



Beachmasters

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Characters Discussed

Tommy Narota, the leader of a rebellion on a tiny South Pacific island. the son of a native woman and a British planter, Narota, who is approximately fifty years old, is a gentle and naïve sort, not at all a typical revolutionary. His firmly held belief in the native people's right to govern themselves on their own island inspires them to revolt, albeit unsuccessfully, against the European powers that have so long dominated them.

Gavi Salway, a teenage boy who learns at the rebellion's start that he is a half-caste. He had been reared believing that he was the child of British planters. Possessing a keen sensitivity and awareness, Gavi sets out to grasp the significance of this discovery. During the short-lived rebellion, he makes his passage into manhood.

District Agent Cordingley, the island's major British official. In appearance, speech, and actions, the middle-aged Cordingley is a near caricature of British colonial administrators. Typically, he responds to the rebellion in a bumbling, cowardly manner.

Bonser, a crude, bigoted, and exploitative Australian expatriate who works as a mechanic on the island. the rebellion to him simply provides a way to make money through gun smuggling.

Père Leyroud, an aging Roman Catholic priest who has spent forty years on the island. the rebellion serves to heighten his sense of failure and his disillusionment with the religion he preaches.

Salway, a British planter and Gavi's grandfather, who has been an island resident for fifty years. Wise and gentle, he sees the rebellion as a sign of a passing era and the end of deception concerning Gavi's true parentage.

Woodful, the school's middle-aged headmaster, who displays more understanding of the natives than most of his fellow Anglo-Saxons on the island. Woodful realizes that the rebellion has undone all of his years of well-intended struggle, and he accepts that truth.

Chloe of the Dancing Bears, an aging prostitute of British descent. A minor character, Chloe stands out as a representative of several such decadent colonial types portrayed briefly in the novel. Having long used the island as a retreat from shattered lives that they cannot face, they ignore the revolution as well.

Letty Trumble, the middle-aged wife of a minor British official. Prudish, pretentious, racist, and sexually frustrated, Trumble represents a typical kind of woman that colonialism produced.

Belle Cordingley, the American wife of District Agent Cordingley. She is a brassy blonde whose responses and actions border on the comic as she expresses bitterness and disappointment over her husband's past failures and his pathetic behavior during the rebellion.

Bibliography

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