

VINCENT AND A.E.

Sample Chapter

CHAPTER TWO

It had been thirty years since Amelia Earhart vanished in the Pacific Ocean. Vincent still blamed himself for not going with her—maybe he could have saved her. He researched and double checked all the facts surrounding her disappearance, but came up at a dead end each time. Haunted by her, he would never forget A.E.—never. What had happened to those thirty years...? He'd been on his island for the past five years—remembering....

Vincent and his G-2 spy buddy, Tad Yamaguchi, had rounded up several German spies in Honolulu on December 7, 1941. One mastermind Japanese spy, Takeo Ito, escaped. Someday, they would meet again.

Tad spent most of the war years in Tokyo as an undercover agent for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services). He supplied intelligence to the United States Army Air Corps which culminated in the Doolittle air raid on Tokyo in April 1942. Tad also supplied the U. S. Navy intelligence about Japan's plans to take Midway Island in June 1942. And the U. S. Navy won that battle which changed the course of the war.

During the entire Second World War, Vincent went from G-2 to the OSS. He gathered his operatives. "All right men, I'm sending you behind enemy lines in Nazi Germany to blow up railroads and cause any other disruption you can." He set up and trained indigenous irregular forces for sabotage and as guides for Allied forces in China and Burma. Also during the war, a young physician invented the first Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus (SCUBA). The U. S. Navy turned it down. When Vincent heard, he responded. "The OSS will buy it. It's invaluable."

After the war, the OSS was transformed into the CIA. It was 1947. Vincent and Tad were now in the CIA. Then in 1950 the Korean War broke out and they were back in the thick of espionage. When the war ended in 1953, Vincent was getting burned out. "Don't know how much longer I can be involved with the CIA," he told Tad.

"Give it some more time, Tad said. "We're at peace now."

Vincent still thought about A.E. and longed to find out what happened to her. He knew she just didn't plunge into the ocean. Then in 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated. Vincent felt the CIA knew something about it, but did nothing. He couldn't reconcile that so he resigned and headed to Australia.

The Cold War was in full swing and trouble brewed in Viet Nam. Tad Yamaguchi, who was younger than Vincent, decided to stay in the CIA. Vincent wondered if they would ever meet again.

While passing over The Coral Sea on his way to Brisbane, Australia, Vincent noticed many small, flat islands. When he landed he found some of the islands were for sale. He hired a sea plane and toured the area until he found a different island with two dormant volcanoes peaked high above the jungle and plenty of coconut palms. Returning to

Brisbane he bought it and went looking for a sailboat. He found a 43-foot wooden sloop that he liked. He bought it and christened her *Courage*. Next he outfitted the boat, stocked up on rations, and a day later, he set sail for his island.

Vincent anchored past the surrounding reef in the light and dark turquoise lagoon, put the supplies in the dinghy, and made several trips to shore. That night he slept on the *Courage*, but it was a restless sleep. Early the next morning, Vincent dove into the cool lagoon to wake up, made strong coffee, and cooked a few eggs for breakfast. He had a hard day planned—stake out a shack, then build it.

After he outlined his hut in the sand, he gathered bamboo canes to raise his new home above the ground to keep bugs from crawling on him. He spent hours pounding strong poles into the sand and securing them. Bamboo shoots laced them together to form the walls.

In the middle of the hot afternoon he stopped, took a breather, and ate a lunch of bananas, coconuts, and water. When he finished, Vincent dove into the lagoon and swam around for about a half hour. Refreshed, he hunted for palm fronds, cut them down, and made the thatched roof for his hut. Then he stopped work and took in the sunset from his crude shack's steps. As night settled in, he lit the lamps he had brought along, ate a fish dinner, and stretched out on the bamboo floor. Tomorrow, he would start building some furniture.