

TOKYO BROADCAST



THE voice of the woman behind the reception desk at the Navy Department was amused. "So you want to see the Admiral?" she said.

"I don't want to see the Admiral," said Grace. "He wants to see me."

The woman said, "Oh! You're Mrs. Brown! You're the wife of that lieutenant . . ." Grace felt alone and afraid. When your husband has talked on the Tokyo radio, and has given aid to the enemy, then you are no longer part of the people and of the land.

The woman handed her a blue badge, and a sergeant of Marines piloted her to the Admiral's office. The Admiral was a small, wiry, gray man.

When he spoke his voice was low and level. "Did you hear the broadcast?"

"No. First the newspaper called. They told me Tommy was on the Tokyo radio." She remembered that first moment, the enormous surge of relief and how she could not speak because she knew he was not dead.

"Then they told me what he had said," she murmured, "and I knew it couldn't be Tommy." She lifted her eyes. "You don't know Tommy, Admiral. Tommy loves the Navy, maybe more than he loves me."

The Admiral leaned across the desk and touched her shoulder. "Easy," he cautioned. "Easy! We'll find out."

An officer appeared with a flat, black disk. Two captains eased into chairs. "Now, Mrs. Brown," the Admiral commanded, "I want you to listen closely to this record. Voices are frequently distorted on short wave. So listen particularly for any phrases your husband habitually used. Listen for phrases he never used. It is important that we know certainly whether it was really your husband who spoke."

"This is Radio Tokyo," a voice that was neither British nor American began. "For our listeners in North America, I now introduce Lieutenant Thomas G. Brown—Lieutenant Thomas G. Brown—who was captured when his destroyer was sunk in our victorious battle of the Macassar Straits."

A man began to speak. He spoke in a monotone, choosing each word carefully. "This is Lieutenant Thomas G. Brown," he said, "and I am allowed to speak through the courtesy of the Imperial Japanese government."

Grace drew in her breath. It didn't

T O K Y O B R O A D C A S T

sound like Tommy. "That's a recording," one of the four-stripers said, "and the voice is distorted. They wouldn't dare put him on a live mike."

The voice continued: "First I want to say hello to my wife, Grace. And I hope the baby shook that strep throat okay—"

She felt the eyes of the Admiral slanting at her, and held tight to the arms of her chair.

"And now I want to tell the people back home how well I have been treated. I've got no reason to honk. I think we have really misunderstood the Japanese."

Grace felt the tears hot on her face. That was his word—"honk."

"Japan is truly a peaceful and beautiful country," the voice went on woodenly. "Just yesterday I stood beside a wharf, with a great white-capped volcano at my back, and looked upon a peaceful scene. At my right two lighthouses were blinking—just as they did in peacetime. Before me there was no sign of war—only the lovely sea gulls and the tiny fishing boats in the bay.

"It is hard to believe, when viewing a scene like that, that Japan is at war, that such a race of mighty warriors could spring from such a peaceful land. I repeat, I have been very well treated and am in perfect health."

"That's enough," the Admiral said. He turned to the girl, small and shaking and infinitely miserable. "Well," he demanded, "was that your husband?"

She tried to speak, and finally she was able to say, "Yes."

"You're absolutely certain?"

"Yes! Oh, God! Yes!"

The Admiral turned to his captains. "Let's start things moving. Fast!"

Grace drew herself straight, because he was her husband and she loved him. "I want to know," she said, "what will happen to him when he comes home? I have a right to know."

The Admiral smiled. "I suppose, child," he said, "that he'll get the Distinguished Service Cross and a promotion. I can tell you about it, because you're a Navy wife. He was describing the Japanese base below Yokohama—and when he told how peaceful it was, with only sea gulls and fishing boats to be seen, he was telling us that the main Japanese fleet had put to sea."

PAT FRANK