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Sally Scott of the WAVES

Story by
ROY J. SNELL

Illustrated by
HEDWIG JO MEIXNER



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Sally Placed the Black Box on the
Study Table

SALLY SCOTT OF THE WAVES

CHAPTER ONE

UP THE LADDER

It was mid-afternoon of a cloudy day in early autumn. Sally Scott glided to the one wide window in her room and pulled down the shade. Then, with movements that somehow suggested deep secrecy, she took an oblong, black box, not unlike an overnight bag, from the closet. After placing this with some care on her study table, she pressed a button, and caught the broad side of the box, that, falling away, revealed a neat row of buttons and switches. Above these was an inch-wide opening where a number of spots shone dimly.

After a glance over her shoulder, Sally shook her head, tossing her reddish-brown hair about, fixed her eyes on this strange box and then with her long, slender, nervous fingers threw on a switch, another, and yet another in quick succession. Settling back in her chair, she watched the spots above the switches turn into tiny, gleaming, red lamps that gave off an eerie light.

"Red for blood, black for death," someone had said to her. She shuddered at the thought.

From the box came a low, humming sound. She turned a switch. The hum increased. She turned it again and once more the hum rose in intensity. This time, however, it was different. Suddenly the hum was broken by a low, indistinct hut—hut—gr—gr—hut—hut—hut.

"Oh!" The girl's lips parted as a look of surprise and almost of triumph spread over her face.

And then, suddenly, she started to leap from her chair. A key had rattled in the door.

Before she could decide what she should do, the door swung open and someone snapped on a light.

And then a voice said, "Oh! I'm sorry! I've been in the bright sunlight. The room seemed completely dark."

"It really doesn't matter," Sally spoke slowly, studying the other girl's face as she did so. The girl was large and tall. Her hair was jet black. She had a round face and dark, friendly eyes. This much Sally learned at a glance. "It doesn't matter," she repeated. "I suppose we are to be roommates."

"It looks that way," the other girl agreed. "I just arrived." She set her bag on the floor.

"I see." Sally was still thinking her way along. "Then I suppose you don't know that we are not allowed to have radios in our rooms."

"No—I—"

"But you see, I have one," Sally went on. "I suppose I could be sent home for keeping it, but I'm going to chance it. I—I've just got to. It—it's terribly important that I keep it. It—well, you can see it's not like other radios. It's got—"

"Red eyes," the other girl said in a low voice.

"Yes, but that's not all. You couldn't listen to a program on it if you tried. It—it's very different. There are only two others like it in all the world."

"I see," said the new girl.

"No, you don't, see at all," Sally declared. "You couldn't possibly. The only question right now is: will you share my secret? Can I count on you?"

"Yes," the black-haired girl replied simply. And she meant just that. Sally was sure of it.

"Thanks, heaps." Her eyes shone. "You won't be sorry. Whatever may happen you'll not be dragged into it."

"And," she added after a pause, "there's nothing really wrong about it, I'm a loyal American citizen, too loyal perhaps, but you see, my father was in the World War, Grandfather at Manila Bay, and all that."

"My father died in France," the large, dark-eyed girl said simply. "I was too young to recall him."

"That was really tough. I've had a lot of fun with my dad."

"But excuse me." Once again Sally's fingers gripped a knob and the mysterious radio set up a new sort of hum. With a headset clamped over her ears, she listened intently, then said in a low tone:

"Hello. Nancy! Are you there?"

Again she listened, then laughed low.

"I'm sorry, Nancy," she apologized, speaking through a small mouthpiece. "Something terribly exciting happened. I got something on the shortest wave-length, where nothing's supposed to be."

"Yes, I did!" she exclaimed. Then: "No! It can't be! Fifteen minutes. Oh, boy! I'll have to step on it. I—I'll be right down. Meet you at the foot of the ladder."

"What ladder?" the big girl asked in surprise.

"The one from first floor to second, of course. We don't have stairways in this place, you know, only

ladders." Sally laughed low.

After turning off the switches, Sally snapped the black box shut, then hid it in a dark corner of the closet.

"But I just came up a stairway," the new girl insisted.

"Oh, no you didn't!" Sally laughed. "It was a ladder!"

"But—"

"You're new here so you'll have to work that one out. I'm sure you'll find I'm right." Sally was hastily putting on hat, coat, and gloves. "I've got to skip. Have my personal interview in fifteen minutes. That's where they try to find out what we're good for. What's your specialty? Oh, yes, and what's your name?"

"I'm Barbara Brown. And I'm scared to death for fear they'll send me home. I haven't done a thing but sew, and work in a laundry, and cook a little."

"They'll find a place for you. Just tell them your life story. Don't be afraid. You'll win."

Sally was out of the room and down the "ladder" before Barbara could have counted ten.

At the foot of the "ladder" she met Nancy McBride, a girl she had known well in the half-forgotten days of high-school basketball.

"It's perfectly terrible starting out in a new place with a deep secret," Sally said in a low tone as they hurried away toward the "U.S.S. Mary Sacks" where interviews for all recent recruits were conducted.

"Yes, it is," Nancy agreed soberly. "A trifle wacky if you'd ask me."

"But it's so very important," Sally insisted.

"More important than making good with the WAVES?" Nancy asked soberly. "For my part I can't think of a thing in the world that could be half as important as that. That's just how I feel about it."

"Yes, that's right. Oh! If I were thrown out of the WAVES I'd just want to die." Sally's face took on a tragic look. "And yet—"

"And yet, what?"

"Well, you just don't know old C. K. Kennedy, that's all. I've been working with him since I was fifteen and now I'm twenty-one."

"Working at radio? What did you know about radio when you were fifteen?"

"That's just it. I didn't know a thing. You see, a radio came dropping right out of the sky and—"

"Out of the sky?" Nancy stared.

"Yes, right into the middle of a meadow where I was looking for a meadowlark's nest."

"Say! Why don't you talk sense? You can't expect people—"

"Shush," Sally whispered. "Here's the gangplank of the 'U.S.S. Mary Sacks.' We'll have to get right in. Don't betray me. I'll explain it all later."

As they entered, a girl in the nobby blue uniform of a WAVE said:

"Take the ladder to Deck Two. Turn to the right and there you are."

"Yes," Sally said to Nancy, with a sharp intake of breath, "there we are. Right in the midst of things. Some sharp-eyed examiner will probe our minds to find out how much we know, how keen we are, what our motives for joining up were, and—"

"And then she'll start deciding what we can do best," Nancy broke in.

"And if she decides I'll make a good secretary to an Admiral," Sally sighed, "I'll wish I hadn't come. Well—" She took a long breath. "Here we go up Fortune's ladder. Wish you luck."

"Same to you." Then up they went.

In the meantime the big girl, Barbara, opened her bag, shook out her clothes, packed some away in a drawer, hung others up, then dropped into a chair for a few long, long thoughts. The truth was at that moment she wished she hadn't come.

She thought of the steam laundry where she had worked for three years. All the girls laughing and talking, the fine clean smell of sheets as they ran through the mangle, the rattle and clank of machines and the slap of flat-irons—it all came to her with a rush.

"It's all so strange here—" she whispered. "Go down the ladder, that's what she said. What ladder, I wonder?"

Then she jumped up. She would have to get out of here, begin to face things. What things? Just any things. If you faced them, they lost their terror. They stepped to one side and let you by.

After putting on her hat and coat, she opened the door to stand there for a moment. Truth was, she was looking for the ladder.

"Hi, there!" came in a cheery voice as a girl in a natty blue suit and jaunty hat rounded a corner in the hall. "You're one of the new ones, aren't you? Close the hatch and let's get down the ladder for a coke at the USO."

"The ha-hatch?" Barbara faltered. "What's a hatch and where's the ladder?"

"Right down—oh!" the girl in blue broke off. "I forgot. Of course you wouldn't know. You see, we are WAVES, you and I—"

"Yes, I—"

"So this place we live in is a ship, at least we say it is. This is not the second floor but the second deck. The door is a hatch, the walls bulkheads and, of course, the stairway is a ladder."

"Oh!" Barbara beamed. "That's the way it is!"

Of course Sally and Nancy had not boarded a ship for their interview. The "U.S.S. Mary Sacks" was a two story building turned over by the college to the WAVES. And it was up a stairs, not a real ladder, that the two girls climbed. It was all a part of the program that was to turn girls from all walks of life into sailors.

"Your name is Sally Scott?" said a girl in a WAVES uniform.

"That's right," said Sally.

"Come into my parlor," the girl said, smiling, broadly and indicating a small booth furnished with two chairs and a narrow table.

"Said the spider to the fly." Sally returned the smile as she finished the quotation..

"Oh! It's not nearly as bad as that," said the blonde examiner. "The fly did not escape. You will, I am sure."

"Six months after the war is over." Sally did not smile.

"Yes, that sounds a bit serious, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does," Sally agreed.

"It's nice to have a sense of humor and also a serious side," said the examiner. "We like them that way. You should get on well."

"Thanks. I'm glad you think so."

"My name is Marjory Mills. I won't keep you long, at least not longer than you wish to stay." Ensign Mills motioned Sally to a chair.

"By the way," she said as she dropped into the opposite chair, "why did you want to join the WAVES?"

"It's our war. We're all in it. I hate the way the people of France, Belgium, and all the rest are treated. They're slaves. They've got to be freed."

"Yes, of course."

"I've three cousins in the war. We were great pals. All the boys of our crowd are gone, and some of the girls."

"Lonesome? Is that it?"

"No, not entirely. I want them to come back, never wanted anything quite so much. They can't come back until we've done all we can to help them."

"That's true," Ensign Mills spoke quietly. "You're sure that it wasn't romance, love of excitement, the desire to go places and see things that brought you here?"

Sally looked into the other girl's eyes, then said:

"Yes, of course it was, in part. No one motive ever draws us into making a great decision, at least not often. Of course I dream of romance, adventure, and travel. Who doesn't?"

"We all do," Marjory Mills agreed frankly. "The only thing is, those can't be our main motives. If they were we should meet disappointment and perhaps miserably fail. 'Blood, sweat, and tears.' That is what we have ahead of us."

"Yes," Sally replied soberly. "I know. My father has told me. He was in France for more than a year."

"In the last war? Yes, then you would know. We like to have daughters of veterans. Some of them are among our best. And now," Marjory Mills's voice was brisk again. "What do you think you'd like to do? Or, first, would you like to tell me your story?"

"I'd love to. How much time have I?" Sally looked at her watch.

"As much as you like." Ensign Mills settled back in her chair. "Shoot!"

CHAPTER TWO

THE RADIO FROM THE SKY

"I grew up, as every child must," Sally began. "Until I was fifteen we weren't rich, not terribly poor either so—"

"Middle class," the examiner murmured. "Best people in the world."

"And then something happened," Sally announced.

"What was that?"

"I was in a meadow looking for a meadowlark's nest when a radio fell from the sky."

"You wouldn't by any chance be kidding me—" Marjory Mills's eyes opened wide.

"No—" Sally sat up straight. "No, I wouldn't. It wasn't a big radio, only a tiny one."

"How far did it fall?"

"About seventy thousand feet."

"Only about fourteen miles. Not much of a tumble after all." Once again Marjory Mills's eyes were wide.

"It didn't hit the ground very hard. It wasn't broken."



Ensign Mills Interviewed Sally

"No, I suppose not."

"Well, it wasn't." Sally talked rapidly. "It was attached to what was left of a large, paper balloon. As it went up, taking the radio with it, the balloon expanded. It got larger and larger. At seventy thousand feet the balloon burst and the radio came down."

"I see," said Marjory Mills.

"No—you don't see. At least, I'm quite sure you don't." Sally half apologized. "The radio had been sent up by a very nice old man who wanted to know about the weather. As it went up, the radio, a sending set, broadcast certain information about the weather. Don't ask me how because I don't know all about that. All I knew at the time was that attached to the radio was a card and on the card was written: 'If the finder of this radio will return it to C. K. Kennedy at Ferndale he will receive a five dollar reward!'"

"And you needed a new spring dress, so you returned the radio."

"Exactly! How did you ever guess that?" They joined in a merry laugh.

"But I'm not joking." Sally's face sobered. "It's every bit true."

"Of course," was the quick response. "Tell me the rest."

"Well, you know, that nice old man, C. K. Kennedy, had lived in my own town for three years and I'd

never heard of him. He owned a tiny house down by the river. Back of the house was his shop, where he invented things."

"Oh! Then he was an inventor!"

"Sure he is! When I brought him the radio I asked him why he sent it up into the sky. He told me all about it, how he could learn all sorts of things about how cold it would be, when it would rain, and all that just by sending up radios to listen in for him.

"That's the way it started." Sally heaved a sigh. "Old C. K.—everyone called him that and I never knew his first name—he was so kind and told me so much that I went back again, lots of times.

"By and by I started helping him. Just doing little things. I told people how good he was with radios and they started bringing them to be fixed. We came to have quite a business. As soon as high school was over I worked there all the time."

"You must have made quite a lot of money."

"Oh, no, not so much. You see," Sally leaned forward, "we were like some very fine surgeons. We charged what people could afford to pay."

"I see."

"And there are lots more poor people than rich ones."

"Always."

"When a little lame boy came in with a very cheap radio that got the stations all jumbled up, we put in more transformers and tubes, practically made a new radio out of it. Then it worked fine."

"And then you charged him—"

"Just a dollar."

"But when a rich man brought you his big fussy radio that would get Berlin, Tokio, London, and maybe Mars, you charged him—"

"Plenty!" Sally laughed.

"Yes, your old C. K. must have been a fine man, but what about the inventions?"

"Oh, that—" Sally frowned. "He's such a sensitive old man, C. K. is. We invented something quite wonderful—that is, *he* did. That was quite a while ago. I didn't know much about it but we could ride about at night in his rattly old car, and every now and then he'd stop and say: 'See! Some young fellow off there is operating a sending radio.' We could have driven right up to his door if we wanted to, but we never did."

"It was a radio-spotter!"

"Yes, and C. K. said it was the best one ever made."

"What came of it?"

"Nothing. You see, C. K. was very fond of his country. He thought Uncle Sam should have his invention. So Mother and I fixed him up the best we could—he just wasn't interested in clothes—and we sent him off to Washington. And," Sally sighed deeply, "he just couldn't stand waiting. They kept him waiting three days. Then, because he was old and a little bit shabby they thought he didn't know much, so—"

"So nothing came of it?"

"Just nothing. C. K. came back discouraged and downhearted, but pretty soon we were working as hard as ever. And now," Sally's eyes shone, "you just ought to see—"

The light in Sally's eyes faded. Just in time she caught herself. She had been about to betray the secret of the black box up there in her room.

"I—I can't tell you," she apologized. "I just must not. It's his secret."

"Of course. That's all right," Marjory Mills agreed. "That really doesn't matter. The only thing that matters just now is, how do you fit in with the WAVES?"

"Yes—yes—that's it." Sally leaned forward, eager and alert.

"I'll just go down our little list," Marjory Mills smiled. "You can tell me which category you'd like to try for the sixty-four dollar question. Now, listen carefully and tell me when to stop. Here they are: Secretarial Work, Typing, Bookkeeping, Aviation Ground Work, Parachute Rigging, Operating a Link Trainer—" To all this Sally shook her head. But when the examiner read, "Communication, including radio," she sat up with a start to exclaim:

"That's it!"

"Yes," Marjory Mills agreed. "That, beyond a doubt, is it. Ultimately you'll go to a special school for perfecting your training. You'll need to know about sending and receiving in code, blinker signaling, flag signaling, and a lot more.

"But first," she settled back in her chair, "you'll have to stay right here in Mt. Morris College, learning; for the most part, things that have nothing to do with communication."

"Oh, must I?" Sally cried in sudden dismay.

"You'll love it." Marjory Mills's words carried conviction. "When it's all over you'll agree, I'm sure, that we've made a real sailor out of you and that you would not have missed it for anything."

"And after that, special school?" Sally asked eagerly.

"After that perhaps you'll find yourself in an airplane directing tower, saying to the pilots of great Flying Fortresses: 'Come in, forty-three. All right, sixty-four, you're off', and things like that. Thrilling, what?"

"Wonderful, and after that perhaps I'll be on some small airplane carrier in a convoy crossing the Atlantic."

"Yes, just perhaps. There is a law before Congress now which, if passed, will permit us to send WAVES on sea voyages and to service overseas. The WACS are already there."

"Oh! Congress must pass that law." Sally half rose in her chair. Again she was thinking of her secret in the black box. "They just must pass that law."

"Don't hope too much," the examiner warned. "'Ours not to reason why—'"

"'Ours but to do or die'," Sally finished in a whisper.

And so her interview came to an end.

In the meantime Nancy McBride was going through her examination with much the same result. She too was a radio bug. She and her lame brother had been radio hams since she was a dozen years old. Though she had lived in another small city, she and Sally had been good friends for some time. That was why Sally had dared trust her with C. K.'s secret and one of her much treasured black boxes.

"Oh!" she had exclaimed on seeing Nancy on the train that carried her to Mt. Morris and her new home. "You're really going to be a WAVE!"

"Surest thing!" Nancy had thrown her arms about her. "And you, too!"

"That's right," Sally agreed. "Oh, boy!" she had whispered when they had found a seat together. "Do you take the load off my mind!"

"Why? How come?" Nancy demanded in great surprise.

"Shush, it's a secret." Sally's voice dropped to a whisper. "It's a deep secret. You know old C. K.?"

"Yes, of course. He's given Bob—that's my brother, you know—and me a lot of fine suggestions."

"Well, he and I have been working on something for weeks and weeks. It's a lot too deep for me, but it's a radio that works with wave-lengths shorter than any that have been used yet. You know what that might mean?"

"Yes, I—I guess so. You could send messages to someone having the same sort of radio and no one else could hear them."

"Not a soul."

"Wonderful! Did you get it worked out?"

"Yes, only a few days before I was to leave, I took one portable radio to a place twenty miles away and talked to C. K. back there in his shop. We could hear each other plainly. That was a great day for C. K."

"And for you."

"Yes, but a greater one came when he took me into his shop that day before I left and said: 'Sally, I want you to take these two black boxes with you.'"

"'But, C. K.,' I said, 'those are your two secret, secret radios, your choicest possessions!'"

"'I can make more of them.' That's what he said. Then he went on, 'Once I tried to give one of my inventions to our country. I failed and later someone stole it from me. Now, Sally, it's your turn—'"

"How strange!" Nancy whispered. "What did he mean?"

"That's what I asked him," Sally whispered excitedly. "He said I was to take these radios with me, that I was to get someone who could be trusted to help me and, as I found time, to test the radios, listen in for any other radios that might be using those wave-lengths, do all I could to see what could be accomplished with them to aid our country."

"That," Nancy said, "is the strangest thing I ever heard."

"Not so strange after all," Sally said soberly. "He knew I was going first to a school close to the sea where I might listen for messages. Then, too, I am to be a WAVE. Perhaps I shall travel in a convoy across the sea. What a chance that will be to try out the radios!"

"Yes, what a chance!"

"Nancy," Sally whispered tensely, "will you be the one who can be trusted? Will you join me in testing C. K.'s radios?"

"Why, I—" Nancy hesitated. "Yes! Yes, I will. You are my friend. C. K. is my friend. I also love America, and want to help, so why not?"

And that is how it came about that, as they walked slowly back to their staterooms on a ship that was a ship in name only, Sally and Nancy talked of radio and of the day when they would be full-fledged WAVES serving their country.

"And here's hoping they put us on an honest-to-goodness ship!" Sally exclaimed.

"Here's hoping," Nancy echoed.

CHAPTER THREE

A MESSAGE IN CODE

In the meantime, with a worried look still on her face, Barbara sat at a small table drinking hot chocolate while her companion, in the chic blue WAVES suit, enjoyed a coke.

"Hot chocolate will make you fat," said Belle Mason, Barbara's new friend.

"I'm fat already," Barbara smiled. "An even hundred and fifty."

"You're big, not fat," her companion corrected. "That's not a bad weight at all for your height. What are you to do for the WAVES?"

"That's just it." Barbara's frown deepened. "I don't know much about anything but cooking, housework, and laundry."

"Home laundry?"

"No, steam laundry. I know you'll think I was silly, but just out of high-school I went into a laundry to work. I've never done anything else."

"You liked it, of course, or you wouldn't have stayed."

"Yes, I like the nice, clean smell of the shiny white sheets and pillow cases, and the cozy, warm feeling of everything. I like to run the sheets through the mangle, fold them just right, then run them through again. I like to stack them up, just right, in clean white piles.

"Oh, I guess I'm hopeless," Barbara sighed. "Just an old hag of a laundry worker. What can the WAVES do with a creature like that?"

"You'll be just wonderful!" her companion beamed.

"Won-wonderful!" Barbara stared.

"Sure! They'll make a parachute rigger out of you."

"Parachute rigger? What's that?"

"You know that all fighting airmen wear parachutes, don't you?"

"Yes, of course!"

"And that those parachutes often save their lives, in fact, have already saved thousands of lives?"

"Yes, but—"

"Parachutes don't just grow on trees like walnuts. They have to be made with great care and arranged with greater care. The rigger is the one who packs them into their bags."

"Oh! I'd love that!"

"Sure you would. And it's a tremendously important job. One slip is all it takes. If a parachute is folded wrong, some fine fellow comes shooting down, down, thousands of feet to his death. But you—you love to do things just right, even bed sheets."

"Yes, I do."

"Then you'll be the best there is. Good parachute riggers are hard to get. Of course," Belle went on, "you don't just fold parachutes and pack them. You select large ones for large people."

"And small ones for small people!"

"Sure! In some of them you pack iron rations, food for a day or so. In others you'll put light pneumatic rubber rafts and fishing line—that's in case the flier might land in the sea.

"Then, of course, there are paper balloons to be rigged for dropping food and medicine, and small silk ones for dogs."

"Dogs?"

"Yes, of course, the dogs of war."

"Real dogs?"

"Certainly! Dogs have played an important part in all wars. They carry messages, keep the night watches, and warn their masters of approaching enemies. Yes, they have their parachutes, and many of them beg to have their chutes strapped on."

"Do they really like dropping from the sky?"

"Oh, don't they, though? And that reminds me. I don't want to frighten you but, because of the great importance of their work, and so they will realize to the full just how important it is, there is talk of having each parachute rigger make at least one parachute landing."

"What! You mean—" Barbara appeared to shrink up in her chair. "You mean I'll have to drop from way up in the sky?"

"You might be asked to."

"I'd die." Barbara's face paled.

"Oh, no you wouldn't. Thousands are doing it every day."

"I'm so big, I'd go right on down into the earth." Barbara laughed, nervously.

"Oh, no! Parachutes are made to fit their owners. Some are made for dropping five hundred pound anti-aircraft guns. But don't let that worry you," Belle hastened to add. "You may never be asked to jump. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' I didn't think that up, but it's good all the same."

"One thing still worries me—" Barbara said a moment later.

"What's that?"

"My interview. My roommate just went to take hers."

"You may forget that." Belle smiled an odd smile. "You've practically had yours already."

"I? Had mine?"



You Mean I'll Have To Drop From the Sky?

"Sure. I'm one of the examiners. This is my hour off. When your time comes, just ask to be examined by Ensign Belle Mason. We'll get it over with in a jiffy.

"And now—" Belle stood up. "I must get back to my post and help solve other cases that are really difficult. It's nice to have had a talk with you."

"It—it's been wonderful." Then Belle Mason was gone.

That evening after they had eaten their dinner in an attractive college dining room, the two girls, Sally and Barbara, walked slowly back to their room.

Already Sally was beginning to know what her examiner had meant when she said, speaking of the life at Mt. Morris, "You'll love it."

Sally had never even dreamed of a college education. There was not nearly enough money for that, but now here she was a student in a real college.

"It's quite an old college, isn't it?" Barbara said.

"One of the oldest in New England," Sally agreed. "And one of the most beautiful. See how the sun shines through those great, old elms."

"And how the ivy clings to the red brick walls. It's wonderful. I could almost forgive the war, just because it's given us a new sort of life. But, oh, gee!" Barbara exclaimed. "Just, think of having to drop from way up there in the sky!"

"Who said we had to?" Sally demanded sharply.

"Not all of us, just me, perhaps."

Barbara told her of the impromptu interview.

"Well, if you have to go up, I'll go with you," Sally declared.

"You wouldn't!"

"Why not? If I'm to work with radio, I may be sent up as a radioman for a bomber. Then I'll want to

know just how to step out into thin air."

"All right!" Barbara exclaimed. "It's a date. If I step through a hole in the sky, you're to come stepping right after me."

"It's a date," Sally agreed.

That evening Barbara went to a movie with one of the girls who had come in on the same train. Left to herself, Sally sat for a long time in her dark room just thinking.

Those were long, long thoughts. She had been there long enough to realize as never before what a change was to come into her life.

"I'm in for the duration," she thought with a thrill and a shudder. How long would the duration be? No one knew that. One thing was sure. Life, all kinds of life, grows broader.

"It's like a river on its way to the sea," she thought. The life of the WAVES was sure to be like that. Just now they were not asked to go outside the United States. How long would this last? Not long, perhaps.

"I almost hope it won't," she told, herself. And yet she shuddered afresh at the thought of life aboard a transport or a destroyer with wolf-packs of enemy subs haunting the black waters.

"But there's C. K.'s radio," she told herself. "A sea trip would give me a grand chance to try it out."

That this radio was a marvelous invention she did not doubt, yet the modest, over-careful old man had forbidden her to mention it to a single person who might be interested in its use and promotion.

"I may discover flaws in it," had been his word. "There is always plenty of time. You just take these two sets and try them out, test them in every way you can. Then let me know what you discover."

"Let me know what you discover," she whispered. She had made a discovery of a sort, that very afternoon. Something very like a radio message in code had come in on her secret wave length, where it was thought no messages had ever been sent.

"I'll try it again," she told herself. Springing to her feet, she dragged the black box from its hiding place.

With the lights still off, she turned on a switch to watch the many tubes glow red. After twisting two dials and adjusting one of them very carefully, she listened intently and, after a moment's wait, was thrilled once again by the low "put—put—put (wait) put—put (wait) put—put—put" again.

After turning a dial half around, she listened again. The sound came, but this time very faintly.

Yes, even as she listened, there came another "put—put—put." It was louder and of a different quality of sound.

"Ah!" she breathed. "Two of you!"

So she worked for an hour. At the end of that hour she knew there were four "put-puts" out there somewhere. Were they radios of American planes, enemy subs, or ships of our allies? She had no way of knowing.

Snapping off two switches, she turned on a third. After ten seconds of waiting she whispered into her mouthpiece:

"I'm alone. Come on down, can you?"

After that she whispered: "That's swell!"

Two minutes later Nancy came tiptoeing into the dark room.

"What's the meaning of all this darkness and secrecy?" she whispered low.

"It's for effect," Sally laughed. "Close the hatch softly and sit down here beside me on the deck. I've something for you to hear."

Sally turned on the radio. Then as the "put-put" began, she turned the dial to catch the different grades of sound.

"That's someone broadcasting in code," she declared.

"Sounds more like a mouse chewing a board," Nancy laughed.

"All the same, it's code of some sort." Sally insisted. "And I'm going to figure it out. Trouble is, it comes in low and indistinct."

"An outside aerial would help, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, of course."

"There's one on top of this building."

"There is?" Sally exclaimed. "Then we'll run a wire up to it. But how will we get it up there without being seen?"

"Let's see." Nancy counted up to six on her fingers. Then she slipped out through the door.

She was back almost at once with the good news that her room was directly over Sally's. "We can run the wires along the heat pipes," she explained. "There's even a pipe running from my room to the attic, though I can't see why."

"Even then we'll not be on the roof," Sally mourned.

"There are two gable windows on each side of the attic," Nancy said. "All you have to do is to get up

to the attic. You can step right out on the roof from a window.”

“And I suppose you’re going to tell me you have a key to the door at the foot of the attic stairway?” Sally laughed.

“No, but I have quite a way with locks. I think it can be arranged,” said Nancy. “But, Sally,” she protested. “You’d think we were sweet sixteen and in a boarding school instead of grown young ladies sworn in to serve America—”

“We’ll serve America in a big way,” Sally insisted stoutly, “if only we get this secret short wave doing its bit. You just wait and see! And I’m going to get my connection with that aerial on the roof sooner than soon.”

CHAPTER FOUR

DANNY DUKE MAKES A CATCH

The days that followed were busy ones. There were shots for typhoid, smallpox and all the rest, with many a sore arm.

They marched until their legs ached and their feet were sore, but all the time their officers were so kind and all their companions so friendly that it did not seem to matter.

Long hours were filled with classes. They learned history of the Navy from the beginning, a glorious story of which they could all be proud. Navy customs came in for their full share of discussion.

"Boy, am I glad I am getting this first!" Sally exclaimed one day. "Without it I'd be completely lost aboard a ship."

"But we're not sailing on a ship, at least not the way things stand now," said Nancy.

"All the same we're going in for Communications and you can't communicate with anyone unless you speak his language," Sally laughed.

"You've got something there," Nancy agreed.

As for Barbara, besides her regular assigned work, she was taken to an airfield where paratroopers were being trained.

As she watched ten boys, one by one, slip from a captive balloon hundreds of feet in the sky, she exclaimed:

"Oh! I could never do that!"

When she saw the parachutes, white against a blue sky, come drifting down and watched the boys drop to the ground as if they were dead, then spring up laughing, she exclaimed:

"That's wonderful! I'll do anything, just anything to have a part in that!"

For a time the two black boxes were neglected. Then, one night, they came back with a bang. That was the night following the receipt of a letter from Sally's old friend, C. K. It ran:

"Dear Sally: Received yours of the 17th. Note what you say about the black boxes.

"Your recent discovery may be of the greatest importance. I refer to the disturbances you think may be messages in code. On that wave-length it can hardly be anything else. Keep it up. You may make a startling discovery. I have definite theory regarding those supposed messages, but will not tell you about it until you have further details.

"You don't know how to receive in code, do you? It's not difficult. Get someone there to teach you.

"I agree with you that an outside aerial will help bring out the sounds. But don't take too many chances just to make an old man's dream come true.

Yours for success,
C. K."

"Too many chances!" Sally exploded after reading the letter. "There couldn't possibly be too many chances."

That very night she started taking the chances.

It was a cloudy, windy night. "Just the night for a murder," Sally whispered to Nancy as they embarked on their enterprise.

"Or something," Nancy agreed.

It was Saturday. All the WAVES have Saturday afternoon and night off for shore leave. Most of them would be away so there would be few prying eyes. That was why they had picked on this night for connecting the black boxes with the aerial set up on the roof.

The wires running from Sally's room up to Nancy's and to the attic were in place. The lock to the attic door was old. Nancy had solved that with a skeleton key bought at the five and ten.

"There's no counting of noses at bedcheck tonight," Sally said. "So we'll start work at ten. You can be the lookout and I'll do the work."

"Don't forget you're going to be quite a way up in the air," Nancy cautioned.

"Oh, I've always been a tomboy." Sally did a cartwheel. "I'll put on gray slacks and a gray sweater, just in case the moon comes out. The roof is gray, you know."

"You'd better wear sneakers."

"Oh, sure!"

And so everything was set for the hour of ten.

"All clear!" Nancy whispered, tiptoeing down the hall. "Deck Three is deserted. Come on up."

Armed with two pairs of small pliers, a coil of wire, a flashlight and the key to the attic, Sally followed in silence to the floor above. A swift glide, the rattle of a key, the silent opening and

shutting of a door and Sally found herself tiptoeing up the attic stairs.

It was a dark and gloomy spot, that attic. As Nancy had put it: "A hundred years look at you up there."

This was true, for an accumulation of furniture, long outmoded, was stored there. There, too, were all manner of stage drops and settings left over from amateur plays. With her flashlight aimed low, Sally picked her way with care to the nearest gable window.

The window was nailed down but her pliers soon took care of that.

As she stepped out on the roof, clinging to the gable, she took one good look at the world beneath and above her, then shuddered.

With dark clouds rolling through a black, windy sky it was one of those nights that always seemed to depress Sally.

Shaking herself free from her moodiness, she gave close attention to the problem that lay before her.

To discover the end of a wire they had thrust up along the heat pipe and to attach the end of her coil to it was simple enough. From there it was to be a trifle difficult. The roof was not too steep but shingles do not offer much chance for a hand grip. As Nancy had said, it was quite a distance to the ground from there and, though she would not have admitted it for worlds, Sally found herself a little dizzy.

One fact gave her a little comfort. Just beneath the part of the roof where she must do her climbing was an elm tree. Its top was broad and its strong, flexible branches all but brushed the building.

As she stood there hesitating, a group of freshman boys came marching by, singing.



She Stepped Out on the Roof and Clung to the Gable

Flattening herself against the gray roof she waited for them to pass. Then, having steeled herself for her task, she thrust her tools into her pockets, held the loose end of the wire in her teeth and began to climb. Clutching with her hands and pushing with her feet, she crept upward. She made slow progress. Now the ridge seemed not so far away. She dared not look back or down.

She was halfway up, when, with startling suddenness, the moon came from behind a cloud.

"Gosh!" she exclaimed, flattening herself against the shingles. She went so flat that she started slowly to slide. After digging in with toes and fingers she managed to hold her ground. And then the moon hid its face.

One more desperate struggle and she found herself sitting triumphantly astride the ridge.

"Now," she breathed, "all I have to do is to pull the wire tight, attach it to the aerial and then slide down."

Yes, that was all there was to it, just to slide down.

With fingers that trembled slightly she drew the gray wire tight against the roof, cut it at the right place and then, with the skill of a lineman, wound it tight, round and round the original wire leading

to the aerial.

She had twisted herself back to a place astride the roof when again the moon showed its face.

At the same instant she thought she heard someone far below let out a low whistle. She couldn't let herself be seen sitting there, just couldn't. That might mean catastrophe.

Then it happened. In attempting to throw herself flat, she overdid the matter. Missing a grip on the ridge, she heard her flashlight go rolling down the roof. And, in quite an involuntary manner, she came gliding, clawing and kicking after it.

Recalling the tree and at the same time realizing that she was powerless to check her slow glide, she managed somehow to swing half about. When she left the roof, she rolled off, felt the brush of a leafy branch, struck out desperately with her hands, gripped a branch, clung there and found herself at last dangling in mid-air. Or was she two-thirds of the way down? There was no way of knowing.

Clinging desperately to the cracking branch, she dared not call for help. What was to be done? Feeling a larger branch against her back, she tried to turn about. She had made half the swing just as her slender branch gave an ominous crack.

At the same time a voice from below said: "Come on down, sister. I'll catch you."

"Good grief!" she thought. "It's a man." And then the branch broke.

She landed rather solidly in a pair of strong arms. Then her feet hit the ground. Also the moon came out.

"What were you doing up there?" The man held her, as if she were a sack of wheat that might fall over.

The moonlight was on his face. He was young and wore a heavy blue coat. His cap had been knocked off.

"That," she replied slowly, "is a military secret. But the way I came down, it seems, is common knowledge." She did not try to escape.

"Rather uncommon knowledge, I'd say," he drawled. "You might have broken your neck."

"Yes, or been caught."

"You were that," he chuckled. "And you're not a bad catch, at that. This is a rather lonesome college for some folks. Tell me who you are and I'll let you go."

"I will anyway," he said dropping his hands.

"I'm Sally Scott and I'm a WAVE!" she confessed.

"A WAVE! Then we belong to the same outfit. I'm a flying sailor. Shake!" He put out a hand for a good handclasp.

"Oh! A flying sailor!" she exclaimed. "Then you could teach me to receive in code."

"Certainly I could and will, in my spare time."

"We have an hour after supper."

"Suits me. But, say, now that I have you, how about a coke and a chat somewhere?"

She did not reply at once. "We—we have to be careful. Mind taking my pal along?"

"Not a bit."

"Then it's a go. I—Oh, boy! Nancy will think I'm dead, or something! Wait. I'll be back."

"I'll wait."

She was gone.

"Sally Scott! How did you get down that way?" Nancy exclaimed as Sally came racing up the second story ladder, instead of coming down from the attic.

"I—I found a new way to get down and, and I found a nice new boy," Sally panted. "He wants to buy us a coke. Come on, let's go."

"Sally, you didn't," Nancy protested. "Besides, there's a scratch on your face. It's bleeding."

"All right then, I didn't." Sally dabbed at her cheek. "You won't believe me if I tell you the truth."

"Try me."

"All right then, after I got the wire all fixed. I fell off the roof, landed in a tree and hung to a branch as long as I could and what do you think?"

"A nice boy caught you. And you expect me to believe that?"

"All right, then don't. Anyway the wire is up."

"And now we can get London, Paris, and Berlin. Come on. Let's try."

"No," Sally seized Nancy's arm. "The nice boy is real. Come on, let's go."

"You wouldn't go looking like that?"

"I'll wash the blood off my face. We've got to get in uniform. Must wear them even off duty, you know!"

So Sally was off to the washroom to bathe her cheek.

"Now I ask you," Nancy challenged the empty air, "how can they hope to make a WAVE out of a girl like that?"

Sally was back in a minute and slipped into her uniform. Nancy was ready a moment later and then they were down the stairs and out into the night.

"This is Nancy McBride." Sally introduced her companion to the flying sailor who had stepped out into the moonlight.

"I'm pleased to meet you, Nancy. I'm Danny Duke," he said. "Distant relative of the famous Dukes, so distant that they never even sent me a package of Duke's mixture. Do you also walk in your sleep? And may I be looking for you on the roof tops?"

"Sally wasn't walking in her sleep," said Nancy, "but tell me, did she really fall off the roof and did you catch her?"

"Shall I tell her?" Danny turned to Sally.

"Sure. Tell her. She wouldn't believe me."

"Well, then," said Danny, in a mock-solemn voice, "it's really true. I made a real catch that time. But then, the elm helped out a lot."

"Good old elm!" Sally exclaimed. "I'll never forget it! And now," she added, "I feel in need of reviving."

The reviving came with good steaming cups of coffee.

Danny Duke could stand the glare of a neon light, Sally found as she looked at his strong, friendly face.

"I'm just past twenty," he told them with a touch of boyish pride. "And my training is about finished right now."

"How is it you're here so far from the Navy flying schools?" Nancy asked.

"I was back on some math, so they sent me here to brush up. I've about got it now. Another two weeks will do it."

"Too bad," Sally sighed. "But that will be time enough to teach me to receive code, won't it?"

"Oh, sure," Danny grinned. "But say, are you the practical young miss! Here I save your life, and first thing you insist that I do something more for you."

"It's not for me." Leaning across the table Sally allowed her voice to drop. "It's much more important than that, I hope. It's for our old friend Uncle Sam. The things I did up there on the roof are part of it, just as my learning code will be. You are such a nice boy, I want you to have a part in it."

"Well, thanks—" Danny was visibly embarrassed. "Thanks a lot: I'll help all I can."

The truth is that Danny was to have a much greater part in the undertaking than either he or Sally knew.

"And now for one more try at the two black boxes," Sally whispered excitedly after the girls had said good-bye at the gangplank of their ship that really wasn't a ship at all.

"It works! And it's going to help a lot, that aerial is," Sally exclaimed a few minutes later.

This was true. They were able now to catch the "put-put-put-put" of those secret broadcasts sent from radios out somewhere on land or sea very plainly. That night they stayed up till midnight, and were able to locate seven different broadcasters.

"They are all part of something big, I know that," Sally insisted. "But is it a sub pack, a flight of planes, or a convoy of ships?"

"Only time will tell," was Nancy's reply.

Just then they caught the sound of voices in the hall and suddenly their secret listenings to the great unknown were at an end. For if the secret radio were to remain just that, they must take great care not to expose either the black box or the purpose of their own midnight meetings. The two conspirators did not intend to be found out.

CHAPTER FIVE

DANNY SHARES A SECRET

There was a glorious hour at sunset in every day of work when Sally was free to do as she chose. What she chose more often than not, in the days that followed, was to visit a certain radio lab in one of the school's regular buildings. Here she found Danny waiting to help her with her problems. She discovered at once that he did know a very great deal about communication and about radio in particular.

When she complimented him on his knowledge he threw back his head and laughed.

"It's no fault of mine," he exclaimed. "I've had it drilled into me from the very start. We're in the Navy. Don't forget that. Most of us will be on aircraft carriers. That means we'll be out over the sea in small planes."

"Alone?" Sally asked.

"Sometimes, sometimes not. You may have a radioman and may not. Anyway, he may get killed. So you have to know all about radio, blinking lights, waving flags, and a lot more.

"Say!" he laughed. "I could propose to a good signal girl in ten different ways."

"Wait till I get up on all the codes," Sally laughed.

"Oh, yes. Well, then, let's get busy."

He picked up a booklet entitled, "International Code" and; turning to page twelve, said:

"Morse code isn't half bad. See! Here it is." Sally looked over his shoulder. "A is dot, dash; B is dash, dot, dot dot, and so on down the line. You can learn all that in about no time. But receiving takes longer. Those birds send out messages like greased lightning. You've got to think fast and be accurate at the same time. That's tough. But it's absolutely necessary, especially in your work. To read a message wrong, skip a dot here and miss a dash there, may sink a ship, or even a half dozen ships."

"Oh!" Sally held her head. "That sounds serious!"

"It is. But see here, why do we waste a beautiful sunset hour on code? You'll get that in your next school anyway."

"Yes, I know, but I want it now. It," she hesitated, "it's not my secret alone so I can't tell you too much."

"You don't have to tell me anything," he replied with a generous smile.

"But I want to. That night when I fell off the roof I was running a wire from my room to the aerial on the roof. I've been working for a long time with a dear old man who's a real genius. He invented a special kind of radio and he gave me two of them to try out."

"I see. That's what you're doing now. Did the outside aerial help?"

"Oh, yes, a whole lot. The 'put-puts' come in a whole lot more distinctly."

"The what?" He stared.

"The 'put-puts'. That's what we call them. I suppose it's some special form of code, but it's not like any I've ever heard on the short wave section of our radio."

"I wish you'd tried to write it down," he said thoughtfully. "Perhaps they have a secret code. They may substitute numbers for letters. See, here are the numbers in Morse Code. Dot, dash, dash, dot are for one, for two you add two dots and drop a dash-dot, dot, dash, dot. Three is dot, dot; dot, dash, dot, and so on."

"That doesn't sound too hard," interrupted Sally.

"It's simple. Take this book home and learn the numbers. Then listen to your radio and try to write down the 'put-puts' in dots and dashes."

"I will if they are there tonight. Sometimes they're not there at all and sometimes there are a lot of them, five, six, or a dozen, all talking to one another like frogs in a pond."

"Is that right!" He suddenly became excited. "Say, perhaps they are in a pond, the big pond. Perhaps they are wolves instead of frogs."

"Wolves?"

"Sure, enemy subs, wolf-packs of them, you know. Wouldn't that be a break?"

"I—yes, I suppose so."

"You suppose so! Say! You don't know the half of it! These wolf-packs are known to have some means of talking to one another under the water."

"They'd almost have to."

"Sure they would, but all the bright minds in Europe and America can't find out how they do it.

"But then," his voice dropped, "probably your 'put-puts' come from a flight of planes crossing to North Africa."

"Or from a convoy."

"Sure. We, too, have our secret methods of communication, but if your old friend has invented a new one, they'll make him an admiral."

"It's up to me to prove it. That's why I'm so anxious about it."

"It is? Well, then, we'll really dig in. Try out my code idea. Then we'll meet again at sunset tomorrow."

"It's a date." She left the lab with a smile. Even if nothing came of this code idea she had made a grand friend and that was always worth while.

Late that evening while others wrote letters, read or slept, Sally gave herself over once more to solving the riddle of the secret radio and its "put-puts." She had made very little progress when the signal sounded for lights out.

"Oh, dear!" she sighed. "No day is ever long enough."

She had been in bed for a half hour but had not fallen asleep when suddenly she caught a gleam of light from Barbara's bed.

"Barbara!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing?"

The light blinked out and Barbara's head came out from beneath the covers.

"I'm sorry!" Barbara whispered back. "These studies are so hard and there are so many of them I never get caught up. So I've been studying with a flashlight under the covers. No one would know it but you."

"Such determination!" Sally exclaimed in a low voice. "You should have a medal or something. But you'll smother!"

"Oh, no!" Barbara laughed. "I'm like a seal. I come up for air."

"Anyway it's an idea," said Sally. Hopping out of bed, she gathered in her precious radio and, with a bed cover for a tent, studied the "put-puts" for another hour.



Barbara's Head Came Out From
Beneath the Covers

The close of that hour found her thoroughly disgusted. On a paper she had made a few marks. When she had compared these to the code marks for letters and figures, they added up to exactly nothing.

"Terrible," she thought. "I know what I'll do. I'll take the radio over to the lab and show it to Danny. I'm sure he can be trusted. We'll work things out together."

"What's that black box?" Danny asked, when she arrived next evening.

"That's my secret radio. I couldn't do a thing last night. I want you to help me."

"It's nice of you to trust me." He beamed. "People have said I was simple but could be trusted. Only time will tell."

"Time doesn't need to tell me. I know it."

"Do you? Well, then that's fine. How do you open this black box?"

She snapped it open. "Oh! We need an aerial!"

"There's one on this building, much better than the one you've been using. There's a connection over in the corner."

In a few minutes the radio was ready to operate. Sally turned the switches. Nothing came out, not a sound.

"What's up?" Danny asked.

"Those gremlins, subs, or whatever they are, are not always there."

"Turn the dial. Get something else. That will tell us whether our connections are okay."

"There's nothing else on the air for us."

"That's a queer radio."

"Yes, it is. But if we wait five minutes Station NANCY will be on the air."

"And in the meantime?"

"Tell me about parachutes," she begged. "You've dropped a time or two, haven't you?"

"Naturally. I'm a flier."

"How does it feel to drop for the first time?"

"Just fine if you think of something else most, of the time. It helps to sing:

"He'd fly through the air with the greatest of ease,
A daring young man on the flying trapeze."

"But why all the interest in parachutes?"

"My roommate is going to be a parachute rigger."

"I hope she's a careful sort of lady. I saw a boy drop two thousand feet straight down. His rigger had failed him."

"I'll rig my own." Sally's lips were a straight line.

"Why should you go in for parachutes? But then—oh, yes—you go in for all sorts of falling." He laughed.

"No," she said, "I don't. I get dizzy. But I promised Barbara that I'd go down with her if they asked her to try parachuting."

"You did! That takes courage!"

"Where's the war job that doesn't?"

"Oh, it's not so bad." He blew an imaginary smoke ring. "You just sit on the edge of a hole until they give you the word. Then you look up, slide through the hole, and down you go. When the parachute is open it is really swell, like dreams we have of flying just with our hands. When you land you curl up like a sleepy kitten, roll on the ground, then get up."

"You make it sound so nice!"

"Why not?"

Sally turned a knob on the radio. She snapped on a headset and said: "Hello, are you there?" Then she listened.

"How do you get me?" she spoke into the mouthpiece again. "Good as ever? That's fine. This is Sally signing off.

"See!" She turned to Danny.

"Pete's sake! What wave-length do you use?"

"I don't know."

"What?"

"Only one person in the world knows that. He's the man who made it. My old friend C. K. All I know is, it's very short. Watch!"

She snapped off the lights, then pulled down the shades. The radio's tubes glowed red.

"Say! A radio with its own private wave length is worth a fortune! I know a man high up in Communications. Let me show it to him."

"Not for worlds."

"You'll be rich and famous."

"No! No! Oh, I wish I hadn't brought it here. Can't you see that it was loaned to me by a very dear friend and that he alone can release it?"

"Yes," he replied soberly. "I won't breathe a word about it until you give me the sign."

"Thanks—oh, thanks!" she stammered. "You really had me worried."

"And now," he said, "how about having another try at the 'put-put' of the gremlins, or subs?"

For ten minutes more they sat there in the dark watching the red glow of the strange radio tubes but hearing just nothing at all.

Then, suddenly, it came, a low "put-put-put-put-a-put-put-put-put-a-put."

For a long time Danny sat there silently listening. "It's code, all right," he murmured once. "There's a sort of rhythm to it, just as there is to all code."

"If you turn this dial," Sally whispered, "it will throw them out." She turned the dial. Silence followed, but not for long. Again came "put-put-put-a-put."

"They're back," he whispered.

"No, that's another one. Listen! You can tell the difference." She brought the first one back, then switched to the second.

"What do you know about that!" He was all ears.

"Perhaps the 'put' stands for dot, and 'put-a-put' for dash," he suggested. "I'll just try it that way."

"Might be the opposite!"

"Sure, just anything." He snapped on a small light and then began marking down dots and dashes as he listened. For a long time neither of them spoke.

"That might be it," he breathed at last. "It's hard to take down, but I've got dot, dot, dot, dash, dot. That's three, dash, dash, dash for five and dash, dash, dot, dot, for seven. Then there are some numbers that seem like seventeen, twenty-three, and thirty-one. I can't be sure—"

"Give me a pencil and paper," she suggested. "Let me play the game."

For a long time after that they listened and marked down dots and dashes. When one sender went off the air they switched to another. In time they came to believe that number one and number two were holding a conversation. Then number two went off the air, followed by number one.

A little search found a third. When number three went dead, number one was at it again. It became an interesting game of hide-and-go-seek, in the air.

"Could it be one of our convoys?" Sally asked.

"Hardly that. They maintain radio silence, I'm told. But with such a radio, who knows? But if they are subs, a whole wolf-pack of them!" he exclaimed a moment later.

"And if we could spot them!"

"While we were on a ship, an aircraft carrier! Spot them some distance away and go after them with a dozen planes loaded with depth-bombs. I'll tell you what!" he exclaimed, becoming greatly excited. "I'll be ready to sail in a month or two, on an aircraft carrier. You get a radio job on my ship. Then we'll really try this radio out."

"They're not sending WAVES on ships yet," she reminded.

"Oh! We'll manage it," he insisted, "We'll just have to."

"We may discover that we're mostly just duplicating one of Uncle Sam's secrets." Sally was cautious by nature. "These code signals may come from American ships or airplanes."

"Tell you what!" he exclaimed. "We've just got to de-code their messages so we can tell what they say. Then we'll know. But that," he sighed heavily, "looks like a long, long job."

They pitched into that job once more and had been working for some time when he said: "By the way, did you have a class tonight?"

"Yes, from eight to nine."

"Never mind then, it's nine now."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I must go! I'll get a black mark. Unhook my radio and let me go."

"There you are," he said a moment later, as he handed her the radio, "but you'll be back?"

"Oh! Sure! It's been exciting. Just think what it will mean if we really do something big with old C. K.'s radio."

"I have been thinking," he replied soberly. "Just keep trying, and mum's the word. We'll get there yet!"

CHAPTER SIX

THROUGH A HOLE IN THE SKY

During the week-days that followed, there were no more long night trysts over the secret radio. Sally had a record to maintain. She had resolved at the very beginning to be one of the best WAVES ever entrusted with a job in Communications. She had decided, too, to move heaven and earth to get a spot on some ship sailing the seven seas. She knew quite well that the best way to get what you want is to earn it. Classes must always come first.

For all that, she and Danny did each day spend one glorious twilight hour working away at the secret radio. When Saturday night came, the WAVES one free night, Nancy joined them, and working both radios at once, they really went places and did things. Using both radios, they spotted as many as eight broadcasters of the mysterious pack on a single night.

"Are they really enemy subs?" Nancy asked.

"Who knows?" was all Danny would say. "If they are we've really got something."

"But they may be cargo ships in a convoy or airplanes going to Europe," said Nancy. "Then why don't we ask our Communications people in Washington whether they are using that wave-length."

"Two good reasons," Danny grinned. "We don't know the wave-length we're using and if we did the folks in Washington wouldn't tell us."

"Probably send an F. B. I. agent to look us up," Sally said. "No, dearie! We've got to work it out all by ourselves."

"Just give us time and we'll make it," Danny declared. Ah, yes, there was the rub. All too soon the bugle would blow and they would be scattered far and wide to new fields of endeavor.

They made some progress. One evening Danny exclaimed: "See here! The numbers they are sending—if they are numbers—are all odd. Seven, seventeen, thirty-one, forty-three. There's not an even number in the lot."

"That narrows it down," said Sally.

"It sure does."

Two evenings later Sally made a more important discovery.

"Look!" She jumped to her feet in her excitement, to point at a row of numbers. "Not one of them is evenly divisible. Seven, seventeen, thirty-seven, fifty-three, every last one of them. Does that mean anything?"

"It may mean a lot," was Danny's excited comment.

"Oh, there's the bell!" she exclaimed. "Time for class. Think of dropping this discovery just like that."

"It's not dropped."

Danny dragged out a tall stack of papers. "I'll still be working on that when you're fast asleep."

"Danny, you're a treasure!" she exclaimed, giving his hand a quick squeeze.

"It's all part of the game," he grinned. "We'll be famous, both of us, and your old friend C. K., as well."

The hour was striking midnight when at last Danny stacked the papers in a neat pile.

"Got it!" he breathed. "It's the berries. Can't be any mistake about that. We're really making progress. But we've still got a long way to go."

That very night one more major problem brought Sally's radio experimentation to an abrupt halt.

She returned to her room, after her late hour of study, to find Barbara sitting in her bed staring gloomily at the floor.

"What's the matter?" she asked. "Been caught out of bounds, or something?"

"I haven't done a thing," Barbara replied gloomily. "Perhaps it would be better if I did. When you never step off the beaten path, just plug along day by day, people ask you to do such terrible things."

"Why? What have they asked you to do now?"

"It's that parachute drop." Barbara stared gloomily at her feet. "They say it's not really required that a parachute rigger should take parachute training, but that if they do take it, and if they do take just one drop, they make better riggers."

"Of course they do," Sally agreed. "They know what it's all about."

"That sounds all right. But would you want to go to an airfield where only men are training, and go through all the practice and finally take the drop, all by yourself?"

"No, of course not. Are they asking you to do that?"

"Not asking, just suggesting."

"Which in this war is the same thing. Tell you what—" Sally came to a sudden decision. "If

Lieutenant Mayfare will let me, I'll go through the training with you."

"You wouldn't!" Barbara stared.

"I said I would, didn't I?"

"Yes, but you don't have to."

"No, of course not, but I want to. If I'm to go in for Radio and Communications I want to be prepared to serve anywhere, on land, on the sea, or in the air."



Barbara Was Staring Gloomily at the Floor

"You're the daffiest person I ever knew—and the dandiest!" At that big Barbara hugged Sally until she thought her ribs would crack.

"But, Sally, you don't have to go in for parachute jumping if you're going in for Radio," Lieutenant Mayfare protested when Sally made her unusual request next day.

"But I want to," Sally insisted.

"You're doing it to help Barbara. Is that fair to yourself?"

"Who knows what is fair?" Sally asked quietly. "It's not fair to ask a boy to give up his college work right in the middle of his first year to go to war. Or is it? It's not fair to ask a father to leave two small children for the same reason. Or is it? Who knows—"

"Anyway I'd like the experience," she added after a brief silence. "There are several things we are not being asked to do now. Perhaps tomorrow or next month we will be asked. I want to be prepared. And after all, I think it's a small matter."

"Not so small." The officer spoke slowly. "You'll have to spend the last half of every afternoon for a week preparing for it.

"Of course," she added, "your work here has been excellent. The time lost will not matter so much. So—"

"Then I may do it?" Sally exclaimed eagerly.

"Yes, you may!"

"Oh! Thank you! Thank you a lot!"

"It is Barbara who should be thankful. I doubt if she could take the test alone."

"She couldn't," Sally agreed. "Barbara is a fine girl. She's true blue. There are not many things she could do in our organization. For parachute rigging she's perfect."

"That's right."

"And I want her to be a great success."

"With your help I'm sure she will be. You and she may start your training this afternoon. The sooner the better. There's not much time left—"

And that is why Danny Duke had to wait so long to tell Sally of his grand discoveries.

That afternoon Sally and Barbara rode five miles to the training field with six boys who were to take the same training.

"Pipe the girls," one fellow called when they were first sighted.

"Shut up!" another boy exclaimed low. "If they are going to take to the chutes, it's not just for fun. It really takes guts. If they've got what it takes you have to hand it to them."

"Ever run a children's playground?" the director asked Sally.

"Yes, once, quite a while ago—"

"Well, this is just another one of them. Only difference is you swing on your chute straps just to get used to them instead of from the old apple tree. And if you don't fasten your straps just right you get a good bump."

"And you learn by bumps," Sally laughed.

"Yes, and that way you don't get killed later."

"It's the same way with the slide," the instructor added. "It's just a kid's slide, only longer, and you fall harder—that is, if you don't relax properly."

After that, for a full week—the two girls practiced swinging, sliding, tumbling, whirling round and round.

"I feel as if I'd been put in a cement mixer and whirled round and round a thousand times," Sally confided to Danny on Saturday afternoon. "But I do believe that Barbara will go through with it. Monday is our zero hour. We drop at dusk. And I'm keeping my fingers crossed."

"I'll say a prayer for you," Danny grinned. "And now about this secret code of the gremlins, the enemy subs, or what have you."

"Yes—yes!" Sally exclaimed eagerly. "What did you find out?"

"A whole lot and yet, not half enough. Come over just after chow, if you can. Bring the radios and I'll tell you all."

"Oh, no! Surely not that much!" Sally held up her hands in mock horror. "All the same, I'll be there!"

"It's like this," Danny said, as they sat before the radio that night listening to the "put-put-put-a-put." "They've made their code from numbers that can be divided evenly. I'm sure of that. But does one stand for the letter A, or have they arranged it all backwards?"

"They may have started in the middle and gone both ways."

"Yes, but I don't think they did. Why should they? They had the wave-length all to themselves. Why not have a simple code? I even think they let one stand for A, three for B, five for C, and so on."

"What makes you think that?"

"Because eleven, which should stand for E, is used more times than any other number and E is the most-used letter in the alphabet. Other vowels stand out in the same proportion. So I think we've got that far. But now," he sighed, "we've got to find out whether they're sending in German or English. That is going to be hard."

"And must be continued in our next." There was a suggestion of gloom in Sally's voice. She was tired and sore. Much lay ahead.

"Monday we drop from that hole in the sky. Tuesday we take our finals," she sighed.

"And Wednesday you scatter," he supplied. "I got that on good authority. Some of you go to other schools and some to work, depending on what you're taking up."

"That's about it. We'll just have to work and hope we meet again over this blessed, tantalizing, mesmerizing radio," she laughed. "And now, what do you say we take the radio over to my house and then make a night of it?"

And that was just what they did.

Monday afternoon came, and with it, many a long-drawn breath.

"Sally, I'm scared," Barbara whispered, as they piled into the car that was to take them on their last trip to the field.

"You wouldn't be natural if you weren't," was the cheering response. "All the same, try to forget it."

In the week that had passed, the eight of them, two girls and six boys, had formed the habit of singing on the way out. Now, when at last they rolled away, a youthful voice struck up:

He'd fly through the air with the greatest of ease,
A daring young man on the flying trapeze.

"Where have I heard that before?" another boy groaned. For all that, they sang it with gusto.

"Sailing, sailing, over the bounding main," came next.

Then the boy from Kentucky started:

"The sun shines bright on my old Kentucky home—"

His voice broke on the second line. Sally swallowed hard, but they sang it through to the end.

"Ioway! Ioway!" shouted the boy from the midwest. "That's where the tall corn grows."

They all laughed, but when the strains of "Swanee River" came rolling out, they were in a mellow mood once more.

When they arrived at the field they found a captive balloon straining at its ropes. Beneath it hung a platform and at the very center of the platform was a round hole.

"That," said Sally, "is the famous hole in the sky."

"On fields where paratroops are trained we have towers to jump from, but they cost a pile of money. A balloon works just as well," a friendly lieutenant explained.

"Sure, even better," wisecracked the boy from Kentucky. "Then if you don't feel like dropping off, you can just cut the rope and go for a balloon ride."

"I'm in favor of a balloon ride right now," said his pal.

A latticework of ropes formed a wall about the platform. Over this they climbed. Then, slowly, majestically the balloon rose skyward.

Once more—"Sailing, sailing," rang out on the air.

"Old Kentucky Home" was a little too much this time. It expired in the middle of the second verse.

"Pack Up Your Troubles" went very well and the "Man on the Flying Trapeze" was as popular as ever.

One big fellow they called Samson sat hunched up in a corner, not singing and saying nothing.

"What's the matter? Scared?" Sally asked.

"Thunder, no!" he exploded. "Sleepy, that's all. What's a little parachute jump? If you'd grown up on a cattle ranch with the big bulls chasin' you and the lonesome coyotes callin', you wouldn't mind. I fell off a mountain once and no parachute stopped me, just a pine tree."

"I'm scared," Barbara whispered. Sally made no reply. Truth was, her stomach was pumping in a strange way. She saw the boy from Kentucky gulp twice. That didn't help any.

"We're about there," the instructor announced. "If your stomachs don't feel good, forget it. That's the way mine feels right now, and I've jumped three hundred times.

"Now remember," he added, "when you slide off, keep looking up. That way your chin doesn't hook on the parachute straps.

"Now," he said in a strong, clear voice, "we're here. See that green light? That's the signal. Don't be nervous. Your parachutes have been properly rigged. I watched it done. Don't forget, I'll be right behind you."

Before they went up, they had been given numbers. Barbara's number was seven, Sally's eight. That meant that, except for the instructor, they would be last. Sally did not know whether this was good or bad. For Barbara to go first would be terrible. But would watching the others disappear wear away her slender thread of courage? She could only hope that it would not.

"Action stations," the instructor snapped. Number one, the big fellow raised on a cattle ranch, took his place, dangling his feet over the hole. With his arms hanging straight down, he looked up.

"Number one!" The big fellow vanished into the thin air below. "Number two!" One more vanished. Sally's throat went dry. "Number three!" There they went. "Number four!" Oppressive silence followed. Sally gasped. Had something gone wrong? Then she remembered they were to go down by fours, with a space between each group. "Two fast sticks," they called it. She felt quite like a stick just then.

Unconsciously, she began to count—one, two, three, four. She mopped her brow. She dared not look at Barbara. "Five, six, seven." She had reached fifteen when the instructor took up the counting once more. "Number five." One more man vanished.

"Get ready," Sally whispered. On Barbara's face was a look of do-or-die.

"Number six." The last boy vanished.

"Now." Barbara slid into her place. Her hands were at her sides, her chin high. When she heard "Number seven" she slid from sight.

In her eagerness to follow, Sally nearly went down without an order. As it was, she sank breathlessly down until, with startling suddenness, she felt a pull at her straps and knew her parachute had opened.

"Good old chute!" she murmured as she glanced up to catch its white gleam against the sky.

She looked for Barbara. Yes, there she was off to the left, floating down with the greatest of ease. This was Barbara's big moment, perhaps the biggest moment of all her life.



“Good Old Chute!” Sally Murmured

But here was a voice coming up from below: “You’re coming down nicely, number seven,” it said. That would be Barbara.

“Number four, bend those knees. Don’t be trying to land stiff legged.” It was the voice again. An instructor was talking through a loudspeaker. His voice carried up to them perfectly.

“Number eight,” he called.

“Oh! He’s calling me!” Sally thought in sudden panic. “Number eight, you must turn round. Reach up, grab the strap.” Sally obeyed. She swung half about. “That’s it. Always land with the wind, not against it.

“Now, all of you, knees bent, feet together, relax, relax for a fall.”

One by one they tumbled on the ground, then jumped up laughing.

Sally made a quick count. Yes, all eight were up and moving. Then, having unfastened her parachute, she rushed over to Barbara to exclaim:

“Barbara! You were wonderful!”

Throwing her arms about her, Barbara burst into tears of joy.

When the shower had passed, she exclaimed, “Now I am going to be a parachute rigger always, for I know just how much it means!”

“Boy, oh, boy!” Sally exclaimed when at last she was alone with her instructor. “I hope I get a chance to make use of that experience. That certainly was something!”

“It’s been my experience,” he replied soberly, “that in this war, sooner or later, we find a place for every bit of practice we’ve ever had. Your time will come.”

Would it? Sally wondered a long, long wonder. She was still wondering when she got back to school. Secret radios, ships, airplanes, parachutes, all went round and round in her head. What was in store for her? In a day or two she would be whirled away to another school for further training.

“And after that, what?” she asked the elm that had once saved her from disaster. The elm whispered to the breeze, but she could not understand what the tree and the breezes were saying.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SILENT STORM

And then, like autumn leaves caught in a miniature whirlwind, they were sent spinning away in all directions. There was one happy evening hour when Sally, Nancy, Barbara, and Danny had lunch together in the Purple Cow, just off the campus. Theirs was the hail-and-farewell of good fellows well met, of soldiers who might never meet again. And yet, behind all their jokes and laughter was a feeling of friendship and devotion to one another that in all the years could never die.

"We'll be seeing you," they shouted next morning.

"Oh, sure! We'll be together again, sooner than you think!"

"Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

Sally and Nancy were sent to the beautiful campus of a great mid-western university where they would learn much more about radio and communications. Barbara was shipped off to a big airport to receive her final training in the art of rigging parachutes. Danny remained behind, but not for long. The autumn winds would soon whisk him away to new fields of adventure and duty.

Both Sally and Nancy had dreamed of attending some truly great university. And, at last, here they were. But for how long? Just long enough to make you efficient in your chosen field, was the precise answer. "And always remember, your services are badly needed right now. Good communications and radio men are scarce. They are badly needed overseas."

"But won't we two be sent overseas?" Nancy asked of the major who gave them the information.

"That remains to be seen. However, one thing is certain, no WAVE will be sent overseas until she has perfected herself in her particular branch, and has served long enough at one of our bases here in America to prove that she will be a valuable addition to our Navy, either aboard ship or overseas."

"Right here is where I forget this Gothic architecture, the shady walks, the cozy nooks that help to make this big school what it is," Sally said, as a look of determination spread over her face. "I'm going to work and study day and night, for we are in the Navy now."

"I'm right behind you," Nancy agreed. "All the same, when this terrible scrap is over, I'm coming right back here and be a regular student as long as I please. And believe me, I'm going to have all the trimmings—class dances, proms, shady walks and all the rest."

"Shake on that." Sally held out her hand. That handshake was a solemn ceremony.

"And now to business."

From that time on their heads were bent, for long hours, over study desks, radios, clattering keys.

Their day was not done when darkness fell, nor their week when Saturday rolled round. They did not, like Barbara, hide under the covers to study with a flashlight when night came. They rented bicycles for the entire period of their stay at the university. On many a night farmers saw strange lights winking and blinking from one hill to another in their pastures. Sally and Nancy were practicing the light-blinking code they had studied that day. Twice they were reported as spies, but nothing came of it for they never returned to the same pasture twice, and it would have been a fleet-footed farm boy who could have rounded them up in the dark.

Saturday afternoon, armed with dozens of multicolored flags, they returned to these same hills to practice flag signals. White and blue with a notch in the end stood for A, blue, white, red, white and blue in stripes was C, and so on and on to white with a red spot for one, blue with a white spot for two, and so on.

With good memories and a zeal for learning seldom witnessed by those gray stone walls, they went through the school in record time and were once more on the move.

"Now we're really going to work," Sally cried, enthusiastically.

"Yes, and at one of the biggest air bases on our long seacoast," Nancy agreed.

"Florida and the sea. Um—" Sally breathed, "that's worth working for."

"It sure is!"

"There's something else I'm going to work harder than ever for—" Sally spoke with conviction.

"What's that?"

"I'm going to try to cut 'Florida and the sea' down to just the good, old 'sea.' All my life I've waited for that."

"Oh, I don't know. There are the enemy sub-packs. They're really dangerous. The water's awfully cold."

"That's just it." Sally's eyes shone. "There are the sub-packs—you haven't forgotten our secret radios?"

"Almost," Nancy admitted.

"I tried them twice back at the U, when you were gone," Sally confided. "Nothing doing. Guess we

were too far from the sea.”

“Florida will be better.”

“Much better, but the sea will be better still.”

“I suppose so,” Nancy replied dreamily. “But don’t forget, your enemy sub-pack may turn out to be friendly ships or planes.”

“I won’t forget. All the same, I want to know.”

“Wonder where Danny is.”

“And Barbara.”

“Oh! I forgot to tell you. I had a letter from Barbara this morning. Guess where she is now?”

“Where we’re going?”

“That’s just where she is. Won’t it be great if you can hop off from the sky with her again?” Nancy laughed.

“I wouldn’t mind. I’ll bet you an ice-cream soda I’ll have a chance to use that experience before the year is over.”

“Easy aces! You’re on. If I never win another bet, that’s one for me.”

Was Nancy too confident? In this world at war many strange things can happen, and many do.

Not so long after that, Sally found herself seated on the top of a high tower that overlooked a vast airfield. The skies were full of floating planes. The roar of powerful motors beat upon her eardrums. In her hand she held a score sheet, and, at the steady, carefully spoken words of a marine in a major’s uniform, she recorded hours, moments, numbers, and names.

On the officer’s head was a set of earphones. About his neck a chin-speaker was attached. From time to time, speaking always in that steady, even tone, he said:

“Come on down, six, four, three. Wind velocity, fifteen miles per hour, north-north-east.”

And again: “Circle once more, three-six-eight. Fast one coming in from the east.”

There were long periods of time when he said nothing, just stood there staring dreamily away toward the sea. But always he appeared to listen, as indeed he did, for listening to the radio voice of great four-motored bombers, inviting them to come in, advising them to wait, telling them when to take off, informing them regarding weather, was his duty. And on his ears, eyes and voice hung the life of many a fine young flier.

Red Storm, his fellow officers called him, some times “Silent Storm.” His real name was Robert Storm. Silent Storm was the name Sally liked best, although, of course, she never called him that, always Major Storm.

He seemed young for a major and certainly was handsome in a big, tall, red-headed way. He seldom spoke to her except to instruct her in her work. He was teaching her his own work, so she could take his place. Nancy too was learning the work, but at a different period.

As Major Storm stood there looking away during quiet times, she often wondered about that faraway look in his eyes. Then, too, there was the long scar across his right cheek and the look of utter weariness that came over his face at times when he slumped down in his chair.

“Major Storm,” she said one day, speaking with a sudden impulse that surprised her, “what does one do to make people want one as a friend?”

“You don’t make people want you as a friend,” was his quick reply. “They either wish to be your friend or they don’t, and that’s all there is to it.”

“Are—are you sure?” she asked a little startled.

“Absolutely.”

“Well, then, they might not care to have you as a friend but you might be able to do something that would make them wish to do something for you—you know, like—”

“Yes, I know what you mean. The answer to that is simple then. Take an interest in them first. Find out about their lives, their families, their problems. Have a sympathetic interest in them. If they’re human, they’ll do the same for you. That’s simple, isn’t it?”

“Very simple.”

Suddenly, he spoke in a different tone: “Come on in, Johnny.”

After sweeping the sky with his binoculars, he settled down in his chair.

“That radio boy on that big bomber is Johnny, one of my own boys. I taught him. He’s a fine boy. I suppose the war will get him sooner or later. It seems rather useless to care for them too much. They go away and—”

“You never see them again.”

“That’s right.”

“But, by the way,” his voice rose, “you have one very good friend, eminently worth while, I’d say.”

“I have several,” she smiled. She was happy, happier than she had been for days. She had really started Silent Storm talking. “But then,” she thought with a shy smile, “who ever heard of a really,

truly silent storm, anyway?"

"This friend of yours," he said quietly, "is also a very old friend of mine—old C. K., we used to call him."

"You don't mean C. K. Kennedy!" She stared in disbelief.

"That's exactly who I do mean. He taught me most of what I know about radio. He's one man in a million."

"Oh! Then—" she exclaimed, "then we're practically cousins!"

"Something like that," he replied dryly.

Then, springing to his feet, he said: "Okay—come in, three-two-six."

And that was all for then. Evening was coming on. Many big ships were coming in through the blue. Every moment was taken from then to the end of the shift. Yes, that was all for then, but it was enough to keep the girl dreaming in the golden twilight, under the palms when the day's work was done. And those were strange dreams. Secret radios, ships, submarines, giant four-motored bombers, old C. K. and Silent Storm were all there in one glorious mixup of lights and shadows.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DANGER IS MY DUTY

Since there were many WAVES stationed at this great air and marine base, they had taken over a very fine little hotel down by the sea.

"Nancy! This is gorgeous!" Sally had exclaimed on their arrival. "If it weren't for the secret radio, I would be glad to stay here until the war is won."

"It *is* wonderful," Nancy replied thoughtfully. "Florida, the blue, blue sea, and these lovely quarters! It's really hard to believe, but, you know, this isn't the sort of thing I joined up for. I expected a truly hard life. The boys in the jungles of those South Sea islands and on the sandy deserts of Africa—they don't have it easy, so why should we—?"

"That's right," was the quick response. "If all the people of America, especially those who have lived soft lives—oh, I don't mean who don't work—but those who have had all they want, always, always slept in a soft bed, and always gone for a long ride in the old bus on a Sunday afternoon, could really be dragged out of it all and have it good and tough for a while, wouldn't it be grand?"

"But then," Sally added in a quieter voice, "we might as well make the best of all this beauty and comfort, for something tells me that it won't last too long."

After her first real talk with Major Storm, Sally returned to her hotel, ate her dinner, then, returning to her room, dragged out her secret radio.

She had barely started thumbing its dials, when a phone call announced a caller.

Hurrying down to the hotel lobby, she barely refrained from throwing herself into the arms of this guest.

"Danny!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"Taking a little final training and waiting for a ship," he whispered.

"What kind of ship, Danny?"

"Ah! Ah!" He held up a finger. "Loose talk may sink a ship."

"Oh! I'm sorry. Then how about our radio? May we talk about that?"

"Not only may, but must. I've studied those records from their code messages. They're really revealing. That's why I came."

"I just got out the radio, but Danny, you're not allowed in my room."



"Danny! What Are You Doing Here?"

"Of course not, but we're both allowed in the radio experimental station, providing one of us has a friend there, which I have, so—"

"So what are we waiting for?"

"Sure! What?"

"I—I'll be right back." Sally was off for the radio.

"We'll have such an aerial as you never dreamed of, over at the station," he confided, once they were on their way. "We'll bring those enemy subs up so close we can practically talk to them."

"Danny," she whispered, "do you really think they were enemy subs we were hearing?"

"Well," he hesitated, "I'd hate to say I am sure of it, but I've studied that secret code so carefully that I am positive that it goes the way we thought it did."

"But the language? Is it English or German?"

"Yes," he replied thoughtfully, "that's the real question. I got out my old German dictionary and gave it a really good workout. All I can say is that it's a lot easier to make sense out of those code messages in German than it is in English."

"Oh, Danny! You are wonderful!" She pressed his arm. "Just think what a glorious victory it will be if we succeed in listening to the message of those wolf-packs!"

"When no one else has done it? Boy, oh, boy!"

"What a triumph for old C. K.!"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Danny, you've never met him. That's too bad."

"But I've met you—in fact, once I actually caught you," he laughed.

"Danny, today I talked with my boss, Major Storm, and he told me old C. K. taught him radio. He says C. K. is one man in a million. Isn't that a great break?"

"I suppose so. But why?"

"Because if I want a chance to do something different, like going to sea so I can try out this radio, if I tell him it's really for old C. K., Silent Storm will help me."

"Silent Storm! What a name!" Danny laughed low.

"It's not the name that counts, but the man, and I—I think he's going to be fine."

"Sure! Sure! I know he will," Danny agreed. "And now, here's the station."

In a small room they set up the radio and, having attached it to the aerial connections, turned on the current. Almost at once, there came the "put-put-put-a-put" of a code message.

"Ah! Got 'em," Danny breathed.

"And it's so much louder, so much more distinct!" Sally was delighted. Danny scarcely heard for he was busy recording dots and dashes.

Soon Sally was at it, too, for by now she too could read code very well. From time to time, however, by turning that certain dial, she switched from one sender to another. She located six in all.

But, even as they continued to listen and record, there came a change. At first the messages were sent in a slow, methodical manner. But now they came in close together, excited, irregular and jerky. At the same time they appeared to draw closer to one another.

"Sally." Danny dropped his pencil. "Once I watched a pack of wolves chase an old and disabled moose. Their barks and howls were just like this radio business we're hearing. At first there was the regular yap, yap of the chase. But when they closed in they became greatly excited. Their barks, howling, and snarls came from excited minds and bloodthirsty throats. They were in for the kill."

As Sally listened, she seemed to see six subs closing in on a ship carrying supplies of food, guns, or ammunition to our soldiers in Africa and at the end caught the excited "put-put-put" of their radios as they closed in for the kill.

"Perhaps tomorrow we will hear on the radio of another ship sunk off our shore," she whispered hoarsely.

"Who knows?" was the sober reply. "Tonight they seem very close."

"Danny, we must hurry!" She gripped his hand. "We must learn more. I must go to sea, somehow, I must. I am sure that will help most of all."

"Perhaps you will go," was his quiet reply.

The next afternoon, as she worked at her highly important, if slightly tiring, task of bringing in the big planes only to send them out again, Sally said:

"Major Storm, why is that faraway look on your face?"

"Why?" He gave her a sharp look. "Is it noticeable?"

"Very."

"Thanks for telling me. I shall discipline my thoughts."

"Is it so terribly bad to want to be in one place, when you are serving in another?" she asked.

"Rather bad," was the slow reply. "We do not always give our best, that way."

"Do you want to be in some other place?" he asked abruptly.

"Not—not just now!" she stammered, taken aback. "But sometime, not too far away, I'd like to be transferred to a fighting ship."

"Why? Ships are dangerous."

"Danger is my duty." She felt that she was quoting someone, but could not recall where she had heard those words before.

"Danger is my duty," he repeated after her. "That's rather good, but you haven't answered my question. Danger can't be an end, you know."

"I have a secret," was the odd reply.

"I'm told that most young ladies of your age have several secrets."

"Not important ones. This one may be of great importance. It has to do with our mutual friend, C. K. Kennedy."

"Oh! Then it is important!" he exclaimed. "Tell me about it—that is, if you are free to do so."

"I'm sure he would tell you at least part of it if he were here. He has invented a new radio that operates on a secret wave length. I think the enemy sub-packs operate on that same band."

"The enemy sub-packs!" he stared. "Wait, there's a plane."

"Come in, six-three-nine."

"Let's not talk about this now," he suggested. "It's too vital. We might become absorbed in it and neglect our duty, commit a tragic blunder. Suppose you have dinner at my house tonight. It's quite proper. My sister lives with me."

"All—all right." Sally found herself strangely excited.

"I'll call for you at seven."

"I'll be waiting."

The remainder of the afternoon was pure routine, but Sally's mind wandered often to thoughts of that dinner date. "Much may come of that. Very, very much," she told herself more than once.

CHAPTER NINE

SALLY STEPS OUT

The place Sally and Silent Storm entered a few hours later was a California-type bungalow hidden among the trees. The windows were small and high. "No chance for spying here," Sally thought to herself.

They were met at the door by a tall, handsome lady who, Sally did not need to be told, was Silent Storm's sister. She appeared to take Sally to her heart at once.

"Robert has often spoken of you," she said in a friendly manner.

"Oh! Has he?" Sally was a little surprised. She had thought of herself as just one more of those WAVES.

They sat down to a delightful dinner. Salad made from fruit just taken from the trees, delicious crabmeat, fried sea bass, hot corn bread, sweet potatoes and coffee, a great urnful—enough for three cups apiece.

Dinner over, Miss Storm took up some knitting that lay in a chair and settled down by herself, because she knew her brother wished it, and she had sensed that there was some serious business in the air.

"It's not that my sister cannot be trusted," Silent Storm half apologized when he and Sally were seated in a small, secret den, quite evidently all his own. "She is to be trusted completely. However, it is a rule of war that a military secret is to be shared with no outsider, and the thing you were about to tell me up there in the tower is something of a military secret."

"Not—not yet—but it might, be." She hesitated. "It's really C. K. Kennedy's secret. He confided it to me because he hoped he could trust me."

"And he can."

"Yes, that's right. He is a wonderful man. There is nothing I would not do for him."

"But such an invention should be of great service to our country."

"He thought it might be. He wasn't sure."

"So he wanted it tried out? I see. Tell me only what you think he would like to have me know." Lighting his pipe, he settled back in his chair. "I have very little curiosity left in me," he went on. "I've seen too much for that. I'm interested in only one thing, to see this war brought to a successful end. I have many fine friends back there." He swept the west with his hand. "I shall never be able to go back to them, but I can serve where I am."

"Then you have already seen service." Sally's eyes lighted.

"Plenty of it, too much. I was at Pearl Harbor, a flier. And I was in about all that came after in the next seven months. Then a smart Jap got me in the back."

"Oh!" she breathed.

"It wasn't so much. I was out of the hospital in a month. But my spine will never be the same, I was once a swimmer, something of a champion. That's all over, too. But it doesn't matter. What really hurts is that I can't get back to help finish what my friends and I started over there."

"And you don't fly any more?" That seemed a terrible fate to Sally.

"Oh, yes," he smiled. "I have a fast, little single-seater and sometimes I haunt the sky, chasing seagulls and wild ducks."

"A single-seater sounds a bit selfish."

"It's not, really. You see, I don't trust myself too much. There's always the chance that—"

"Something might go wrong with you?"

"Yes. I'm not willing to take a chance with other people's lives. But you were going to tell me about that radio." He changed the subject abruptly.

"Yes, it's the most remarkable invention!" Launching at once into her theme, she talked for an hour. From time to time he interrupted to ask a question. His pipe went out. Twice he tried to light it and failed. Then he gave it up.

At last she spread a pile of papers covered with dots and dashes on the table. These were the records of the "put-put" broadcast which she and Danny had kept.

After that for a half hour their heads were bent over these records.

"This," he said at last, after re-lighting his pipe, "promises to be something of great importance.

"I wish you could stay with me on the airfield." He added after a moment, "Both you and Nancy are working in very well. You could relieve me of much tiresome routine, but for your sake and for old C. K. I'll do all I can to get you on a ship. I do know that there is talk of giving over the communications and radio work of one ship for a single trip to a group of WAVES, just to see how it works out. I'll look into that."

"Oh, please do," she begged eagerly.

"You should be devoting your entire time to this secret radio business right now," he said thoughtfully.

"But I'm a WAVE."

"You could be given a leave of absence."

"Not without a reason. It would be necessary to explain to the officials about the radio. And that's just what C. K. doesn't want."

"Why?"

"Well, you know the story about his other invention?"

"Yes, his radio detector. That was a disgrace. Some unscrupulous person stole it."

"And sold it to a foreign country. He doesn't want that to happen again."

"Surely not. Well, you just keep working in your spare time. And after that we shall see."

And that was the way matters were left. But not for so very long.

The next afternoon was regular time out for Sally. The first person she saw as she entered the lobby of her hotel was a big girl with a round beaming face.

"Barbara, you stranger!" she exclaimed. "Where have you been hiding?"

"Haven't been hiding, been working hard," was the big girl's reply. "I've been rigging the parachutes for a ship. Danny's ship. I saw him on it." Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"But, Barbara, they don't use parachutes on a ship."

"On this one they do. Shush!" Barbara held a finger to her lips. "Don't ask me another thing about it."

Sally thought she understood.

They went out to lunch together. After that they spent three hours shopping. When Sally returned, she found a notice for a phone call in her box.

"A phone call on my day off!" she exclaimed. "Maybe a date. How grand!"

It was Danny and a date as well. He was going for a spin in the air, just a little advanced trainer cabin plane, four hundred and fifty horse power. Would Sally like a look at the airfield, the palms, and the sea from the air?

Sally most certainly would. And so it was a date.

"I suppose it's no use hanging one of those things on you," Danny said with a grin as he strapped on his parachute. "You wouldn't know what to do about it, if something did go wrong."

"Oh, wouldn't I?" she challenged. "You forget that Barbara and I took the shorter course and graduated with honors from the sky."

"Say! That's right, you did." At that he produced a second parachute and helped her strap it on.

"You aren't planning to drop me in the big pond, are you?" she joked.

"Nothing like that. This is a land plane. Oh, we'll take a turn or two out over the sea but the plane's been thoroughly worked over. Not a chance of her going wrong."

"Anyway, I'll keep my fingers crossed." She laughed as she climbed in.

When Danny had gone through the ritual of turning on the current, gas and oil, warming up his motor and setting his wheels for the run, they were off.

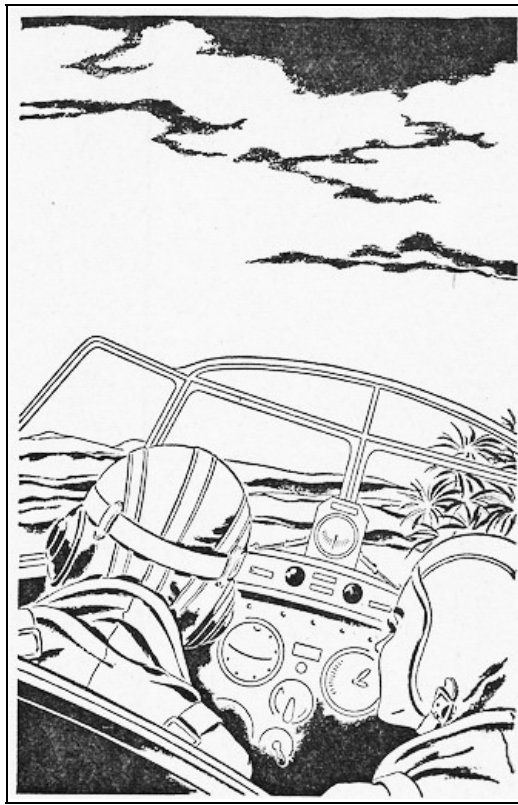
It was one of those cloudless Florida evenings when little fishing boats, looking from the sky like toys, glide over the dark blue waters, when a distant steamer sends off a slow, lazy drifting cloud of smoke and all seems at peace.

They took a turn out over the ocean, then swung inland where little, blue lakes dot the dark green of forests and the lighter green of farms.

"Nice place, Florida," said Danny. "We've been missing something, should have taken a vacation down here every year."

"Oh! So you're the son of a millionaire!" Sally laughed.

"Not quite. But if I worked hard all the year, guess I could make it. What do you say we try it after the war is over?"



They Swung Out Over the Sea Again

"Don't mind if I do. But, Danny," her voice hit a serious note, "did you ever think that war is not all a dead loss? Think of the boys who would have grown up to sell socks, or run a streetcar or mend shoes—"

"And never get twenty miles away from good old Chicago."

"And now they're seeing the world, Africa, India, China, South Sea Islands. This country of ours will never be the same after the war."

"It sure won't."

They swung out over the sea again. Beneath them a large ship, under full steam, was gliding out to sea.

"Going out to make a secret meeting with other ships of a convoy," Sally said. "Wonder how soon I'll be sailing with that ship, or some other."

"Perhaps never," Danny replied soberly. "They haven't said they'd take WAVES abroad yet. But I am about all set. Just a day or so more at the most. They never tell us exactly."

"Oh, Danny, no!"

"Oh, Sally, yes!" he echoed. "What's the matter? Want me to stay a landlubber all my life?"

She did not answer. A small plane, darling through the air like a bird, had caught her eye.

"That's your boss, Silent Storm," Danny said. "When I learned he was your boss, I sort of looked him up. The boys told me that was his plane. No one else flies it."

"He's a fine man, Danny."

"That's what they all say. He was very badly shot up out there in the Pacific. They didn't expect him to live, but the nurses pulled him through—"

"And now—"

"Now he might be sitting in the sun, living on a pension."

"But who would want to in exciting times like these?"

"Not your Silent Storm. He works harder than the rest of them."

"But, Danny! Look!" Her voice rose sharply. "Look at his plane!"

"Acting crazy all right. Seems to be out of control."

"Danny! He said something strange once. He said he wouldn't take other people up because he wasn't sure of himself. You don't think—"

Danny was thinking, and thinking fast. Advancing the throttle, he sent his plane speeding toward the spot in the sky where the small plane was going through all the motions of a fighter shot out of the clouds.

"He's really going down," he muttered grimly. "And ours is a land plane, worse luck."

They remained at two thousand feet. Starting at that same level, the other plane had gone into a

slow spiral and was slowly drifting down.

"If he hits the water at that speed, he's done," Danny groaned. "Why in the world doesn't he bail out?"

"Perhaps he can't. He—he may be unconscious." Sally gripped her hands until the nails cut deep into the flesh.

"There!" she exclaimed.

"He's getting control. He's leveling off." Danny spoke slowly. "But he'll crash all the same. And his plane is a land plane. Let's hope he's a good swimmer."

"But he isn't." Sally's words came quick and fast. "He used to be. The Japs wrecked his back."

"Tough luck!"

"There! He's down. His plane is still intact."

"It will sink all the same, in no time at all."

"Danny!" Sally gripped his arm tight. "Just circle over that spot, slowly." She stood up.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going over the side. I'm a good swimmer, I can save him."

"Here—take the controls. I'll go."

"I can't fly a plane, never have."

"Okay, good girl! Here's luck to you. Here, take this." He dragged a rubber raft from beneath his feet.

Tucking the raft under her left arm and gripping the ripcord with her right hand, Sally opened the cabin door, stood there for a few seconds, and then she was gone.

CHAPTER TEN

SALLY SAVES A LIFE

Fifty seconds is not a lot of time but Sally had taken her chute training seriously. In just that many seconds she did several things. She pulled her ripcord, waited breathless, then felt the pull of the opening chute.

Finding that she was facing the wind, she turned herself about. Looking down, she judged that she would hit the water only fifty yards or so from Major Storm's rapidly vanishing plane. Catching the raft by its edges she held it before her and waited. Ten seconds later, as the lapping waves reached for her, she did a sort of swan dive and landed flat with the raft beneath her.

"Four-point landing." She laughed in spite of the seriousness of the situation, freeing herself from her parachute harness.

Rearing up on her elbows, she looked for the plane.

"Gone!" she cried in dismay.

Just then she saw a hand go up. Silent Storm was doing his best.

Throwing herself flat on the raft and using her hands for paddles, she threw all her strength into an effort to reach him.

Even so, weakened by his efforts and the pain his back gave him, he had gone down once before she reached him.

A brief struggle followed, and then he lay on the raft and stared up at the sky.

"You—you shouldn't have done it." He talked with difficulty. "I'm really not worth it. Shouldn't have gone up. But flying somehow gets into your blood."

"I know," she replied quietly. "It's all right. I wouldn't have missed this for anything. Somehow I thought that parachuting was a good thing to know. Now I'm sure of it. You'll be fine when you get your breath. Danny will send out a motorboat."

They were both wet to the skin. That didn't matter too much. There was a warm land breeze from the shore. Stripping off their sodden jackets, they allowed their thin cotton shirts to bag and flutter in the breeze.

"I've often dreamed of being on the sea in one of these rubber rafts," he mused. "Men have lived in them for weeks."

"It wouldn't be bad if the weather were always like this." She leaned back in lazy comfort.

"It's rather rough on me, this experience," he said at last.

"It's too bad you lost your plane."

"Oh! It's not that. I could buy another. Thing is, I've really proved to myself that I'm no good for flying. I went out cold right up in the air. I came out of it in time to save myself, but not my ship. Even so, if it hadn't been for you I'd have drowned."

"You're too important to be taking such needless chances." There was a note of kindness in her voice.

"Yes. I suppose you're right, but I have so wanted to be back there in the islands with my friends, fighting it out with those unspeakable Japs. I kept sort of kidding myself along, but now—"

"Now you know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

"Ah! So you're a preacher?" He laughed good-naturedly. "Well, I don't mind. What's the rest of the sermon?"

"You'll have to make new friends where you are. You've made some already. I am one of them, 'one of the least of these.'"

"Far from that. One of the greatest. I prize your friendship."

"Thanks."

"But you have asked to be sent away, on a ship."

"I'll come back, I hope."

"Oh, yes." His voice rose. "I meant to tell you. It's more than half arranged already. There's a new type of fighting ship going out with a convoy in a day or two. She's a small airplane carrier built specially for convoy duty.

"But," he hastened to add, "you'll not whisper a word of this."

"Of course not."

To herself she thought: "That must be Danny's ship. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I were to sail on his ship!"

This hope was lost for the time, at least, for Storm went on: "This is the ship's maiden voyage. She will carry a crew, all men. But if all goes well on the following trip it is planned to use some women nurses and a number of WAVES for secretarial work, storekeepers, radio and communications."

"A testing trip?"

"Exactly. I have already put in a word for you. I hated that for I wanted both Nancy and yourself on my own force. But there's that secret radio."

"Yes, there's the radio," she agreed with enthusiasm. "We'll work it out together. I have two sets. I've already written C. K. asking permission to leave one with you in case I am sent across. That way, we can try it out."

"It's good of you to suggest it, but don't hope for too much. There is a lot of radio silence when you're on convoy duty. It's necessary, you know."

"That's just it," she exclaimed. "If we get in a really tight place and don't dare use the regular radio we can switch to our secret radio. You could stand by with your set at regular hours, couldn't you?"

"Certainly."

"Then it's all arranged. Don't you see, if you and I can work out this secret radio, if it turns out to be a really big thing, it will make up for the other things you want to do and can't!"

"You're wonderful!" he exclaimed. "We'll do things together!"

"Look!" she exclaimed. "Here's a small flashlight attached to the boat, yes, and a fish line with artificial bait attached!"

"We're all set for a long sail," he laughed. "At least the flashlight will come in handy for signaling our rescuers. It's getting dark."

Sally tried the flashlight. It worked. The line and tackle too was tried and with rather startling results.

After unwinding the line Sally propped herself up on her knees, then gave the bright nickel spinner a fling well out over the dusky blue waters. She drew it in, slowly at first, then faster and faster.

"Ah!" he murmured. "I see you are a fisherman."

"Not an expert," was her modest comment, "My father loves to fish. I go with him to the lakes sometimes. We cast for pike and bass and sometimes a big land-locked salmon."

"Then there's a battle."

"A wonderful battle. I love it!"

She gave the spinner one more fling, this time far out from the boat. Scarcely had she begun speeding up her pull, when suddenly she all but pitched head foremost into the sea.

"Hey!" he exclaimed, seizing her by the waist and pulling her back. "Not so fast!"

"He—help!" she exclaimed. "I've got something big!"

Reaching around her he grasped the line and together they pulled.

"Now!" he breathed. "I'll pull and you roll in the line. Now!"

He heaved away and she rolled line. The fish came, sometimes slowly, sometimes faster. A quarter of the line was in, half, two thirds, and then—

"Oh! Give him line!" she exclaimed. "He'll have us both in the water."

They gave him line, then started pulling in. Three times this was repeated. At last, apparently worn-out, the fish came all the way in.

"Give us a light," Storm said, as the fish came close to the boat. "Let's see what we have." She switched on the small flashlight. "Ah! A small tuna! A beauty!" he breathed. "We must have him."

"A small one!" she exclaimed.

"Perhaps twenty pounds."

"How big is a big one?"

"Five hundred pounds is a nice size. We—"

"Watch out!" His words rang out sharply.

She dodged back. There had been a sudden white flash in the water. Then the line gave a great yank.

"A shark! A bad one!" he exclaimed again. "He got our fish—"

"No, the fish is still there. Pull him in quick!"

The fish came flapping into the boat.

"All here but the tail," was his comment. "Baked tuna is not half bad. We'll have a feast."

For a time after that they sat watching the waters.

The shark did not return. The night really settled down. The city's lights painted a many-colored picture against the wall of darkness beyond, and all was still.

Out of that stillness came the chug-chug of a motorboat.

"They're coming for us," she said huskily. She did not know whether to be glad or sorry.

"It's nice to have been with you," he said when, an hour later, he let her out of a taxi at her hotel door. "Thanks for saving my life and all that."

"It's been fun," she said. "It really has. Think I'll resign from the WAVES and join the life guards."

"Oh, yes!" he exclaimed, with one foot on the running board. "Don't forget we have one more dinner date. Our tuna catch must be honored. Shall we say tomorrow evening?"

"That will be fine."

"Then it's a date."

"If I hear from C. K. and have his permission," she added, "I'll bring over the secret radio."

"Good! You can give me a few lessons regarding its operation."

"And we'll have a listen-in at the sub wolf-packs."

"If that's what it is. And here's hoping."

"Here's hoping!"

"Good night!"

"Good night!" His taxi rolled away.

"It's a strange world," she thought as she walked up the marble steps.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SECRET MEETING

Three weeks later Sally was again on those fine waters. Again it was night. Once more the city painted its many colored pictures against the sky. But how strangely different was the craft on which she rode!

Gone was the small rubber raft, the tuna, and the shark. Gone too was strange, intriguing Silent Storm.

"It will be a long time before I see him again," she told herself, "but I may talk to him, perhaps many times."

This was true. During the weeks that had just passed she had secured permission from her aged benefactor, the radio inventor, C. K., to show the secret radio to Silent Storm.

She had taken it to his house for the first time on the night of the tuna feast. That feast had been a great success. Nancy had gone with her. Never had she seen Silent Storm so carefree and gay as on that night.

When the feast was over, the three of them, Sally, Nancy, and Silent Storm, had retired to his den. There the secret radio was set up. Since he had a private hook-up with the station's great aerial, things had gone very well.

For a time, it is true, no sound came over that secret wave length, but this had happened many times before. When at last the "put-put-put" began, the strange broadcasters had put on a real show. As on one other occasion the six separate units broadcasting were some distance apart.

Then came the sudden, loud and insistent bark of a broadcast for all the world like the call of a wolf leader to his pack.

"A call to the kill," Sally had thought to herself. She was thrilled to the very center of her being, but said never a word. She wanted Silent Storm to listen and form his own opinions.

Slowly, surely, quite like the wolves of the Great White North, the broadcasters drew closer and closer together.

"Closing in on the prey." Scarcely could she avoid speaking aloud.

Then came the loud, irregular barks of apparent command.

Strangely enough, when all this excitement was over and the broadcasters began to separate there were only five. One had gone silent.

"That," said Silent Storm, mopping his brow, "is one of the strangest things I ever heard."

"Is it an enemy sub wolf-pack?" Sally asked.

"It would be only one other thing," Storm spoke slowly. "It could be a flight of our bombers concentrating on a target and then delivering their cargoes of death and destruction."

"Yes," Sally agreed, "the broadcasts fit that picture quite as well."

"We can only wait and see," said Storm. "We must do all we can to get Nancy and you on a ship at the earliest possible moment."

Nancy seemed a bit startled by this, but Sally said: "That will be swell!"



"It Could Be a Flight of Our Bombers."

"You see," said Storm, "when you are on a ship you are constantly changing your position. Once you are at the center of the Atlantic, if these secret broadcasters put on a show like this for you, and if it is north, south, or west of you, you'll know at once that they are subs and not bombers.

"And then!" he struck the table a blow, "then we'll go after them. Last year we lost twelve million tons of shipping to those wolf-packs. Think of it! A million tons a month. That might mean the losing of the war.

"But with this secret radio of yours, if things are as we suppose them to be, what we won't do to those inhuman beasts who have machine-gunned men struggling in the water and women on rafts!"

After that night, Sally had waited, impatiently, for the return of Danny's ship. Then one day she met Danny on the street.

"Yes," he whispered. "We are safely back. She's a grand, old ship. I got a sub."

"Danny! Good for you!" She wanted to hug him right there on the street.

"We're sailing tomorrow night with a fresh convoy," he confided, "and I've been told you are to sail with us."

"And now, here I am," Sally thought as she watched the city's lights fade while they sailed out into the dark, mysterious night.

She was standing on a great, flat, top deck. Nancy was at her side, a dim shadow. Larger shadows, that were airplanes, loomed at their backs. No lights were showing. The radio was silent. They were alone on the sea. And yet there was to be a convoy.

"That will come later," Lieutenant Riggs, radio officer for their flat-top, told her. "The ships of our convoy come from many places, Boston, New York, Portland, even San Francisco. Someone stuck a pin in a map. The spot is right out there in the sea."

"Our secret meeting place." Sally wet her lips. It was all so strange.

"It's all of that," was the quiet response. "And it better be mighty secret at that. Forty ships, all loaded, food, airplanes, soldiers. There are even a hundred WACS going over in one of those ships."

"A hundred WACS," Sally thought as she caught the last spark of light from the shore. There were twelve WAVES on this airplane carrier, and they weren't just going over, but over and back. There were six women nurses as well. This was to be a trial trip.

"I hope we make good," she had said to Lieutenant Riggs.

"Oh, you will. I can see it in your eyes."

"Will we make good?" she asked Nancy.

"We'll do our best," was the solemn reply. "But what about the secret radio?"

"We can always listen for the subs. They can't detect our listening. Perhaps that's the most important of all."

"Silent Storm has the other set?"

"Yes. He'll be standing by for a half hour in the morning and again at night. In an emergency, the secret radio might help. Other than that, silence is the order of the day."

"Yes, subs have ears," Nancy agreed. "Loose talk may sink a ship."

"It's nice to have Danny on the ship."

"Which do you like best, Danny or Storm?" Nancy asked.

"I like them both, but in different ways. Storm is like a big brother. He helps a lot. Danny's just a very nice boy."

"And really nice boys are about the nicest creatures in the world." Nancy laughed low.

"I'm going below for a few winks of sleep." Sally turned away. "There'll be work to do later."

"I couldn't sleep now. It's all too strange," Nancy murmured, her eyes on the sea.

And indeed for this American girl it was strange. All her life she had been looked after, cared for. The things she wanted she got. She had joined the WAVES to do her bit but with the thought that she would remain in America. Now, caught up and carried on by Sally's enthusiasm, she had gone to sea. She had been told that theirs was to be a slow convoy, that they would be twelve days at sea.

"Twelve days," she whispered, looking away at the dark waters of night. "Twelve nights." Losses from sinking were greater in these days than ever before. She could swim, but shuddered at the thought of being thrown into those cold, black, miserable waters. How was it all to end?

"Whatever happens, I'm in it to the end," she had written her mother just before she sailed.

"And that's that," she told herself stoutly as she turned to make her way down the ladder to the forward cabins on the deck below where the nurses and the WAVES had their quarters.

Four hours later Sally found herself standing on the ship's tower. Beside her stood Lieutenant Riggs. Riggs was a veteran ship's radio engineer. No one seemed to know how old he was. He was tall, erect, every inch a sailor. His steel gray hair told that he was not young. His sharp, darting eyes had told Sally that here was a man who would demand exactness of service and never-failing loyalty. And she loved him for that.

She was feeling a bit nervous, for this was to be her first testing at sea. They had arrived at the place of meeting, an unmarked spot in an endless sea, ahead of the other members of the convoy.

Just a moment, before, she had caught a winking blink on the horizon.

"There's one, south southwest," she had said to Riggs.

"You have good eyes," he commended. "Give them this message. See if they get it."

As he read off the location the other ship was to take in relation to the airplane carrier, she blinked it out in code with the aid of an electric blinker, aimed like a gun at the other ship.

They waited. Then came the answering blinks.

"They got it," she said simply. "They will go at once to their position."

"Very good," was his quiet reply.

For a full hour after that they stood there, he giving orders in a low monotone and she blinking them across the waters to some newly-arrived ship. As the work went forward, her heart swelled with pride. She was part of something really big. Great ships moved in on the dark horizon, ships loaded with oil, airplanes, food, soldiers, everything that is vital to war. Like an usher in some great theater of the sea, she told each ship where its place was to be and it silently glided into position.

"This," she murmured, "is the life!"

"You are doing very well," was Riggs's comment. "Not a mistake yet."

There were no mistakes. When the last ship had taken its position, there came low orders passed from man to man. Then they began moving on into the night.

Still Sally and Lieutenant Riggs held their places. One ship had forgotten or failed to receive the hour of departure. A question blinked to them was speedily answered. Then they too began to move.

A half hour later a tanker lagging behind was ordered to put on more steam.

And so it went until four hours were gone. Then Nancy appeared with a young lieutenant and Sally crept away to her quarters for more sleep.

"How do you like it?" a gray-haired nurse with a kindly face asked.

"Fine, so far," was her answer. "Just swell. And so different!"

"Yes, it's different all right. You might like to know," the nurse's voice dropped to a whisper, "I'm Danny Duke's mother."

"Danny's mother!"

"He told me about you and Nancy. He likes you." The gray-haired woman gave her a fine smile.

"And we like him. He caught me once, saved me from a broken leg or something," was Sally's reply.

"Yes, he told me about that." She laughed. "Danny's just a boy, you know. He's my only child. You won't tell that I'm his mother?" she begged. "It's a bit irregular, my being on a ship with him. But I wanted it, so I told them if sons could sail the sea then mothers could, too. So they took me on, just for this trip. It's sort of a tryout for all of us, you know."

"Yes, I know. I won't tell a soul. Thanks so much for telling me." Sally moved on.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THEY FLY AT DAWN

Sally awoke with a start. She had had a strange dream. In the dream three of her best friends had stood by her berth looking down at her. The older of the three said:

"She won't wake up in time."

"Not in time," the next in line agreed.

"Oh, yes, she will!" the third exclaimed confidently.

"Well, I'm awake," Sally thought. "Now I have all the bother of going back to sleep again."

She closed her eyes, then opened them wide again. Through her eyelids she had received an impression of red light.

And, yes, there it was. The cabin was dark but the faint red light was there all the same.

"My secret radio!" she thought. "I can't have left it on!"

She propped herself on an elbow to peer into the darkness. She had left the radio close to her berth, just in case—

There was no harm in that, for only Nancy slept in the berth above.

"It's on," she thought. "I'm sure I turned it off."

This was strange for Nancy had been fast asleep when she turned in. Sally had tried picking up some sound of the "put-put-put-a-put" of the mysterious broadcasters and failed. Then she had—

At that her thoughts broke off short for, very faintly, because the radio was turned low, there came the familiar "put-put-put-put-a-put."

"I turned the radio on in my sleep," she told herself. There seemed to be no other possible conclusion, yet it seemed close to a miracle that she had done so for, during the two preceding days, she had caught not the faintest suggestion of a broadcast on her secret radio, and now, here, in the middle of the night, it was coming in strong. Needless to say, she listened with both her ears.

For two whole days she and Nancy, together with Riggs and the second radioman, had kept their convoy together, with blinker lights by night and flags by day. Not a sound had come from a radio on any ship of the convoy. It had been one of the strangest experiences of Sally's entire life. To go to sleep at night after a look at dark bulks looming here and there on the horizon, and to wake up with those same ships in the identical position in regard to one another, yet some hundreds of miles on their way, had seemed unbelievable.

But now, here was the secret radio talking again. "This may be the hour," she whispered excitedly as, having turned the dial, she listened once again.

Slipping from her berth, she drew on a heavy velvet dressing gown, turned the radio up a little, then sat there listening, turning a dial now and then, listening some more and all the time growing more excited.

After twenty minutes of listening her face took on a look of sheer horror.

"I can't do it," she thought. "I may be court-martialed. But I must! I must!"

For a full five minutes she sat there deep in perplexing thought. Having at last reached a decision, she went into action. After dressing hurriedly, she shut off the radio and disconnected its wires. Then, seizing it by the handle, she slipped out of the stateroom, glided along one passageway after another to wind up at last in the radio room where Lieutenant Riggs was standing watch alone.

"Why! Hello, Sally!" Riggs exclaimed. "What's up?" He glanced down at the black box. "You're not planning to leave the ship, I hope?" During the days of fine sailing they had enjoyed together, since the start of the convoy voyage, she and Riggs had become quite good friends.

She did not join in his laugh. Instead she said:

"Lieutenant Riggs, something terrible is happening. We are being surrounded by an enemy wolf-pack of subs."

"Sally!" he exclaimed. "You've been having a bad dream. You'd better go back to bed."

"It's no dream." Her face was white. "It's a terrible reality."

"But, Sally, how could you know that? The moon is down. The sky is black. It's three in the morning. You haven't a radio and even I have heard nothing within a thousand miles—not that I can hear those wolves," he added. "No, nor you either."

"Yes," she replied in a hoarse whisper, "I do have a radio, and I can hear the sub wolf-pack, have been hearing them for half an hour."

"What!" He stared at her as if he thought her mad. Then his eyes fell on her black box. "What's that thing?" he asked in a not unkindly voice.

"It's a secret radio." She was ready to cry by now. "Sending and receiving. There's only one other like it in the world. Perhaps they'll court-martial me for it. I know how strict the regulations are about radios."

"But that does not matter now!" She squared her shoulders. "All that matters now is that you connect up this radio, that you listen to it and believe what I tell you."

"I'll try." He did not smile.

In no time at all the radio was hooked up and "put-putting" louder than ever.

"That's a sub giving orders to another sub," she said quietly.

"Ah!" he breathed.

"Now watch. I turn this dial. That changes the direction of our listening. And—" For a space of seconds there came no sound and then again, "put-put-put...."

"That's a different sub, answering the first." There was quiet confidence in her voice. "It has a different sound."

"So it does," he agreed.

In the next ten minutes, she located six different radios operating out there, somewhere in the night.

"There are two others" she said as she straightened up. "Eight in all."

"Eight," he repeated after her.

"They're on every side of us," she said quietly. "The direction from which the sound comes tells that."

"On every side of us." Riggs seemed in a daze.

"But you can't know unless you've listened to them as I have." She gripped his arm in her excitement. "They're closing in on our convoy from all sides. Closing in for the kill."

"Closing in for the kill." The Lieutenant spoke like one in a trance. "Thousands of lives, soldiers, nurses, WACs, airplanes, ammunition, food—closing in for the kill."

"Watch the radio!" he ordered. "I'll be back with the Captain!"

"The Captain! Oh! Oh! No!" she cried. But he was gone.

To say that Sally was frightened would not have expressed it at all. For some time after Riggs left, she sat there shivering with fear.

Riggs had gone for the Captain. Did that mean that he believed what she had told him, or had he been shocked by the realization that she had laid herself open to court-martial?

"He's gone for the Captain," she told herself at last. "He'd never think of doing that, just to get me into deeper trouble. He's not that kind of a man." At that she drew in three deep breaths and felt better.

"He's gone for the Captain," she thought and shuddered. She had seen the Captain on the bridge, that was all. He had seemed a fine figure of a man, the sort you saw on the bridge in movies, stern, unsmiling, inflexible. She shuddered again.

But here was Riggs and with him the Captain.

"Miss Scott," said Riggs, "will you kindly repeat your performance with that, that radio, for the Captain's benefit?"

Sally's fingers trembled as she turned on the radio. Noting this, the Captain said:

"As you were." His dark eyes twinkled as he added: "We're not 'angin' Danny Deever in the mornin'."

"So the Captain has a sense of humor," the girl thought and at once felt much better.

Not only did she repeat the demonstration she had put on for Riggs, but for a full half hour she turned dials bringing in first this broadcaster, then another, and, at the same time, demonstrating by circles and angles that they were moving in, closer, ever closer, to the convoy.

Not this alone, but in her eagerness to be understood and trusted, she told the whole story of the secret radio and the experiments that had been carried on from the beginning.



“Riggs, I’m Convinced!” the Captain
Declared

“Riggs, I’m convinced!” the Captain declared at last. “They will strike at dawn. In a half hour our men will be ordered to battle stations. Twenty minutes before dawn ten planes will leave the ship to scour the sea. At the same time half our destroyers will take up the search.

“Miss Scott, I salute you.” He clicked his heels. Instantly Sally was on her feet with a true sailor’s salute.

“They believe me,” she thought as the pair left the radio cabin. “By rights I should want to shout or burst into tears.” She wanted to do neither, just felt cold and numb, that was all.

Then, as red blood flooded back to her cheeks and she thought of fighting planes and destroyers shooting away before dawn, practically at her command, she suddenly felt like Joan of Arc or Helen of Troy.

Then a terrible thought assailed her. What if it were all a mistake? Only time could answer that question, time and the dawn. “They fly at dawn,” she whispered.

Just then someone entered the cabin. It was Nancy.

“Sally,” she exclaimed. “Why are you here? This is not your watch. I woke up and missed you. What have you been doing?”

“Plenty,” said Sally. “Sit down and I’ll tell you.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
AMONG THE MISSING

Presently Riggs came hurrying back. Nancy and Sally remained in the radio room, dividing their time between listening for messages from the outside world, and watching with awe the ever-narrowing circle being drawn about the convoy by the enemy sub pack.

Riggs busied himself getting off messages from station to station on the ship. All men were ordered to their posts. Planes not in readiness were prepared for flight. Some were hoisted from the lower deck to flight deck.

"It's like a calm before a terrible storm," Nancy said to Sally. Soon enough they were to learn what an actual storm could mean to a convoy at sea. For the present, however, there was quite enough to occupy their minds.

Once, when Sally climbed the ladder to the flight deck for a breath of air, she chanced to bump into Danny Duke.

"Oh, Danny!" she exclaimed. "Must you go out?" He was garbed in flying togs. A parachute hung at his back.

"Sure!" He laughed. "What do you think I trained for? A game of volleyball?"

She didn't think. She just didn't want anyone she liked as well as Danny to be out there fighting subs, dodging antiaircraft fire and watching the black sea that waited to swallow him up.

At last, as dawn approached and a young officer came to take her place, Sally closed up her black box, removed the wires and marched away to store it under her berth.

"Stay there a while," she whispered, "until we know whether you mean honor or disaster for me."

It was with a sober face that she returned to the flight deck. She found the planes that were to go all in place, their motors turning over slowly.

She caught a quick breath as the first plane took off; then the second and third had whirled away when a hand waved to her as a voice shouted:

"Hi, Sally! See you later!"

It was Danny. In ten seconds he was not there.

"Gone! Just like that." She swallowed hard to keep back the tears.

"Yes, just like that," came in a quiet voice. Sally turned to find Danny's mother standing beside her.

"Tha—that was Danny," Sally murmured hoarsely.

"Yes, that was my boy, Danny."

"Did—did you want him to go?" Sally asked.

"Of course, my child. He's well prepared, Danny is. It's the work he was trained to do. Our country is at war. We must all do our part." The mother's eyes were bright, but no tears gleamed there.

"It's so much easier to dream of war than it is to see it, feel it, and be a part of it," Sally murmured.

"Yes, dreams are often more pleasing than the realities of life," Danny's mother agreed.

Sally stood where she was. There was comfort to be had from communing with this big, motherly woman, comfort and peace. And just then she was greatly in need of peace, for she was being weighed in the balance. The next few moments would decide everything. And so she stood there waiting for the answer.

And then the answer came, a deep-toned muffled roar, that seemed to shake the sea.

"They've found them," Mrs. Duke said. "That's a bomb."

"They were there. They've found them!" Sally wanted to shout for joy. She said never a word, just stood there thinking: "Good old C. K. will be famous because of his secret radio. I won't be court-martialed and thrown out of service for bringing it on board. Perhaps it has saved the convoy from attack, may save it again and again. Glory! Glory!"

Just then there came another roar. This was followed by a series of pom-pom-poms.

"That's antiaircraft fire," said Danny's mother.

"Does it come from our destroyers?" Sally asked.

"No. We are the ones who have airplanes, not they. Besides, our guns on the destroyers don't sound like that. You'll hear them. There! There's one now!"

There had come a boom that seemed to roll away to sea. There was another and another.

All this time, for all the world as if they were anchored in some harbor, the forty ships laden with freight and human cargo kept their places and moved majestically forward.

"It's beautiful," Danny's mother murmured.

"And terrible!" Sally added with a sigh.

Soon from all sides there came the roar of bombs, the pom-pom-pom of antiaircraft fire, and all the

time Sally was thinking: "Danny! Oh, Danny!"

And what of Danny? Having been told the course he should take, he had gone gliding straight away toward his supposed objective. Nor did he miss it. Feeling safe in their false security, the eight enemy submarines on the surface had come gliding silently toward the apparently defenseless convoy.

At the sound of Danny's roaring motor, the sub he had been sent to destroy crashdived, but too late. Swooping low, Danny released a bomb with unerring accuracy. It missed them by feet, but when it exploded it brought the sub to the surface with a rush and roar of foam.

By the time Danny could swing back, three of the enemy had manned an anti-aircraft gun, but, nothing daunted, Danny again swung low and this time he did not miss. His bomb fell squarely on the ill-fated craft and it exploded with a terrific roar.

But before this could happen, the anti-aircraft gun had put a shell squarely through the body of Danny's plane, ripping the radio away, damaging the plane's controls, and missing sending Danny to oblivion by only a foot or two.

"That," said Danny, as if talking of someone other than himself, "was your closest miss. Another time, they'd get you. But that other time won't be—ever. So how about getting back to the ship?" Yes, how? His motor was missing, and his controls stuck at every turn.

In the meantime three planes came zooming back. Anxiously Sally waited as the landing crews made them fast. Danny's plane was not among them.

One plane, a two-seated dive-bomber, had been shot up. Its pilot was wounded. Mrs. Duke went away to care for him.

The other two planes remained on board just long enough to take on more bombs. Then they were off again.

Catching Sally's eye, the Captain motioned her to join him at the bridge.

"It's marvelous!" he told her. "That secret radio of yours has saved ships and lives. Eight subs all ready to pounce on us and now look—" He swung his arm in a broad circle taking in all the gliding ships.

This was high praise. Sally's bosom swelled with pride. Then—

"Danny?" she said without thinking.

"What about Danny?" He laughed. "Hell be back with the rest. A fine boy, Danny. There are few better. We need a lot of Dannys in this war."

"Yes—yes, a lot of Dannys, but there's only one," she replied absent-mindedly.

She left the bridge to wander back to the deck. One more badly crippled plane made a try for the deck, but missed and fell into the sea.

A line was thrown to the pilot and he was pulled on board.

"Have you seen Danny?" she asked as the man came up dripping wet.

"Dan-Danny?" he sputtered, coughing up salt water. "Why yes, once. He was after a sub. Got him, I guess. But there were the AA guns, you know."

Yes, Sally knew. She had heard them. Her heart ached at the thought of them.

Other planes came in. Had they seen Danny?

"No Danny."

Were they going out again?

Orders were not to go. All subs had been accounted for. Looked as if a fog would blow in any time. It had been a grand day.

At last all planes were in but one, and that was Danny's.

Then came the fog. Drifting in from the north, where fogs are born, it hid every ship of the convoy from Sally's view.

Turning, she walked bravely along the deck, climbed down the ladder, entered her room, threw herself on her berth, and sobbed her heart out to an empty world.

Finally, she sat up resolutely, and her eyes fell on the secret radio. Here was an idea, perhaps a way out. Danny was out there on the sea. He must be. His plane carried a rubber raft. She would not give up hope. They were not yet too far from shore for heavy searching planes to reach the spot. She would get their location. Then she would radio to Silent Storm. He'd send out a plane, a dozen big planes from the shore. They could not fail to find Danny.

Yes, she would get Storm tonight on the secret radio. But dared she do it? Her splendid body went limp at the thought. This was a terrible world.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CAPTAIN'S DINNER

That evening at the hour when Silent Storm had promised to be waiting at his Florida airport to receive any urgent message Sally might send, Sally sat alone in her cabin. Her fingers were on the dial, headphones over her ears, speaker under her chin.

"I will," she whispered. "I must. It's for the best pal I ever had, for Danny."

And yet, she hesitated. It was very still in the cabin. There was only the faint sound of water rushing along the ship's side. The thin fog continued. The convoy moved majestically on. Everyone said they had won a marvelous victory. Five, perhaps six submarines had been destroyed. No one could tell for sure about the other two. That her secret radio had played a major role in this victory she knew quite well. With her help, this radio with its gleaming red eyes had put out long fingers and touched the subs here, there, and everywhere. Then those brave boys in their planes had gone out and destroyed them.

"Danny got one. And then—" She did not finish.

She could not.

She started as there came a knock at her door. After hastily throwing a blanket over the radio, she said:

"Come in."

The door opened. "Oh! Mrs. Duke!" she exclaimed. "I'm glad you came."

"I thought you might need me," The words were spoken in a surprisingly calm voice.

"Yes, I—"

Sally lifted the blanket from the radio.

"That's good! It's a fine and noble gesture." Danny's mother took a chair.

"It—it's not just a gesture!" the girl exclaimed. "It's the realest thing I ever thought of doing in all my life!"

"Yes, but you must not do it. You must not send the message."

"It's for Danny, your son, my friend and pal!"

"Yes, Danny is my son." The gray-haired woman spoke slowly. "My only son—he—he's been my life. But you must not send that message. It would almost surely mean court-martial for yourself."

"Yes—I know. I don't care." Sally's hand was on the dial.



"Thought You Might Need Me," She Said

"Yes, I know. You would sacrifice your freedom and your honor for Danny. That is noble. I would do

the same and much more.

"But there are others to consider." The woman's voice sounded tired. "So many others! There are more soldiers in this convoy than we know about, thousands of them! They too are fine young men, just as fine as our Danny. They too are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their country. It would be tragic if their lives were wasted."

"But our boys destroyed those submarines!"

"Not all of them, not for sure, and there are other enemy wolf-packs. There were never as many as now. We know that they use the same wave-length as your radio does. They will hear your message and will hunt us down."

"We will be listening, Nancy and I, night and day. Let them come! Our airplanes will destroy them!"

"Perhaps, perhaps not. The weather may not be right for flying. And then, try to think what it might be like."

"But Danny?" The words came in a whisper that was like a prayer.

"Danny is alive. I feel sure of that. He's on his rubber raft. The sea is calm."

"But it may storm."

"God will look after Danny. You believe in God's care for his children, don't you?"

"I—I don't know. I've never been able to think that through."

"Then you'll have to trust Danny's mother." Mrs. Duke smiled a rare smile. "The time may come when Danny will mean more to you than he does to me. When that time comes, I shan't mind. You are a splendid young lady. But until that time I shall have the right to say: 'Sally, don't send that message.'"

"All right." Sally went limp all over. "You win."

A moment later, after giving herself a shake, she stood up. "I'll put the radio away. There'll be no more subs for a time. Nancy and I have been invited by the Captain to have our evening meal with him at the officers' table."

"That's splendid!" Mrs. Duke stood up. "You'll enjoy it. You're a real hero."

"Will I? Am I?" Sally asked these questions of herself after Danny's mother had gone. She did not know the answers.

Danny's mother was right. For the moment at least, Danny was safe and quite comfortable. After battling his half-wrecked plane to a point where further struggle and loss of altitude might prove fatal, he gave up the fight and, circling down, went in for a crash landing.

His was as successful as any crash landing can be. Between the time he hit the water and his plane sank he was able to inflate his rubber raft, look into its equipment, and even salvage a heavy leather coat he carried for an emergency.

Scarcely had he accomplished this and paddled a short distance, when the plane put its nose into the water, stood there quivering, then disappeared from sight.

"Good old plane," he murmured, as a strange feeling of loneliness swept over him. "You did your full duty. You sank a sub and probably saved a ship. Now, in Davy Jones's Locker, you can rest in peace.

"Looks as if I'd get some rest, too," he thought as, a short time later, he settled back against the soft, rounded side of his raft.

"A good, long rest," he added as a cool damp mist, touched his cheek and the chill, gray fog came drifting in.

When he first hit the water the boom, bang and rat-tat-tat of battle were still in the air. After that had come comparative silence, disturbed only by the low roar of planes returning to their ship.

"A fine bunch of fellows," he thought, as a lump rose in his throat. "Finest ever. Here's hoping they all land safely."

A faint hope remained that one of those planes would get away to search for him. When the fog came in he knew that hope was at an end.

He found the silence, broken only by the lap-lap of little waves, oppressive.

"Going to be lonesome," he thought as he started to examine the gadgets that came with the rubber raft. There was a fish line and some artificial bait.

"I'll try them all out," he chuckled. "If I catch a whopper with one of the lures, I'll send the manufacturer a picture of it with a story. He'll like it for his catalogue.

"Only I won't," he murmured a moment later. "They forgot to pack a candid camera."

Instead of a camera he found a device for distilling fresh water from salt, some iron rations, and a small bottle of vitamin B1.

"What? No vitamin D?" he roared. "But then, I've heard that there's lots of the sunshine vitamin in the ocean air."

At that he settled back for a rest. Even if worse came to worst he was better off than those wolf-pack pirates who had come after them.

It was with a feeling of misgiving that Sally allowed herself, along with Nancy, to be led to the door of the officers' mess hall that evening. But when the Captain met them at the door with a bow and a smile instead of a stiff salute, things began looking better.

As they entered the mess hall they found all of the officers standing in their places. When the Captain had escorted them to their places at the head of his table he stood smartly erect, every inch a commander, as he said:

"Gentlemen, I propose a salute to the ladies of the day, Sally Scott and Nancy McBride of the WAVES."

Instantly every man stood erect and snapped to a salute. It was a simple and impressive ceremony, one long to be remembered, but to Sally's utter confusion, she almost forgot to return the salute.

It was all over in twenty seconds of time. Then they were all seated in their places ready for the meal that was to be quite a feast, in celebration of a real victory.

There was fried chicken with cranberry sauce, and sweet potatoes, fresh, crisp celery, and baked squash. All this was topped with ice cream and very fine coffee.

Was Sally conscious of all this wealth of good things? Well, hardly. She was, first of all, tremendously interested in Captain Donald MacQueen who sat at her side. All her life she had dreamed of really knowing great and important people. Not that she wished to brag about it, far from that. She did long for an opportunity to study them, to feel their greatness, to try to absorb some of the qualities that had made them great. Now just such a man was giving the major portion of his time to her for one blissful half hour. A young lieutenant had taken over the task of entertaining Nancy, and he did not seem at all unhappy about it either.

Important to Sally also were the things Captain MacQueen was saying to her.

"This old friend of yours—his name is Kennedy, I believe—must be a great genius," he suggested.

"Oh, he is!" she beamed.

"But it does seem strange that he should have entrusted such a priceless device to a, well, to any young person."

"Perhaps it may seem that way to you," was her slow reply, "but, Captain MacQueen, I think that too often those who boast of gray hairs underestimate the dependability, the devotion, yes, and the wisdom of the young people of today—and—and," she checked herself, "I have worked with him for six years."

"Everything you say is true." His dark eyes twinkled. "But such a priceless invention! Look what it has accomplished today—given us a clean-cut victory, perhaps saved hundreds of lives and very precious cargo.

"Miss Scott," he leaned close, speaking low, "this is one of the most important convoys ever to cross the Atlantic. Our enemy is not through. He will attack again and yet again, perhaps. But if we can always know, as we did today, the hour, the very moment of his attack—what a boon!"

"C. K. Kennedy is a very old man." She was speaking slowly again, "He is an extremely modest man. In the case of another important invention he met with disappointment. I am sure he did not realize the real value of this secret radio."

"But now he shall know. He shall be richly rewarded. Of course the government will want to take over his invention, but even so—"

"He does not ask for reward, only recognition."

"He shall have both, and in good measure," the Captain declared. "And now, let's talk for a little while about the radio that is in your stateroom right now."

"Ah," Sally thought, with a sharp intake of breath, "now it is coming!"

"Of course, you realize, Miss Scott," he said, speaking low but distinctly, "that for the present and probably for a long time to come, your radio has value to the Navy only as a listening ear."

"No," she replied quite frankly. "I'm not sure of that. It works quite well as a sending set."

"In bringing such a radio on board you must have realized that you were laying yourself open to serious charges."

"Yes, of course."

"Then, why did you do it?" His words were spoken in a tone that betrayed only a kindly interest.

"Because I believed the radio to be a great invention, one that could be made to serve my country, and because I wanted to bring honor to a real friend."

"You did not really mean to try communicating with anyone on land?" he asked in a quiet tone.

"Only in case of a great emergency, and then only with an officer." Her voice was low.

"I can think of no emergency that would warrant the sending of such a message. The truth is that such a message would be almost certain to bring in one more sub wolf-pack to hunt us down.

"That is not all." He was still speaking in a low, friendly voice. "The moment our enemy realizes that we are able to listen in on his talk from sub to sub, that moment your radio loses its value. Think what it will mean if the escorting vessel in every convoy should be able in the future to listen as we did today while the wolf-pack moves in!"

"I-I have thought." Sally wet her dry lips. "I shall not attempt to contact anyone with my radio, unless you sanction it—not—" she swallowed hard, "not for anything."

"That is being a good sailor." Putting out a hand he said: "It will be a pleasure to shake the hand of a lady who does honor to the Navy." They shook hands solemnly.

When at last Sally and Nancy found themselves on the open deck once more, they were in prime condition for a long promenade.

"My head is in a whirl!" Nancy exclaimed. "How could all this happen to us?"

"We're just what Danny would call fools for kick," was Sally's reply.

And then, at the very mention of Danny, she felt an all but irrepressible desire to sink down on the deck. Danny too should have had a part in all this. And where was he now?

"The Captain was wonderful," she said to Nancy. "He must know how we feel about Danny."

"Of course he does. He knows we all worked together on the radio."

"And yet he never once mentioned Danny."

"Didn't he?"

"No, and I think that is about the most wonderful of all."

For a time after that they marched on in silence. In a shadowy corner they passed two other WAVES seated on a pile of canvas. It was too dark to distinguish their faces.

After passing beyond a ladder, they paused to watch the moon, a faint yellow ball, rolling through the fog that was thinning and blowing away.

Then they heard one of the other WAVES talking. "Know who those girls are?" she was saying. "They are the ladies of the day. Imagine!" Her laugh was not good to hear. "One of them worked in a radio shop. The other was a radio ham. Now they're the ladies of the day. And I gave up a five-thousand-a-year secretarial job to act as yeoman to Captain Mac Queen. Isn't war just wonderful?"

"Who is that girl?" Sally whispered, as she and Nancy hurried on.

"She's the Old Man's yeoman all right (secretary to you)," Nancy replied. "I recognized her voice."

"What's she got against us?" Sally asked in a puzzled voice.

"That's for her to know and for us to find out," said Nancy. "But she'll bear watching!"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

DANNY'S BUSY DAY

Before falling asleep that night Sally found two faces appearing and disappearing before her tired eyes. By drawing on her memory she had been able to recall the face of Erma Stone, the Skipper's secretary. Erma was tall and dark.

"Rather foreign-looking," she told herself. She dismissed the idea that she might really be a foreigner and, perhaps, a spy. Foreigners could not join the WAVES, and on such a mission as this all members would be chosen with great care.

"She's smart and has been successful," she thought. "For some reason she does not like Nancy and me. It may be pure jealousy because of the favors just shown us, or it may go much deeper than that. I'll be on my guard."

The second face that seemed to hang on the black wall of darkness was the smiling countenance of Danny.

If she was troubled about Danny, as indeed she was, she might well enough have put her mind to rest for, at the moment at least, Danny was doing very well indeed. He was fast asleep.

Never given much to worrying, he had munched some iron rations, then, as darkness fell, had spread his heavy coat over him and, using the side of the craft as a pillow, had drifted off to peaceful slumber.

His awakening was rude and startling. Something hard and wet, like a wadded-up dishrag, had struck him squarely in the face.

He came up fighting and clawing. One hand caught the damp and slimy thing. The thing bit his fingers but he hung on.

After dragging himself to a balanced position, he gave both hands to conquering the intruder.

"Feathers," he muttered. "A sea-bird. Food from the sea." At that he felt for the creature's neck, got one more bite from the iron-like beak, then put the wandering bird to rest with neatness and dispatch.

Hardly had he accomplished this, when, with all the force of a big league baseball, a second object struck him squarely in the chest. Completely bowled over, he barely avoided going overboard. This intruder escaped.

After searching about, he located a small flashlight. He started casting its gleams over the sea. All about him the black waters seemed alive.

"Birds!" he exclaimed. "Thousands of them!"

He had not exaggerated. A great host of sea parrots, beating the water with their tough little wings, were making their way south from their summer home.

Three more of them fell into his small boat and were added to his slender larder.

"I must make the most of everything," he told himself stoutly. "Men have lived for weeks on such a raft as this."

At that, after watching the last ugly little traveler pass, he once more drew his heavy coat over him and lay down to peaceful sleep.

Next morning Sally awoke with mingled feelings of joy, sorrow, and fear. She was glad that the secret radio had proved to be so great a boon. Old C. K. could die happy. He had achieved a great success and this would not go unrewarded.

She was sorry about Danny. She would miss him terribly. "It's not a case of love," she told herself almost fiercely, "We're just good pals, that's all." She did not believe in that word love. It could stand for so much and so little. A stuffy night on a dance floor—that, for some, was love. Men loved their ladies so well they killed them so no one else would get them. Bah! The word might as well be marked out of the dictionary. Perhaps the Old Man's yeoman thought she was in love with Danny. Who could tell?



Danny Watched the Last Little Traveler
Pass

It was this same yeoman, Erma Stone, who sent a shudder running through her being.

"I won't think of it!" She sprang from her berth to turn on the secret radio. Turning the dials, first this one, then that, for some time, she caught nothing.

"Subs are far away this morning," she reported to Riggs in the radio room, as she passed on her way for coffee, bacon, and toast.

"That's fine, Sally!" he beamed. "Keep up the good work. As long as the weather remains fair that secret radio of yours will be your assignment, yours and Nancy's. Don't sit over it all the time, but tune in for a few minutes every hour. We can't afford to take chances."

"Okay, Chief," was her cheerful reply.

"If the weather gets nasty, we may need your help," he added.

"It better stay fair." Her brow wrinkled. "Danny's out there somewhere."

"The storm gods don't care for Danny," he replied soberly. "Nor for any of the rest of us."

"Riggs," she said, coming close and speaking low, "do you know any reason why the Captain's yeoman should not like me?"

"Erma Stone? No, why? Doesn't she like you?"

"I'm afraid not."

"You never know about women." Riggs looked away. "If one gets a grouch on me I keep my eyes peeled, that's all."

"Thanks, Riggs. One thing more, do you think they will send a plane back to look for Danny?"

"No."

"Why?"

"We've come too far since then. Besides, a plane rising from our ship might catch the eye of some sub commander. That would be just too bad. This is a mighty important convoy."

Sally drank her coffee in a cloud of gray gloom. There was nothing she could do for Danny, absolutely nothing. But when she came out on the deck, the sun was shining brightly, gulls were sailing high and all seemed at peace. Since there was work to be done she snapped out of her blue mood and stepped into things in the usual manner.

That night, since the weather was still beautiful and no dangers appeared to threaten, the Captain authorized a dance for the fliers, the sailors off duty, the nurses, and the WAVES.

Some of the sailors had organized an orchestra of a sort, two fiddlers, two sax players, and a drummer.

To Sally this seemed to offer an hour of glorious relaxation. She loved dancing and did it very well, too. It seemed, however, that a whole flock of gremlins had joined the ship, just to disturb her peace of mind.

The Captain was on hand to lead off the first dance, and chose her as his partner.

She wanted to say: "Oh, Captain! Please! No!" But she dared not. So they led off the dance. It was a glorious waltz. The boys jazzed it a little. Still it was glorious.

The Old Man was a splendid dancer. She lost herself to the rhythm and swing of the music until, with a startling suddenness, her eyes met those of Erma Stone.

From the shock of that flashing look of hate she received such a jolt, that, had not the Skipper held her steady, she must have fallen to the floor.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Dizzy? I shouldn't wonder. You've been working rather hard and had a shock or two." That was as close as he would come to speaking of Danny.

"It's nothing!" Summoning all her will power, she pulled herself back into the swing. And so the dark siren was forgotten, but not for long.

Out on the wide open sea Danny had had a busy day. Where he was the sun came out bright and hot. After breakfast he began studying his watermaking machine, and, in due time, had water that was a little better than city water and not as good as that from the old oaken bucket on his uncle's farm.

After that he skinned and cleaned his birds. Then he sliced the meat thin and spread it out on the edge of the boat, where the sun shone hot, to dry.

"That will do for dinner tonight," he told himself. "If I only had a cookstove I'd get along fine."

He would want something for supper. Perhaps a fish would do.

After attaching a lure to his line he cast out into the deep. At the third cast a gray shadow followed his lure halfway in. Then, rising to the surface, it thrust out a fin like a plowshare.

"Huh!" He hauled in his line. "Seems to me this isn't Friday after all." He thought what would happen if that shark threw one flipper over the side of his raft.

"It's always something, but it ain't never nothin'," he murmured.

Setting his coat up as a shade, he lay down to avoid the sun. And there with the raft lifting and falling beneath him, he fell to musing on the width of the ocean, the number of ships passing that way, and the probability of a storm.

In the midst of this his eye caught a sudden gleam of light. A dark cloud was rolling along the horizon and from it came an ominous roar.

Apparently Danny need no longer wonder about the probability of a storm. The flash of lightning which had attracted his attention, together with the rolling thunder which accompanied it, made a squall, at any rate, a distinct possibility.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE DARK SIREN

"Watch out for that dark-faced siren."

It was Danny's flying pal who spoke. The dance was still on and he, Fred Angel, was dancing with Sally.

"You mean the Captain's yeoman?" she suggested.

"Sure I do. While you were dancing with him, she looked as if she'd like to murder you."

"Fred, why doesn't she like me?"

"Can't you guess?" He grinned.

"I might try, but I'd probably be wrong."

"She thinks her boss is sweet on you."

"Fred! That's ridiculous! He's been good to me because I've been lucky enough to help out."

"Sure! That's it," he agreed.

"He's interested in just one thing, the same as the rest of us, helping to bring this terrible war to an end."

"The thing that most of us are interested in," Fred corrected her. "Some people never get their minds off themselves for long. Miss Stone is like that. You never worked in a large organization, did you, where there were a lot of really big shots?"

"No. I'm a small town girl."

"That's where you were lucky. Me, I worked with a big city outfit and I saw a lot of private secretaries like Erma Stone."

"Were they all like her?"

"Most of them were, the very successful ones. They work like slaves, do the boss's work as well as their own. By and by they get to thinking they own the boss. Erma is like that."

"And she thinks I'm trying to steal her property? That's absurd!" Sally laughed.

"That's just part of it. Erma is a two-timer. She has got to like Danny pretty well, too."

"You don't blame her, do you?" Sally spoke with feeling.

"Not a bit. Danny's one of the swellest guys I've ever known. He got a real break last trip, sank a sub all by himself, and the rest of us never even got a look-in," Fred replied with enthusiasm.

"So Erma set a trap to catch him, too?" Sally asked.

"That's what she did. And now, well, you know the answer from the books you have read. Keep an eye on her, Sally. She'll get to you sooner or later. She may beat your time with the Old Man, but never with Danny, for you're in solid there—"

"Danny," she whispered, swallowing hard. "We may never see him again."

"There's a chance there, but I'm betting on Danny!"

The dance was at an end.

"I'll keep my eyes open," she whispered. "Fred," her voice was low and tense—they were walking slowly toward her post of duty, "will we go back the way we came?"

"No one knows that."

"But do you think we will?" she insisted.

He knew she was still thinking of Danny and wanted to help her, but lies, he knew, never help. "Well, yes," he spoke slowly, "the Old Man will return this way for he never forgets his boys. Grand old boy, Captain MacQueen is."

"Thanks, Fred. That really helps a lot. And, Fred," they were at the door of the radio cabin, "if you are sent out to search for Danny on the way back, will you take me along?"

"Well, now that—" he pondered, "yes, I will, if I can, I'll even let you stow away."

"Stowaway. That's a lovely word," she laughed. "Shake. It's a date." With a hearty handclasp, they parted.

That night Sally insisted on taking a two-hour shift with Riggs, blinking out her messages to the ships of the convoy.

"I want to do something besides sitting and listening for trouble," she told him.

Truth was, a great loneliness had come sweeping over her. Perhaps the dance had done that. Certainly it had brought back memories of other times. Gay days at high school when she joined in the school hops which had not been so grand but had for all that given her a feeling of buoyant youth. There had been times too when, out with her father on a fishing trip, she had fallen in with a jolly crowd and had danced by the light of a campfire.

Now that the ship's dance was over, and she stood looking at the endless black waters rolling by,

she felt very blue. But the instant the blinker was in her hands and bright little messages came to her out of the night, loneliness fled.

"We're a big family," she said to Riggs.

"A family of ships," he agreed.

"And on those ships are enough people to populate a town as large as the one where I was raised."

"Quite a young city," he agreed.

"But it seems so sad that they should all be carried away from their home towns."



Sally Stood Looking at the Endless
Black Waters

"Some of them got pretty tired of the old home town," he mused. "But, boy! Won't they be happy when they get a chance to go back!"

"I hope it may be soon."

Riggs was a fine fellow. Sally liked him a lot.

"Riggs," she said, "if I get into trouble, really serious trouble, I'll come to you first thing."

"You do just that, Sally." He put a hand on her shoulder. "You just spill it all to old Riggs. He'll pull you out of it or die in the attempt."

"Thanks, Riggs. I feel so much better."

"It's the dance that did that," he slowly insisted. "Really there must be some change in our lives or we break. The Old Man knows that. Great old fellow, the Captain."

Sally and Nancy worked out a schedule all their own. Four hours on and four off, day and night, turn and turn about, they stayed by the secret radio.

"It seems such a simple thing to do!" Nancy exclaimed, after a full twenty-four hours of it.

"Yes, I know," Sally agreed. "Nothing ever happens. I hear a little 'put-put-put-put-a-put' now and then—"

"Sure! So do I but it sounds far away. The subs seem close together so they can't be near—"

"So we just set the dials and sit and listen, and wait. But just think what has already happened and may happen again!"

"Yes. We stopped them. Stopped them dead. Ships and lives would have been lost."

"And so we must stick to our post for it may happen all over again."

In the quiet days that followed there was an hour of dancing every night. These were hours of real joy for Sally. The Captain, apparently considering that he had shown her all due courtesy, seldom asked for a dance. This left her free to enjoy Fred and his fellow fliers. Erma Stone seemed to have forgotten her, but this, she told herself, was only a lull before another storm.

One night while she stood by the rail, watching the black waters roll by and thinking gloomy

thoughts, she suddenly found the Captain at her side.

"I just wanted to tell you, Sally," there was a mellow tone in his voice, "that I haven't forgotten Danny. I shall never forget him. He was one of my finest. I am hoping our paths may cross yet."

"How—how can they?" she asked huskily.

"We are taking this convoy to a certain port in England. There it will be split up into smaller groups and convoyed by other fighting ships to other ports."

"That leaves us free?" There was a glad ring in her voice.

"Yes. We will follow the same course back. We have the spot where Danny was lost marked on the chart and have a record of currents and winds that may carry him off our course."

"Then you really think there is a chance?"

"Most certainly, a real chance. We shall send out planes and scour the sea."

"What a pity it could not have been done the hour he was lost."

"The battle was still on, then came the fog. After that we were far away and this great convoy hung on our shoulders like a crushing weight." The Skipper sounded old and very tired. "It's war, Sally. War! God grant that it may soon be at an end."

As she returned to her cabin after this talk she had with the Captain she ran upon Danny's mother. She had seen her several times of late, but they had never spoken of Danny. Now she had something cheery to tell.

"Come in, Mrs. Duke," she invited. "I'll make a cup of hot chocolate on my electric plate, and we'll have a talk."

When the cocoa had been poured steaming hot, she said: "I had a talk with the Captain."

"Was it about Danny?" Mrs. Duke smiled knowingly.

"Yes, who else?" Sally smiled back.

"Danny's all right, that is, up to now."

Sally did not ask how she knew. That would have been questioning a mother's faith.

"And he's going to be all right," Sally replied cheerfully. "The Captain says we are to turn right back the moment we reach England, and that we'll have a look for Danny."

"That's fine. Really, the Captain is a great and grand man." Mrs. Duke was warm in her praise.

Sally told all she knew. Danny's mother beamed her gratitude. But as she rose to go, a wrinkle came to her brow. "It's going to storm," she said. "I feel it in my bones."

Sally didn't say: "That will be bad for Danny." She said nothing at all, just watched the older woman as she walked out into the night.

Those had been strange, hard days for Danny. He was not long in learning that there is nothing so lonely as an empty sea. "If I get out of this alive," he told himself, "I'll always carry some book with thin pages and lots of reading, a Bible, a volume of Shakespeare, just anything."

His threatened storm turned into a gentle shower. Spreading out his coat, he caught a quart of water and poured it into a rubber bottle. The supply of water that could be produced by his still, he knew, was limited, and this might be a long journey.

That he was slowly going somewhere, he knew well enough. Winds and currents would see to that. Perhaps he would in time come to land. What land? Some wild, uninhabited island, a friendly shore, or beneath an enemy's frowning fortifications? He shuddered at the thought.

At times he tried reciting poetry. One verse amused him:

"'This is the ship of pearl, which poets feign, sails the unshadowed main.' It's a rubber ship," he told himself, "but why quibble over small details?"

As he recalled the poem it ended something like this:

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new'—(new what? Well, skip it!—)
'Shut thee from Heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.'

"That's a fine idea," he thought, "if I could make this rubber raft grow. But I can't, so I'd better catch me a fish."

The sharks were gone. His fishing on that day met with marvelous success. After a terrific struggle in which his boat was all but capsized a dozen times, he succeeded in landing a twenty-pound king salmon.

"Boy, oh, boy!" he exclaimed. "How did you get way out here?"

That was not an important question. After cutting off the salmon's head, he sliced the rich, red steaks into strips and set them drying along the sides of his boat.

“Take, eat, and be content,” he quoted. “These fishes in your stead were sent by him who sent the tangled ram, to spare the child of Abraham.”

He didn't know what that was all about, but it did somehow seem to fit his case, so he liked it.

One evening his sea was visited by one more flight of small birds with big, ugly heads. By one device and another he captured six of these. Five went into his larder but the sixth being young-appearing and innocent got a new lease on life. He tied it to the boat by a string. At first his pet objected strenuously, but in the end he settled down to a diet of dried salmon meat and was content to sit by the hour perched on the side of Danny's boat. He looked like a parrot but, try as he might, Danny could not make him talk.

And then this young “ancient mariner” was visited by both hope and despair. A lone boat appeared on the horizon. It remained there for hours, at last came much closer, and then was swallowed up by a great bank of clouds rolling over the surface of the sea.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LITTLE SHEPHERDESS OF THE BIG SHIPS

That same night, after dreaming of being in the old garden swing beneath the apple tree at home, and of swinging higher and higher until the swing broke, letting her down on her head, Sally awoke to find herself standing first on her feet and then on her head.

"Something is terribly wrong," she thought, still half asleep. "Where am I? What is happening?"

Just then her head did bump the boards at the head of her berth and she knew. She was still aboard the aircraft carrier. A terrific storm had set the top-heavy craft to doing nose dives and near somersaults.

"I suppose I should be seasick," she told herself, "but I am not, not a bit. The Lord be praised for that."

Just then her ears caught a low moan.

"Nancy!" she exclaimed, springing out of bed. "What's happened?"

"No-nothing. Every-every thing," was the faltering answer. "Oh! Sally, I do wish I could die on land."

"Nonsense!" Sally exclaimed. "You won't die. You're seasick, that's all. I've got some Lea and Perrins Sauce in my bag. It's swell for seasickness, they say. Wait, I'll get you some."

"I'll wait."

After downing the red-hot pepper sauce, Nancy felt a little better, but hid her face in her pillow and refused to move.

Sally had left her three hours before listening in at the secret radio. Now she herself took a turn at listening. After a half hour of absolute radio silence she dragged the headset off her ears, rolled the radio in her blankets, drew on a raincoat, then slipped out into the storm.

Slipped was exactly the right word. The instant she was outside the wind took her off her feet. She went down with a slithering rush and slid fifteen feet to come up at last against a bulkhead.

"It must be storming," she said to a sailor who volunteered to help her to her feet.

"I-I shouldn't wonder," he laughed, just as they went down in a heap.

"Guess this is a good place to crawl," he suggested, setting the example. "The wind comes through here something fierce. Not-not so bad up there for-forward."



A Sailor Helped Sally to Her Feet

Following his example, Sally crept on hands and knees to a more sheltered spot. Then, getting to their feet and gripping hands, they made a dash for it.

At the end of this wild race they were caught by one more mad rush of wind and piled up against the radio cabin door. Sally was on top.

"This," she said, "is where I get off. Thanks. Thanks a lot."

She pushed the door open, allowed herself to be blown in, then closed the door in the face of the gale.

"Do you think it will storm?" she asked Riggs who was there alone.

"It might at that," he grumbled. He looked just terrible, Sally thought.

"Good grief, Sally!" he exploded. "Aren't you seasick?"

"Not a bit," she laughed. "At least, not yet."

"You won't be then. Thank God for that. How about taking over? I'm about through for now."

"I'll be glad to, Riggs."

"We've had to give up blinker signals. It's so dark you couldn't see a ten-thousand watt searchlight. Besides, the ships go up and down so you'd never get their messages. But we've got to keep in touch with every blasted ship in the convoy. Get lost if we didn't, bang into one another, and sink everything."

"Yes, I know, Riggs."

"We've given up radio silence, had to. Anyway, no sub pack would attack in this howling hurricane. We use sound and radio, to keep the ships together."

"Yes, I know," she replied quietly.

"Oh! You do? Then you tell me." Even Riggs got a little peeved at times, when these lady sailors tried to tell him.

"All right, here goes. Every two minutes you give the call number of some ship in the convoy on the radio and then—"

"Then you—" he began.

"Who's telling this?" she demanded.

"Okay, Sally, okay!" Riggs laughed in spite of himself.

"You give a toot on the ship's whistle," Sally continued. "At the same time you send out a radio impulse. The radio sound reaches the ship instantly. The sound of the whistle is slower. The signal man on that other boat notes the difference between the time of arrival of radio impulse and whistle. He does a little figuring, then he radios his approximate position in relation to your ship. After that you tell him to move so far this way and that. Then everything is hunky-dory until next time." Sally caught her breath.

"Say, you know all the answers!" He laughed.

"Not all, but some of them," she corrected. "You don't have to be dumb all the time, even if you are a girl."

"Guess that's right. Well, now, go to it." Riggs threw himself down on a long seat that ran the length of the room, and Sally took up her work.

For a full hour the ship's whistle spoke and the radio joined in. Sally was there at the center of it all and enjoyed it immensely.

The tanker at the back of the convoy and to the right was slipping behind. She advised them to shovel more coal. The English packet was crowding its mate to the right. She shoved it out to sea. The big, one-time ocean liner, now a transport, laden with boys in khaki, was straying and might get itself lost. She called it in a few boat-lengths. The three liberty ships were getting too chummy with one another. She spread them apart.

At the end of the hour she glanced at the long seat. Riggs was gone. She was alone with the ships and the storm. With a little gasp, she returned to her duties.

When she made the rounds of the ships for the second time the other radiomen began to notice her.

"Say! You're all right!" the man on the big transport exclaimed over the radio. "You're all right, but you sound like a lady. Are you?"

"No chance," was the snapping answer, "only a WAVE."

"What do you know about that?"

"Hello, Sally!" came from a liberty ship. "How are you? I saw your picture in a movie!"

"You didn't!" she exploded.

"Come on over and I'll show it to you!" he jibed.

"Can't just now. I'm busy." She cut him off.

At the end of two hours Danny's mother appeared with sandwiches and hot coffee. "Thought I'd find you here," was her quiet comment. "So you're the little shepherdess of the big ships." Sally joined her in the laugh that followed. Never a word was said about Danny, nor would there be.

"Have you seen Nancy?" Sally asked.

"Oh yes. Don't you worry about her. I fixed her up just fine."

"And Riggs?"

"Yes, Riggs, too. He said to tell you he'd take over any time you sent for him."

"I'm doing fine, I guess," Sally smiled. "And I'm enjoying it no end."

"But what about Lieutenant Tobin?" Sally asked. "The second radioman."

"Oh, he's sick too but he said he'd drag himself around soon."

Lieutenant Tobin lurched into the cabin a few moments later. Very unsteady on his feet but fighting to keep up his spirits, he said:

"Nice storm, Sally. I never saw a better one. I'll take over now."

"Thanks, Lieutenant. Just send for me any time. Storms don't mean much to me."

"Lucky girl. Wish I was like that."

Sally returned to her quarters, looked to Nancy's comfort, then crept under the blankets.

It seemed to her that she had only just fallen asleep, when a sailor pounded on her door.

"Lieutenant Tobin's busted two ribs," he announced. "He got slammed against a stanchion. Lieutenant Riggs requests that you take over."

"I'll be there in no time." Again she hurried into her clothes.

"I'm sorry, Sally." Riggs seemed shaken by the very violence of the storm.

"That's all right. I love it." She managed a smile.

"Got to see that Tobin has proper care. Tried to get to the rail, well—you know why. A big wave slammed him hard. It's terrible, this storm is. I'll relieve you later." Riggs went away. Sally settled back in her place.

Never before had Sally experienced such a sense of power. She held many great ships and thousands of lives in the hollow of her hand. "Some of them know I'm a girl. Some even know who I am, and yet they trust me." The thought made her feel warm inside.

"It's worth the whole cost, just this," she told herself. The whole cost? Yes, giving up her work with old C. K., bidding good-by to her family and friends. It was worth all that and more.

But Danny! If she had lost him forever? She dared not think of Danny. The very thought would unnerve her. Her work would suffer. She might make some terrible blunder.

"One increasing purpose," a very good man had said to her. "That's what we need in these terrible hours."

One increasing purpose. That was what she must have in this hour of trial.

Riggs returned. Sitting down dizzily, he watched and listened for a time. Then, leaning back, he seemed to go into a sort of coma.

At the end of four hours, he came out of this, pushed her aside, mumbled, "Go get some rest," then took over.

After fighting her way down the deck, she tumbled into her stateroom, banged the door shut, shoved the secret radio into a corner, rolled the blankets about her and fell fast asleep.

Three hours later she was once more at her post.

"I-I'll be here if you need me." Riggs threw himself on the hard seat and was soon fast asleep.

An hour later the Skipper looked in upon her.

"How are they coming?" he asked, closing the door without a bang.

"All right, I guess." Sally nodded to a sort of peg-board map that indicated the location of each ship in the convoy at any particular moment.

He studied the map for a time in silence. "That's fine," was his comment. "Really first class."

"How's your yeoman?" she asked. There was a twinkle in her eye.

His eyes returned the twinkle. "She hasn't bothered me for quite a time. She's under the weather, I suspect."

He looked at Riggs with a questioning eye.

"He's all right," she hastened to assure him. "Doing all he can."

"It's a terrible storm, worst I've ever seen in these waters. I'm having ropes strung along the ship. You'd better stick to them pretty closely. We can't afford to lose you." Then he was gone.

His visit had made her happy. It is something when a really big man says, "We can't afford to lose you." Well, they wouldn't lose her nor even have occasion to miss her for long at a time.

The storm roared on. Boats pitched and tossed. The English packet had its rigging blown away. The tanker reported a damaged rudder and a destroyer went to her aid.

Day dawned at last and they began using flags for signals. With very little rest, buried in heavy sweaters and slicker, Sally stood like a ship's figure-head on the tower and signaled all day long.

Once Nancy came to take her place. She lasted for an hour.

"It-it's not that I can't take-it." Nancy was ready to cry when Sally relieved her. "It's this terrible seasickness."

"Yes, I know. Just forget it. The storm will be over before you know it."

It wasn't over when Sally went for a few hours of rest, but the clouds were gone, the moon was out, and because of possible submarine menace, they had gone back to blinker signals.

At ten she was at her new post blinking signals. Time and again, as the hours passed, waves sent their spray dashing over her. When at last she was relieved, she was half frozen and soaked to the skin.

To her surprise, when she reached her cabin, she found the door swinging.

"What now?" she whispered. Nancy, she knew, had been removed to the sick bay where Mrs. Duke could look after her.

As she bounced into the room, slamming the door after her, she surprised a tall figure bending over her secret radio.

The instant she saw the girl's face, she gasped. It was Erma Stone, the Captain's yeoman. Her face was a sight to behold. She had been sick, all right.

"Perhaps she's delirious," Sally thought.

The instant she caught the look of hate and cunning in the girl's eyes, she knew this guess was wrong.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"I was sent here to make sure you had not been sending messages on this radio." Miss Stone stood her ground.

"How would you know whether I had or not?" Sally demanded.

"I would—"

"You were not sent here!" Sally was rapidly getting in beyond her depths. "You came of your own accord. Why? I don't know. But I'll know why you left!" She took a step forward.

Dodging past her, the girl threw the door open and was gone.

"She was going to send a message," Sally told herself. "Then I'd get the blame. She couldn't do that. There is no one to listen at this hour of the night. She—"

Sally's thoughts broke off short. Yes, someone might be listening. The enemy subs; and if they heard, all her secrets would be out.

Had the girl succeeded in sending a message? She doubted that, for this was a secret radio in more ways than one.

A brief study of the radio assured her that no messages could have been sent.

After making sure of this, she snapped on her headset to sit listening for a half hour. She caught again that "put-put-put." It seemed nearer now. Tomorrow she and Nancy should get back to this secret radio.

At that she dragged off her sodden garments, rubbed herself dry, drew on a heavy suit of pajamas, then rolled up in her blankets. Soon she was fast asleep. And the storm roared on.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE SECRET RADIO WINS AGAIN

When Sally awoke, hours later, the sun was shining. Great billowing waves with no foam on their crests were rolling their ship up and down. The worst of the storm was over.

Looking like a ghost, Riggs crawled out of his hole to resume his duties. Even Nancy was back to her old, normal self.

"You take it nice and easy, Sally," was Riggs's advice. "You've done a swell job and deserve a rest."

After drinking her coffee and eating toast and oatmeal at a real mess table, Sally felt swell. She took a turn or two along the deck, then climbed the ladder to the flight deck. There she came across Fred.

"Quite some storm," he grinned. "We had a heck of a time keeping the planes from taking off all by themselves. But say!" His face sobered. "What about Danny? What do you know about him out there on a rubber raft?"

"I don't know a thing, and I try not to think about it," was her solemn reply.

"Oh, well, some ship may have picked him up. And then, again, this storm might not even have gone his way." Fred was a cheerful soul.

Sally went back to the lower deck. In her own stateroom, she hooked up the secret radio, then lay propped up in her berth listening.

Almost at once she caught a low "put-put-put." "Still far away," she murmured.

For three hours she lay there turning dials, listening, then turning more dials. Now and then she dozed off into a cat nap. But not for long. She was disturbed. Each passing hour found the "put-puts" coming in stronger. There was one particular broadcaster whose code messages fairly rang in her ears.

By working on her record of messages and her German dictionary, she was able to tell that this particular broadcaster was directing the course of several other subs.

"They must be subs," she told herself. "And such a lot of them! Twelve or fourteen. And they are coming this way."

What did it mean? Had one or two of the enemy subs from that other pack escaped? Had they joined another larger wolf-pack and were they all coming in to attack?

She took all these questions to the Captain's cabin. She found the "siren" at her typewriter, but ignored her. When she had made her report to the Captain, he said:

"Our radio was going yesterday. That was unavoidable. We may be attacked. How soon do you think it may come?"

"They seem quite a distance away. It may be several hours yet," Sally replied thoughtfully.

"Several hours? I hope so. By that time we shall be in waters that are within striking distance of powerful land-based planes in England. When we're sure the attack is to be made we'll radio for aid. Those big planes will blast the subs from the sea!"

"But do you think they will come right in as they did before—the subs, I mean?" Sally asked.

"Why not?" he asked, seeming a little surprised.

"Perhaps they have been warned. They may try some new trick," Sally suggested.

"It's hard to imagine what that might be. Certainly they can't sink our ships without coming in where we are. Keep a sharp watch. Stick to that radio of yours and report to Riggs every hour."

Sally returned to her cabin with grave misgiving. That the enemy would repeat the performance of that other day seemed improbable. There was, of course, a fair chance that they did not know of the catastrophe that had befallen that other sub pack.

"It seems to me that we have had enough for one trip," Nancy said when Sally told her what was happening.

"In war no one ever has enough trouble," was Sally's sober reply. "There is no such word as enough in the war god's dictionary. It is always more and more and more. I've heard that we're losing two hundred ships a month. No one seems to know for sure. One thing is certain, *we* haven't lost any and we're about two days from England."

It did seem, after an hour had passed, and then another, that this sub pack was going to do just as the other had done. As Sally listened, turned dials, and waited, the broadcasters on the enemy subs began to fan out. After that, with a slow movement that was ominous, they began to surround the convoy. After the circle had been completed they started moving in.

It was the hour before sunset when she hurried to the radio room.

"Rig-Riggs!" She was stammering in her excitement. "They are all around us!"

"How close?" He blinked tired eyes.

"There's no way to know that," she replied cautiously.

"They'll attack at dusk. Always do. You can't see the wake of their periscopes so well then."

"Don't you think we should send for the big planes from the mainland?" she asked.

"It may be too soon. We want them to arrive at what you might call the psychological moment. Wait. I'll ask the Skipper."

He called the Captain on the ship's phone, then stated his problem.

"You don't think so?" he spoke into the phone. "I thought that might be best, sir."

"Yes, sir, all the men are at battle stations now. I'll wait, sir." He hung up.

"The Skipper says to wait," he explained "He—"

He broke off short for at that moment the lookout sang out:

"A sub off the port side."

"Sub—sub off the port side," came echoing back.

At once there came the sound of running feet, of guns swung to position, and more shouts: "Subs! Subs!"

Sally dashed to the rail. Just what she meant to do, she did not know. At any rate, it was never done for, at that instant, a gun roared and in three split seconds a shell crashed into the radio cabin.

"Torpedo!" a voice shouted.

"Hard to port! Hard to port!" the man on the bridge roared.

With a sense of doom Sally saw the radio cabin smashed, then saw a torpedo leave the sub. Fascinated, terrified, she watched it come. It seemed alive. It played like a porpoise. First it was in the air above the water, then beneath the water.

With sudden terror, she realized that the torpedo would strike the ship directly beneath her. The order to turn the ship had come too late.

"And when it does strike!" Her knees trembled. For the first time in her life, she was paralyzed with fear.

The torpedo came on rapidly. Now it was fifty feet away, forty, thirty. It dove beneath the water, rose sharply, sped through the air, and—

Shaking herself into action, Sally turned and ran. Headed for the opposite side of the ship she was all prepared for a terrific roar accompanied by the sound of rending and crashing of timbers. But none came.

Racing headlong, she banged into the gunwale on the opposite side, to stand there panting.

Suddenly she rubbed her eyes, then looked at the sea. "It's gone," she murmured. "The torpedo is going away. It must have plunged low and gone under the ship."

Her instant of relief was cut short by the realization that there were other torpedoes and shells, that the battle had just begun and that a shell had gone through their radio cabin.

"Riggs!" she cried. "Riggs was in that cabin!"

She reached the radio door just as two sailors carried Riggs out. His face was terribly white.

Asking no questions, she brushed past them and into the cabin. With Tobin and Riggs gone, she must carry on.

A look at the radio gave her a sense of relief. It had not been damaged. She tested it and her heart sank.

"Dead!" she murmured. Then: "It's the power wires. They've been cut."

One moment for inspection and she was gripping a hatchet, cutting away a varnished panel that hid the wires.

Finding rubber gloves, tape, pliers, and a coil of wire, she set about the business of repairing the wires.

"Every second counts," she told herself. "Those bombers from the mainland must be called."

The wires had been connected; she was just testing out the radio when the Skipper bounded into the cabin.

"The radio!" he exclaimed. "Can it be repaired?"

"It has been repaired. It's working!" she replied, straightening up.



Sally Saw Two Sailors Carry Riggs Out

"Working. Thank God! Call this—one—seven—three—seven. Repeat it in code, three times."

She put in the call. Then they waited. Suddenly, the radio began to snap.

"That's their answer," she said quietly.

"Tell them to send bombers. We're being attacked by subs, this position." He laid a paper before her.

She set the accelerator talking.

Again they waited.

Again came the snap-snap of code.

"Repeat," she wired back.

The message was repeated. "Okay," she wired. "They're sending twenty bombers," she said quietly.

"Good! What about Riggs?" the Captain asked.

"I wasn't here. They carried him out," said Sally.

"And Tobin?"

"He has two broken ribs," was the quiet reply.

"I'll send you a young second lieutenant. He knows radio."

"We—we'll make out." Sally hated herself for stammering.

"Good!" He was gone.

Had the enemy gun crew had their way, Sally would by this time have been among the missing. But, thanks to the timely warning, all the men of the aircraft carrier had been at their posts when the sub appeared on the surface.

The instant the sub poked its snout out of the water the long noses of five-inch guns were being trained on it. The first enemy shot had crashed into the radio cabin, but every other shot went wild. One went singing over Sally's head and another cut a stanchion not ten feet from where she stood, but she had worked on.

More and more guns were trained on the sub. A colored crew chanted: "'Mm, I got shoes, you got shoes, all God's chillun got shoes."

"Bang! Pass up another shell, brother. That un wrecked the conning tower. 'Ummm, I got shoes, you got shoes—"

Bang! One split second passed and there came a terrific explosion. The sub had blown up.

By this time the enemy's plan was plain to see. This sub had been sent in to wreck the ship's radio at once, then to sink her at their leisure. It would be impossible this way for the carrier to summon aid from land planes. It was true that this task might have been taken over by a cargo ship or a destroyer but before these ships could know of the need, it would be too late.

With the threat to his ship removed, the Captain ordered his planes off on a search for the

remainder of the wolf-pack.

With a strange feeling at the pit of her stomach, Sally heard them take off one after the other.

"Fred and all his comrades," she whispered. "What will the score be now?"

A youthful face appeared at the door. "I'm Second Lieutenant Burns," said the boy. "I was sent to pinch-hit on the radio."

"That's fine!" Sally gave him her best smile. "You just look things over. If you want to give me a few moments off, it will be a blessing straight from Heaven."

"Things happen pretty fast." He smiled back at her.

"Too fast." She was rocking a little on her feet.

"You were lucky at that." He grinned. "I watched those shots. If it hadn't been for that singing gun crew, one of those shells would have blown this cabin sky high."

"But it didn't." Sally felt a little sick. "I'll just get back to my secret radio for a moment," she said.

"Okay, I'll take over." He settled down in his place.

The messages she picked up on her radio were a jumble of sounds. Every broadcaster of the enemy subs was trying to talk to every other.

"We got their leader!" she thought as her heart gave a triumphant leap. "Now they're all looking for orders and getting none."

Her hope for a quick and easy victory over this new and more powerful sub pack was soon dashed to the ground. In a very short time there came into the enemy broadcasts a firmer and more confident note.

"Oh!" Sally exclaimed. "Some other sub commander has taken charge of the pack! Now there will be a real fight."

Soon enough the fliers who went out to the attack found this to be true. Warned, no doubt, by the experience of that other sub pack, these subs came in with only their periscopes showing. Fred, who carried a radioman who was also a gunner in his two-seated plane, searched the sea in vain for a full fifteen minutes. Then suddenly he caught over his radio a call for help from one of the tankers.

"We're about to be attacked," was the terse message.

Only twenty seconds from that very tanker, Fred swung sharply about, barked an order to his gunner, then moved in.

"There's the sub!" the gunner shouted. "Over to the left."

Sighting his target, Fred swung wide and low. Aiming at the white wake of the sub's periscope he let go a depth bomb. It was a near hit and brought the sub to the surface but it seemed to the young flier that she came up shooting; at least, by the time they had swung back, the sub's gun was barking.

"Hang onto your shirt," Fred called to his gunner. "Get ready to mow 'em down, we're dropping in on them." At that he shot straight down two thousand feet, leveled off with a wide swoop, then sent a murderous hail of machine-gun bullets sweeping across the sub's crowded deck. As they passed on, his gunner sent one more wild burst tearing at them.

On the sub men went down in rows. The sea was dotted by their struggling forms. Those who remained crowded down the conning tower. Then the sub crash-dived. For the time, at least, the tanker and its priceless cargo were saved.

But now there came a call from the big transport which carried a thousand men in khaki on its crowded decks. She too was about to be attacked. Sally, standing on the tower, watching, ready to blink signals, caught the message but could do nothing. The small English packet, the *Orissa*, also caught the message. Small as she was, and armed with but one gun, she moved swiftly in, cutting off the sub's line of attack on the big transport.

As if angered, by this interference, the sub commander brought his sub to the surface, prepared to finish off the small ship with gunfire. But two can play with firearms. The packet carried a gun crew that had done service on many seas. The foam was hardly off the sub when a shell from the *Orissa* blasted off one side of the sub's conning tower. The shot was returned but without great harm. One more shot from the *Orissa's* plucky gunners and the sub's gun was out of commission. Perhaps, after this beating, the sub's commander planned to submerge and leave the scene of action. Whatever his plans might have been, they were never carried out, for a fighter from the aircraft carrier that had come to the rescue swung low to place a bomb squarely on the sub's deck. The *Orissa* was showered with bits of broken steel as the sub blew up with a great roar.

This was a good start but there were many subs, some of them very large. Without doubt they had received orders to get that convoy at any cost, for they kept coming in.

Fred and his partner, still scouring the sea, discovered a sub slipping up on one of the liberty ships. Swinging low they scored a near hit with a bomb. The sub's periscope vanished. Was it a hit? They could not tell. One more miss and they were soaring back to their own deck for a fresh cargo of death.

Seeing them coming in, Sally handed her blinker to Nancy and raced down to find out how things were going.

"It's bad enough," was Fred's instant response. "We've lost one plane to AA fire but the pilot bailed out and was picked up by a destroyer. A sub scored a hit on one of the liberty ships but it is all shored up and holding its own. If only those big bombers from England would come!" His brow wrinkled.

"Well, I'll be seein' you." He climbed into his plane and was once more in the air.

"If only those big bombers would come!" Sally echoed his words as she returned to the tower.

Now, once again, a large sub, apparently assigned to the task, slipped in close to the aircraft carrier, and life on board became tense indeed. Two additional airplanes were thrown into the battle. One of these brought the sub to the surface with a depth charge. Sally drew in a deep breath as she saw the sub's size. "Big as a regular ship," she murmured to herself.

"And twice as dangerous," said the young lieutenant who stood at her side.

The truth of this was not long in proving itself, for suddenly a shell went screaming past them and a second tore bits of the tower away.

But the sub was not having things all her own way. A daring young flier swooped low to pour a deadly fire across her bow. For a moment her guns were silenced, but no longer. This time she directed her fire skyward and with deadly effect. A fighter, some three thousand feet in the air, was hit and all but cut in two.

"Oh!" Sally exclaimed. "They got that plane." She knew the plane and the boys who flew her. Now her eyes were glued on the sky. Her lips parted with a sigh of relief as a parachute blossomed in the sky. But where was the other one? It never blossomed. The plane came hurtling down to vanish instantly.

"If only those big bombers would come!" Sally's cry was one of anguish. She could not stand seeing those fine boys go down to death.

Another shell sped across their deck. At the same time there came again the cry, "Torpedo off the port bow."

Once more, with terror in her eyes, Sally watched a torpedo speed toward the broad side of their ship. This time it seemed it could not miss. But again came that strange hum, as the gun crew began to sing, "I got shoes, you got shoes."

There was a splash close to the speeding torpedo, and another and yet another. It seemed impossible that any gun could fire so fast. And then an explosion rocked the ship. What had happened? Sally had looked away for the moment.

"That's some gun crew," the lieutenant exclaimed. "They just blew that torpedo out of the water."

"Wonderful!" Sally exclaimed. "All the same, this can't last. There are too many of those subs. I do wish the big bombers would come."

As if in answer to her prayer, there came a great rumbling in the clouds that hung high over them in the evening sky and suddenly, as if it had seen all and had been sent to deliver them from the giant sub, a four-motored bomber came sweeping down. As Sally watched, breathless, she saw a dozen white spots emerge from the big bomber and come shooting down. It was strange. At first they seemed a child's toy. Then they were like large arrows with no shafts, just heads and feathered ends. And then they were a line of bombs speeding toward their target. She watched, eyes wide, lips parted, as they hit the sea. The first one fell short, and the second, and third and then once more there was a roar.

"A direct hit!" the young lieutenant shouted. "That does it."

When the smoke and spray had drifted away, Sally saw the giant sub standing on one end. Then, as the last rays of the setting sun gilded it with a sort of false glory, the sub slowly sank from sight.

"Oh!" Sally breathed. "How grand!" For all that there was a sinking feeling at the pit of her stomach. The men on that sub too were human, and some were very young.



They Watched Breathlessly as the Bomb Struck

Suddenly the sky was full of giant bombers and the air noisy with the shouts of thousands of voices welcoming the deliverers.

"Here," Sally handed the blinker to Nancy, "take this. I've just thought of something that needs doing." At that she sped away.

A moment later Sally was in her stateroom listening to the secret radio. The question uppermost in her mind at that moment was: How will the enemy subs take this new turn in the battle? She had the answer very soon; they were not taking it. At first there came a series of hurried and more or less jumbled messages from very close in. After that the enemy radio messages settled down and were spaced farther apart. Each new burst of "put-puts" came in more faintly, which meant that the subs were withdrawing.

When at last she was sure that, for the time, the fight was over, she hurried to the Captain's cabin.

"The subs have withdrawn," she announced.

"Good!" the Captain exclaimed. "How far? Are they still withdrawing?"

"That's hard to tell," Sally replied cautiously.

"They'll withdraw for now," he prophesied, "and come back to the attack at dawn. Their theory will be that the big bombers will have to return to their land bases."

"Which they must."

"That's right. But there is no reason why they should not return at dawn if there is still work for them to do. Our enemy does not yet realize that, thanks to your secret radio, we can keep track of their movements. Perhaps we can catch them off guard at dawn and finish them. That," the Captain added, "will depend on you and your secret radio."

"It's a terrible responsibility," was the girl's quiet reply, "but I accept it. I shall be listening, all through the night."

That night will live long in Sally's memory. She slept not at all. At all hours the headset was over her ears. At first there were few messages passing from sub to sub.

"They are sleeping," she told herself. Then the lines of a very old poem ran through her mind:

At midnight in his guarded tent the Turk lay dreaming of the hour
When Greece, her knee in suppliance bent, should tremble at his power.

"There will be no trembling," she told herself stoutly. She knew that all had been arranged. If she reported that the subs were again moving in to the attack, the big land bombers would be notified and would return to surprise the wary foe. But would the subs attack? Only time could tell.

At the eerie hour of three in the morning, she began picking up messages, sent from sub to sub, some near, some far away.

"I think reinforcements are coming in," she phoned the Skipper, who was at the bridge.

"Good! Then we will have more to destroy," was his reply.

The hour before dawn came at last and with it the enemy subs, at least ten in number, slowly closing in. With a radio message sent to the mainland, they could but wait the dawn.

This time, confident of success and eager for the kill, the subs surfaced and came racing in. They were met by bombs from every plane the aircraft carrier could muster and from thirty land bombers as well. Their rout was complete, and the destruction, insofar as could be learned, was to them a great disaster.

Leaving the land-based bombers to finish the job, the convoy steamed on toward its destination.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

OH, DANNY BOY!

In the hours that followed every nerve was tense. They had won another battle but not without loss. The terrors of war at sea had come to stand out before every WAVE on board in sharper reality than ever before.

It was so with Sally and Nancy. They had volunteered for sea duty and, as long as their services in this capacity were required, there would be no turning back. The spirit of youth that had flowed in their veins as they boarded the ship only a few days before was being exchanged for sterner stuff.

Uppermost in the minds of all was the question of enemy subs. Twice they had been defeated, but the convoy they had hoped to destroy was priceless. Would they strike again?

Throughout one long, sleepless night both Sally and Nancy hovered over their secret radio. The "put-put-put" of strange enemy broadcasts was coming in constantly. There were still plenty of subs about. At first they appeared to be scattered far apart. But in time they seemed to be assembling for attack.

Every hour Sally reported to the Captain. In spite of the fact that it was impossible to tell the exact position of this sub pack, at three in the morning huge four-motored bombers, hovering overhead, were radioed a message and they went zooming away in the bright moonlight.

An hour later a message came in that they had surprised two large subs on the surface, probably engaged in charging batteries, and had sunk them both.

Just before dawn Sally, tired but happy, reported to the Captain:

"The loss of those two subs seems to have broken the pack up."

"What's happening now?" he asked.

"They're spreading out. Their messages are fading."

"Perhaps they have given it up and are heading for their home ports. If so, that's good news. In less than twenty-four hours we shall be safe in port."

"Oh! Happy day!" Sally exclaimed.

And it was indeed a happy day when, with her convoy, every precious ship of it safe, the aircraft carrier dropped anchor in a broad harbor. A small puffing tug came alongside to take members of the crew, who had been granted shore leave, to the dock. Among these were Sally, Nancy, Erma Stone, Riggs, and Mrs. Duke.

Sally, Nancy, and Danny's mother stuck close together once they entered the streets of the only European city they had ever known.

"So this is merry England," said Nancy. "It doesn't seem very merry."

And indeed it did not. A heavy fog hung over the city. The streets were narrow and dark. The people were poorly dressed. They seemed overworked and weary.

"They are merry in a way, all the same," said Sally. "Take a look at their faces."

Nancy did just that and was amazed. In every face was the glorious light of hope.

"How can you be happy after so many months of war?" Sally asked of a very old lady.

"Oh, the Americans are coming," the cracked old voice replied. "You are an American, aren't you?" she asked, peering at Sally's blue uniform.

"Yes, of course. I'm a WAVE."

"Oh! A lady soldier?"

"No, a lady sailor," Sally laughed.

"Then you were in the convoy that just came in." The woman's voice dropped to a whisper. "How many of your ships did they get?"

Sally hesitated. She looked the woman over. She was English from head to toe. She was old and tired, hungry, too, yet she dared be cheerful. She wanted good news. Well, then, she should have it.

"Not a ship," she whispered.

"Oh, then you brought us good luck," the old woman cackled joyously. "You must come again and again."

"I think I shall," said Sally. "It's been truly wonderful."

"And terrible," she whispered to herself when the old woman had moved on.

Sally put a hand in her coat pocket, then laughed low. In that pocket was a present for someone.

A little farther on they overtook a small girl. She was thinly clad. Her thin face appeared pinched by the fog and cold.

"See, I have a present for you," said Sally, taking her hand out of the pocket. In the hand were two hard-boiled eggs. She had saved them from her breakfast.

The girl's eyes shone, but she did not take the eggs. Instead she grasped Sally by the hand. After

leading her down a narrow alley, she opened a door in the brick wall, then stood politely aside while Sally, Nancy, and Mrs. Duke walked in.



“See, I Have a Present for You” Said Sally

The room they entered was a small kitchen. It was scrupulously clean. Beside a small fire on an open hearth stood the girl’s mother.

“Oh, you have brought us company, Mary!” she exclaimed. “These fine ladies from the boats. Won’t you be seated?” she invited.

“Oh, we won’t stay,” Sally smiled. “I offered Mary two eggs. I saved them just for her. Why didn’t she take them?”

“Two eggs in the middle of the month!” the mother exclaimed. “That is unheard of. One egg at the first of each month. That is all we are allowed.”

“But if the eggs are a present from America?” Sally insisted.

“Oh! That is different.” The woman’s face beamed.

“Then you and Mary shall each have an extra egg.” Sally placed them on the table.

“May God bless you.” The woman was close to tears.

“That,” said Danny’s mother, once they were on the street, “is why we came.”

“All those ships,” Sally exclaimed, “and all safe! I’ve been told that our convoy brought three shiploads of food.”

“Food will win the war,” said Nancy. “We’ll come again.”

Sally’s impatience grew with every passing hour. Why weren’t they heading back? Every hour’s delay seemed a crime, for Danny was still out there on the tossing sea. Or was he? She dared still to hope.

“We’ll be heading back just as soon as we take on fuel and get our clearance,” said the Captain. “I’m as anxious to be moving as you are.”

“And once we get started, we’ll really make time. When it’s not hampered by a convoy, our ship can do close to thirty knots. We’ll steer a straight course. It won’t be long, once we are on our way.”

Sally did not say: “Long before what?” She knew he meant long before they reached the spot where Danny had last been seen.

“The Skipper never forgets one of his boys,” had been Riggs’s word for it. “And he never fails to do all he can for them.”

On the second day Nancy remained on board, but Sally and Danny’s mother once again went ashore.

“The time will pass quicker that way,” Mrs. Duke said.

“Yes, and while we are in England we should see all we can of the English people. The more we learn of them the more we’ll know the things we’re fighting for.”

By mid-afternoon they were ready for a rest. Seeing a throng entering a service club, they followed. An entertainment was in progress. A group of Tommies was putting on an amusing skit about life on the African front.

When this was done, the band from Sally's own ship came on the platform to give the English people a taste of real American swing tunes. They were received with hilarious applause.

Then a beautiful lady in a gorgeous costume mounted the platform and, as a pianist gave her the chords, began to sing. She had a marvelous deep voice. Being English and having known the cruel war as only the English people do, she sang with power and feeling. The song was entitled "Danny Boy."

"Come on," Sally whispered with something like a sob. "I can't listen to all of that. Let's get out."

They did hear more, for as they moved down the aisle and out into the open air, the words were wafted back to them.

After walking away a little, they sat down on a bench at the edge of a narrow square. Neither spoke. There was no need. The rare, bright sun came out to bless them. From the harbor came the hoarse call of a ship's whistle. Sally wished it were her own, but knew it was not.

Then, suddenly, another sound reached their ears, the rather high-pitched laugh that could only come from the throat of an American.

Sally looked back. It was Erma Stone who had laughed. Her arm was linked in that of an admiral. She had had a shampoo. Her suit was pressed. She "looked like a million" and was beaming on the admiral in a dazzling manner.

"Life is strange," Sally whispered to her white-haired companion.

"Yes, child," was the solemn reply. "Very, very strange."

That night Sally was awakened by the throb of the ship's motors. They were on their way back.

CHAPTER TWENTY

A GLEAM FROM THE SEA

As she lay there in her berth, still too tired and dreamy to do more than think, all the events of the past few months seemed to pass in review before her mind's eye.

She saw herself a normal young lady in a normal, slightly humdrum world, going her regular daily rounds, work at the shop during the day, dinner with her father at night, and after that an easy chair and a book, varied now and then by a party or a ride in the moonlight.

"Some life!" she whispered. Had it been? She did not really know. She found herself longing for it now in a dreamy sort of way. But would she be happy there now? She doubted that.

And then again she saw herself at the great airport, directing huge bombers and other planes to their places on the field. With Silent Storm as her guide, instructor, and friend, she had lived a happy life. The work she had been doing had been important, very important. One false move, one misdirected training bomber and a dozen fine young men from Colorado, Vermont, Illinois—might have gone crashing to earth.

"Silent Storm," she whispered. "A grand friend. Barbara, a good, staunch pal. I am going back to them." The speedy aircraft carrier seemed to fairly leap along, carrying her home to America.

"Shall I stay there always?" she asked herself.

To this question she found no certain answer. Probably she would not be the one to answer that question. This trip, made by a dozen WAVES, had been an experiment. Had it been successful? Would it be repeated? She could not tell.

She found herself hoping it might be, for the good of others as well as herself. The Captain had told her that on this trip his men had been happier, steadier, more contented than ever before.

"Ladies add a touch to every organization that can be had in no other way." That was his way of putting it.

On shore in the harbor city many fine American boys were located. She had talked to some of them. One boy had said:

"You don't know what it means to meet an honest-to-goodness American girl over here."

"Why not?" she asked herself now, almost fiercely. "If the boys can die for their country, why not the girls as well? Thousands of good English women died in the terrible bombings, but the others never faltered."

Yes, she was sure that she wanted to stay with the ship, to sail the sea, to do her bit, to fight and die if need be for her beloved land. But would they let her? Only time could tell.

After listening in vain for any sound of enemy subs, she drew on slacks, slippers, and a heavy bathrobe, and went out on the deck. As she passed along toward the ladder leading to the flight deck above, she saw gunners standing like wax statues by their guns.

"There won't be any subs tonight," she paused to whisper. "I have had my radio on for half an hour. Not a sound."

"Perhaps not," was the low response. "But the Skipper isn't taking any chances."

"Boy! We gave them subs plenty, comin' over," came from another statue. "I'll bet we got twenty of them."

"Not that many, Old Kentuck," said another statue. "But plenty. And they say it's on account of one of them WAVES having some queer sort of radio. Great little dame, I'd say."

"Sure brought us a lot of luck!" said the first shadow.

"They haven't recognized me!" Sally thought, feeling all sort of good inside. "And I won't tell them. That would spoil it. I've always thought it would be fun to be famous, if nobody ever found it out." Wrapping her robe a little more tightly about her, she climbed the ladder to the flight deck where she could get a better view of the sea.

The view was worth the climb. Riding high, the moon had painted a path of gold across the sea. They were heading into the wind. They cut across long lines of low waves. All this made the boat seem to race like mad over the sea.

"It won't be long now," she whispered. Then her heart sank. "Three days," the Old Man had said. "Three days and we'll be near the spot where Danny was last seen."

"Oh, Danny Boy!" she sang softly. "Oh, Danny Boy!"

Something stirred. She turned about. Danny's mother stood beside her.

"I—I'm sorry," she said. "I didn't know you were there or I wouldn't have sung it."

"It was lovely," the white-haired woman's voice was low. "Out here where you can catch the full sweep of the sea, he seems very near tonight. I wish you would sing it all."

So again, softly, Sally began to sing: "Oh, Danny Boy."

"He is in God's hands tonight, and God's hands are good hands," said the mother. "No matter whether Danny comes back or not, I want to stay with Danny's ship—at least until the ship goes

down to be with Danny."

For some time after that they stood there in silence, looking away at the sea and at the path of gold that seemed to lead to Danny.

From that night on, to Sally, every throb of the great ship's engines seemed to be the beating of a mighty heart, a throbbing that each hour brought them nearer to a spot where they might have a tryst with life or death.

On the second night, as she stood alone on the upper deck, now watching the dark waters swirl by, and now lifting her face to the sky where a million stars shone, she was joined by the Skipper.

"Captain," she said after a few moments of talk, "where's your lady yeoman? I haven't seen her since we left port. Is she ill?"

"No-oo," he rumbled. "Miss Stone isn't with us anymore. I traded her to an admiral for a young man and two very fine old French etchings. I like the etchings. They just hang on the wall and don't say a thing." He laughed in a dry sort of way.

"But Miss Stone must have been a good yeoman. She gave up a very fine position to join the WAVES," Sally suggested.

"Yes, that's true, she did. But in this man's war, in fact any war, it's not the wonderful things you have done in the past; it's what you can do now that counts.

"'Not to the strong is the battle,'" he quoted. "'Not to the swift is the race, but to the true and the faithful.'

"The faithful, always the faithful, Sally," he repeated. "Most of the girls we took on trial have been very fine. You, Sally, and your pal, Nancy, may stay on my ship as long as she flies the Stars and Stripes and sails the seas. I'll even offer you the honor of going over her side with me when the subs get her and she prepares to sink beneath the waves."

"They'll never get her," Sally declared stoutly, "but, Captain, I wish to thank you from deep in my heart. Those are the finest words I've ever heard spoken."

"They were spoken from the heart, Sally."

For a time after that they were silent, then Sally spoke in a deep voice:

"Captain, do you really think we'll find Danny?"

"Only time will tell. We have taken account of wind and tide, done everything we could. When we think we have located the approximate spot, we'll heave to and send out a full complement of planes to search for him."

"But the storm?" she whispered hoarsely. "It seems impossible."

"From reports I have received, I am led to believe that the storm may not have passed over Danny's part of the ocean. It was a tropical storm, violent in intensity, but narrow in scope."

"Oh!" she breathed. "If that is only true. If it is—"

"It won't be long now, Sally. Tonight we'll say a prayer for Danny."

"Let's do," she whispered.

"Captain," she spoke again, "when the planes go out on the search, may Danny's pal, Fred, fly a two-seater and may I ride in the second seat?"

"Yes, Sally, you just tell Fred I said he must take you for luck."

A few moments later she was back in her quarters, saying her prayer for Danny.

The hour came at last when, on a wide open sea, the big ship came to a halt, turned half about to give the planes the advantage of the wind, then stood by while, one by one, they roared away.

"This is the beginning of the end," Sally thought as she strapped on her parachute. Would it be a sad or a happy ending? She dared not hazard a guess. She did not dare to hope.

Their plane was slower in its upward climb than any that had gone before.

"Our plane seems tired," she said to Fred.

"That's because I'm carrying an extra gas tank lashed to the fuselage," he explained. "We may not find Danny, but we'll be the last ones back from the search."

After sailing aloft, they began to circle, while with powerful binoculars Sally searched the sea for some sign, a speck of white, a dark, drifting object, just anything that spoke of life.

As the moments passed, their circle grew ever wider. Slowly, the big ship faded into the distance.

From time to time, with eager eyes, Sally lifted her glasses to scan the sky and count the planes slowly soaring there. She hoped against hope that one of these might show some sign of an all important discovery, but still they circled on.

At last she saw them, one by one, start winging their way back toward the carrier.

"Their gas is about gone," said Fred.

"Will they refuel and come back?" Sally asked. There was a choke in her voice and an ache in her heart.

"I don't know," was the solemn reply. "That's up to the big chief."

"Danny's out here somewhere," she insisted. "He just must be." Still they circled on.

Suddenly Sally cried: "Look! Fred! Way off there to the left! There's a bright gleam on the water!"

"A sun spot," was the quiet response. "We often see them on the water. You don't think Danny would set fire to his raft, do you?"

"No, but Fred!" She gripped his arm in her excitement. "I read about it in a magazine."

"Read what?"

"About some chemical. I can't remember the name. When you pour it on the water it throws back the light of the sun, makes the water shine."

"Never heard of it."

"Oh! Yes, Fred! It's true! At first the chemical didn't work so well. It disappeared too soon, but they mixed it with other chemicals, then it lasted for a long time. They were going to put small bottles of it on the rubber rafts. It just must be true!" She pounded him on the back.

"We'll soon know." He headed the plane toward that gleaming spot.

For a time the light gleamed brightly, then it began to fade.

"Oh, it can't fail us!" Sally whispered. "It just can't! It's our last chance."

And it did not fail them, for, as Sally watched through her binoculars, a dark spot appeared at the center of the fading light.

"It's Danny!" she cried. "It just has to be!"

And it was. The small bottle of chemicals was not a dream but a blessed reality. Danny had discovered it and had used it at just the right time.

As they circled low, he stood up and waved excitedly.

Fred got off a message to the boat. They promised to send a fast power boat to the spot at once. After that there was nothing left to do but circle over the spot and wait.

As Sally's eye caught the gray spot that was the rescue boat, a sudden impulse seized her.

"Fred, I'm going to jump," she said.

"What? Take to the parachute? Why? We've got plenty of gas for getting back to the ship."

"All the same I'm going to jump. I want to be with Danny when the boat arrives. Nothing will happen to me. I've done it before." Sally pulled off her shoes.

"All right," he agreed. "But wait until the boat is almost here."

Impatiently Sally waited. At last she said, "Now! Here I go!"

Over the side she went. She pulled the ripcord. The parachute opened, then she went drifting down. Her aim had been good. She hit the water not a hundred yards from Danny's raft.

After releasing herself from her parachute she went into the Australian crawl and soon was there at the raft's side.

Danny would have welcomed anyone after his long days on the sea, but to have Sally drop from the sky seemed too good to be true. Danny's pet sea parrot, however, was not so friendly. He had become very fond of Danny, particularly fond of his dried fish. He didn't propose to have anyone come between him and Danny, so, with his vice-like beak, he had taken a firm grip on one of Sally's pink toes.

By the time Danny had settled the quarrel between Sally and his pet, the boat was at their side.

"Danny, are you all right?" his mother cried from the boat.

"Oh, sure! Fit as a fiddle, and I have lots more brain cells. I've been living on fish." He laughed gaily.

When the raft, the pet sea parrot, all Danny's dried fish and, of course, Danny and Sally, had been taken aboard, the boat headed for the carrier.

"Danny," Sally asked, "how did you ever ride out that storm?"



She Hit the Water Near Danny's Raft

"That? Why that was easy," was his smiling reply. "You see, I didn't really get the worst of it, just the aftermath, big rolling waves, high as a church, just rolling and rolling. I went to the top of one, slid down its side, then started up another. Talk about your roller coaster. Say! That's tame!"

Needless to say, both Sally and Danny ate at the Captain's table that night. When Danny had told of his glorious fishing expedition, when Sally had added the story of the rescue, and the sea parrot had screamed his approval, the applause that followed made the bulkheads ring.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

DREAMS

The moment they were tied up at the dock in their home port Captain MacQueen got in touch with Silent Storm.

"I understand you know this inventor C. K. Kennedy," he said over the phone. "How well do you know him?"

"Quite well, I think," was Storm's modest reply.

"Fine," said MacQueen. "How about having dinner with my friend, Sally, and me tonight?"

"That will be a pleasure," said Silent Storm, sensing at once that something big regarding Sally's secret radio was in the offing. "But why don't we have the dinner at my house? It's quiet and very secret."

"That's okay with me," was the prompt reply.

"Make it seven o'clock," said Storm.

"Sally and I will be there." And they were.

When Sally had enjoyed one more delightful dinner in the Storm home she was led away once more to Silent Storm's secret den. There, over black coffee, the three of them talked over the future.

"I have asked you to take a part in this," Captain MacQueen said to Storm, "because you are an old friend of C. K. Kennedy and will, perhaps, know the best manner in which to approach him. This matter of the secret radio is one of great importance. And we cannot forget that he alone holds the secret of its extraordinary performance."

"You overestimate my influence," was Storm's reply. "Wouldn't Sally do quite as well?"

"Perhaps," the Captain admitted, "but in battles of major importance I bring up all my forces. What I want to propose is that Sally, you, and I take a plane to Washington—our ship is to be tied up long enough for this—that we pick up a rather important Government man there, and that we then go on to Sally's home town to interview Kennedy. What do you think of that, Sally?"

"Sounds all right to me," said Sally. "I agree with you that Major Storm will be a great help."

"How about it, Storm?" said the Captain. "Can you arrange for the time off?"

"Oh, beyond a doubt it can be arranged," said Storm.

"Then we are all set." Captain MacQueen heaved a sigh of relief.

The rest of that evening was given over to telling of the aircraft carrier's journey and the important part the secret radio had played in the winning of her battles. When he had heard the story Silent Storm was more than eager to accompany them on their journey to the home of the great inventor.

"One thing must be understood from the start," he said as the Skipper and Sally prepared to leave. "That is that I am a real friend of old C. K. and of Sally as well. If there are negotiations going on for old C. K.'s secret, I shall act, in a way, as his lawyer."

"And you will see that he is treated fairly," said the Captain.

"Not only that, but I shall see that he knows that he is being treated fairly," Storm amended.

"That's just what I had hoped for," the Captain agreed.

The very next day, with Danny as co-pilot for a big twin-motored plane, they set off on their journey. Twenty-four hours later they were knocking at the door of the modest shop where the secret radio had first seen the light of day.

"Sally!" the aged inventor exclaimed at sight of her. "I'm glad to see you! But how is it that you are back so soon?"

"These men can tell you more about that than I can." Sally was beaming. "You know Major Storm."

"Oh, yes indeed!" The two men shook hands.

The other men were introduced and then, seated on rustic benches and chairs, they told the delighted old man the story of his secret radio.

"Sally, you have done all that I hoped and much more," he exclaimed. There were tears in his eyes. "I shall never forget."

"That's just fine," said Sally, rising a bit unsteadily to her feet. "I—I'm glad you are happy. And now I am going to leave you men to finish the business of the hour. I promised to show Danny our river."

"Danny?" the old man laughed happily. "So you've got you a Danny? Well then, run along. I wouldn't keep you for the world."

After a long, delightful tramp over the river trail, Sally and Danny came to rest on a rustic bench overlooking the river.

"It's really slow and peaceful," Sally murmured.

"I'll say it is, after what we've gone through," Danny agreed. "My hands fairly ache for the controls of my plane."

"Hands," said Sally, with a sly smile, "are sometimes used for other purposes."

"That's right, they are," Danny exclaimed, seizing Sally's hand. Sally didn't mind, so they sat there for a time in silence.

Then came the sound of voices. "They are looking for us," said Sally. "Time for a crash landing." She pulled her hand away.

"So here you are!" Captain MacQueen said a moment later.

"Well, folks," said Silent Storm, "everything is arranged. The Government gets the secret radio and your old-friend C. K. gets a liberal payment."

"And you, Sally, are to receive half of it," said the Captain.

"What!" Sally sprang to her feet. "Why! That's unfair!"

"He didn't see it that way," Storm replied quietly. "He felt that you have done more than he to make the radio a success. I advise that you accept his offer and allow things to stand as they are. It is for the good of your country as well as yourself, and there will be plenty for you both, I assure you." Sally settled back in her place.

"Well," she admitted, "it will be a good opportunity to help my country in another way. I'll invest it in War Bonds right away. C. K. will really be aiding our nation in that way, then, too."

"Yes," said the Captain, "that is true. Kennedy wants you to have the bungalow you have always dreamed of, when peace has come again."

"Won't that be sweet?" Sally said, turning to Danny with a teasing smile. Danny said never a word.

"And C. K. wants you to come back to work with him as soon as the war is over," Storm said with a grin.

Once more Sally turned to Danny. This time he spoke. "That," he said, "will need a lot of thinking about."

And so, for Sally, life seemed fairly well begun.

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