas. In the last flight, it is clear that the odds of the plane making a safe landing are virtually nil, yet Tony fears losing his whiskey and washing machine unless they make it back to Segi Point. The idea of landing with no wheels and literally burning the bottom of a plane up on landing is pretty wild. Since the men can count on not having any liability for destroyed equipment, if they can make the landing alive and with the whiskey intact it is a victory. Now on to the real battle at Kuralei.



## **pp. 282-302, The Airstrip at Konora**

### **pp. 282-302, The Airstrip at Konora Summary**

To strengthen the strike on Kuralei, Admiral Kester targets tiny Konora to build an airstrip there, and a special operation is under Commander Hoag. Lt. Pearlstein warns that there is a ravine or gully at the island knee point, due to the pattern of water drainage. All this information is uncertain. The other concern is if there is a coral hill to dig out building material for the airstrip. Three Australians are brought in who lived on Konora for a few months long ago, but their intelligence is very vague. The men on a reconnaissance mission return and report that there is a ravine in the middle of the island and there is coral in the hills. Pearlstein is given the job to fill the ravine, redirect the watercourse, and build the airstrip over it. The Seabees prepare to perform this miracle under fire. There is even a plan to get live coral from the shore and put it on top of the airstrip to get a tighter, smoother top. The notion of using live coral is strange, but the men get used to it. Marines are prepared to land on the island and secure a beachhead, to be immediately followed by the Seabees.

Under a huge air and naval covering fire, Marines land on Konora and are soon followed by the Seabee troops. Pearlstein begins directing tractors to scoop up coral from the hill and fill the ravine. A shovel is destroyed by a Japanese bomber, and one of the steam shovels that are scooping up the live coral has to climb up the hill. By now the airstrip is being built from both ends of the island. Small Japanese forces are surrounded. Meanwhile, Luther is missing for two days on a bet to grab Japanese Samurai swords. In an aerial dogfight, an SBD American plane is damaged and ends up landing on the airstrip. The pilot turns out to be Bus Adams. Then the time comes for the first of the bombers to land. As the bomber lands, three Japanese soldiers attack towards the bomber. Two are shot, but one tackles Commander Hoag and kill himself and Hoag with a grenade.

### **pp. 282-302, The Airstrip at Konora Analysis**

Konora is only about two miles long and is bent. Commander Hoag of the 144 Seabees is chosen to build the airstrip as soon as the Marines land. Hoag has only fifteen days to build the airstrip. The narrator is the errand boy between Admiral Kester and Commander Hoag. The island is like a bent knee, with neither leg at 6,000 in length. The plan is to build the airstrip crossing the knee point of the island and then across both legs to get a longer airstrip. Attempts to get more intelligence from Australians who lived on the island long ago are not very successful. The married couple and a widower are asked questions but can remember little, even after studying a map. Finally, one of the Australian men suggests that a submarine secretly bring him ashore to check for a coral hill and to see if there is a ravine in the middle of the island. The man goes with a volunteer force, which includes the Seabee Luther Billis. It's interesting that the theoretical knowledge of Pearlstein, that the ravine must be there because of the flow of



water on the island, such as rain water, is correct. The narrator is impressed with Commander Hoag's judgment in giving Pearlstein this task.

Air cover is arranged with several islands bombed as a partial diversion. Marines cover the Seabees, but some are killed and wounded by the Japanese. Luther Billis complains that due to Marine negligence he is slightly wounded. Within a couple of days, American bombers are scheduled to land on the airstrip, and the persistent Bus Adams shows up on the airstrip after his plane is damaged in a dogfight. There is such a rush to finish that two trucks overturn going up the hill. The triumphant ending of the story is marred by the attack of the Japanese suicide men, with one getting through and blowing up Commander Hoag. This is an important incident, since Japanese suicide attacks by men, and by planes are a major source of American casualties during the South Pacific campaign.



## pp. 303-327, Those Who Fraternize

### pp. 303-327, Those Who Fraternize Summary

Bus Adams thinks of Latouche Barzan, who is part-French and part Javanese, twenty-three years old and very attractive. When Bus first meets her, she invites him to dinner. Latouche becomes Bus's girlfriend, though he is married at home. They listen to records and Latouche wonders what Paris, France is like. Latouche is also married, but hates her husband, who is a fugitive. The plantation is disrupted when Lt. Col. Haricot raids the plantation and demands the return of all American goods that have found their way there. Then, a sergeant who was deployed to guard the plantation announces that he wants to marry Latouche's sister Marthe. Lt. Col. Haricot gets more upset, and Latouche decides that since Haricot is a bachelor, he can be persuaded to marry Laurencin.

Bus Adams still is sleeping with Latouche and telling her stories of Paris, mostly based on the opera, *La Boheme*. Haricot returns to look the place over and gets into a confrontation with Latouche, who slaps him, and soon sets him up with her sister Laurencin. Bus' arrangement is abruptly interrupted when he gets into a fight with Lt. Bill Harbison who wants girls immediately, and Bus's jaw is busted. Tony Fry shows up as well, and soon fascinates Latouche with talk of Paris; plus, he is not married. Tony becomes Latouche's new boyfriend, and Bus takes up with his nurse, Lisette.

More disruption occurs when it is found out that Marthe is pregnant by her boyfriend. Bus obtains parachute silk for Latouche, who makes a lovely dress for the wedding. On the other side of the plantation, Marthe and the Sergeant are married by a Buddhist priest. This wedding is interrupted by Latouche's fugitive husband, Achille Barzan. Barzan attacks Latouche, but Bus intervenes. Latouche flees to her house and is followed by Barzan, but is able to shoot him to death. After interrogation, this killing is ruled self-defense. Lisette's husband is found and Bus is again alone. The last couple to marry is Tony Fry and Latouche. Before the wedding, Tony confesses that the killing of Achilles Barzan was a set-up. He was lured to the plantation. Bus flies off in his plane to blow off steam. Soon after, Bus and Tony have to go for the next strike.

### pp. 303-327, Those Who Fraternize Analysis

Bus Adams, along with his friend Tony Fry is a man who chases women, though in Bus's case he is married. He likely enjoys at some point the whorehouses on Luana Pori, and later, enjoys the Frenchman's daughter. The Red House is for enlisted men, and the Green House is for officers, but the narrator claims that neither is run by Latouche, the Frenchman's daughter. Bus is a legend in his own time, and is soon given the intimate attentions of Latouche. Along with many other officers, he goes first go into a salon and has drinks. After the servant calls them, they go into another small house for dinner. The officers give Latouche things that she needs, from car tires to gun ammunition. When Lt. Col. Haricot makes a crackdown, few goods are actually seized



and the party goes on at Latouche's plantation, though guards are placed at the gates to put the place off-limits to Americans.

With Latouche are her lovely sisters Josephine, Laurencin, and Marthe. Other Frenchwomen show up, and eventually several are married to American servicemen. Latouche soon targets the bachelor Haricot for the full treatment with her outburst at him for accusing her of running the whorehouses near her plantation. When Haricot goes back to his base he is confused, and ends up going back to the plantation to apologize to Latouche. Latouche leaves quickly and leaves Laurencin to deal with Haricot.

Latouche's husband is a Frenchman named Achilles Barzan, who like his parents is a follower of the collaborationist Petain. Latouche tells of how she was well-behaved until Latouche's father leads followers of the pro-Allies De Gaulle to take over the island and arrest the Petainists. She obviously was in touch with her father, the DeGaulle Emile De Becque, who jails Barzan's father, while Achilles flees into hiding. For a while Bus lives with Latouche on her plantation, but he loses his spot to the bachelor Tony Fry, who also speaks French. Bus still resorts to spying on Latouche and finds out that Tony is fascinated with Latouche and even learns some Javanese. With all the romance and affairs going on, the only honorable solution is marriage. First Marthe is married to her Sergeant, and Lt. Col. Haricot also marries Laurencin. Then Tony Fry himself has a covert Buddhist marriage to Latouche. Buddhist marriages can be done with some stealth, since they are not administered by the Catholic French.



## pp. 328-349, The Strike

### pp. 328-349, The Strike Summary

The Seabees construct and maintain a huge supply depot. There are no days off, as trucks constantly bring in and take out supplies. The commander there is Captain Samuel Kelley, age fifty-four, who is a career naval officer. Already the men work seven days a week, and now their hours are even longer. Officers that protest are transferred and their careers are ruined. Anything boisterous or sarcastic, like cheering Captain Kelley at the movies, is dealt with severely. Individual men and officers are subject to unnecessary ridicule. Bus insinuates that Captain Kelley is a modern-day Captain Bligh, and does an imitation from the Hollywood movie, *Mutiny on the Bounty*. One soldier named Polikopf takes up the Captain Bligh cry of "What's that Mr. Christian?" The narrator is deployed to tell Polikopf and others to stop this mockery of the Captain. Captain Kelley is very capable and takes special measures to prepare the Depot to resist a hurricane. Things get more hectic when the fleet comes into port while there are heavy rains. Tension is released when at 2 am one night, a man in a long black coat appears, and tells guards the words, Naval Intelligence. He gets the guards to fire in response to a flashlight that appears, to signal that there are Japanese saboteurs. Soon it is found to be a hoax and the narrator somehow arranges the little game.

Polikopf is held in prison, but with the attack in preparation, his case begins to seem very funny. The possible charges are ridiculed, particularly by Bus Adams and Polikopf is soon freed, denying that Bus Adams or anyone else put him up to pulling the prank. There is continuing bitterness between Captain Kelley and Bus. Just at this point a hurricane strikes. The fleet goes out to sea and Kelley's preparations help the Depot stay safe. After the storm, the ship *Torpex*, an ammunition carrier, returns with extension storm damage. The ship is kept separate from other ships. Three days later, some *Torpex* officers talking to Bus remark that Kelley is from Madison, Wisconsin. A couple of hours later, the *Torpex* blows up. The *Torpex* officer is drunk and talking. He compares his kind skipper who just died with the mean Captain Kelley. He says that Kelley had a daughter who fell in love and was impregnated by an Army flier who is then killed in action. Due to Kelley's rage, the daughter committed suicide. The next morning, Bus Adams requests to be transferred up north for the coming strike. Then, Bus makes up a story that hints at what happened to Kelley's daughter. Kelley walks out of breakfast, and soon Bus is transferred.

### pp. 328-349, The Strike Analysis

The Strike— The narrator is an officer at a huge supply depot that is undergoing preparations for the big strike on Kuralei, and his old friend the Navy airman Bus Adams is there as well. There are always huge specific requests that are often cut down to manageable size. The officer at the Depot, Captain Kelley, drives the men hard and is responsible for the successful logistics at Kuralei. Nevertheless, there is the question of



too cruel leadership creating tension among officers and men. Kelley criticizes officers for slight lapses. Other officers succumb to a hate-filled atmosphere as they attempt to direct Captain Kelley's rage against other officers and not themselves. Bus is blamed for some incidents but ignores the harassment. The narrator keeps Kelley in line by constantly alluding to his knowledge of Admirals and the place for the big attack. Bus Adams also as his ways of putting Kelley down and is able to continue to wear his aviator cap. The episode of Polikopf posing as Navy Intelligence is clearly secretly backed by the narrator and Bus Adams as a necessary prank. The Polikopf prank is the true so-called Strike of the story, a strike against too much tension building up in the men at the Depot.

Kelley is successful in taking the threat to the Depot of hurricanes seriously, deploying the narrator on this task. The narrator gathers information from natives and plantation owners of the typical course of a hurricane and their floods. Kelley is informed that he needs to strengthen Quonset huts that open to the southeast, by repacking the goods against the vulnerable walls. Work is increased to ninety hours a week. When the hurricane hits, rain is blowing horizontally as coconut trees snap. Some of the huts are destroyed, but only one depot building is damaged. Kelley's measures prevent wider damage. Still some disasters are unavoidable, as in the explosion of the ammunition ship Torpex in the harbor. The survivor of the Torpex on shore-leave tells the strange story of Kelley's daughter being impregnated and her suicide. This story is highly disturbing, and creates a morale in the story of the dangers of too much discipline.





## **pp. 350-358, Frisco, pp. 359-376, The Landing at Kuralei, pp. 377-384, A Cemetery at Hoga Point**

### **pp. 350-358, Frisco, pp. 359-376, The Landing at Kuralei, pp. 377-384, A Cemetery at Hoga Point Summary**

Frisco— The narrator is an officer in the coming Kuralei landing and is stationed on a small ship, the LCS-108. Navy guns and aircraft bomb Kuralei, and an American oiler ship is sunk by the Japanese. The men stay up and get together in the recreation room and sing. There is a bright explosion on Kuralei and it reminds the men of the lights and excitement of San Francisco, California, the main embarking port out to the South Pacific War. One man, a cook, remembers meeting a girl in a restaurant in 'Frisco and taking her out to all sorts of places as well as sleeping with her. Men tell stories, while others sharpen their weapons. Men wonder when the war will be won and what they will do after the war. At this point there is an announcement that the assault party to attack the beach is forming.

The Landing at Kuralei— The quick and easy landing planned in Operation Alligator is jeopardized by Japanese Lt. Col. Hyaichi, a graduate of Cal Tech, and some key intelligence. At 5:27 am, when the amphibious tanks hit the coral, most of them are destroyed. Two-thirds of the second wave of troops is killed, but a small beachhead is formed. The third wave mostly gets through, but cannot reach the line of coconut trees. American planes hit with pinpoint strikes on the Green beach landing site, on the west side of the promontory. The situation on Red beach is worse. By 2:22 pm, another landing is made on the western side of the highlands. Barges land from the LCS-108, the narrator's ship. A barge is hit, but some men make it to the beach, called Sonova beach, and some tanks land. The LCS-108 is ordered to run aground on the beach and fires rockets at Japanese tanks.

Japanese forces try to reinforce Green beach but are cut down by rocket fired from the LCS-108. At this point, some American tanks from Sonova beach break out into the Green beach area and help the advance. More reinforcements land safely on Green beach. The Marines advance towards a blockhouse, stopping a counterattack, as daylight grows dim. Japanese forces attack from the left (western) flank but are cut down by rocket fire. American tanks and flamethrowers converge on the blockhouse. With heavy cover fire, the flamethrowers are able to flood the blockhouse with fire and it is taken. Casualties are heavier than expected. Bill Harbison is not on the attack; he managed to get a leave to go back to New Mexico while others die. Two men talk, with an older man named Burke claiming that the fighting in Europe against the Germans is tougher than the fighting in the South Pacific. The younger man, Eddie thinks that the



bombardment of Kuralei could have been better and things were very difficult. Burke argues that the attack was not so bad, but Eddie still has to guard against Japanese infiltrators at

A Cemetery at Hoga Point— The narrator is at Konora to get replacements for the men who died from unit LARU-8. A skipper has the narrator go fishing to relax. The narrator is dropped ashore by a cemetery at Hoga Point. A Negro called the Preacher greets the narrator and shows where Commander Hoag is buried. He recalls that Hoag defended the Negro soldiers from abuse, but the officer that replaces Hoag is prejudiced. This officer punishes the Preacher and Denis by making them work in the cemetery, but they like being surrounded by heroes. They pass the grave of Lt. Joe Cable, the Marine from the 'Fo Dolla' story. The narrator thinks how men like Commander Hoag and Tony Fry are in some ways irreplaceable. The Preacher meets Denis, his fellow worker, and they talk on how absurd it would be to move the graves back to the United States, when here the men who fought together can stay together.

## **pp. 350-358, Frisco, pp. 359-376, The Landing at Kuralei, pp. 377-384, A Cemetery at Hoga Point Analysis**

Frisco— Many small craft are involved in the invasion of Kuralei. The LCS-108 is more typical of the American navy than the battleships and aircraft carriers that most people think of. The LCS-108 has anti-aircraft and other guns and fighting men ready to wade up the beach and attack the Japanese. The skipper is up most of the time as D-Day approaches and the excitement is so great that most men cannot sleep the last night before D-Day. The men sing and talk about San Francisco, California, the last city that most of them see when they leave for the South Pacific. While usually men talk little of women, this night they talk about their romances in Frisco, whether real or imagined. All of the men are sure that the United States will defeat Japan, but many fear it will take a long time. Meanwhile, a man named Norval is in the corner sharpening his knives and other equipment. A machinist mate remembers having his wife come to San Francisco, and conceiving their infant daughter. A fireman there got drunk night after night. A seaman in Frisco dated a beautiful Chinese female dancer. The narrator flew out of San Francisco instead of going on a ship, increasing his prestige among the group.

The Landing at Kuralei— The Cal Tech graduate Hyachi is represented as knowing the American mind, and the danger of American technology and innovation. At first Hyaichi thinks it to be impossible for the Americans to hit the south highlands of the island of Kuralei. Then intelligence comes in that the Americans have a new weapon to cross rough coral, amphibious tanks. Hyaichi is not entirely believed, but is allowed to set up a secondary defense line near the highlands, in addition to the main Japanese defenses on the two beaches. The path of the secret intelligence about the new American amphibious troop carriers calls to mind the saying that loose lips sink ships. Wartime gossip can be dangerous if it leaks out to the enemy.



The battle for the beaches is fierce and only the huge amount of forces the Americans have to bring to bear enables their attack to succeed. At first the attack is contained. Japanese planes hit some American ships before being shot down. Finally, the first Japanese trenches on Green Beach are taken after pinpoint bombing. Cruiser ship fire destroys a Japanese counterattack and by 4:29 pm (16:29) more amphibious troop carriers land on Green Beach. The coordination between land invasion, air and sea power is able to widen the beachhead penetration and enable the Japanese position at the blockhouse to be taken on schedule, though at a much higher cost than expected.

Tony Fry is killed during the Japanese flank attack, though he could have stayed on the beach as beach-master and survived. The reader tends to view this as tragic, since he has gotten to know Tony so well. Also, Tony has survived many other dangerous missions in previous stories. Nearby, the narrator overhears two men talking in a foxhole on the beach. They have a light argument, now that their beachhead is mostly secure, over whether the Japanese match up to the German forces that Americans fight in Europe. Meanwhile, the narrator thinks of the long chain of command from the base at Noumea that runs all the way to the flamethrower troops that take the blockhouse. The courage is all along that chain, but it only applies its force at the end of the chain.

A Cemetery at Hoga Point— Konora is now peaceful, where once there was heavy fighting. The narrator reflects that the individual Americans fought and thought they would survive, but many did not. Cable was jailed after going crazy and being mocked, but then was let out to fight and die. Ironically, the two black servicemen, the Preacher and Denis, are being punished for some minor infraction by being deployed to care for the cemetery. Commander Hoag was killed on Konora, as described in the story "The Airstrip at Konora" and the Negro men are suffering from Hoag's successor's racial prejudices. The heavy dialect that is written for the Negro men is somewhat difficult to understand, though it can be funny.



# Characters

## **The Narrator, an unnamed Naval Officer appears in The South Pacific, Coral Sea, etc.**

The narrator holds the story line together with his frequent changes in location and his presence in meetings with Admiral Kester on planning the battle of Kuralei and on winning the war. He is an officer on Admiral Kester's staff who typically travels around and keeps in touch with various units. Thus, the narrator gets to meet the other major characters of the stories and tell the stories about them. Though the narrator is almost always present, he is not developed as a character very much. Though he is on the scene at the plantation of the Frenchman's daughter, for example in the story about "Those Who Fraternize," he is not described as having an affair of his own with one of the women there. Perhaps the best characterization of the narrator is in the story "The Strike." There he makes clear that he, unlike Captain Kelley, knows what the objective of the next great offensive is, and the narrator brags of his association with various Admirals. In the story "Alligator," the narrator describes himself as being an undistinguished average man, who is used as a courier for top-secret plans and is careful not to draw attention to himself. As explained in the first story "The South Pacific," the narrator is fascinated with people and tells stories both about situations he has been in and stories that he has heard from others.

## **Navy Lt. Tony Fry appears in Mutiny, The Wine Mess at Segi Point, Those Who Fraternize, A**

Tony Fry is in many of the stories, from "Mutiny," to the report of his death in the last story. Tony is known for his ability to procure endless supplies of whiskey. He also has affairs with Lucy, the dim-witted girl of the so-called Bounty People in "Mutiny" and with the sharp-witted Latouche, who Tony ends up marrying. Tony has the ability to be philosophical and questioning, which angers some of the career Navy types. This is typified by Tony's conversations with Lt. Charlesworth, in "the Cave, where Tony insults graduates of the Navy academy at Annapolis as the so-called trade-school boys. Tony is actually a courageous person, but often pretends to not be this, sometimes as a joke and sometimes on account of laziness. Still, he is happy to go out on PT boat patrol and do other dangerous duties that he might have avoided. This willingly to do more than expected actually leads to his death at the battle of Kuralei, where as beach-master, he could have stayed on the beach instead of going into a dangerous area with some Marines.



## **Lt. Bus Adams appears in The Milk Run, The Wine Mess at Segi Point, Those Who Fratern**

Bus Adams is a Navy pilot and a major character of "The Milk Run," and "Those Who Fraternize" as well as other stories. Bus is described as a blond and cocky pilot who lives day to day. In the story "The Milk Run," he is rescued from a downed plane in the water at a huge expense in a funny story which shows the superior logistics in-depth of the US Navy. Bus makes an impression as an impulsive romantic when he has an affair with Latouche, the Frenchman's daughter, though Bus is married in civilian life. Bus Adams is the center of many funny situations, typified by his role as the pilot of the Bouncing Belch, a disintegrating plane, as he helps Tony Fry seek whiskey supplies for Christmas.

## **Seabee Luther Billis appears in Dry Rot, A Boar's Tooth and, The Airstrip at Konora**

Luther Billis is a Seabee and an enlisted man who first appears in the story "Dry Rot." He entertains Joe, the sailor who is stuck on a small atoll, and gets girls back in the United States to write letters to Joe. Luther also appears in "A Boar's Tooth," and "The Airstrip at Konora." He is a Seabee construction worker as well as a so-called Big Dealer, who gets the assistance of the officer Tony Fry. Tony helps Luther to visit the native ceremonies on Vanicoro. Luther is an honorary member of this native tribe. In the story "The Airstrip at Konora," Billis is finally at work trying to build an airstrip there in a very short amount of time.

## **Lt. Bill Harbison appears in An Officer and a Gentleman, and Passion**

Lt. Bill Harbison is the main character in "An Officer and a Gentleman" and appears in several other stories. Bill is very ego-driven and feels that he is wasting his time and accomplishing nothing in the South Pacific. He decides to pursue the beautiful Nurse Nellie after previously avoiding such love affairs. Bill ends up admitting to Nurse Nellie that he is married, mainly to maintain his snobbish view of the world. It is mentioned in the story "Passion" that Bill is involved with other women. Later, it turns out that Bill arranges to return to the United States and avoid combat in the attack on Kuralei.

## **Nurse Nellie Forbush appears in An Officer and a Gentleman, and Our Heroine**

Nurse Nellie is a beautiful and intelligent young woman from a small town in Alabama. She dates Lt. Bill Harbison for a while and ends up asking him to marry her. She ends up being rejected by Bill, because he is already married, and is a social snob. Nellie is



moved to an island to the north and becomes involved with Emile De Becque. Her racial prejudices are challenged when she considers marrying De Becque, and finds out about his children with women from the South Pacific.

## **Emile De Becque appears in Our Heroine**

Emile De Becque is a French plantation owner who is in his forties and has had many women though never has been married. He is a leading follower on his island of Gen. de Gaulle and the French forces that are allied with the Americans. Emile decides to marry Nurse Nellie. He has many children from earlier affairs with women that are Tokinese, Javanese and Melanesian.

## **Dinah Culbert appears in An Officer and a Gentleman, and Our Heroine**

Dinah Culbert is an older nurse who goes out with Lt Bill Harbison for a time, though she is almost twice his age. Dinah gives advice to Nurse Nellie on how to deal with her confusing love-life. Later, she carefully and thoughtfully encourages Nurse Nellie to marry Emile De Becque.

## **Admiral Kester appears in The South Pacific, Alligator**

Admiral Kester is the narrator's commander and operates from Noumea on New Caledonia. Admiral Kester plays an important role in developing Operation Alligator, the seizure of the island of Kuralei.

## **Joe appears in Dry Rot**

Joe is an ordinary young Navy man who spends the entire war on a small coral atoll that has two airstrips. Joe tries hard to avoid getting in trouble, but does not always succeed in this. Joe meets Seabee Luther Billis, who gets girls to write Joe letters. Joe is extremely frustrated because he fails to see how he is actually playing an important role in the American war effort.

## **Teta Christian appears in Mutiny**

Teta Christian is a ninety-year-old woman who is a descendant of the mutineers from the ship Bounty. Teta is an old woman but is healthy. She leads the islanders that are trying to stop the building of an airstrip on Norfolk Island, and the cutting down of a row of pine tree across its central plateau.



## **Atabrine Benny appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Atabrine Benny is a man of about fifty, who supervises malaria prevention programs in a sector of the New Hebrides Islands. Benny enjoys being free of his nagging wife and posing as a doctor, when he is really a pharmacist's assistant back in Texas. Benny is constantly going from one island to another delivering Atabrine, and serves to bring Joe Cable to Bali-ha'i and to other islands.

## **Dr. Paul Benoway appears in Passion, A Boar's Tooth**

Dr Paul Benoway is a friend and colleague of characters such as Lt. Bill Harbison and Tony Fry. He is a careful and quiet man, unlike some of his wilder friends. Paul Benoway wonders why he does not have the passion for his wife as men like Bill Harbison has for women. He is interested in things out on the islands and goes along on the expedition to the native pig ceremony on Vanicoro Island.

## **Marine Lt. Joe Cable appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Marine Lt. Joe Cable shares some of the snobbishness of other well-educated officers. Unlike other well-educated men, he gives the impression of being a real man. Joe Cable gets Bloody Mary to stop selling grass skirts and other items. Soon he is captured by Mary's admiration, and then the physical passion of Mary's daughter Liat. This interferes with his mission to suppress Bloody Mary's trading activity, and causes Joe other problems.

## **Bloody Mary appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Bloody Mary is a Tonkinese woman who is an indentured servant in the New Hebrides Islands. She is daring and successfully trades in grass skirts, and at night in bootleg whiskey. Bloody Mary decides to give her daughter to Lt. Joe Cable and marry her off to him. This is a bit confused, because Mary is also arranging Liat to marry the French planter Benoit, but Joe Cable is her first choice.

## **Captain Samuel Kelley appears in The Strike**

Captain Samuel Kelley is the commander at the supply Depot. He is known for his extreme harshness, though he is an effective officer. His planning saves the Depot from the worse effects of a hurricane, but his command style infuriates other officers. These officers stage a type of strike against Captain Kelley. Later it is revealed that his strictness caused the suicide of his daughter.





## **Lt. Colonel Haricot appears in Those Who Fraternize**

Lt. Colonel Haricot is a man in his forties and a bachelor. He leads a raid on Madame Latouche Barzan's plantation and aims to seize all the American equipment that has been brought there and traded for other things like food. Haricot gets only a small number of goods confiscated. Then Latouche plots successfully to get Lt. Colonel Haricot involved with her sister, Laurencin. Haricot ends up marrying Laurencin.

## **Commander Hoag appears in The Airstrip at Konora**

Commander Hoag is the commander of the 144 Seabees, and agrees to build an airstrip on Konora within fifteen days of landing his equipment on the island. Hoag drives his men, but is also sensitive to their suggestions and abilities. He gets a Jewish soldier named Lt. Pearlstein to fill in the ravine and build an airstrip over it. Hoag is killed by a Japanese suicide attack just when the first bomber successfully lands on the airstrip on schedule.

## **Lieutenant Grant appears in Coral Sea**

Lieutenant Grant is a New Zealander who pilots a PBY seaplane from the eastern end of Vanicoro Island, at the beginning of 1942. At the time, the Japanese are on the offensive and there is fear that they will continue towards New Zealand. Lt. Grant keeps very tight discipline and works hard to track the Japanese. When the Japanese are defeated at Coral Sea, Grant makes a speech and then collapses totally drunk.

## **Latouche Barzan appears in Those Who Fraternize**

Latouche Barzan is one of the daughters of Frenchman Emile De Becque with a Javanese woman. She is married to Achilles Barzan, but Achilles is forced to flee after their island is secured for the pro-Allies DeGaullist forces by Latouche's father Emile De Becque. Latouche gets into affairs with American soldiers, and helps her sisters Josephine, Laurencin, and Marthe do the same.

## **Liat appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Liat is the Tonkinese daughter of Bloody Mary. Joe Cable is brought to Liat on Bali-ha'i Island, and Joe and the seventeen-year-old girl immediately start an affair. Liat and Joe are aware from the beginning that their affair is a temporary thing, and that Liat is to marry the French plantation owner Jacques Benoit.





## **The Remittance Man appears in The Cave**

The Remittance Man is a man of British-origin who is a coast-watcher on one of the Japanese-held islands in the New Hebrides Islands. He sends radio broadcasts to the Allies about Japanese forces heading south towards them, until he is stopped by the Japanese.

## **Timothy Hewitt appears in Passion**

Timothy Hewitt is a young navy man who is married. Tim writes passionate letters to his wife that are considered subversive by the officers that censor the mail. Dr. Paul Benoway meets with Tim and decides that his letters to his wife are harmless as long as they are kept private.

## **Jacques Benoit appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Jacques Benoit is a French plantation owner who is in his forties. He has many native women, but decides to marry Bloody Mary's daughter Liat. He meets Joe Cable but does not realize that Joe has been Liat's lover.

## **Lt. Charlesworth appears in The Cave**

Lt. Charlesworth is an Annapolis Naval Academy graduate that leads a group of PT boats from a base on the island of Tulagi. These PT boats are responsible for stopping the transport of Japanese troops on barges to Guadalcanal. Charlesworth has argues with Lt. Tony Fry, but soon shares Tony's obsession with the coastwatcher giving the Allies radioed intelligence, the Remittance Man.

## **Sister Clement appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Sister Clement is a French nun on the island of Bali-ha'i who is in charge of maintaining the hospital on the island. Sister Clement is familiar with the education of Liat, the young daughter of Bloody Mary. Sister Clement resents Joe Cable's affair with Liat and seeks to disrupt it.

## **Polikopf appears in The Strike**

Polikopf is an enlisted man who is recruited by officers including the narrator to run a comic disruption of the supply Depot in the story "The Strike." He notifies guards of a the presence of Japanese saboteurs in the middle of the night, but this is a false alarm. The comic story of a man saying he is Naval Intelligence and getting guards to shoot into the air, ends up not involving a prosecutable crime. Polikopf is freed, though he denies getting any assistance or encouragement by Bus Adams and others.



## **The Preacher appears in A Cemetery at Hoga Point**

The Preacher is a Black-American serviceman who has been assigned to maintain the cemetery at Hoga Point on Konora, along with his friend, another black man, Denis. The Preacher talks in a heavy black dialogue and wonders if good men like Commander Hoag can be replaced.



## Objects/Places

### **Kuralei appears in The Landing on Kuralei, other stories**

Kuralei is a fictional island that is like other islands conquered during the Sea Pacific campaign from the Japanese. It is chosen to cut off Japanese forces from supplies that are further to the south of it.

### **Konora appears in The Airstrip at Konora, A Cemetery at Hoga Point**

Konora is a very small coral island that is conquered a couple of weeks before the attack on Kuralei. It is just big enough to hold a bomber landing strip, but is near enough to Kuralei to add strength to the attack through an American bomber base.

### **Bai-ha'i appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Bali-ha'i is a low-lying island that is next to the larger and higher island of Vanicoro. Bali-ha'i is a safe haven for the young, unmarried women of the New Hebrides from male soldiers who may assault them. Ironically, this is where it is arranged for Joe Cable to have Bloody Mary's daughter Liat.

### **Vanicoro appears in 'Fo 'Dolla, A Boar's Tooth**

Vanicoro is an island known for its primitive natives that not too long ago were making shrunken heads out of their dead enemies. Luther Billis leads a group of Americans there to see the boar tusk and pig ceremony.

### **Efate appears in An Officer and a Gentleman**

Efate is a fairly large island in the New Hebrides. Lt. Bill Harbison and Nurse Nellie are deployed there in the hinterlands of the island. Bill is part of a unit called LARU-8.

### **LARU-8 appears in An Officer and a Gentleman, The Landing on Kuralei**

LARU-8 stands for Land Based Aircraft Repair Unit #8. It is Lt. Bill Harbison unit in "An Officer and a Gentleman" in its long period of preparation and waiting on the island of



Efate. LARU-8 is part of the assault force on Kuralei, where its transport is hit and many of its men are killed.

## **The Bouncing Belch appears in Wine for the Mess at Segi**

The Bouncing Belch is a condemned TBF plane, a type of bomber. Tony Fry uses the Belch to fly to get whiskey. It has a beer bottle design on it until Admiral Kester orders that this decoration is removed.

## **The Children of Emile De Becque appears in Our Heroine, Those Who Fraternize**

The Children of Emile De Becque include his children with a Javanese woman, and are Latouche Barzan, her sister Laurencin, Marthe and Josephine. Stories about these women are included in "Those Who Fraternize" and other stories. Other children of Emile are with a Melanesian woman and a Tonkinese woman. Nurse Nellie is particularly upset that Emile had children with a Melanesian woman, who she considers a Black woman.

## **The Red House and the Green House appears in Those Who Fraternize**

The Red House is a house of prostitution for enlisted men, while the Green House is for officers. These are both located on the island of Luana Pori near the plantation of Latouche Barzan.

## **DeGaullists, Petainists appears in Our Heroine, Those Who Fraternize**

Followers of DeGaulle refuse to surrender to Germany and Japan, and continue to fight alongside the Allies. Emile De Becque is known as a DeGaullist leader. Followers of Petain collaborate with Germany and potentially with Japan. These include Latouche Barzan's husband, Achilles Barzan.

## **The Bounty People appears in Mutiny**

The Bounty People are descendants of the mutineers on the ship Bounty, led by Fletcher Christian. The men intermarried with Tahitian women and their descendants now live on Norfolk Island, as well as Pitcairn Island.



## **The Slot appears in The Cave**

The Slot is an ocean passage between islands that runs south from Japanese-controlled islands to the embattled island of Guadalcanal. It is a key Japanese supply line that is disrupted by Allied forces.

## **Atabrine appears in Dry Rot, 'Fo 'Dolla**

Atabrine is a pill that is supposed to counteract the effects of the pervasive, mosquito-carried disease Malaria. American servicemen in the story "Dry Rot" fear that it has bad side effects. Atabrine is also valued by natives as a yellow dye that is used to dye grass skirts.

## **Operation Alligator appears in Alligator**

Operation Alligator is the secret plan for the American offensive and attack on the island of Kuralei. The report is brought back and forth by the narrator as a courier until all the different parts of it can be put together.

## **Amphibious Vehicles appears in The Landing on Kuralei**

Amphibious Vehicles are an American secret weapon. These vehicles can bring a fairly large number of American troops from a landing ship through shallow water with concealed coral, to enemy shores.

## **The Tonkinese appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

The Tonkinese are the people of Tonkin China, then a French colony, now mostly Vietnam. Bloody Mary is a Tonkinese from near Hanoi. The Tonkinese are brought out to the New Hebrides Islands by the French as indentured servants to work on plantations.

## **The LCS-108 appears in The Landing on Kuralei**

The LCS-108 is a small ship with anti-aircraft guns and guns to fire at ships and land targets. It also carries one hundred or so men to land on enemy beaches, such as in the invasion of Kuralei.



## **PT Boats appears in Coral Sea**

PT boats are the legendary ships that resist the Japanese at the beginning of the war. The narrator laments that the PT boats have no armor and are near death traps. Still, these PT boats are key to stopping Japanese troop transports to Guadalcanal.

## **Torpedo Juice appears in 'Fo 'Dolla**

Torpedo Juice is a liquid with a high alcoholic content that is used to fire torpedo. It is also diverted illegally for alcoholic consumption, though its purity and safety for human consumption is doubtful.

## **Parachute Silk appears in 'Fo 'Dolla, Those Who Fraternize**

Parachute Silk is the fine material that is usually red and white and used to make parachutes. Natives prize it as a beautiful material, and Madame Latouche and other women like to use it to make fine and flashy gowns.

## **Luana Pori appears in Those Who Fraternize**

Luana Pori is an island in the New Hebrides Islands where Emile De Becque's daughter settles after marrying the plantation owner Achilles Barzan. Latouche becomes a free and wild woman after Achilles Barzan flees the pro-Allied DeGaulist French forces. Latouche stages many affairs and parties on her plantation on Luana Pori.

## **Censor appears in Passion**

Censors have to examine all letters from officers and enlisted men. Officers are censors and also examine each other's mail. This is to make sure that no subversive messages or secret information is mailed to people in the United States or elsewhere. Sometimes the censoring guidelines cause trouble, as in the disturbance over the passionate letters of Timothy Hewitt in the story "Passion."

## **The Coral Sea appears in Coral Sea**

The Coral Sea is a body of water than is connected to the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and lies between the New Hebrides, New Guinea and Australia. The Battle of the Coral Sea is mostly a draw, but the Japanese are stopped from further offensive attacks toward Australia and New Zealand.



## **A Boar's Tusk, Pig Religious Ceremony appears in A Boar's Tooth**

On the island of Vanicoro, the natives have a religious ceremony involving pigs. The male pigs, boars are encouraged to grow long tusks that in-grow into their jaw in a circle. The pigs are fed soft food and are confined so they do not break the tusks. In pain, the pigs grow circular tusks through their jaw. Then the pigs are sacrificed and the flesh is eaten by the tribe. The pig or boar's tusk or tooth is hacked out and preserved as a memento of the ceremony.

## **The Ravine on Konora appears in The Airstrip on Konora**

The Ravine on Konora is a valley or ravine that is only about thirty feet deep, but it cuts the island of Konora in two at its middle. Lt. Pearlstein spots this ravine by studying a map of Konora and the probable water flows of the island from underground sources or rain. The Seabees must figure out how to divert the water course and fill in enough of this ravine that a level airstrip can be built across the middle of the island.

## **The Depot appears in The Strike**

The Depot is a huge storage and supply facility that supplies the upcoming attack on Kuralei and other operations. Hundreds of American servicemen work at the Depot keeping supplies in order and giving them out to troops that have authorization for them. These supplies range from weapons and ammunition, to lanterns, to paper and pens.

## **Big Dealer appears in A Boar's Tooth**

A Big Dealer is described as typically an enlisted man who is involved in buying and selling goods and profiting on the war. At a more limited level, a Big Dealer is manipulating officers to let him get what he wants. An example of a Big Dealer is the Seabee Luther Billis, who gets assistance from the officer Lt. Tony Fry.



# Themes

## The Scope of the Effort to Take Kuralei

The nineteen stories in "Tales of the South Pacific" are loosely linked around the background of units that eventually land on the Japanese-held island of Kuralei in Operation Alligator. Many of the stories share the same characters such as the narrator, Tony Fry, Bus Adams, and Latouche Barzan. Even Joe, the young man deployed on a coral atoll meets Luther Billis, a Seabee whose plane is serviced on the atoll, and deploys as part of Operation Alligator. First, the initial Japanese offensive has to be stopped, which is described in "The Coral Sea." Then the Americans gain the offensive around fighting for Guadalcanal, as described in "The Cave." This offensive drive is continued into Operation Alligator.

The author makes the point that the logistics involved in Operation Alligator are huge and involve thousands of men and women, many of whom do not participate in the actual battles for Kuralei or the airstrip at Konora. While the fanaticism and bravery of Japanese fighters are legendary, they lack the logistics in depth of the Americans and their Allies. In the dark days of the Battle of the Coral Sea, forces from Australia and New Zealand are able to reinforce the small American forces available to fight. At Konora, within hours of the landing, an airstrip is started while Marines are still fighting the Japanese. The completion of this airstrip in fifteen days allows bombers to participate in the battle for Kuralei. Still, the battle for Kuralei is bloody, with additional problems caused by unexpected Japanese defenses there in an area where amphibious tanks assault a coral heavy beach.

## Americans Surviving and Enjoying the War in the South Pacific

The South Pacific is a strange world for American servicemen. On the one hand there is the beautiful warm weather, the beaches and the abundance of tropical fruit growing on many of the islands. On the other hand there are horrible diseases there such as malaria, and uncertainty about primitive natives in the area. For especially American officers this becomes a romantic setting. In the story "An Officer and a Gentleman," this becomes a chance for officers to meet and fall in love with female American nurses. Even this is confusing, because the officers tend to be married and of high social status, while the nurses often are single and come from more humble backgrounds. Amid romance and lush islands, there is still danger, from planes crashing or being shot down, to some American enlisted men attempting to ambush officers and women and commit rape.

The French are the reigning colonial power in the New Hebrides island chain, the setting for most of the story. One of the most exciting stories is that of Nurse Nellie finding love with an older Frenchman who owns a plantation. The story line becomes





even wilder when the Frenchmen's daughters socialize with American officers. The natives also provide a source of amusement for US servicemen. The Seabee Luther Billis and Navy Lt. Tony Fry enjoy the strange ceremonies of the boar's tusk on the island of Vanicoro. They try to figure out the psychology of the natives. American servicemen also get involved with people from the French colony of Tonkin China that have been brought to the South Pacific. Tonkinese trade with Americans in souvenirs from grass skirts to shrunken human skulls. In the story "'Fo 'Dolla" one Tonkinese woman attempts to marry her daughter to an American officer as well.

## Winning the War

Despite a lot of fun and games going on in the South Pacific, the purpose of Americans there is to win the war against Japan. As is shown in the story "The Coral Sea," there are high stakes at risk in these battles, with a danger that Japanese forces could be unstoppable and occupy places such as New Zealand and Australia. A key turning point in the story is illustrated in the story "The Cave." In this story, the PT boats are shown to be an inadequate weapon that is still used to attempt to stop the Japanese from bringing up forces down the Slot and then to Guadalcanal. The long drawn-out battle for Guadalcanal destroys the power of the Japanese to launch an offensive, and gives the Americans time to reinforce their weak forces.

The small American and Allied forces in the area are bolstered by the intelligence reports they get from isolated coast-watchers in the area, like the Remittance Man. By the time of the story "The Milk Run," the average American feels that it is only a matter of time before they win victory over the Japanese. Operation Alligator is planned at a point that the success of the Japanese is beginning to fail and be rolled back. Although the story is based on real battles in World War II, the battles for Konora and Kuralei are fictitious, though based on real battles. These battles, and the logistics and planning done to launch them are typical of the way that American forces take the offensive in the South Pacific.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of the story is that of an American officer involved in operations in the South Pacific, in this case a Naval officer. Most of the stories are written in the first person viewpoint of the narrator, who is an aide to the fictional Admiral Kester. Some of the stories are in the third person point of view, with a few from the point of view of the pilot Bus Adams. The narrator is not given a name and is often purely an observer, as in stories such as "The Coral Sea." Nevertheless, the story is in the narrator's first person point of view. In the story "Mutiny," the narrator has an active role, with a mission from Admiral Kester to overcome local objections and build an airstrip on Norfolk Island.

In other stories the narrator is not used and the story is told from a third person point of view of an all knowing observer. Another possibility is that a bunch of servicemen got together, and one of them told the story of what happened between Lt. Bill Harbison and Nurse Nellie Forbush. Stories alternate between those told in the first person by the narrator, with Tony Fry usually as a companion, and those that are told by someone else. In "The Milkman," the story is told from the point of view of Lt. Bus Adams who is a pilot who is shot down over the ocean, and rescued. The story "Alligator" sets the tone of the war drive that is described in some of the following stories. "Our Heroine," "Dry Rot" and other stories are more focused on a central characters and their triumphs and failures. Even in the roughest battle front stories, an effort is made to inject humor with things like the funny conversation between two soldiers at the end of "The Landing at Kuralei."

## Setting

The setting of the stories is the South Pacific during World War II, with American and Allied forces fighting Japan. At the battle of the Coral Sea, the ability of Japan to continue their attack is stopped, but they still control a huge area of islands and sea lanes. In the fight to defeat Japan there is fighting on only a few islands such as Guadalcanal and Bougainville, with many Japanese-held islands bypassed and isolated from supplies. These Japanese islands are bombed, but sometimes have enough ammunition to shoot back at American planes as well.

The American offensive develops around a plan to attack the island of Kuralei, and to make a preliminary attack on the tiny island of Konora to build an airstrip there. Other islands are safely within the Allied controlled zone that stretches back to the base at Noumea, New Caledonia, where Admiral Kester is based. In this safe area, American servicemen, including Navy, Marines and nurses confront the conditions of the South Pacific. This area includes the New Hebrides islands, a French colony that includes the islands of Efate, Bali-ha'i, Vanicoro, and Luana Pori. By the time of these stories, these islands are in the hands of DeGaulist French forces and Americans. French plantation



owners supply food to Americans, and plantations such as those of Emile De Becque and of Madame Latouche Barzan become playgrounds for American servicemen, especially officers. Other people on these islands come from Tonkin China. There are long periods of waiting where men get drunk, play cards and collect souvenirs. Some of the luckier men like Lt. Tony Fry form relationship with French, mixed, and other women. Other men like Seabee Luther Billis try to have adventure, meet the natives and collect items from grass skirts to boar's tusks and shrunken heads.

## Language and Meaning

Generally, the language of the stories is literate though not difficult, with a significant amount of use of the slang used by soldiers of the period. There is some difficulty in the use of terms for military equipment. For example, a PBV plane is shown after several descriptions of its activity to be a seaplane that can land on water. Other initials are used for various fighter and bomber planes.

Stories that have a lot of dialogue, or that are stories told by one person to the narrator have much simpler language than stories involving in-depth descriptions by the narrator. An example of this is the story "The Milk Run," where pilot Bus Adams's account of being shot down and then rescued is in very straightforward, easy language. Some technical and political terms are archaic. Tonkinese like Bloody Mary, who comes from near Hanoi, are really Vietnamese. Petainists are Frenchmen who follow the Nazi collaborator Government of Petain, while De Gaulle leads the French who fight as part of the Allies.

Most of the stories are meant to be funny, though they usually have a serious side to them too. For example, the story "The Mutiny" is a funny but dramatic account of the US military's confrontation with descendants of the mutineers from the ship *Bounty*. These descendants, Teta Christian and Lucy, are helped by Tony Fry to blow up an old bulldozer, though this cannot stop the building of an airstrip there. The meaning of the story is that American forces can also commit acts of oppression in their rush to win a war, in this case the cutting down of prized trees on the central plateau for an airstrip. Tony Fry excuses helping sabotage because it reminds him of stories of Jews resisting the Nazis, though he realizes that no one fighting a war is going to be perfect.

## Structure

The book, *Tales of the South Pacific* is divided up into nineteen stories that range from sixty pages long to less than ten pages. These are action driven tales where something new is always happening, either related to the war or to the characters' personal life. The stories are loosely related around the general direction of the war and the attacks of Operation Alligator, and also can stand as individual stories.

In terms of plot, the first two stories "The South Pacific" and "Coral Sea" lay out the overall situation of the start of the war. In the stories "An Officer and a Gentleman," "The



Cave," and "The Milk Run" most of the main characters in the stories are introduced such as, the narrator, Tony Fry, Nurse Nellie, Emile De Becque and his many daughters.

"Alligator" is a turning point where the Allied offensive is planned. "Dry Rot" shows the boredom and challenges that face an isolated serviceman like Joe on a coral atoll. "'Fo 'Dollar" describes the temptations of valuable goods and women to servicemen. In "The Airstrip on Konora," the importance of American engineering ability and logistics is shown. "Those Who Fraternize" further explores the possibilities for fun and fooling around in the South Pacific. Logistics and the struggle to keep them in order are looked at with a personal angle as well in "The Strike." Personal tensions erupt as men are driven to work longer and longer hours. In the last three stories, the actual battle unfolds that many men have been waiting for, and the battles aftermath. There is hope that the dead Americans can be replaced and that they have not died in vain.



## Quotes

"Out came a rear admiral with the zipper of his pants caught in his underwear. 'Goddamned things. I never wanted to buy them anyway. Sold me a bill of goods.'" p. 11, *The South Pacific*

"As I did so a chubby young girl of fifteen or sixteen came into the shed and ran up to Tony in that strange way you can spot every time. She was desperately in love with him." p. 30, *Mutiny*

"'My father, Fletcher Christian,' Teta said, 'always told us that it did not matter whether you lived on Norfolk Island or Pitcairn Island so long as you lived in the love of God.'" pp. 45-7, *Mutiny*

"He had a blanket with him, and before Nellie knew what had happened, she found herself wrestling with him on the ground." p. 63, *An Officer and a Gentleman*

"Without waiting a moment he literally rushed into the formation, sank one and hung onto another, dodging shells, until his mates could close in for the kill." p. 74, *The Cave*

"They'd like to see Kuralei get it. So first thing you know, it's a real milk run, and you're in the tourist business!" p. 100, *The Milk Run*

"To herself she was saying, 'I shall marry this man. This shall be my life from now on. This hillside shall be my home. And in the afternoons he and I will sit here.'" p. 130, *Our Heroine*

"'Remember, Mr. Benny!' the Frenchman said, half pleading, half warning. 'Atabrine pills! They drink, OK. They use for grass skirts, no!' Monsieur Benoit shrugged his shoulders and moved away." p. 167, *Fo' a Dolla'*

"She was altogether delectable, and Cable knew it. From that moment there was no uncertainty." p. 186, *Fo' a Dolla'*

"Sure enough, there in the moonlight, aided by a vest-pocket flashlight, Bloody Mary was selling half-pint bottles of gut-rotting homemade whiskey." P. 197, *Fo' a Dolla'*

"He knew only that one of these days something would break, a terrible scandal, or a new attack on some island further north, or detachment to some other station. Something unforeseen would rescue him from Bloody Mary." P. 216, *Fo' a Dolla'*

"He knew of Bill's escapades at Luana Pori and with the blonde nurse. But he also knew that Harbison had touched a throbbing core of life unknown to many men, unknown particularly to Paul Benoway." P. 242, *Passion*



"Then he grasped the tusks firmly and with a harsh, wrenching motion, tore them loose from their long tomb of misery. One he gave to Fry, one to the chaplain." P. 262, A Boar's Tooth

"'Commander,' he said. 'I'm morally certain there must be a big ravine running north and south through that elbow. I'm sure of it, but the photographs don't show it.'" P. 284, The Airstrip at Konora

"Then once or twice each meal she would raise them at some young officer and knock him silly with her charm. There was a good deal of food spilt at Luana Pori, mostly by young men looking at Marthe." P. 306, Those Who Fraternize

"'Oh my God!' the guard whispered. 'Stand your post!' 'We're getting reinforcements. They're going to try to blow this place up. Stop the strike! We've got to outwit them. I'll be in charge.'" P. 339, The Strike

"When I last saw him he was filing down the sear on his revolver, to make it fire at the slightest suggestion from his trigger finger." P. 355, Frisco

"After his beer this workman talked with a shoe salesman from St. Louis, who told a brother-in-law, who passed the word on to a man heading for Texas, whee the news was relayed to Mexico and then to Tokyo and Kuralei that 'General Motors is building a boat that can climb over the damnedest stuff you ever saw'" p. 360, The Landing on Kuralei

"Never once during the five weeks I helped to plan the operations that engulfed Konora, not once at Kuralei, did I believe that I would die." p. 379, A Cemetery at Hoga Point



## Topics for Discussion

How does the author make clear the danger of the Japanese offensive in the story "The Coral Sea?" How do the different men at the station respond to this danger?

Discuss relations between enlisted men and officers in the South Pacific. For example, discuss the relationship between Lt. Tony Fry and Seabee Luther Billis.

Why are enlisted men driven to commit acts of rape against American nurses like Nellie Forbush? How does Nurse Nellie react to such incidents?

Discuss Lt. Bill Harbison's motivations. What defines Bill as a snob? How does this influence his relationship with Nurse Nellie Forbush?

Discuss the strengthening of the Allied military position. How does Bus Adams characterized the typical systematic bombing of American positions. How does the story "The Milk Run" dramatize the military capabilities of US and Allied forces?

In the story "'Fo 'Dolla" Marine Lt. Joe Cable feels himself under the influence of the Tonkinese woman Bloody Mary, as well as her daughter Liat. How does he fall into this situation? Could he have avoided it? How does he get out of it?

Discuss Luther Billis, the so-called Big Dealer. Does Luther seem typical of a type of soldier and sailor who is dedicated to enjoying and profiting from his time in the South Pacific?

Discuss Lt. Tony Fry. Tony Fry engages in a series of wild adventures, from his feeble minded girlfriend on Norfolk Island, to his marriage to Latouche. Although his character is one that is exaggerated, can such a person function in the U.S. military in a war zone?

Discuss how the United States and its Allies win the war against Japan. In "The Airstrip at Konora," how do superior logistics help to win the battle?? Are there other examples of the power of superior logistics in other stories that boost American fighting power?

Discuss the role of intelligence and information gathering in the war. How does Japanese Intelligence score a tactical upset at Kuralei? Can knowledge of a so-called secret weapon shift the outcome of a battle? How do the broadcasts of the Remittance Man in the story "The Cave" affect American fighting ability around Guadalcanal?