

RED SKI AT MORNING
MORNING MORNING
COMES TO THE
SPINNING THE
COME IN SPINNER
Novel
HIMORAN
PIONEERS OF THE
(in collaboration with John F. Jones)
COME IN SPINNER
FOUR WIVES AND A FAMILY
(in collaboration with John F. Jones)

Books by
DYMPHNA CUSACK

Plays

RED SKY AT MORNING
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Novels

JUNGFRAU
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COME IN SPINNER
FOUR WINDS AND A FAMILY
(in collaboration with Florence James)

COME IN SPINNER

by

DYMPHNA CUSACK
AND
FLORENCE JAMES



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To
MILES FRANKLIN

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"And, sometimes, 'Come in Spinner,' laugh the gods.

Yet the felled tree ever
sprouts from the lowly butt.

And, 'Come in Spinner,' laugh the gods again.

'Well, who'd believe it—tails!' my empty pocket cries.
But still there blooms my unabated spring."

IAN MUDIE

FRIDAY I

(i)

ANGUS McFARLAND stepped out of the private-hire car at the main entrance of the Hotel South-Pacific and snapped a brusque reply to the commissionaire's "Good evening, sir." The chauffeur pocketed his tip, touched his cap, and the car moved smoothly down Macquarie Street.

Angus was hot and uncomfortable. The unseasonable heat of the spring afternoon beat up from the pavement, and across the street the glare from the setting sun blazed back from the fan-shaped transoms of Parliament House. He noticed with rising irritation that the sky was angry with clouded fire, and flaming mares' tails rioted in the upper air. That would mean another hot day tomorrow—probably a westerly, judging by the sky.

What a fool he had been to let his sister persuade him to go up to Wahroonga on a day like this, even if Ian and his family were down from the country on one of their infrequent visits. It had been damned boring as well as uncomfortable—nothing but family business and gossip. Serve him right for going; he had nothing whatever in common with Virginia—or Ian, and he ought to have known better. He should have spent the afternoon up at the Continental Gymnasium having his usual Friday Turkish bath and massage to get himself in form for his evening with Deborah. A man wanted to feel at his best with a girl as vibrant and beautiful as she was—particularly when he was seventeen years older.

Not that that really made any difference, Angus told himself hastily. His middle age was a thought on which he did not care to dwell and he smothered it immediately under a number of customary private reassurances. Why, a man was in his prime at forty-nine if he looked after himself properly. And he had always done that. He had never spared himself on the golf course nor had he once failed to fit in his massage twice a week ever since he had decided some years ago that this was essential if he was to keep his waistline under control and at the same time continue to enjoy the quantity of whisky he was used to and the choice food

which a life-time of delicate eating demanded. Other men might go to seed in their forties, but not he.

Yet, in spite of his satisfactory statement about himself to himself, Angus turned to go up the steps of the hotel with a sense of personal injury which vented itself on his sister and the heat. It almost seemed as though Virginia had deliberately planned to upset his massage routine out of malice, and the weather had perversely arranged to be hot and windy tomorrow in order to ruin the Spring race meeting for him.

His irritation sharpened to distaste as he was forced to join the stream of people who were moving up the hotel steps with the ragged purposefulness of ants. There had been a time when a man could mount the steps of his hotel with dignity. After all, when one had patronised the same hotel on and off for twenty-five years, one had reason and right to expect to enter as an honoured guest, not merely as one of a jostling mob clamouring for a drink before six o'clock closing. There was some comfort at least in the thought that all but a privileged few would be disappointed.

Angus picked his way fastidiously round the outskirts of the crowd in the vestibule. No better than an Eastern bazaar, he said to himself. Utterly repugnant, all of it. The prowling servicemen with hot inquisitive eyes: the girls dawdling by, welcoming obvious pick-ups with the assumed warmth of old acquaintance: the drawled compliments of Americans: the clipped greetings of a few British naval officers: the casual Australian voices; guttural Dutch and nasal French. Revolting. He would complain again to the manager. Not that that would be of much use. Sharlton was always promising to do something about it and always excusing his failure, which all boiled down to the fact that it was deliberate policy. The directors ought to be ashamed of themselves for allowing the hotel to become a place of common assignation. If it were not for Deborah he'd move to the "Australia" tomorrow.

He made his way with impatient authority through a crowd waiting round the lift doors. Neither lift was down. He put his finger firmly on the call button, the bell buzzed surprisingly close at hand and he was astonished to hear an American voice only a little above his head call with an impatience matching his own: "Say, buddy, instead of ringing hell out of that bell, you'd do better to spend your energy looking for an elevator technician. We're marooned."

Angus stepped back a pace. Someone behind him tittered.

"Better see if you can find the manager," a second voice advised. "This flaming old rattle-trap's stuck again."

He recognised the voice as that of the insufferable relieving lift man whom everyone called Blue. Angus moved to the other lift and put his finger on the button, looking fixedly at the indicator as though he was not only deaf to the men in the lift but blind to the gathering crowd as well. There was no response from the second lift. It seemed permanently stuck at the top floor.

This was intolerable. In no country in the world but Australia would a man have to put up with service like this. Unquestionably the "South-Pacific" was going to the dogs. If it weren't for Deborah he would stay at the Club—anywhere rather than endure this sort of thing every time he came in or out. Quarter to six! He had already been waiting for five minutes. Anger mounted in him. He had come back early especially to have a rest before dressing for the evening and he had to waste his time standing round waiting for a lift.

It was true he was not meeting Deborah until eight o'clock, but the whole evening would be ruined if he had to rush and he wanted to be at his best for her. She was always so exquisite, poised—utterly different from the upstart women who invaded the "South-Pacific" nowadays with their interminable high-pitched laughter. He felt again a sense of incongruity that Deborah's position on the staff of the hotel's Beauty Salon should place her at the beck and call of such women as these. All the months he'd known her he had never become reconciled to the thought. It was time he did something definite about it.

(ii)

When Blue opened the lift door at the second floor two American officers lifted a finger in friendly greeting. "Just hold her, will you, Blue?" one asked, looking along the corridor, "Homer's still round in the Wellington Room saying his good-byes. He won't be a minute."

"Good-oh, Loot." The lift bell buzzed. Blue looked at the indicator and jerked it off. "You can wait," he said amiably to the invisible caller.

A lanky sergeant pelted down the corridor and into the lift. "Whew! I w-w-was afraid you'd be g-g-gone," he stuttered.

"Trust us, Serg." Blue clapped him affectionately on the shoulder. "Wait all day for you, we would."

"That's real nice, B-B-Blue," the sergeant grinned and flicked a cigarette towards him. "Butt?"

"Thanks." Blue opened the maroon tunic of his uniform and

tucked the cigarette away in the pocket of his khaki shirt, buttoned up the tunic again and started the lift. "How did the shivoo go off?"

"Swell. N-n-nicest party I've been to since my kid-sister graduated. Ellery sure is a lucky guy to get a g-g-girl like Constance."

"And boy! Is she easy on the eye!" The lieutenant clicked his tongue admiringly.

"She sure is," drawled the young airman, "and sweet as they come."

The sergeant drew a deep sigh. "That's love for you," he said. "C-c-can anyone tell me why no g-g-girl ever looks at me the way Ellery's girl looks at him?"

"You want to eat more spinach, Homer," the airman advised.

"Babes in the wood," Blue said sentimentally. "I brought 'em up in the lift together and they stood there lookin' into each other's eyes and floated out on air holding each other's hands. Fair give me a lump in me throat it did."

The airman shook his head mournfully. "When I think of the luck of the stiff getting a wife like that *and* a Purple Heart!"

They all sighed together and caught their breath short as the lift stopped between floors with a jolt. Blue swung the handle over. Nothing happened. He pressed each button on the automatic indicator in turn. The three Americans followed his movements. The lift stayed stuck. He ran his fingers through his scanty ginger hair.

"Sorry, pals. I've pushed all the buttons. I've pulled all the gadgets and it's no go. Anyone got any ideas?"

"Maybe if we all jumped together," the airman suggested.

Blue cocked an eye at him. "This is a lift, Corp, not a kite."

"On the elevator I mean, Buddy. Not out of it."

They all jumped up and down together solemnly. The lift remained where it was.

"Stuck! I had a car when I was out on dates at College used to get stuck like this," the lieutenant said. "She sure was a fine car."

Blue tried the handle again. Half a dozen floors were ringing on the indicator. He jerked it clear.

"Where are we?"

"Between first and ground floor."

"I'll t-t-take a peek." The sergeant knelt and put his face down, looking out through six inches of iron grille that had cleared the first floor. A buzz of voices rose from the Vestibule. "So n-n-near and yet so far," he mourned.

"What can you see?" demanded the lieutenant.

"Just enough of the Cockpit to put my blood-pressure up. Gosh there're a lot of b-b-blondes in this town."

The airman knelt down beside him. "Drugstore," he said. "Look at their partings."

"Move over, you old son of a gun," the lieutenant nudged him.

Blue gazed down on the pink-beige bottoms of the kneeling men. "Easy seen you boys ain't spent the war shiny-bumming."

"You n-n-need t-t-talent for that, Blue," the sergeant replied without moving his eyes from the crack. "Us b-b-boys haven't got it."

"You've said it." The lieutenant shouldered his way to a better view. "I reckon sixty years from now I'll still be crawling through jungles when those guys at H.Q. have grown fast to their chairs."

"That's what you call the seat of war," the airman commented drily.

"I know," Blue agreed. "We breed the kind here at Victoria Barracks."

"It's a fine war for them. I wish I had what it takes to get me a job at the Base."

"Maybe you could learn it by correspondence. . . . Gosh, look at that copper-top!"

"Listen, boys," Blue broke in. "You keep your minds on the job. If you don't want to be here all night you'd better give someone a call for a lift mechanic while you're down there."

"That's no use, Blue. What you want is an elevator technician."

"Move over," Blue gave the sergeant a nudge, "and let me see if I can get someone to give us a hand." He knelt and squeezed himself down at the end of the row.

"Hey," he bellowed to the sea of heads in the vestibule below. "We're stuck! Will somebody send for the manager?"

The buzz of voices continued unheeding.

"All I can see now," the lieutenant tried to get a better view, "is the top piece of that gold statue that stands up in the middle of the Cockpit fish-pond."

The airman laughed. "Good old Bouncing Belle. I've never seen anything so curvaceous. What a girl!"

"Grandpa's idea of female pulchritood," the lieutenant chuckled.

"What did they stick her up there for, Blue?"

"Aw . . . she was a figurehead on a sailing ship called the Bouncing Belle; belonged to the old joker who built the first 'South-Pacific' pub down near the docks. She's in the contract and they can't get rid of her."

"Boy, what an armful!"

"She bulges," the airman said critically.

"Matter of taste," said Blue. "When I was a kid, if a girl didn't have bulges, she made 'em."

"A few more dames like that around and your poppa'd be a billionaire, Homer, instead of merely a millionaire." The lieutenant dug the sergeant in the ribs.

Homer got up and dusted the knees of his pinks. "I w-w-wish you wouldn't always keep bringing my P-p-poppa up," he said aggrievedly. "I can't help him being a m-m-millionaire."

"Crikey!" Blue exclaimed. "If I had a poppa a millionaire I'd put a placard across me bloomin' back to let everyone know."

"So would anyone else but Homer. He's kinda shy about it. I never know whether it's the dollars he's bashful about or the product that brings 'em in."

"I d-d-don't mind my Poppa making b-b-b-brazeers at all, it's a national utility, and if I ever get out of this war I'm going to do the p-p-p-publicity for the firm. It's just I don't like having p-p-p-poppa's money thrown up at me. It makes me unp-p-popular."

"You act like a crazy man, Homer." The airman clapped him on the back. "What do you think Spen here and me stick round you closer than a brother for? Love?"

"I d-d-don't mind you guys knowin'. It doesn't stop you from slappin' me down."

Blue flattened out on the floor and let out a piercing: "Ho-ho-ho! Ho-ho-ho!"

The buzz of conversation below the lift stopped for a moment and a shrill, affected voice called angrily: "What are you doing up there, pray? We've been waiting here for hours."

"Listen, lady," Blue explained, "we don't like it any better than you do. But she's broken down. Hop round to the manager's office, will you, and tell him."

"Really!" The shrill voice came to them full of pained astonishment.

"Lady, if you ever want to travel in this lift again," Blue implored, "get somebody to get a mechanic. It won't go, see?"

"Denny darling," he heard the voice coo, "would you run round to Mr. Charlton's office and tell him to send someone immediately. Tell him the lift's been stuck for hours."

"Oh, Mummyskins," they heard Denny darling complain petulantly, "there's always something wrong with the lifts in this wretched place. Next time I come into town I'm going to stay at the 'Australia'."

Blue straightened himself as the voice faded. "Well, that'll certainly be a break for the 'South-Pacific'."

Homer cowered behind the airman. "D-d-did my ears deceive

me," he whispered, "or was that that D'Arcy-Twyning d-d-dame?"

"Too right it was."

"Help! You c-c-can keep me locked up here for life, Blue, but d-d-don't let her get at me."

"O.K., mate. Looks like the lift'll do the trick for you. Seems like we're going to be stuck here all night if I know anything about this rattle-trap."

"Five-thirty," exclaimed the airman, looking at his wrist-watch. "We ought to have been round at the 'Carlton' five minutes ago."

"I d-d-don't like to think of those g-g-girls waiting there in the foyer for us."

"As this is our last night in Sydney-town for God knows how long, I don't like to think of them not waiting," the airman said gloomily.

"Well, you've just got to resign yourself to it," the lieutenant cheered him up. "We're going to be late—but late!"

"We might as well settle down for a quiet evening at home and make ourselves comfortable," Blue suggested. "How about a game of Swy just to pass the time?"

"What's Swy, Aussie?"

"Two-up."

"I seem to've heard of it."

"It's the great Australian pastime. Fairest game on God's earth. Just a matter of spinning a couple of brownies."

Blue fished in his trouser pocket and brought out a handful of change from which he selected two pennies.

"Is it on the level, Blue?"

"Too bloody right it is. You could play it in your mother's parlour. I'll show you how it goes."

(iii)

Angus heard above him, with incredulity that amounted to horror, the jargon of a game he had not heard or seen played since the days of the First World War. When the rattle of the pennies first caught his attention he had deliberately taken no notice, but now, no one could disregard the noise. Or the language. If this was a sample of what the "South-Pacific" was coming to, the sooner he—and Deborah—got away from it, the better. He would sound her out about a flat tonight. . . . He frowned. It would take some skill to do it. In all the months he had been taking her out he had not been able to bring himself to the point of asking her. There was something about Deborah that eluded him: she

was not like any other woman in his wide experience. He could never make up his mind just how much a woman of the world she was. And, since Angus was used to making up his mind on every matter which came under his notice and he was strongly attracted to Deborah, he had lately found himself venting his annoyance at his own indecision on any irritation that presented itself.

He decided to walk up the stairs, remembered the six flights to his suite and decided not to. His anger grew, fanned by his indignation for Deborah, on whose erratic hours of work in the Marie-Antoinette Salon he had so often to wait, and resentment at his own deep involvement which gave him no choice but to wait. He turned a contemptuous glance on the crowds milling around the Bouncing Belle. Really, he did not know what Sharlton could have been thinking of, to have had that vulgar figure-head regilded. It had always been an eye-sore, and now, with the lights gleaming on every golden curve, it was positively offensive. But no doubt it suited a crowd like this.

Vulgarians, that's what they all were, with neither knowledge nor taste; chasing showy pleasures, swallowing any liquor they could get. All they wanted was a stimulant and an aphrodisiac; though what need there was of either he could not see, with all these trollops flirting their bottoms under swinging skirts, their breasts impudent and aggressive under skin-tight frocks. People said the break-down in manners and morals was due to the war, but he had been young in the last war and he would take an oath it had not been like this. Women had dignity then, and mystery. Open parading of lust there might have been in some places, shameless soliciting—that was inevitable in war—but it was kept in its place. It did not intrude into decent society as it did nowadays. The Americans were responsible for it, in Australia at any rate. They had too much money. Until they came, hotels like the "South-Pacific" were not frequented by "other ranks", and at least officers in the last war thought enough of their uniforms to behave like gentlemen, even if they were not.

He started as a hand touched his arm. An affected voice gushed over him: "Oh, Mr. McFarland, isn't it all frightfully inconvenient! Denise and I have been waiting here simply hours."

Angus turned, lifting his hat and bowing in acknowledgment of the greeting. "Mrs. D'Arcy Twynning. Miss Denise . . . most inconvenient."

Blue's voice came down to them. "A quid wanted," he called. "A quid in the guts to see her away."

"Right!" The voice rose jubilantly. "Come in Spinner!"

The rattle of coins sounded again.

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twynning shuddered. "That awful language! What are they doing?" She craned her long, crepey neck upwards. "Playing Two-up, I'm afraid." Angus's mouth set in a tight line.

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twynning gaped incredulously. "No-o-o!"

"The whole thing's perfectly ghastly," Denise pouted. "I had an appointment at half-past five at the Marie-Antoinette for a manicure, and if I know those girls they simply won't wait back a minute for me, and I'm bothered if I'm going to climb the stairs after the ghastly time I've had trailing around that Orchid Show the whole afternoon."

"Denny darling, you're really very naughty. It was a perfectly enchanting show, Mr. McFarland. Lady Govett was the President, you know. Sir Frederick's just back from India . . . that big Conference . . . what was it about? Anyway he's just back. A horrible place, he says, beggars everywhere, you couldn't move for them. He's sure we're going to have trouble there soon, they've got quite above themselves."

"He brought Goldie back the divinest saris, she's going to have them made into evening frocks." Denise's voice was full of envy.

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twynning held out a transparent plastic box to Angus. "Look at my prize Cattleya. Isn't it magnificent?"

"A fine specimen."

"It's quite a thing," Denise trilled, "and it cost her seven guineas at the auction afterwards."

Her mother tee-heed. "I told you not to say anything about that, you naughty little girl. It was for charity and you know your father and I never begrudge money for a good cause."

"Well, all I wish is this silly old lift'd come. I simply must have a manicure before the Ball tomorrow and I don't know where I'll fit it in now."

Angus's irritation increased irrationally. To think that every little chit like this D'Arcy-Twynning girl could order Deborah around. "I shall see Sharlton myself," was all he could trust himself to say.

"Oh, he's not in the office. Denise has just been and Mrs. Molesworth says they've sent for a mechanic; but you know what it is to get a man at this hour."

"Surely both lifts can't be out of order." Angus held his finger on the second bell.

"No, but the other driver got out to see if he could do something and one of the American boys took his lift up and must have left the door open at the roof."

"Is there no one to go up and see?"

"They said in the office they'd sent one of the porters."

"That's typical," Angus muttered, all his annoyance focusing itself on the lout who had left the door ajar. A burst of laughter from the marooned party above his head made him feel that it was all part of a deliberate plan to ruin his evening. It was already five to six.

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning went gushing on. Angus disentangled from the spate of words her thankfulness that at last all these Americans were going home and we were to have the British Navy here. They, at least, would never leave lift-doors open on the roof and disrupt the social engagements of the guests for whom the "South-Pacific" used once to be run—not, as it seemed now, for a horde of jumped-up baggages and servicemen.

He glanced at the enormous square sapphire on Denise's left hand, pledge of an American colonel, and waited for her protest. But she only opened her eyes in ecstasy and lisped: "Isn't it too marvellous? I simply adore the British."

"Ah," said Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning rapturously, "there'll always be an England. Or should I say—Britain?"

"It's a matter of taste. You'll be in the fashion if you do."

"Oh yes, we're all British now."

Angus winced. "Personally I deplore this war-time breaking down of traditional distinctions."

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning went off at a tangent. "I'm so glad to see you've booked a table for my O.B.N.O.s Ball tomorrow evening. I was hoping you might join my party at the official table. We did so look forward to having Prince Alexander—he's on the *Impenetrable*, you know—but he'd already arranged to fly down to Melbourne. Such a charming young man, so democratic. But Commander Derek Ermington will be there—his father, you know, is Lord Weffolk."

"Thank you. But my brother and his wife and daughter are down from the country and I'm taking this opportunity of entertaining a family party."

"How charming! We're booked right out, you know. It's so nice to think Australians are rallying so generously to help the orphans of British Naval Officers."

"Splendid," Angus murmured. Confound the O.B.N.O.s. He had booked thinking it would be an ordinary "Who's Who" Saturday night; now it looked as though there was going to be a disgusting social crush.

He had let himself in for a wretched evening, he thought morosely. Already he was regretting asking the family. It was bad enough to have had to spend the day with them! Ian, his brother,

soured and aged by the problems of running a property with all this damned Government interference: his sister-in-law, Olive, more irritating than ever, with her eternal preoccupation with Country Women's affairs. She and his sister Virginia were a pair; no style, no poise, nothing but good works and sentimentality. And their husbands were as bad; Ian and Lawrence actually backed them up. Lawrence, with his exaggerated ideas of giving back to the community the extra income he was making out of war contracts, and Ian, with that bee in his bonnet that absentee landlords were the curse of the country. Why, Ian had actually suggested that he should leave Sydney and lend a hand on the property! A lot of good he'd be on the land after thirty years of civilised living, and besides it was ridiculous to think he could cut loose from all his interests at a word from Ian.

Angus made an impatient movement, reached out his hand to press the bell again, and thought better of it. By God, if people had to put up with what they suffered in France in 1917. . . . Women were losing their femininity nowadays and their husbands and fathers encouraged them. Look at his niece Helen. Positively weather-beaten and no sense of style. It was a pity she couldn't take a few lessons from Deborah on how to look after her skin and hair. The way Olive let a young girl neglect herself like that was positively wicked. It was no excuse that she had to be up early and late, mustering, trucking, working like a man. She needn't do it if she didn't want to, and if she hadn't enough sense, her mother ought to put her foot down. There was something abnormal about this fervour on the part of women for the war effort. Probably sex compensation. . . . Well, he could tell them, as a soldier, how men preferred to find their women when they came home. Certainly not like Helen; no polish, not a spark of charm, nothing attractive about her.

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning gabbled endlessly. He brought his mind back with an effort, but the clink of coins against the floor of the lift kept distracting him.

Blue's voice rang down the lift-well. "Stand back, boys! Fair go for the spinner!" The coins rattled again. The people pressing around the lift doors were listening with upturned faces. The cable ropes of the second lift began to sway. "Whoopee," someone called, "she's coming. They must have moved the body."

The crowded lift shot down, the door opened slowly and a flustered lift driver looked out.

"Sorry, sir," he said, "but it got held up."

"We've been waiting hours," shrilled Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning.

"I'm very sorry, madam."

At least he was apologetic, thought Angus. Not like the fellow in the other lift. He could still hear the clinking of coins and bursts of raucous laughter. It would serve them right if someone sent for the police . . . playing an illegal game in public!

"I shall certainly speak to my husband about it," Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning said severely. "There's a directors' meeting next week. They must be told about this."

"I don't know what the Britishers would think," Denise chanted in her sing-song treble.

The last passenger stepped out and the waiting crowd surged forward. The lift driver barred the way. "Guests first, please. This way, madam. This way, sir."

Mrs. D'Arcy-Twyning and Denise swept in disdainfully. Angus followed.

From the marooned lift Blue's voice encouraged the unseen players. "O.K.; fellers. Let the angels see 'em!"

(iv)

The pennies went spinning up again from Blue's practised fingers. Down they came and the spinner collected. The rolls of the Americans decreased steadily, and by the time Blue spun out at last, there was a big bulge in his shirt pocket.

The lieutenant and Homer took their turn and the young airman crooned to the spinning coins in his drawling southern voice: "Do it for Daddy, babies; do it for Daddy."

"Bad luck," Blue consoled him, collecting the last of his roll. "You're a hell of a fine player; I've never seen anyone pick up the game so quick in me life. It's just that these Aussie brownies don't understand the crap language."

"You've c-c-cleaned me right out, Blue." Homer turned out his empty pockets.

"I'll give yer a loan for the night," Blue offered. "I know what it is to be stone motherless broke in a strange city."

"That's O.K., Aussie. My b-b-buddies'll see me through. But I'll give you one last t-t-toss." He opened his wallet and took out a lottery ticket. "I'll play you for this. It may bring you five thousand of your m-m-money. And we'll be back in Manilla by the time it's d-d-d-drawn."

"Looks like they're starting the last big push in the Pacific, eh?"

"That's right," the airman agreed. "All the big shots are moving up from the Base."

"Well, that oughter cheer you up; things must be getting safe!" Blue generously covered the lottery ticket with a pound note and handed Homer the pennies. "You take the last toss for luck, Serg. Stand back, fellers, and give him a fair go. Now! Come in Spinner!"

Homer placed the pennies reverently on his outstretched fingers and breathed on them: "C-c-c-come on, you little b-b-brown sweethearts," he pleaded and spun the coins.

"Up where the birdies fly, you beauts," Blue's strident voice cheered him on.

The pennies rolled to his feet.

Homer solemnly picked up the lottery ticket, flattened it against the wall, and wrote across the back: "To my old pal Blue" . . . "Say, what's your other name?"

"Johnson," Blue supplied. "Come out with the First Fleet."

"Blue Johnson," the sergeant continued, "from Homer P. Alcorn in settlement of a d-d-debt of honour." He turned to the other two. "C-c-come on, you guys, witness here, so it's all legal."

Blue pocketed the ticket and buttoned his tunic. The lift gave a jerk. Slowly they began to descend. When he opened the door the manager was waiting, his thin face pale with rage. Crikey, Blue thought, old L.F. looks like murder. Aw, what the hell! "Well, here we are at last, Mr. Sharlton!" he announced cheerily.

The manager ignored him. The crowd jostled forward. "Now then, now then." Blue waved them back. "No pushin' and shovin'. Make way for our allies."

The Americans filed slowly out, each pausing to shake his hand. "Good luck, Homer P." Blue smiled up at him warmly. "Come and see me when you get back, mate!"

"S-s-sure," said the sergeant, "it's a date."

The manager gritted his teeth and stepped back to allow the lift to fill. He followed the last passenger in and stood beside Blue, lean and forbidding.

Come in Spinner

FRIDAY II

IN the Marie-Antoinette Salon on the second floor of the Hotel "South-Pacific" the process of beautifying the last client of the day went through its complicated routine.

Claire came wearily into the boudoir, now free of waiting