

Scene One

SCENE: EMILE DE BECQUE'S *plantation home on an island in the South Pacific.*

On your right as you look at the stage is a one-storied residence. On your left is a teakwood pagoda at the edge of the cacao grove. House and pagoda are bordered and decked in the bright tropical colors of the flaming hibiscus, the purple bougainvillaea, and the more pale and delicate frangipani. Between the house and the pagoda you can see the bay below and an island on the open sea beyond the bay. Twin volcanoes rise from the island.

AT RISE: *Two Eurasian children, NGANA, a girl about eleven, and JEROME, a boy about eight, are, with humorous dignity, dancing an impromptu minuet. A bird call is heard in the tree above. JEROME looks up and imitates the sound. The eyes of both children follow the flight of the bird. NGANA runs over to the pagoda and climbs up on a table and poses on it as if it were a stage. JEROME lifts his hands and solemnly conducts her as she sings.*

NGANA AND JEROME

Dites-moi
Pourquoi
La vie est belle,
Dites-moi
Pourquoi
La vie est gai!
Dites-moi
Pourquoi,

Chère mad'moiselle,
Est-ce que
Parce que
Vous m'aimez?

(HENRY, a servant, enters and scolds them)

HENRY

Allez-vous! Vite! Dans la maison!

NGANA

Non, Henri!

JEROME

(Mischievously delivering an ultimatum)

Moi, je reste ici!

HENRY

Oh, oui? Nous verrons bien . . . (He chases JEROME around the giggling NGANA) Viens, petit moustique!

(HENRY catches JEROME. He is not as angry as he pretends to be, but he grabs JEROME by the ear and leads him off squealing, followed by NGANA, who protests violently.)

NGANA

Non, Henri . . . non . . . non!

(As she runs off, NELLIE and EMILE are heard offstage from around the corner of the house)

NELLIE'S VOICE

What's this one?

EMILE'S VOICE

That is frangipani.

NELLIE'S VOICE

But what a color!

EMILE'S VOICE

You will find many more flowers out here.

(NELLIE enters, looking around her, entranced by the beauty of the scene. She turns upstage to gaze out over the bay. HENRY comes on from downstage with a tray which he takes over to the coffee table. EMILE, entering a few paces behind NELLIE, comes down briskly and addresses HENRY.)

EMILE

Je servirai le café.

HENRY

Oui, Monsieur.

EMILE

C'est tout.

HENRY

Oui, Monsieur de Becque.

(HENRY exits. NELLIE comes down, still under the spell of the surrounding wonder.)

NELLIE

Well, I'm just speechless! . . . And that lunch! Wild chicken—I didn't know it was ever wild. Gosh! I had no idea that people lived like this right out in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

EMILE

(Pouring coffee)

Sugar?

NELLIE

Thanks.

EMILE

One?

NELLIE

Three. (EMILE *smiles*) I know it's a big load for a demitasse to carry. All right, I'm a hick. You know so many American words, do you know what a hick is?

EMILE

A hick is one who lives in a stick.

NELLIE

Sticks. Plural. The sticks.

EMILE

Pardon. The sticks. I remember now.

NELLIE

How long did it take you to build up a plantation like this?

EMILE

I came to the Pacific when I was a young man.

(NELLIE studies him for a moment)

NELLIE

Emile, is it true that all the planters on these islands—are they all running away from something?

EMILE

(Pausing cautiously before he answers)

Who is not running away from something? There are fugitives everywhere—Paris, New York, even in Small Rock . . . (NELLIE *looks puzzled*) Where you come from . . .

(NELLIE suddenly understands what he means and bursts out laughing)

NELLIE

Oh, Little Rock!

EMILE

(EMILE, laughing with her and shouting the correction)

Little Rock! . . . You know fugitives there?

(NELLIE runs over to where she has left her bag)

NELLIE

I'll show you a picture of a Little Rock fugitive. *(Taking an envelope from the bag)* I got this clipping from my mother today.

(She hands it to EMILE, who reads:)

EMILE

"Ensign Nellie Forbush, Arkansas's own Florence Nightingale . . ."

NELLIE

(Apologetically)

That was written by Mrs. Leeming, the Social Editor. She went to school with my mother. To read her, you would think that I'm

practically the most important nurse in the entire Navy and that I run the fleet hospital all by myself, and it's only a matter of time before I become a Lady Admiral.

EMILE

In this picture you do not look much like an Admiral.

NELLIE

Oh, that was taken before I knew what rain and heat and mud could do to your disposition. But it isn't rainy today. Gosh, it's beautiful here. Just look at that yellow sun! You know, I don't think it's the end of the world like everyone else thinks. I can't work myself up to getting that low. *(He smiles)* Do you think I'm crazy too? They all do over at the fleet hospital. You know what they call me? Knucklehead Nellie. I suppose I am, but I can't help it.

(Sings)

When the sky is a bright canary yellow
I forget every cloud I've ever seen—
So they call me a cockeyed optimist,
Immature and incurably green!

I have heard people rant and rave and bellow
That we're done and we might as well be dead—
But I'm only a cockeyed optimist,
And I can't get it into my head.

I hear the human race
Is falling on its face
And hasn't very far to go,
But ev'ry whip-poor-will
Is selling me a bill
And telling me it just ain't so!

I could say life is just a bowl of Jell-o
And appear more intelligent and smart,
But I'm stuck like a dope
With a thing called hope,
And I can't get it out of my heart!
Not this heart!

(She walks over to him, speaking the next line)

Want to know anything else about me?

EMILE

Yes. You say you are a fugitive. When you joined the Navy, what were you running away from?

(He returns the clipping to her)

NELLIE

Gosh, I don't know. It was more like I was running *to* something. I wanted to see what the world was like—outside Little Rock, I mean. And I wanted to meet different kinds of people and find out if I like them better And I'm finding out.

(She suddenly becomes self-conscious)

EMILE

(Tactful)

Would you like some cognac?

NELLIE

(Relieved)

I'd love some.

(EMILE goes to the table and pours the brandy. In the following verses, EMILE and NELLIE are not singing to each other. Each is soliloquizing.)

NELLIE

(Thoughtfully watching EMILE)

Wonder how I'd feel,
 Living on a hillside,
 Looking on an ocean
 Beautiful and still.

EMILE

(Pouring the cognac)

This is what I need,
 This is what I've longed for,
 Someone young and smiling
 Climbing up my hill!

NELLIE

We are not alike;
 Probably I'd bore him.
 He's a cultured Frenchman—
 I'm a little hick.

EMILE

(Pausing as he starts to pour the second glass)

Younger men than I,
 Officers and doctors,
 Probably pursue her—
 She could have her pick.

NELLIE

(She catches his eye. Each averts his eyes from the other.)

Wonder why I feel
 Jittery and jumpy!
 I am like a schoolgirl,

Waiting for a dance.

EMILE

(Carrying the the two filled brandy glasses, he approaches NELLIE)

Can I ask her now?
 I am like a schoolboy!
 What will be her answer?
 Do I have a chance?

(He passes NELLIE her brandy glass. It is a large snifter. She has apparently never drunk from one before. She watches him carefully as he warms his brandy, holding the snifter in the palms of both hands and making a gentle circular motion. She does the same. As they drink, the music rises to great ecstatic heights. One is made aware that in this simple act of two people falling in love, each drinking brandy, there are turbulent thoughts and feelings going on in their hearts and brains. They lower their glasses; the music dies down. EMILE struggles to say something. He plunges into the middle of his subject as if continuing a thought which he assumes she has sensed.)

EMILE

In peacetime, the boat from America comes once a month. The ladies—the wives of the planters—often go to Australia during the hot months. It can get very hot here.

NELLIE

It can get hot in Arkansas, too.

(She takes another quick swallow after this one)

EMILE

Ah, yes?

NELLIE

(Nodding her head)

Uh-huh.

EMILE

(He puts his glass down on the table)

I have many books here . . . Marcel Proust? *(She looks blank)* Andre Gide? *(This evokes a faint smile of half-recognition from her)* Did you study French in school?

NELLIE

Oh, yes.

EMILE

Ah, then you can read French?

NELLIE

(As though saying, "Of course not.")

No! *(Fearful of having disappointed him, she makes a feeble attempt to add a note of hope)* I can conjugate a few verbs. *(Realizing how silly this must sound to him, she changes the subject)* I bet you read a lot.

EMILE

Out here, one becomes hungry to learn everything. *(He rises and paces pensively)* Not to miss anything, not to let anything good pass by.

(He pauses and looks down at her, unable to go on. She, feeling he is coming closer to his point, looks up with a sudden encouraging smile.)

NELLIE

Yes?

EMILE

One waits so long for what is good . . . and when at last it comes, one cannot risk to lose. *(He turns away, searching for more words)* So . . . so one must speak and act quickly . . . even—even if it seems almost foolish to be so quick. *(He looks at her, worried . . . has he gone too far . . . how will she accept any advance at all he may make to her? She can only smile helplessly back at him. He goes on, speaking quickly.)* I know if it is only two weeks. A dinner given at your Officers' Club. Do you remember?

NELLIE

Yes.

EMILE

And that is the way things happen sometimes . . . Isn't it, Nellie?

NELLIE

(Swallowing hard)

Yes, it is . . . Emile.

EMILE

(Singing)

Some enchanted evening
You may see a stranger,
You may see a stranger
Across a crowded room.
And somehow you know,
You know even then,
That somewhere you'll see her again and again.

Some enchanted evening
 Someone may be laughing,
 You may hear her laughing
 Across a crowded room—
 And night after night,
 As strange as it seems,
 The sound of her laughter will sing in your dreams.

Who can explain it?
 Who can tell you why?
 Fools give you reasons—
 Wise men never try.

Some enchanted evening,
 When you find your true love,
 When you feel her call you
 Across a crowded room—
 Then fly to her side
 And make her your own,
 Or all through your life you may dream all alone.

Once you have found her,
 Never let her go,
 Once you have found her,
 Never let her go!

(There follow several seconds of silence. Neither moves. EMILE speaks.)

I am older than you. If we have children, when I die they will be growing up. You could afford to take them back to America—if you like. Think about it.

(HENRY enters from house)

HENRY

Monsieur de Becque, la jeep de Mademoiselle est ici. *(NELLIE and EMILE turn as if awakened from a dream)* La jeep de Mademoiselle. *(HENRY smiles, a wide toothy smile, at NELLIE)* Votre zheep!

NELLIE

Oh, my jeep! *(She looks at her watch)* Gosh! Thank you, Henry. I'm on duty in ten minutes!

(HENRY exits. NELLIE holds out her hand to EMILE.)

EMILE

Before you leave, Nellie, I want to tell you something. A while ago, you asked me a question—why did I leave France?

NELLIE

Oh, Emile, that was none of my business.

EMILE

But I want to tell you. I had to leave France. I killed a man.
(Pause)

NELLIE

Why did you kill him?

EMILE

He was a wicked man, a bully. Everyone in our village was glad to see him die, and it was not to my discredit. Do you believe me, Nellie?

(Another pause—unbearable to him)

NELLIE

You have just told me that you killed a man and that it's all right.

I hardly know you, and yet I know it's all right.

EMILE
(Deeply moved)

Thank you, Nellie. *(His voice suddenly gay and exultant)* And you like my place?

NELLIE
Yes.

EMILE
You will think?

NELLIE
(Smiling up at him)

I will think.

(They are silent and motionless for a moment. Then she turns and suddenly walks off very quickly. He looks after her and starts to hum softly. He picks up the coffee cup she has left on the fountain and smiles down at it. He holds the cup up so he can examine its rim.)

EMILE
Lipstick! . . . Three lumps of sugar in this little cup! *(He laughs aloud, then resumes his humming and walks, almost dances, across the stage in time to his own music. NGANA and JEROME and walk behind him across the stage, imitating his happy stride. As EMILE puts down the cup, the children join him, humming the same melody. He turns quickly and frowns down on them with mock sternness. They giggle.)*
Eh bien!

JEROME
Bravo, Papa!
(The children both applaud)

EMILE
Merci, Monsieur!

NGANA
Nous chantons bien, aussi.

EMILE
Ah, oui?

NGANA
Attends, Papa!

JEROME
(Parroting NGANA)
Attends, Papa!
(He looks at NGANA for the signal to start the song. They sing . . . EMILE conducting them.)

NGANA AND JEROME
Dites-moi
Pourquoi
La vie est belle—
(EMILE joins them)
Dites-moi
Pourquoi
La vie est gai!
Dites-moi
Pourquoi,

(EMILE and JEROME make a deep bow to NGANA)

Chère mad'moiselle,

(EMILE picks them up, one under each arm, and starts to carry them off as they finish singing the refrain together)

Est-ce que

Parce que

Vous m'aimez?

(The lights fade out and a transparent curtain closes in on them. Before they are out of sight, the characters of the next scene have entered downstage in front of the curtain. All transitions from one scene to another in the play are achieved in this manner so that the effect is of one picture dissolving into the next.)

Scene Two

The curtain depicts no specific place but represents the abstract pattern of a large tapa-cloth. In front of this, lounge a group of Seabees, sailors and Marines. As the lights come up on them and go out on the previous scene, they are singing.

MEN

Bloody Mary is the girl I love,
 Bloody Mary is the girl I love,
 Bloody Mary is the girl I love—
 Now ain't that too damn bad!
 Her skin is tender as DiMaggio's glove,
 Her skin is tender as DiMaggio's glove,
 Her skin is tender as DiMaggio's glove—
 Now ain't that too damn bad!

(The object of this serenade who has been hidden during the song, by two sailors, is now revealed as they move away. This is BLOODY MARY. She wears black sateen trousers, and a white blouse over which is an old Marine's tunic. On her head is a peach-basket hat. Around her neck is a G.I. identification chain from which hangs a silver Marine emblem. At the end of the singing, she gives out a shrill cackle of laughter with which we shall soon learn to identify her.)

BLOODY MARY

(Looking straight out at the audience)

Hallo, G.I.! *(She holds up a grass skirt)* Grass skirt? Very saxy! Fo'

dolla? Saxy grass skirt. Fo' dolla! Send home Chicago. You like? You buy? *(Her eyes scan the audience as if following a passerby. Her crafty smile fades to a quick scowl as he apparently passes without buying. She calls after him.)* Where you go? Come back! Chipskate! Crummy G.I.! Sadsack. Droopy-drawers!

MARINE

Tell 'em good, Mary!

BLOODY MARY

What is good?

MARINE

Tell him he's a stingy bastard!

BLOODY MARY

(Delighted at the sound of these new words)

Stingy bastard! *(She turns back toward MARINE for approval)* That good?

MARINE

That's great, Mary! You're learning fast.

BLOODY MARY

(Calling off again)

Stingy bastard! *(She cackles gaily and turns to the MARINE)* I learn fast . . . pretty soon I talk English good as any crummy Marine. *(Calling off once more)* Stingy bastard!

(She laughs very loud, but the MARINES, SEABEES, and SAILORS laugh louder and cheer her. They then resume their serenade.)

MEN

Bloody Mary's chewing betel nuts,
She is always chewing betel nuts,
Bloody Mary's chewing betel nuts—
And she don't use Pepsodent!

(She grins and shows her betel-stained teeth)

Now ain't that too damn bad!

(While this is being sung, the lights come up behind the tapa-cloth transparent curtain revealing.)

Scene Three

SCENE: *The edge of a palm grove near the beach. Beyond the beach in the bay can be seen the same tein-peaked island that was evident from EMILE'S hillside. On your left, as you look at the stage, is BLOODY MARY'S kiosk. This is made of bamboo and canvas. Her merchandise, laid out in front, comprises shells, native hats, local dress material, outrigger canoes, and hookahs. Several grass skirts are hanging up around the kiosk. On the right, at first making a puzzling silhouette, then as the light comes up, revealing itself to be a contraption of weird detail, is a G.I. homemade washing machine. It looks partly like a giant ice-cream freezer, partly like a windmill. In front of it there is a sign which reads:*

TWISTED AIR HAND LAUNDRY
LUTHER BILLIS ENTERPRISES
SPECIAL RATES FOR SEABEES.

As the lights come up, the washing machine is being operated by Carpenter's Mate, Second Class, George Watts, better known as STEWPOT. SEABEES, SAILORS, MARINES, and some ARMY MEN lounge around the scene waiting for whatever diversion BLOODY MARY may provide. During the singing which covers this change, BLOODY MARY takes a strange looking object out of her pocket and dangles it in front of a MARINE.

MARINE

What is that thing?

BLOODY MARY

(Holding the small object in her hand)

Is head. Fifty dolla'.

MARINE

(Revolted)

What's it made of?

BLOODY MARY

Made outa head! Is real human.

MARINE

(Fascinated)

What makes it so small?

BLOODY MARY

Shlunk! Only way to keep human head is shlink 'em.

MARINE

No, thanks.

(He leaves quickly)

BLOODY MARY

(To a new customer as she holds a grass skirt up to her waist and starts to dance)

Fo' dolla'. Send home Chicago to saxy sweetheart! She make wave like this.

(She starts to dance. One of the sailors grabs her and goes into an impromptu jitterbug dance with her. Others join, and soon the beach is alive with gyrating gentlemen of the United States Armed Services. As this spontaneous festivity is at its height, LUTHER BILLIS enters, followed by the PROFESSOR, both loaded

with grass skirts. They come down in front of BLOODY MARY and throw the grass skirts at her feet.)

BILLIS

Here you are, Sweaty Pie! Put them down, Professor. These beautiful skirts were made by myself, the Professor here, and three other Seabees in half the time it takes your native workers to make 'em. *(He picks up a skirt and demonstrates)* See? No stretch! *(Throwing the skirt back on the ground)* Look 'em over, Sweaty Pie, and give me your price.

(At this point, an altercation starts upstage near the washing machine)

SAILOR

Look at that shirt!

STEWY POT

Take it up with the manager.

(He points down to BILLIS)

SAILOR

(Coming down to him)

Hey, Big Dealer! Hey, Luther Billis!

BILLIS

(Smoothly)

What can I do for you, my boy? What's the trouble?

SAILOR

(Holding up his shirt which has been laundered and is in tatters)

Look at that shirt!

BILLIS

The Billis Laundry is not responsible for minor burns and tears. *(He turns back laconically to BLOODY MARY)* What do you say, Sweatso? What am I offered?

(The SAILOR storms off. The PROFESSOR, meanwhile, is showing the beautiful work they do to some other sailors and Seabees.)

PROFESSOR

(Holding up a skirt)

All hand-sewn!

SAILOR

Gee, that's mighty nice work!

BILLIS

(To BLOODY MARY)

Do you hear that, Sweaty Pie? You can probably sell these to the chumps for five or six dollars apiece. Now, I'll let you have the whole bunch for . . . say . . . eighty bucks.

BLOODY MARY

Give you ten dolla'.

BILLIS

What?

BLOODY MARY

Not enough?

BILLIS

You're damn well right, not enough!

BLOODY MARY

(Dropping the skirt at his feet)

Den you damn well keep.

(She goes down to another sailor and takes from her pocket a boar's tooth bracelet which she holds up to tempt him)

BILLIS

(Following BLOODY MARY)

Now look here, Dragon Lady—*(Whatever he was about to say is knocked out of his head by the sight of the bracelet. BILLIS is an inveterate and passionate souvenir hunter.)* What's that you got there? A boar's tooth bracelet? Where'd you get that? *(He points to the twin-peaked island)* Over there on Bali Ha'i?

BLOODY MARY

(Smiling craftily)

You like?

BILLIS

(Taking bracelet and showing to G.I.s who have huddled around him)

You know what that is? A bracelet made out of a single boar's tooth. They cut the tooth from the boar's mouth in a big ceremonial over there on Bali Ha'i. There ain't a souvenir you can pick up in the South Pacific as valuable as this . . . What do you want for it, Mary?

BLOODY MARY

Hundred dolla'!

BILLIS

Hundred dollars! *(Shocked, but realizing he will pay it, turns to*

the boys and justifies himself in advance) That's cheap. I thought it would be more.

(He takes the money from his pocket)

PROFESSOR

I don't see how she can do it.

BLOODY MARY

Make you special offer, Big Deala'. I trade you boar's tooth bracelet for all grass skirts.

BILLIS

It's a deal.

BLOODY MARY

Wait a minute. Is no deal till you throw in something for good luck.

BILLIS

Okay. What do you want me to throw in?

BLOODY MARY

(Taking money from his hand)

Hundred dolla'.

BILLIS

Well, for the love of . . .

MARY

(Shaking his hand, grinning a big Oriental grin)

Good luck.

(She exits with the grass skirts. The men all crowd around BILLIS, shaking his hand in ironic "congratulations.")

BILLIS

You don't run into these things every day. They're scarce as hens' teeth.

PROFESSOR

They're bigger, too.

BILLIS

That damned Bali Ha'i! (*Turning and looking toward the twin-peaked island*) Why does it have to be off-limits? You can get everything over there. Shrunken heads, bracelets, old ivory . . .

SAILOR

Young French women!

BILLIS

Knock it off! I'm talking about souvenirs.

PROFESSOR

So's he.

BILLIS

(*Pacing restlessly*)

We got to get a boat and get over there. I'm feeling held down again. I need to take a trip.

STEWPOD

Only officers can sign out boats.

BILLIS

I'll get a boat all right. I'll latch on to some officer who's got some imagination . . . that would like to see that boar's tooth

ceremonial as much as I would . . . It's a hell of a ceremonial! Dancin', drinkin' . . . everything!

SAILOR

Why, you big phony. We all know why you want to go to Bali Ha'i.

BILLIS

Why?

SAILOR

Because the French planters put all their young women over there when they heard the G.I.s were coming. That's why! It ain't boar's teeth . . . it's women!

BILLIS

It is boar's teeth—and women!

(*A long pause. All the men are still and thoughtful, each dreaming a similar dream—but his own. Music starts. A SEABEE breaks the silence.*)

SEABEE

(*Singing*)

We got sunlight on the sand,
We got moonlight on the sea,

SAILOR

We got mangoes and bananas
You can pick right off a tree,

MARINE

We got volleyball and ping-pong
And a lot of dandy games—

BILLIS
What ain't we got?

ALL
We ain't got dames!

MARINE
We get packages from home,

SAILOR
We get movies, we get shows,

STEWPOW
We get speeches from our skipper

SOLDIER
And advice from Tokyo Rose,

SEABEE
We get letters doused wit' poifume,

SAILOR
We get dizzy from the smell—

BILLIS
What don't we get?

ALL
You know damn well!

BILLIS
We got nothin' to put on a clean, white suit for.

What we need is what there ain't no substitute for.

ALL
There is nothin' like a dame—
Nothin' in the world!
There is nothin' you can name
That is anythin' like a dame.

MARINE
We feel restless,
We feel blue,

SEABEE
We feel lonely and, in brief,
We feel every kind of feelin'

PROFESSOR
But the feelin' of relief.

SAILOR
We feel hungry as the wolf felt
When he met Red Riding Hood—

ALL
What don't we feel?

STEWPOW
We don't feel good!

SAILOR
Lots of things in life are beautiful, but, brother—
There is one particular thing that is nothin' whatsoever

In any way, shape or form like any other.

ALL

There is nothin' like a dame—
Nothin' in the world!
There is nothin' you can name
That is anythin' like a dame.

Nothin' else is built the same!
Nothin' in the world
Has a soft and wavy frame
Like the silhouette of a dame.

MARINE

(with a deep bass voice)

There is absolutely nothin' like the frame of a dame!
(The music continues throughout the following dialogue and action)

GIRL'S VOICE

Hut, two, three, four! Get—your—exercise!
(A husky LEAD NURSE enters, leading several other NURSES, all dressed in bathing suits, playsuits, or fatigues. NELLIE is among them. They jog across the stage, their LEADER continuing the military count. The men's eyes follow them.)

A TIRED NURSE

Can't we rest awhile?

HUSKY LEADER

Come on, you nurses, pick it up!
(NELLIE drops out of line as the others run off)

NELLIE

(Beckoning to BILLIS)

Hey, Luther!

STEW POT

(Nudging BILLIS)

Luther!

(BILLIS turns and goes shyly to NELLIE, terribly embarrassed that the men are watching him. He is a different BILLIS in front of NELLIE. He is unassured and has lost all of his brashness. To him, NELLIE has "class.")

BILLIS

Yes, Miss Forbush.

(All eyes follow him)

NELLIE

Have you done what you promised?

BILLIS

Yes, Miss Forbush. *(He pulls out a newspaper package from a hiding place in the roots of a tree and hands it to her)* I did it all last night. *(With an alarmed look at his comrades, as she starts to unwrap it)* You don't have to open it now.

(But NELLIE opens the package, much to BILLIS's embarrassment. It is her laundry, neatly folded.)

NELLIE

Oh. You do beautiful work, Luther! *(Two men painfully cling to each other and turn their heads away. BILLIS tries to outglare the others in defensive defiance.)* You've even done the pleats in my shorts!

BILLIS

Aw, pleats ain't hard. You better run along now and catch up to your gang.

NELLIE

Pleats are *very* hard. How do you do such delicate work at night, in the dark?

BILLIS

There was a moon!

STEW POT

(In a syrupy voice)

There was a moon!

BILLIS

(He turns to the men, realizing that they have heard this, and shouts defiantly)

A full moon!

NELLIE

(She is wrapping up the package)

How much, Luther?

BILLIS

(Earnestly)

Oh, no, not from you.

NELLIE

Gosh, I guess I'm just about the luckiest nurse on this island to have found you. You're a treasure. *(She turns and runs off)* Well, good-bye, Luther. Hut, two, three, four!

(She has gone! BILLIS turns and faces the men, trying to bluff it out. He walks belligerently over to STEWPOT, who with the PROFESSOR whistles "There's Nothin' Like a Dame." Then he walks over to another group and they join STEWPOT and PROFESSOR in whistling. Soon all are whistling. BILLIS whistles too. After the refrain is finished, STEWPOT looks off reflectively at the departing NELLIE.)

STEW POT

She's a nice little girl, but some of them nurses—the officers can have them.

PROFESSOR

They got them!

STEW POT

Well, they can have them!

MARINE

(Singing)

So suppose a dame ain't bright,
Or completely free from flaws,

SAILOR

Or as faithful as a bird dog,

SEABEE

Or as kind as Santa Claus—

SOLDIER

It's a waste of time to worry
Over things that they have not

SAILOR

Be thankful for

ALL

The things they got!

HUSKY LEADER

(Entering)

Hut, two, three, four! Hut, two, three, four!

(The exercising nurses enter upstage, jogging in the opposite direction to their previous course. NELLIE is again with them. She turns and waves to BILLIS and points to the laundry under her arm. The men all rise and turn upstage, their heads following the nurses until they're off. Then they continue to turn until they're facing front again.)

ALL

There is nothin' you can name
That is anythin' like a dame!
There are no books like a dame,
And nothin' looks like a dame.
There are no drinks like a dame,
And nothin' thinks like a dame,
Nothin' acts like a dame
Or attracts like dame.
There ain't a thing that's wrong with any man here
That can't be cured by puttin' him near
A girly, womanly, female, feminine dame!
(BLOODY MARY enters and starts humming the song, as she proceeds to rearrange her new stock of grass skirts. LT. JOSEPH CABLE enters. He wears suntans, overseas cap, and carries a musette bag in his hand. BLOODY MARY sees him and stops singing. They stand for

a moment, looking at each other—she, suspicious and frightened, and he, puzzled and curious.)

BLOODY MARY

Hallo.

CABLE

Hello.

(Music of "Bali Ha'i" is played softly)

BLOODY MARY

You mak' trouble for me?

CABLE

Hunh?

BLOODY MARY

Are you crummy Major?

CABLE

No, I'm even crummier than that. I'm a lieutenant.

BLOODY MARY

Lootellan?

CABLE

(Laughing)

Lootellan.

(He strolls away from her, toward the men)

BILLIS

Hiya, Lootellan. New on the rock?

CABLE

Just came in on that PBV.

BILLIS

Yeah? Where from?

CABLE

A little island south of Marie Louise.

STEW POT

Then you been up where they use real bullets!

CABLE

Unh-huh.

BLOODY MARY

(Who has been looking adoringly at CABLE)

Hey, Lootellan. You damn saxy man!

CABLE

(Rocked off his balance for a moment)

Thanks. You're looking pretty . . . er . . . fit yourself.

(She grins happily at him, showing her betel-stained teeth and crosses, beaming, to her ASSISTANT)

BLOODY MARY

(To ASSISTANT)

Damn saxy!

CABLE

(To BILLIS)

Who is she?

BILLIS

She's Tonkinese—used to work for a French planter.

BLOODY MARY

French planters stingy bastards!

(She laughs)

CABLE

Say, I wonder if any of you know a French planter named de Becque?

BILLIS

Emile de Becque? I think he's the guy lives on top of that hill . . .
Do you know him?

CABLE

(Looking off toward the hill, thoughtfully)

No, but I'm going to.

(BLOODY MARY follows CABLE, taking the shrunken head from her pocket)

BLOODY MARY

Hey, Lootellan. Real human head! . . . You got sweetheart? Send home Chicago to saxy sweetheart!

CABLE

No-er—she's a Philadelphia girl.

BLOODY MARY

Whazzat, Philadelia girl? Whazzat mean? No saxy? *(With a sudden impulse)* You like I give you free?

BILLIS

Free! You never give *me* anything free.

BLOODY MARY

You not saxy like Lootellan. (*To CABLE, proffering the shrunken head*) Take!

CABLE

No, thanks. Where'd you get that anyway?

BLOODY MARY

Bali Ha'i.

STEWPOUT

(*Nudging BILLIS, pointing to CABLE, as he whispers:*)
There's your officer! There's your officer!

BILLIS

That's the island over there with the two volcanoes. (*Significantly*)
Officers can get launches and go over there.

CABLE

(*Looking out at island*)

Bali Ha'i . . . What does that mean?

BLOODY MARY

Bali Ha'i mean "I am your special island" . . . mean . . . "Here I am." Bali Ha'i is *your* special island, Lootellan. I know! You listen! You hear island call to you. Listen! You hear something? Listen!

CABLE

(*After listening for a moment*)

I hear the sound of the wind and the waves, that's all.

BLOODY MARY

You no hear something calling? Listen!

(*Silence. ALL listen.*)

STEWPOUT

(*Trying to be helpful*)

I think *I* hear something.

BILLIS

(*In a harsh, threatening whisper*)

Shut your big fat mouth!

BLOODY MARY

Hear voice?

(*She sings to CABLE as he gazes at the mysterious island*)

Mos' people live on a lonely island,

Lost in de middle of a foggy sea.

Mos' people long fo' anudder island

One where dey know dey would lak to be . . .

Bali Ha'i

May call you,

Any night, any day,

In your heart

You'll hear it call you:

"Come away, come away."

Will whisper
On de wind of de sea,
“Here am I,
Your special island!
Come to me, come to me!”

Your own special hopes,
Your own special dreams,
Bloom on de hillside
And shine in de streams.

If you try,
You’ll find me
Where de sky meets de sea,
“Here am I,
Your special island!
Come to me, come to me!”

Bali Ha’i!
Bali Ha’i!
Bali Ha’i!

Some day, you’ll see me,
Floatin’ in de sunshine,
My head stickin’ out
F’um a low-flyin’ cloud.
You’ll hear me call you,
Singin’ through de sunshine,
Sweet and clear as can be:
“Come to me,
Here am I,

If you try,
You’ll find me
Where de sky meets de sea,
“Here am I,
Your special island!
Come to me, come to me!”

Bali Ha’i!
Bali Ha’i!
Bali Ha’i!

(BLOODY MARY *exits*. CABLE *seems spellbound by her words*.
BILLIS *follows up with a more earthy form of salesmanship*.)

BILLIS

Of course, Lieutenant, right now that island is off-limits due to the fact that the French planters have all their young women running around over there. (*He pauses to observe the effect of these significant words*) Of course, you being an officer, you could get a launch. I’d even be willing to requisition a boat for you. What do you say, Lieutenant?

(*Singing throatily*)

Bali Ha’i may call you
Any night any day.
In your heart you’ll
Hear it call you—
Bali Ha’i—Bali Ha’i . . .
Hunh, Lieutenant?

(*Pause*)

CABLE
No.

BILLIS

(Making a quick shift)

I see what you mean, being off-limits and all. It would take a lot of persuading to get *me* to go over there . . . But, another thing goes on over there—the ceremonial of the boar's tooth. After they kill the boar they pass around some of that coconut liquor and women dance with just skirts on . . . *(His voice becoming evil)* . . . and everybody gets to know everybody pretty well . . .

(He sings)

Bali Ha'i will whisper—

(BILLIS starts dance as he hums the melody seductively. Then he stops and talks.)

It's just a little tribal ceremonial and I thought you being up in the shooting war for such a long time without getting any—recreation—I thought you might be interested.

CABLE

I am. But right now I've got to report to the Island Commander.

BILLIS

Oh. *(Shouting officiously)* Professor! Take the lieutenant up in the truck.

CABLE

Professor?

BILLIS

That's because he went to college. You go to college?

CABLE

Er . . . yes.

BILLIS

Where?

CABLE

A place in New Jersey.

BILLIS

Where? Rutgers?

CABLE

No . . . Princeton.

BILLIS

Oh. Folks got money, eh, Lieutenant? *(He leers wisely)*

Don't be ashamed of it. We understand. Say! Maybe you'd like to hear the Professor talk some language. What would you like to hear? Latin? Grecian? *(Grabbing the unwilling PROFESSOR by the arm and leading him over to CABLE)* Aw, give him some Latin.

PROFESSOR

(The professor feels pretty silly, but proceeds:)

"Rectius vives Licini . . ."

BILLIS

Ain't that beautiful!

PROFESSOR

". . . neque altum
Semper urgendo dum procellas . . ."

(A crowd gathers around the PROFESSOR. BILLIS beams at CABLE.)

BILLIS
Now, Lieutenant, what did he say?

CABLE
I'm afraid I haven't the slightest idea.

BILLIS
What's the matter, didn't you graduate? *(Disgusted, to the PROFESSOR)* Take the Lieutenant to the buildings.
(CABLE and the PROFESSOR start to go)

PROFESSOR
Aye, aye!

BILLIS
(To STEWPOT)
He'll never make Captain.
(The PROFESSOR, suddenly alarmed by something he sees off-stage, turns back and starts to make strange signal-noises of warning)

PROFESSOR
Whoop—whoop—whoop. *(In a horse whisper)* Iron Belly! *(The men assume casual and innocent attitudes. Some make bird sounds. BLOODY MARY looks off and walks back to her kiosk to stand defiantly in front of it. CABLE, puzzled, stands by to await developments. What develops is that "Iron Belly," CAPTAIN BRACKETT, enters, followed by his executive officer, COMMANDER HARBISON.)*

HARBISON
(A brusque man)

Here she is, sir.
(He points to BLOODY MARY, who is standing her ground doggedly in front of her kiosk. BRACKETT walks slowly over to her. HARBISON takes a few steps toward the men and they move away. BRACKETT glares at BLOODY MARY. Undaunted, she glares right back.)

BRACKETT
You are causing an economic revolution on this island. These French planters can't find a native to pick a coconut or milk a cow because you're paying them ten times as much to make these ridiculous grass skirts.

BLOODY MARY
French planters stingy bastards!
(STEWPOD drops a tin bucket. The men control themselves by great efforts, their faces contorted queerly. BILLIS approaches BRACKETT with a snappy salute.)

BILLIS
Sir! May I make a suggestion, sir?

BRACKETT
(Returning salute)
Who are you?

BILLIS
Billis, sir, Luther Billis. *(Making an impressive announcement)* The natives can now go back to work on the farms. The demand for grass skirts can now be met by us Seabees!

BRACKETT

Dressmakers! *(Starting to blow up)* Do you mean to tell me the Seabees of the United States Navy are now a lot of—

BILLIS

If you don't like the idea, sir, we can drop it right here, sit. Just say the word. Just pretend I never brought it up.

HARBISON
(Reflectively)

Luther Billis.

BILLIS

Yes, sir?

HARBISON

Nothing. Just making a mental note. I want to be sure not to forget your name.

(Pause, during which BILLIS slowly and dejectedly retires. BRACKETT turns to BLOODY MARY)

BRACKETT

I want to see you pick up every scrap of this paraphernalia now! And, for the last time, carry it way down there beyond that fence off Navy property.

(BLOODY MARY stands firmly planted and immovable! . . . CABLE walks to the kiosk and collapses it)

CABLE

(With decisive authority)

Come on, everybody. Take all this stuff and throw it over that fence.

(The men quickly obey, BILLIS ostentatiously taking charge in front of the two officers)

BILLIS

(To men)

All right—take it way down there. Off Navy property!

CABLE

(Strides over to BLOODY MARY and points off)

You go too.

BLOODY MARY

(CABLE can do no wrong in her eyes)

All right, Lootellan. Thank you.

(She exits. By this time, all the men have gone, taking her kiosk with them. BRACKETT, CABLE, and HARBISON are left. BRACKETT looks at HARBISON as if to ask who CABLE is. HARBISON shrugs his shoulders. CABLE turns and exchanges salutes with BRACKETT.)

BRACKETT

Lieutenant, who are you, anyway?

CABLE

I'm Lieutenant Joseph Cable, sir. I just flew in on that PBY.

BRACKETT

A joy ride?

CABLE

No, sir. Orders.

BRACKETT

A Marine under orders to me?

CABLE

Yes, sir.

BRACKETT

I'm Captain Brackett.

CABLE

How do you do, sir?

BRACKETT

This is Commander Harbison, my Executive Officer. (CABLE and HARBISON exchange salutes and handshakes) Well, what's it all about?

CABLE

My Colonel feels that all these islands are in danger because none of us has been getting first-hand intelligence, and what we need is a coast watch.

HARBISON

A coast watch?

CABLE

A man with a radio hiding out on one of those Jap-held islands, where he could watch for Jap ships when they start down the bottleneck . . . down this way.

BRACKETT

(Turning to HARBISON)

What do you think, Bill?

HARBISON

Well, sir, our pilots could do a hell of a lot to Jap convoys with information like that.

BRACKETT

You'd have to sneak this man ashore at night from a submarine.

CABLE

Yes, sir.

HARBISON

Who's going to do it?

CABLE

Well, sir . . . *I've* been elected.*(Pause)*

BRACKETT

(After exchanging a look with HARBISON)

You've got quite an assignment, son.

HARBISON

How long do you think you could last there, sending out messages, before the Japs found you?

CABLE

I think I'd be okay if I could take a man with me who really knew the country. Headquarters has found out there's a French civilian

here who used to have a plantation on Marie Louise Island.

HARBISON

Marie Louise! That's a good spot. Right on the bottleneck.

BRACKETT

What's this Frenchman's name?

CABLE

Emile de Becque.

BRACKETT

(Suddenly excited)

Meet me in my office in about half an hour, Cable.

(He starts off, followed by HARBISON)

CABLE

Yes, sir.

BRACKETT

Come on, Bill! Maybe we'll get into this war yet!

(They exit. CABLE watches them off, then picks up his bag and starts off himself. The music of "Bali Ha'i" is played. CABLE stops in his tracks and listens. Then he turns and looks across at the island. . . . Softly, he starts to sing:)

CABLE

Bali Ha'i
May call you,
Any night,
Any day,
In your heart you'll hear it call you,

Come away, come away.
Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i, Bali Ha'i.

Scene Four

As CABLE sings, the lights fade slowly. A transparent curtain closes across him.

Downstage, several G.I.'s enter carrying bales and various articles of equipment. The lights dim out on cable behind the curtain and now, illuminating the forestage, reveal the curtain depicting a company street.

SAILOR

(Crossing stage)

When are you guys going to get that lumber in our area?

SEABEE

(Passing him)

Aw, knock it off!

SAILOR

We'll never get it finished by Thanksgiving.

(By this time, the lights are higher on the company street. Natives and G.I.s are constantly crossing, carrying equipment. Natives are seen sometimes wearing G.I. uniforms and sometimes just native cloths. Two nurses in white uniforms cross. Then BILLIS enters, in earnest conversation with STEWPOT and the PROFESSOR.)

BILLIS

Did you tell those guys at the shop to stop making those grass skirts?

STEW POT

Sure, they just turned out one of these. *(He hands him a small, dark object)* What do you think of it?

BILLIS

(Studying it a moment)

That don't look like a dried-up human head. It looks like an old orange painted with shoe polish.

STEW POT

That's what it is.

BILLIS

Go back to the shop and tell them to try again. If I order a dried-up human head, I want a human head . . . dried up!

(He puts orange in his pocket)

STEW POT

But—

BILLIS

Fade. Here he comes. *(STEW POT and the PROFESSOR move away as CABLE enters. BILLIS crosses to him and speaks in a low voice, right in CABLE's ear, as he walks alongside him.)* Don't change your expression, Lieutenant. Just act like we're talking casual. I got the boat.

CABLE

(Stops)

What boat?

BILLIS

Keep walking down the company street. Keep your voice down.

(CABLE walks slowly and uncertainly)

I signed out a boat in your name. We're shoving off for Bali Ha'i in forty-five minutes.

CABLE

(Stopping)

No, we're not. I've got to see Captain Brackett.

BILLIS

(An injured man)

Lieutenant! What are you doing to me? I signed this boat out in your name.

CABLE

Then you're just the man to go back and cancel it. *(Very firmly)* Forget the whole thing. Okay?

(CABLE walks off. Billis looks after him with narrowing eyes and jaw thrust forward)

BILLIS

Lieutenant, you and me are going on a boat trip whether you like it or not.

(He pulls the orange, covered with shoe polish, out of his pocket, and wishing to vent his rage somehow, he turns and hurls it off in the direction opposite that taken by CABLE)

A FURIOUS VOICE

(Offstage)

Hey! Who the hell threw that?

BILLIS

(Spoiling for a fight with anyone at all)

I threw it! What are you gonna do about it?

(He strides off pugnaciously in the direction of the voice. Before he is off, the curtains have parted on the succeeding scene.)

Scene Five

Inside the Island Commander's office. BRACKETT is sitting at his desk, reading some papers. HARBISON stands above him. CABLE sits on a chair facing the desk.

BRACKETT

(As curtains part)

Cable—we've got some dope on your Frenchman. *(He reads a paper before him)* Marie Louise Island . . . moved down here sixteen years ago . . . lived with a Polynesian woman for about five years . . . two children by her. She died . . . Here's one thing we've got to clear up. Seems he left France in a hurry. Killed a guy. What do you think of that?

CABLE

Might be a handy man to have around.

(The phone rings)

HARBISON

(Beckoning to CABLE)

Cable.

(CABLE joins him and they inspect a map on the wall)

BRACKETT

(In phone)

Good—send her in. No, we haven't got time for her to change into her uniform. Tell her to come in. *(The men exchange looks*

and face the doorway where presently NELLIE appears) Come in, Miss Forbush.

NELLIE

Captain Brackett, please excuse the way . . .

BRACKETT

You look fine. May I present Commander Harbison?

HARBISON

I have the pleasure of meeting Miss Forbush twice a week. *(BRACKETT looks at him with surprised admiration)* We serve together on the G.I. Entertainment Committee.

BRACKETT

Oh. May I also present Lt. Joseph Cable . . . Miss Forbush. Sit down, Miss Forbush. *(The three men rush to help her sit. CABLE gets there first. NELLIE sits. BRACKETT sits on his desk facing her. CABLE drops upstage. BRACKETT starts off with light conversation.)* How's the Thanksgiving entertainment coming along?

NELLIE

Very well, thank you, sir. We practice whenever we get a chance. *(She wonders why she has been sent for)*

BRACKETT

About a week ago, you had lunch with a French planter . . . Emile de Becque.

NELLIE

Yes, sir.

BRACKETT

What do you know about him?

NELLIE

(Thrown off balance)

Well, I . . . er . . . what do I know about him?

BRACKETT

That's right.

NELLIE

I . . . we . . . met at the Officers' Club dance. He was there and I . . . met him. *(She stops, hoping they will help her along, but they say nothing, so she has to continue)* Then I had lunch with him that day . . .

BRACKETT

(Quickly)

Yes! Now, what kind of a man is he?

NELLIE

He's very nice . . . He's kind . . . He's attractive. I—er—just don't know what you want to know, sir.

HARBISON

Miss Forbush, Captain Brackett wants to know, did you discuss politics?

NELLIE

No, sir.

BRACKETT

(After a long, pitying look at HARBISON)

Would you have discussed politics, Commander? *(Turning back to NELLIE)* Now, what we are specifically interested in is—er—when these fellows come out from France, it's generally because they've had some trouble. *(NELLIE looks worried)* Now . . . has he ever told you anything about that? *(NELLIE hesitates a moment, deliberating just how far to go in her answer. BRACKETT tries to help her out, sensing her embarrassment.)* What do you know about his family?

NELLIE

(Glad to be able to answer a simple specific question without incriminating EMILE)

He has no family—no wife, nobody.

HARBISON

He hasn't any children?

(CABLE and HARBISON exchange looks)

NELLIE

No, sir!

BRACKETT

And you say he's never told you why he left France?

(Pause. Then NELLIE answers as a Navy ensign should.)

NELLIE

Yes, sir. He left France because he killed a man.

(A sigh of relief from BRACKETT)

HARBISON

Did he tell you why?

NELLIE

No. But he will if I ask him.

HARBISON

Well, Miss Forbush, that's exactly what we'd like to have you do. Find out as much as you can about him, his background, his opinions, and why he killed this man in France.

NELLIE

In other words, you want me to spy on him.

BRACKETT

Well, I'm afraid it is something like that.

NELLIE

Why? *(Alarmed, she rises and faces BRACKETT across the desk)* Do you suspect him of something?

BRACKETT

(Lies do not come easy to him)

No, it's just that we don't know very much about him and he's—er . . . Will you help us, Miss Forbush?
(Pause)

NELLIE

I'll try.

BRACKETT

Thank you. You may go now if you wish.
(She starts toward the door, then turns, thoughtfully, as if asking the question of herself)

NELLIE

I don't know very much about him really . . . do I?
(Slowly, she goes out. For a moment, the men are silent.)

CABLE

He's kept a few secrets from her, hasn't he?

BRACKETT

Well, you don't spring a couple of Polynesian kids on a woman right off the bat!

HARBISON

I'm afraid we aren't going to get much out of her. She's obviously in love with him.

CABLE

(To HARBISON)

That's hard to believe, sir. They tell me he's a middle-aged man.

BRACKETT

(Rising from his desk chair. Smoldering.)

Cable! It is a common mistake for boys of your age and athletic ability to underestimate men who have reached their maturity.

CABLE

I didn't mean, sir . . .

BRACKETT

Young women frequently find a grown man attractive, strange as it may seem to you. I myself am over fifty. I am a bachelor and, Cable, I do not, by any means, consider myself—through. *(To HARBISON who is suppressing laughter)* What's the matter, Bill?

HARBISON

Nothing. Evidently!

BRACKETT

Okay, Cable. See you at chow. Do you play bridge?

CABLE

Yes, sir.

BRACKETT

Got any money?

CABLE

Yes, sir.

BRACKETT

I'll take it away from you.

CABLE

Yes, sir.

(He goes out. BRACKETT darts a penetrating look at HARBISON.)

BRACKETT

What makes you so *damn sure* this mission won't work out?

HARBISON

(Looking at the map)

Marie Louise Island is twenty four miles long and three miles wide. Let's say that every time they send out a message they move to another hill. It seems to me, looking at this thing . . .

BRACKETT

Realistically.

HARBISON

. . . realistically, *(Measuring his words)* they could last about a week.
(Pause. BRACKETT considers this.)

BRACKETT

Of course, it would be worth it, if it were the right week. With decent information, our side might get moving. Operation Alligator might get off its can.

YEOMAN

(Entering with large cardboard box)

Here it is, sir, I got it.

BRACKETT

*(To HARBISON)*Okay, Bill. See you at chow. *(HARBISON looks at the package curiously)* See you at chow, Bill.

HARBISON

(Snapping out of it)

Oh, see you at chow.

(He goes out)

BRACKETT

Got the address right?

YEOMAN

I think so, sir. *(Reading the box lid)* Mrs. Amelia Fortuna. Three twenty-five Euclid Avenue, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.

BRACKETT

That's right. I want to pack it myself.

YEOMAN

Yes, sir.

(He exits. BRACKETT starts to whistle. He opens the package and takes out a bright yellow grass skirt and shakes it out. HARBISON re-enters, stands in doorway, unseen by BRACKETT, nods as if his suspicions were confirmed, and exits as the lights fade.)

Scene Six

As the lights fade on the Captain's hut, the company street curtain closes in and the activity seen here before is resumed.

G.I.s and natives cross, carrying various items of equipment.

NELLIE enters, walking slowly as she reads a letter. Another NURSE in working uniform has some letters in her hand and is moving off.

NURSE

Going to the beach, Nellie?

(NELLIE nods. NURSE exits. CABLE enters and watches NELLIE for a moment. NELLIE is now standing still, reading a part of a letter that evokes an occasional groan of irritation from her. CABLE grins at her.)

CABLE

Letter from home?

(NELLIE looks up, started by his voice, then grins back at him)

NELLIE

Yes. Do you get letters from your mother, telling you that everything you do is wrong?

CABLE

No. My mother thinks everything I do is right . . . Of course, I don't tell her everything I do.

NELLIE

My mother's so prejudiced.

CABLE

Against Frenchmen?

(She smiles to acknowledge that she gets the allusion, then pursues her anti-maternal tirade)

NELLIE

Against anyone outside of Little Rock. She makes a big thing out of two people having different backgrounds.

CABLE

(Rather hopefully)

Ages?

NELLIE

Oh, no. Mother says older men are better for girls than younger men.

CABLE

(Remembering his recent lecture from BRACKETT on this subject)
This has been a discouraging day for me.

NELLIE

Do you agree with Mother about people having things in common? For instance, if the man likes symphony music and the girl likes Dinah Shore—and he reads Marcel Proust and she doesn't read anything . . . Well, what do *you* think? Do you think Mother's right?

CABLE

Well, she might be.

NELLIE

Well, I don't think she is.

CABLE

Well, maybe she's not.

NELLIE

Well, good-bye, Lieutenant. You've helped a lot.

CABLE

Listen, you don't know so much about that guy. You better read that letter over two or three times.

NELLIE

I'll show you what I think of that idea.

(She crumples the letter and throws it on the ground)

CABLE

Well, don't say I didn't warn you.

(He exits. NELLIE comes back and picks up the letter and starts reading as she walks off)

Scene Seven

Before NELLIE is off the lights come up on:

The beach. Several nurses are lounging about before taking their swim. More enter. One of them, DINAH, is washing an evening dress in a tin tub. Upstage is a homemade shower bath, bearing a sign:

BILLIS BATH CLUB
SHOWER 15¢
USE OF SOAP 5¢
NO TOWELS SUPPLIED

Two or three SEABEES stand in attendance, part of WILLIS's business empire, no doubt.

BILLIS
(Entering)

Oh, I thought Miss Forbush was here. I brought some hot water for her. *(He goes to shower, climbs a ladder, and pours a bucket of water into the tank on top)* She likes to take a shampoo Fridays.

NELLIE
(Entering)

Hello, Luther.

BILLIS
Hello, Miss Forbush. I brought some hot water for you.

NELLIE

Thanks. It'll do me a lot of good to get some of this sand out of my hair.

BILLIS

If you need some extra water for rinsing your hair, my bath-club concession boys will take care of you. When you're ready for the shower, just pull this chain, just like you was . . . Like you was pulling down a window shade. Take care of her, boys.

(He exits. NELLIE enters the shower.)

NURSE

What'd he want?

NELLIE

Huh?

NURSE

What'd he want?

NELLIE

Who?

NURSE

Iron Belly.

NELLIE

Captain Brackett? Oh, nothing—nothing important. Something about the Thanksgiving show.

SECOND NURSE

Then what's the trouble, Knucklehead?

NELLIE

Huh?

SECOND NURSE

I said, what's the trouble?

NELLIE

Oh, nothing. *(The girls look at one another. NELLIE comes out of the shower enclosure.)* There's not going to be any trouble anymore because I've made up my mind about one thing. *(She takes a deep breath and looks at them dramatically)* It's all off.

(She goes back into the shower enclosure)

THIRD NURSE

With him?

NELLIE

(Coming right out again through the swinging doors)

Uh-huh. *(She starts back, then stops and turns)* I'm going to break it off clean before it's too late.

4TH NURSE

Knucklehead, what's happened? What'd he do?

NELLIE

He didn't do anything. It's just that . . . Well, I guess I don't know anything about him really and before I go any further with this thing—I just better not get started! Don't you think so, too? Diney?

DINAH

Yes, I do.

NELLIE

(Unprepared for such prompt and unequivocal agreement)
You do? Well, I guess I do, too. *(She turns to the other girls)* Well, don't look so dramatic about it. Things like this happen every day.

(She sings:)

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
And send him on his way!

(She struts around splashing soap out of her hair)

Get the picture?

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my arms,
I'm gonna wash that man right outa my arms,
I'm gonna wash that man right outa my arms,
And send him on his way!
Don't try to patch it up—

NURSES

Tear it up, tear it up!

NELLIE

Wash him out, dry him out—

NURSES

Push him out, fly him out!

NELLIE

Cancel him and let him go—

NURSES

Yea, sister!

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
 I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
 I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
 And send him on his way!

NELLIE

If the man don't understand you,
 If you fly on separate beams,
 Waste no time!
 Make a change,
 Ride that man right off your range,
 Rub him outa the roll call
 And drum him outa your dreams!

NURSES

Oh—ho!

DINAH

If you laugh at different comics,

JANET

If you root for different teams,

NELLIE, DINAH, AND JANET

Waste no time,
 Weep no more,
 Show him what the door is for!

NURSES

Rub him outa the roll call
 And drum him outa your dreams!

NELLIE

You can't light a fire when the wood's all wet,

NURSES

No!

NELLIE

You can't make a butterfly strong,

NURSES

Uh-uh!

NELLIE

You can't fix an egg when it ain't quite good,

NURSES

And you can't fix a man when he's wrong!

NELLIE

You can't put back a petal when it falls from a flower,
 Or sweeten up a feller when he starts turning sour—

*(NELLIE goes back into the shower, turns on the water and rinses
 the soap out of her hair)*

NURSES

Oh, no! Oh, no!
 If his eyes get dull and fishy
 When you look for glints and gleams,
 Waste no time,
 Make a switch,
 Drop him in the nearest ditch!
 Rub him outa the roll call

And drum him outa your dreams!
Oh—ho! Oh—ho!

NELLIE

(Poking her head out from the shower, then dancing down to the nurses, as she sings:)

I went and washed that man right outa my hair,
I went and washed that man right outa my hair,
I went and washed that man right outa my hair,
And sent him on his way!

NURSES

She went an' washed that man right outa her hair,
She went an' washed that man right outa her hair,
She went an' washed that man right outa her hair,

(NELLIE joining them in a triumphant finish)

And sent him on his way!

(NELLIE starts to dry her hair with a towel. EMILE enter. She cannot see him because the towel covers her eyes. The other girls quickly slip away to leave them alone, all except DINAH, who goes to her tin tub and takes out her evening dress. NELLIE is humming and dancing as she dries her hair. Suddenly, she stops. She has seen something on the ground—EMILE's shoe tops. She moves closer to them, holding the towel forward, as a photographer holds his cloth. She patters over to DINAH for confirmation, still holding the towel in this manner. DINAH nods as if to say: "That's him, all right." NELLIE makes a dash for the shower. While she is putting a top-piece on over her halter top, DINAH stands in front of the shower enclosure, blocking the way, and trying to make conversation with EMILE. She looks and feels very silly.)

DINAH

You'd never think this was an evening dress would you? We're only allowed to bring two of them—evening dresses . . . only two . . . I brought . . . Yeah, sister!

(She retreats offstage, with no grace whatever. NELLIE comes out of the shower and makes a naïve attempt to appear surprised.)

NELLIE

Hello!

EMILE

Hello . . . That song . . . is it a new American song?

NELLIE

It's an American-type song. We were kind of putting in our own words. *(Looking around)* Where is everybody?

EMILE

It is strange with your American songs. In all of them one is either desirous to get rid of one's lover, or one weeps for a man one cannot have.

NELLIE

That's right.

EMILE

I like a song that says: "I love you and you love me . . . And isn't that fine?"

NELLIE

(Not very bright at the moment)

Yes . . . that's fine.

EMILE

I left a note for you at the hospital. It was to ask you to my home for dinner next Friday.

NELLIE

Well, I don't think I'll be able to come, Emile, I—

EMILE

I have asked all my friends. The planters' colony.

NELLIE

(Determined to wash him out of her hair)

A big party. Well, then, if I can't come, you won't miss me.

EMILE

But it is *for* you. It is for my friends to meet you and—more important—for you to meet them; to give you an idea of what your life would be like here. I want you to know more about me . . . how I live and think.

NELLIE

(Suddenly remembering her promise to "spy on him.")

More about you?

EMILE

Yes. You know very little about me.

NELLIE

That's right! *(Getting down to business)* Would you sit down?

(EMILE sits. NELLIE paces like a cross-examiner.)

Do you think about politics much . . . And if so, what do you think about politics?

Brackett

I want to see you pick up every scrap of this paraphernalia now. And, for the last time, carry it way down there beyond that fence. Off Navy property.

(MARY stands planted, staring back her reference. CABLE walks down and angrily folds up the whole book.)

Cable *(will do it)*
Come on everybody. Take all this stuff and throw it over that fence.

(The MEN quickly obey, BILLIS ostentatiously taking charge before the two officers. Cable strikes Mary and points off.)

Call. (No Mary)
You go too!

Billis

(Ad lib) (To Mary)
All right - take it way down there. Off Navy property!

Mary *(Cable can't do anything)*
Allright Lootellan. Thank you.

(SHE and the MEN exit off R. BRACKETT looks at HARBISON as if to ask who CABLE is. HARBISON shrugs his shoulders. CABLE turns and exchanges salutes with BRACKETT)

Brackett

Lieutenant, who are you anyway?

Cable

I'm Lieutenant Joseph Cable sir. I just flew in on that FBY.

Brackett

A joy ride?

Cable

No sir. Orders.

Brackett

A Marine under orders to me?

Cable

Yes sir.

Excerpt from Oscar Hammerstein II's script for the Random House publication, with his notes.



Mary Martin, as Nellie Forbush, photo signed to Richard Rodgers.

EMILE

Do you mean my political philosophy?

NELLIE

I think that's what I mean.

EMILE

Well, to begin with, I believe in the free life—in freedom for everyone.

NELLIE

(Eagerly)

Like in the Declaration of Independence?

EMILE

C'est ça. All men are created equal, isn't it?

NELLIE

Emile! You really believe that?

EMILE

Yes.

NELLIE

(With great relief)

Well, thanks goodness!

EMILE

It is why I am here . . . why I killed a man.

NELLIE

(Brought back to her mission)

Oh, yes. I meant to ask you about that too. I don't want you to think I'm prying into your private life, asking a lot of questions. But . . . I always think it's interesting why a person . . . kills another person.

(EMILE smiles understandingly)

EMILE

Of course, Nellie. That has worried you. *(He turns away to gather his thoughts. Then he begins by stating what he considers the explanation and excuse for the whole thing:)* When I was a boy, I carried my heart in my hand . . . so . . . when this man came to our town—though my father said he was good—I thought he was bad. *(With a shrug and a smile)* I was young . . . He attracted all the mean and cruel people to him. Soon he was running our town! He could do anything—take anything . . . I did not like that. I was young. *(NELLIE nods, understanding)* I stood up in the public square and made a speech. I called upon everyone to stand with me against this man.

NELLIE

What did they do?

EMILE

(Letting his hands fall helplessly to his side)

They walked away!

NELLIE

Why?

EMILE

Because they saw him standing behind me. I turned, and he said to me, "I am going to kill you now." We fought. I was never so strong. I knocked him to the ground. And when he fell, his head struck a stone and . . . *(He turns away and lets NELLIE imagine the rest)* I ran to the waterfront and joined a cargo boat. I didn't even know where it was going. I stepped off that boat into another world . . . *(He looks around him, loving all he sees)* where I am now . . . and where I want to stay. *(He turns to NELLIE and impulsively steps toward her, deep sincerity and anxiety in his voice)* Nellie, will you marry me? . . . There are so few days in our life, Nellie. The time I have with you now is precious to me . . . Have you been thinking?

NELLIE

I have been thinking.

(Singing, thoughtful, considerate)

Born on the opposite sides of the sea,
We are as different as people can be.

EMILE

It's true.

NELLIE

And yet you want to marry me . . .

EMILE

I do.

NELLIE

I've known you a few short weeks and yet
Somehow you've made my heart forget

All other men I have ever met
But you . . . But you . . .

EMILE

Some enchanted evening
You may see a stranger,
You may see a stranger
Across a crowded room.
And somehow you know,
You know even then
That somewhere you'll see her
Again and again . . .

NELLIE

Who can explain it?
Who can tell you why?

EMILE

Fools give you reasons—
Wise men never try
Some enchanted evening,
When you find your true love,
When you feel her call you
Across a crowded room—
Then fly to her side
And make her your own,
Or all through your life you may dream all alone!

NELLIE

(Clinging to him)

Once you have found him
Never let him go.

EMILE

Once you have found her,
Never let her go!
(They kiss)
Will you come next Friday?

NELLIE

(Somewhere, from out of the ether, she hears her voice murmur an inarticulate but automatic assent)
Uh-huh.
(EMILE kisses her again and leaves. There is the sound of laughter offstage right and voice is heard.)

NURSE

(Offstage)

Well, she sure washed him out of her hair!
(More laughter, NELLIE looks defiantly off in the direction of her mocking friends)

NELLIE

(Singing)

I expect every one
Of my crowd to make fun
Of my proud protestations of faith in romance,
And they'll say I'm naïve
As a babe to believe
Any fable I hear from a person in pants! . . .

Fearlessly I'll face them and argue their doubts away,
Loudly I'll sing about flowers and spring!
Flatly I'll stand on my little flat feet and say,
"Love is a grand and a beautiful thing!"

I'm not ashamed to reveal the world-famous feeling I feel.

I'm as corny as Kansas in August,
I'm as normal as blueberry pie.
No more a smart
Little girl with no heart,
I have found me a wonderful guy.

I am in a conventional dither
With a conventional star in my eye,
And, you will note
There's a lump in my throat
When I speak of that wonderful guy.

I'm as trite and as gay
As a daisy in May,
(A cliché coming true!)
I'm bromidic and bright
As a moon-happy night
Pouring light on the dew.

I'm as corny as Kansas in August,
High as a flag on the Fourth of July!
If you'll excuse
An expression I use,
I'm in love,
I'm in love,
I'm in love,
I'm in love,
I'm in love with a wonderful guy!

(The other NURSES enter and join her in her song: each obviously thinking of her own wonderful guy. The "company street"

curtain closes as they sing, and before the light on the girls fades out, the men are seen pursuing the activities which have characterized previous company street scenes. The music of "A Wonderful Guy" has continued and now the nurses enter and resume singing it. NELLIE running on last and finishing in a triumphant coda to the amusement of the G.I.'s. The lights fade on them all as they exit and the next scene is revealed.)

Scene Eight

This is BRACKETT's office again.

BRACKETT, HARBISON, and CABLE are all looking intently at EMILE . . .

BRACKETT

Now, before you give us your answer, I want to impress you with three things. First, you are a civilian and you don't have to go. There's no way of our making you go. Second, this is a very dangerous mission and there's no guarantee that you'll survive—or that it will do any good. Third, that it might do a great good. It might be the means of turning the tide of war in this area.

EMILE

I understand all these things.

BRACKETT

Are you ready to give us your answer?

EMILE

Yes, I am. *(Pause)* My answer must be no. *(CABLE's foot comes down from the top of the wastebasket on which it was resting. HARBISON uncrosses his arms. BRACKETT and HARBISON exchange looks.)* When a man faces death, he must weigh values very carefully. He must weigh the sweetness of his life against the thing he is asked to die for. The probability of death is very great—for both of us. I know that island well, Lieutenant Cable. I am not certain that I believe

that what you ask me to do is . . . is . . .

BRACKETT

We're asking you to help us lick the Japs. It's as simple as that. We're against the Japs.

EMILE

I know what you're against. What are you for? *(He waits for an answer. They have none.)* When I was twenty-two, I thought the world hated bullies as much as I did. I was foolish—I killed one. And I was forced to flee to an island. Since then, I have asked no help from anyone or any country. I have seen these bullies multiply and grow strong. The world sat by and watched.

CABLE

Aw, to hell with this, de Becque, let's be honest! Aren't you just a guy in love with a girl and you're putting her above everything else in the world?

(EMILE looks at CABLE for a moment before answering)

EMILE

Yes, I do care about my life with her more than anything else in the world. It is the only thing that is important to me. This I believe in. This I am sure of. This I have. I cannot risk to lose it. Good day, gentlemen.

(He goes out. Pause. All three men have been rocked off their balance.)

HARBISON

(Thoughtfully)

He's an honest man, but he's wrong. Of course, we can't guarantee him a better world if we win. Point is, we can be damned sure it'll

be worse if we lose. Can't we? . . . *(Hotly)* Well, can't we?

BRACKETT

(Rising)

Of course. Cable, there's a bottle of Scotch in my bottom drawer. See you tomorrow.

(He exits quickly. HARBISON goes to the desk and takes out the bottle from a drawer.)

HARBISON

This is the one he means.

(He takes two glasses and starts to pour the Scotch. A YEOMAN enters holding a sheaf of papers to be signed.)

YEOMAN

(Querulously)

Commander Harbison! The Old Man walked right out on me with all these orders to be signed! And there's another delegation of French planters here, complaining about that stolen pig—the one the Seabees took and barbecued. And Commander Hutton's here—

HARBISON

(Grabbing papers from him, irritably)

Okay, okay! . . . I'll take care of it!

YEOMAN

Well, all right, sir!

CABLE

(As he takes his glass of Scotch)

What should I do, Commander Harbison? Go back to my outfit tonight?

HARBISON

(With a drink in his hand)

No, take a couple of days off and unwind.

CABLE

Unwind?

HARBISON

Sure. Take a boat. Go fishing.

CABLE

(A light dawning on him, a memory of BILLIS's offer and BLOODY MARY's song about Bali Ha'i)

Boat!

(He puts his glass down and exits suddenly—as if pulled out of the room! HARBISON takes a swallow of Scotch, puts down his glass, looks around for CABLE, but CABLE has disappeared. HARBISON rubs his face with the gesture of a weary man, and starts to go to work on the papers as the lights fade.)

Scene Nine

As BRACKETT's office recedes upstage, the tapa-cloth curtain closes and groups of French girls and native girls enter. They sing softly.

GIRLS

Bali Ha'i
 T'appelle,
 Dans le jour,
 Dans la nuit,
 Dans ton coeur
 Toujours résonne,
 "Par ici,
 Me voici."
 Si tu veux
 Tu m'trouveras
 Où le ciel
 Trouve la mer.
 Me voici,
 Laisse-moi te prendre,
 "Par ici,
 Me voici."
 Bali Ha'i
 Bali Ha'i
 Bali Ha'i.

(There is a bell ringing offstage. A native KID shouts excitedly, "Boat! Boat! Boat!" He runs off left. The girls back away a few steps as BILLIS, CABLE, and BLOODY MARY walk on.)

CABLE

(As he enters)

Look, Billis, I didn't come over here to Bali Ha'i to see anybody cut any boar's teeth out.

BILLIS

It ain't the cutting of the boar's teeth exactly. It's what comes afterwards.

(During these lines, BLOODY MARY has whispered into a small boy's ear and sent him running off. CABLE has crossed the girls and looks back over his shoulder at them.)

BLOODY MARY

(Smiling, understanding perfectly)

I take you with me. Come, Lootellan. You have a good time. *(Calling to a native)* Marcel! Come here! Billis, Marcel take you to boar ceremony. Lootellan come later. *(Two French girls have caught CABLE's eye, and he has made up his mind to approach them. He takes a couple of steps toward them, but now two nuns enter and engage them in conversation. Thwarted by this unhappy development, CABLE becomes more receptive to BLOODY MARY, who now says:)* Lootellan, come with me. You have good time. Come!

(She leads him off as the lights fade)

Scene Ten

The music swells. A concentration of light in the center of the stage reveals:

The interior of a Native Hut.

BLOODY MARY *comes in. Even she has to bend low to get through the doorway. CABLE, following her, finds himself in the darkness, blinking.*

CABLE

What's this?

BLOODY MARY

You wait.

CABLE

There's nobody around here.

BLOODY MARY

You wait, Lootellan.

CABLE

What's going on, Mary? What . . .

(He doesn't finish because a small figure has appeared in the doorway. A girl, perhaps seventeen. Her black hair is drawn smooth over her head. Like BLOODY MARY, she wears a white blouse and black trousers. Barefooted, she stands, silent, shy and motionless against the wattled wall, looking at CABLE with the

honest curiosity and admiration of a child.)

BLOODY MARY

(To CABLE, with a sly smile)

You like?

CABLE

(Never taking his eyes from the girl)

Who is she?

BLOODY MARY

Liat.

LIAT

(Nodding her head and repeating in a small voice)

Liat.

BLOODY MARY

Is French name.

CABLE

(Still stunned, still gazing at the girl)

Liat.

BLOODY MARY

But she no French girl. She Tonkinese like me. We are ver' pretty people— No?

(She goes closer to CABLE and looks at him. She turns to LIAT and then back to CABLE. The two young people continue to regard each other with silent, longing interest.)

CABLE

(Over BLOODY MARY's head, to LIAT)

Do you speak English?

BLOODY MARY

Only a few word. She talk French. *(To LIAT)* Français!

LIAT

(Smiling shyly)

Je parle Français—un peu.

(She holds her forefinger and thumb close together to show how very little French she speaks)

CABLE

(Grinning, nearly as she as she)

Moi, aussi—un peu. *(He holds up his forefinger and thumb, just as she did. They both laugh, and in some strange way, BLOODY MARY seems to have been forgotten by them both. She looks from one to the other. Then with the air of one who has accomplished a purpose, she waddles to the doorway. As she goes out, she lets the bamboo curtain roll down across the opening, reducing the light in the hut. There is a long moment of silence.)* Are you afraid of me? *(LIAT looks puzzled. He remembers she speaks no English.)* Oh . . . er . . . avez-vous peur?

LIAT

(Her young face serious)

Non. *(He takes a step toward her. She backs closer to the wall.)* Oui! *(He stops and looks at her, worried and hurt. This sign of gentleness wins her. She smiles.)* . . . Non.

(Now it is she who walks slowly toward him. The music builds in a rapturous upsurge. CABLE gathers LIAT in his arms. She reaches her small arms up to his neck. He lifts her off her

feet. The lights fade slowly as his hand slides her blouse up her back towards her shoulders. The lights dim to complete darkness. Light projections of large and lovely Oriental blossoms are thrown against the drop. Native couples stroll across the stage, only dimly seen. The music mounts ecstatically, then diminishes. The stage is clear. The light comes up on the hut again and moonlight now comes through the opened doorway where CABLE stands. He has no shirt on. LIAT is seated on the floor, gazing up at him silently; her hair hangs loose down her back. CABLE smiles down at her.)

CABLE

(Trying to puzzle something out in his mind)

But you're just a kid . . . How did that Bloody Mary get a kid like you to come here and . . . I don't get it. *(Suddenly realizing that she has not understood)* Cette vieille femme . . . votre amie?

LIAT

Ma mère.

CABLE

(Horried)

Your mother! Bloody Mary is your mother! But she didn't tell me. *(LIAT, to divert him from unpleasant thoughts, suddenly throws herself in his lap; they kiss. The sound of the ship's bell is heard in the distance. They sit up. LIAT looks panic-stricken.)*

LIAT

Non, non!

(She covers his ears with her hands)

CABLE

(Looking off)

It's the boat all right. *(He turns back to her, sees her little face below his, her eyes pleading with him to stay)* Aw, let them wait.

(He sings)

I touch your hand
 And my arms grow strong,
 Like a pair of birds
 That burst with song.
 My eyes look down
 At your lovely face,
 And I hold the world
 In my embrace.

Younger than springtime are you,
 Softer than starlight are you;
 Warmer than winds of June are the gentle lips you gave me.
 Gaye than laughter are you,
 Sweeter than music are you;
 Angel and lover, heaven and earth, are you to me.
 And when your youth and joy invade my arms
 And fill my heart as now they do,
 Then,
 Younger than springtime am I,
 Gaye than laughter am I,
 Angel and lover, heaven and earth, am I with you . . .

(He releases her, goes to the door, looks off, then comes back to her. He stoops to pick up his shirt. She tries to get it first. Each has hold of one end of it. He looks down at her and repeats, softly:)

And when your youth and joy invade my arms
 And fill my heart as now they do,

Then, younger than springtime am I,
 Gaye than laughter am I
 Angel and lover, heaven and earth, am I with you
(He starts. She clings to her end of his shirt for a moment, lets it slide through her sad little fingers, and through the door—out of her life, perhaps. The lights fade. Now, again in front of the curtain, native girls bearing trays of tropical flowers are gathered in several groups.)

Scene Eleven

The girls sing and hum "Bali Ha'i" softly under the scene, as Hawaiians sing "Aloha" to all departing craft. BLOODY MARY and BILLIS are looking off, anxiously awaiting CABLE.

BILLIS

(Shouting off)

Ring the bell again! Ring the bell again! *(Taking a lei from a FLOWER-SELLER)* I'll have another one of those.

(He drapes the lei around his neck where he already has three others)

BLOODY MARY

He come. He come. He be here soon. Don't worry, Billis.

BILLIS

Hey, Mary—please ask those Boar Tooth ceremonial fellows not to be sore at me. I didn't think those girls would do a religious dance with only skirts on. If somebody had told me it was a religious dance, I wouldn't have gotten up and danced with them. *(Looking off)* Oh! Here he comes! Here he comes.

(BILLIS exits toward the boat. CABLE enters and crosses in a kind of dream. BLOODY MARY smiles, ecstatic, as she sees his face. Several girls try to flirt with CABLE, but he doesn't know they're alive. He goes right by them. BLOODY MARY then walks past them, her chin in the air, very proudly and triumphantly. The girls voices rise, singing the final measures of "Bali Ha'i."

The girls throw flowers offstage where BILLIS and CABLE made their exit. Cries of "Au revoir" and laughter are heard over the singing.)

BLOODY MARY

(Throwing flower garland she has taken from a native girl and shouting to the others)

Is gonna be my son-in-law! *(Calling off)* Goo' bye! Come back soon, Lootellan! Bali Ha'i! Come back soon!

The lights fade.

Scene Twelve

And other light come up slowly on Emile's Terrace.

The good-byes continue through the darkness, and other good-byes from other voices blend in with these . . . all in French.

HENRY enters with another servant. They start to clear glasses, champagne bottles and other leftovers of a gay party which clutter the scene.

FRENCHMAN
(Offstage)

Bali Ha'i . . . Bon soir!

FRENCHWOMAN
(Offstage)

Merci, Emile . . . Merci, mille fois!
(EMILE enters and addresses HENRY)

EMILE

Pas maintenant . . . Demain!

FRENCHMAN
(Offstage)

A bientôt! Bali Ha'i.
(HENRY and the other servant exit)

FRENCHWOMAN
(Offstage)

Quelle charmante soiree.

NELLIE
(Offstage)

Good night . . . everybody . . . Good night.

FRENCHMAN
(Offstage)

Non, non . . . Nellie . . . en Français . . . en Français.

NELLIE
(Offstage, laboring with her French)

Jc . . . suis . . . enchantée . . . de faire . . . votre . . . connaissance!
(EMILE looks off, smiles with amusement and pride. Voices offstage shout "Bravo!" "Formidable!" EMILE exits.)

FRENCHMAN
(Offstage)

Bon soir, de Becque.

FRENCHWOMAN
(Offstage)

Merci mille fois!!!

(There is the sound of a motor starting loud, then growing fainter. EMILE and NELLIE enter and turn back to wave good-bye to the last guests. Then NELLIE turns to EMILE, who has been gently urging her further into the garden. There is high excitement in her voice and she speaks very rapidly.)

NELLIE

Emile, you know I can't stay. And I've got to get that jeep back. I stole it. Or rather, I borrowed it. Or rather a fellow stole it for me. A wonderful man named Billis. I'll have to sneak around behind the hospital as it is.

EMILE

In that case, I forbid you to go! If you have to sneak back without anyone seeing you, you might just as well sneak back later.

(NELLIE thinks for a moment, then comes to a quick decision)

NELLIE

(Taking off her coat)

You're absolutely right! *(She looks guiltily at EMILE and screams with laughter. So does he. She puts her coat on the back of a chair.)* I never had such a wonderful time in my whole life. All these lovely people and that cute old man who spoke French with me and made believe he understood me. And that exciting native couple who danced for us. Oh, it's so different from *Little Rock!* *(She screams the last line exuberantly, as if she hopes Little Rock would hear. EMILE laughs uproariously. She suddenly becomes quiet.)* What on Earth are you laughing at? Am I drunk?

EMILE

Oh, no.

NELLIE

Yes, I am. But it isn't the champagne—it's because I'm in love with a wonderful guy!

(She sings this last line. They waltz to the music of "A Wonderful Guy!" NELLIE resumes singing.)

If you'll excuse an expression I use,

I'm in love, I'm in love, I'm in love—

EMILE

(Also singing)

I'm in love, I'm in love,

And the girl that I love,

She thinks I'm a wonderful guy.

(They stop, exhausted and laughing. She turns and picks up a half-filled glass of champagne which has been left by one of the guests. She takes it up and drinks it.)

NELLIE

Imagine leaving all this wonderful champagne! *(She drinks, then takes another glass and hands it to EMILE)* Here, Emile! You have some, too. It's such a waste!

EMILE

Here—here's another bottle.

(He goes over to a long table which is under the windows on the porch. There are several buckets of champagne there. He takes one and fills two clean glasses and brings them to NELLIE. Meanwhile, she leans back, stretching her arms behind her head. Dreamily, she sings:)

NELLIE

This is how it feels,

Living on a hillside . . .

(She speaks as the melody in the orchestra continues)

Here we are just like two old married people. Our guests have gone home and we're alone.

EMILE

(Handing her the glass of champagne)

This is what I need,

This is what I've longed for—

Someone young and smiling,

Here upon my hill—

(The orchestra starts the music of "A Cockeyed Optimist.")

NELLY has been thinking.)

NELLY

Emile, you know, my mother says we have nothing in common. But she's wrong. We have something very important in common—very much in common.

EMILE

Yes, we're both in love.

NELLY

Yes, but more than that. We're . . . we're the same kind of people fundamentally—you and me. We appreciate things! We get enthusiastic about things. It's really quite exciting when two people are like that. We're not blasé. You know what I mean?

EMILE

We're both knuckleheads, cockeyed optimists.

(They both laugh and start to sing)

NELLY

I hear the human race

Is falling on its face . . .

EMILE

And hasn't very far to go!

NELLY

But ev'ry whippoorwill

Is selling me a bill

And telling me it just ain't so!

BOTH

(Harmonizing—"Sweet Adeline" fashion)

I could say life is just a bowl of Jell-o

And appear more intelligent and smart,

But I'm stuck, like a dope,

With a thing called hope,

And I can't get it out of my heart . . .

(Dwelling on the fancy ending:)

Not this heart!

(They smile in each other's eyes. EMILE suddenly gets an idea and rises.)

EMILE

Nelly, I have a surprise for you. You sit over there—something that I have been preparing for two days. Close your eyes. No peeking.

(He looks around for a prop, sees her coat, then makes her sit by the fountain. NELLY is mystified, but excited, like a child waiting for a surprise. EMILE takes her coat and throwing it over his head, using it to simulate a towel, he imitates her as he found her on the beach the other day.)

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,

NELLIE

Oh, no! No!

(She writhes with embarrassment and laughter as he continues)

EMILE

I'm gonna wash that man right outa my hair,
And send him on his way! . . .

(She covers her eyes)

Don't try to patch it up,

Tear it up, tear it up,

Wash him out, dry him out,

Push him out, fly him out,

Cancel him, and let him go—

Yea, Sister!

(He finishes, waving his arms wildly)

NELLIE

(Applauding)

That's wonderful, Emile.

(EMILE lifts the coat and, looking off, sees NGANA and JEROME as they enter in their nightgowns, followed by HENRY)

EMILE

Bon soir!

(NELLIE turns, looks at the children, and is immediately enchanted. She kneels before the two of them, holding them at arm's length.)

NELLIE

You're the cutest things I ever saw in my whole life! What are your names? You probably can't understand a word I'm saying, but, oh, my goodness, you're cute.

EMILE

Nellie, I want you to meet Ngana and Jerome. Ngana and Jerome, Nellie.

NGANA AND JEROME

Nellie . . .

EMILE

(To the children)

Maintenant au lit . . . vite!

HENRY

Venez, Petits!

NGANA

Bon soir, Nellie.

JEROME

Bon soir, Nellie.

(They wave to NELLIE, as HENRY leads them out)

NELLIE

Bon soir! *(Turning to EMILE)* Oh, aren't they adorable! Those big black eyes staring at you out of those sweet little faces! Are they Henry's?

EMILE

They're mine.

NELLIE

(Carrying out what she thinks is a joke)

Oh, of course, they look exactly like you, don't they? Where did

you hide their mother?

EMILE

She's dead, Nellie.

NELLIE

She's . . . (*She turns*) Emile, they *are* yours!

EMILE

Yes, Nellie. I'm their father.

NELLIE

And . . . their mother . . . was a . . . was . . . a . . .

EMILE

Polynesian. (*NELLIE is stunned. She turns away, trying to collect herself.*) And she was beautiful, Nellie, and charming, too.

NELLIE

But you and she . . .

EMILE

I want you to know I have no apologies. I came here as a young man. I lived as I could.

NELLIE

Of course.

EMILE

But I have not been selfish. No woman ever hated me or tried to hurt me.

NELLIE

No woman could ever want to hurt you, Emile. (*Suddenly, feeling she must get away as quickly as she can*) Oh, what time is it? I promised to get that jeep back! (*She looks at her wristwatch*) Oh, this is awful. Look at the time!

(*She grabs her coat. EMILE tries to stop her.*)

EMILE

Nellie, wait, please. I'll drive you home.

NELLIE

You will do no such thing. Anyway, I couldn't leave the jeep here. I've got to get it back by—

EMILE

Don't go now, Nellie. Don't go yet, please.

NELLIE

(*Rattling on very fast*)

Oh, this is terrible! I won't be able to face the girls at the hospital. You can't imagine the way they look at you when you come in late . . . I'll call you, Emile. I'll come by tomorrow. (*Suddenly remembering*) Oh, no! Oh, dear! These are those awful rehearsals for Thanksgiving Day—I'm teaching them a dance and they want to rehearse night and day—but after that . . . (*Shifting quickly*) Oh, thank you for tonight, Emile. I had a wonderful time. It was the nicest party and you're a perfect host. Good-bye. Please stay here, Emile. Don't come out to the jeep, please.

EMILE

(*Grabbing her arms, feeling her slipping away from him*)
Nellie, I love you. Do you hear me, Nellie? I love you!

NELLIE

And I love you, too. Honestly I do . . . Please let me go! Please let me go!

(NELLIE goes off, as fast as she can. EMILE watches for a second. The motor of the jeep starts and fades away quickly, as though the jeep were driven away very, very fast. The music of "Some Enchanted Evening" swells as EMILE looks down and picks up a coffee cup that has been left on the fountain.)

EMILE

(Singing, as he looks down at the cup)

Once you have found her,

Never let her go.

Once you have found her,

Never let her go!

Curtain

ACT TWO

Scene One

The stage during a performance of "The Thanksgiving Follies."

A dance is in progress, four girls and four boys. NELLIE is one of the girls. They meticulously perform the steps and evolutions of a dance routine no more distinguished or original than any that might be produced by a Navy nurse who had been the moving spirit in the amateur theater of Little Rock. Not one of the dancers makes a single mistake. Nobody smiles. Tense concentration is evident in this laboriously perfect performance. During the course of the dance, there are solo "step-outs" after which each soloist soberly steps back into place. The most complicated unison step is saved for the exit, which they execute with vigorous precision.

On either side, in the downstage corners of the stage, G.I.s are sitting as if there had not been enough seats and the audience overflowed up onto the stage. There are no chairs. They are seated and sprawled on the floor of the stage.

NELLIE returns to the stage, a sheaf of notes in her hand and talks into the microphone.

NELLIE

It has been called to our attention that owing to some trouble with the mimeograph, the last part of the program is kind of blurry, so I will read off who did the last number. *(Reading)* The hand-stand was by Marine Sergeant Johnson. *(Applause)* The barrel roll was done by Lieutenant J. G. Bessie May Sue Ellie Yaeger. *(Applause)* The solo featuring the hitch-kick and scissors . . . those are the names of the steps . . . was by Ensign Cora MacRae. *(Applause)*

The Pin Wheel . . . you know— (*She demonstrates by waving her leg in imitation of STEWPOT*) was by Stewpot . . . I mean George Watts, Carpenter's Mate, Third Class.

(*Applause. STEWPOT's head protrudes from the wings.*)

STEWPTOT

Second class!

(*Applause*)

NELLIE

The multiple revolutions and, (*NELLIE becomes self-consciously modest*) incidentally, the dance steps were by Ensign Nellie Forbush. (*She bows. Applause.*) Now the next is a most unusual treat. An exhibition of weight lifting by Marine Staff Sergeant Thomas Hassinger.

(*HASSINGER enters from right. He flexes muscles. Applause and shouts from G.I. audience on the corners of the stage.*)

SAILOR

Atta boy, Muscles!

(*The "stage" light starts fading*)

NELLIE

. . . and Sergeant Johnson . . . (*JOHNSON enters*) . . . Marine Corporal . . .

(*The lights are out*)

VOICE IN THE DARK

Hey, lights . . . the lights are out . . . Billis!

NELLIE

Bill-is . . . what the heck happened to the lights?

OTHER VOICES

"It's the generator." "Generator run out of gas." "Switch over to the other one." "Mike . . . turn on the truck lights."

NELLIE

Keep your seats, everybody! There's nothing wrong except that the lights went out.

VOICES

Look where you're going How the hell can I look when I can't see?
(*The lights come up. The set has been changed in the darkness. We are now in:.*)

Scene Two

In back of the stage.

SEABEE

We'll have the other generator on in a minute.

BILLIS

They got the truck light on. That's something.
(Applause offstage, right)

STEW POT

(Looking off toward "stage.")

The weight lifting act got started.

BILLIS

Good . . . *(He notices two SEABEES who are pushing a large roll of cable)* What I can't understand is how some guys ain't got the artistic imagination to put gas in a generator so a show can be a success—especially when they're on the committee.

FIRST SEABEE

You're on the committee, too. Why didn't you tell us it wasn't gassed up?

BILLIS

I'm acting in the show and I'm stage manager and producer. I can't figure out everything, can I?

SECOND SEABEE

Sure you can. Just put your two heads together.

(He and his companion exit, pushing the roll of cable before them)

BILLIS

(Calling off)

Look, jerk! I got a production on my hands. *(Turning to STEWPOT)*
How's the weight lifting act going?

STEW POT

I can't tell. Nobody's clapping.

BILLIS

If nobody's clapping, it ain't going good. You ought to be able to figure that out. Put your two heads together.

STEW POT

You was the one with the two heads.

(EMILE enters. He carries a bunch of flowers in his hand. He has a serious "set" expression in his eyes.)

EMILE

Pardon, can you tell me where I can find Miss Forbush?

BILLIS

(Shrewdly sensing trouble and determined to protect NELLIE)
She's onstage now. She's the emcee. She can't talk to nobody right now. Do you want me to take the flowers in to her?

EMILE

No. I would prefer to give them to her myself.

BILLIS
Are you Mister de Becque?

EMILE
Yes.

BILLIS
Look, Mister de Becque. Do me a favor, will you? Don't try and see her tonight.

EMILE
Why?

BILLIS
We got her in a great mood tonight and I don't want anything to upset her again.

EMILE
She has been upset?

BILLIS
Upset! She's asked for a transfer to another island. And day before yesterday, she busted out crying in the middle of rehearsal. Said she couldn't go on with the show. And she wouldn't have either unless Captain Brackett talked to her and told her how important it was to the Base. So do us all a favor—don't try to see her now.

EMILE
She has asked for a transfer?

BILLIS
Don't tell her I told you. Nobody's supposed to know.

EMILE
I must see her. Tonight!

BILLIS
Then stay out of sight till after the show. I'll take the flowers to her.
(EMILE gives him the flowers. BILLIS and STEWPOT exit. CABLE enters. He doesn't see EMILE at first.)

CABLE
Hey, Billis—Billis!

EMILE
(Peering through the semi-darkness)
Lieutenant Cable?

CABLE
(Putting his fingers to his lips in a mocking gesture)
Shh! Lieutenant Cable is supposed to be in his little bed over at the hospital.

EMILE
You have not been well?

CABLE
I'm okay now. Fever gone. They can't hold me in that damned place any longer. I'm looking for a guy named Billis, a great guy for getting boats. (His voice rising, tense and shrill) And I need a boat right now. I've got to get to my island.

EMILE
(Worried by CABLE's strangeness)
What?

CABLE

That damned island with the two volcanoes on it. You ever been over there?

EMILE

Why, yes, I—

CABLE

I went over there every day till this damned malaria stopped me. Have you sailed over early in the morning? With warm rain playing across your face? (LIAT enters. *He sees her, but doesn't believe his eyes.*) Beginning to see her again like last night.

LIAT

(*Calling offstage*)

Ma mère! C'est lui!

(*She turns and, like a young deer, glides over to the amazed CABLE and embraces him before the equally amazed EMILE. BLOODY MARY waddles on.*)

CABLE

(*Holding LIAT tight*)

I thought I was dreaming.

LIAT

(*Laughing*)

No.

(*She holds him tighter*)

CABLE

(*He holds her away from him and looks at her*)

What are you doing over here?

BLOODY MARY

(*Grimly*)

She come in big white boat—bigger than your boat. Belong Jacques Barrere. He want to marry Liat. (*To EMILE*) You know him. (*EMILE nods. She turns back to CABLE.*) Is white man, too. And very rich!

CABLE

(*To LIAT*)

Is that the old planter you told me about? The one who drinks? (*His eye catches EMILE'S. EMILE nods. CABLE cries out as if hurt.*) Oh, my God! (*He turns angrily to BLOODY MARY*) You can't let her marry a man like that.

BLOODY MARY

Hokay! Then you marry her.

EMILE

(*Angrily, to BLOODY MARY*)

Tais-toi! Il est malade! . . . Tu comprends? (*BLOODY MARY is temporarily silenced. EMILE turns to CABLE and his voice becomes gentle and sympathetic.*) Lieutenant, I am worried about you. You are ill. Will you allow me to see you back to the hospital?

CABLE

You're worried about me! That's funny. The fellow who says he lives on an island all by himself and doesn't worry about anybody—Japs, Americans, Germans—anybody. Why pick out me to worry about?

EMILE
(*Stiffly*)

Forgive me. I'm sorry, Lieutenant.

(*He leaves. BLOODY MARY goes to CABLE to make one last plea for her daughter's dream.*)

BLOODY MARY

Lootellan, you like Liat . . . Marry Liat! You have good life here. Look, Lootellan, I am rich. I save six hundred dolla' before war. Since war I make two thousand dolla'—war go on I make maybe more. Sell grass skirts, boar's teeth, real human heads. Give all de money to you an' Liat. You no have to work. I work for you . . . (*Soft music is played*) All day long, you and Liat be together! Walk through woods, swim in sea, sing, dance, talk happy. No think about Philadelia. Is no good. Talk about beautiful things and make love all day long. You like? You buy?

(*She sings. Throughout the song, LIAT performs what seem to be traditional gestures.*)

Happy talk,
Keep talkin' happy talk!
Talk about t'ings you'd like to do.
You got to have a dream;
If you don' have a dream,
How you gonna have a dream come true?

Talk about a moon
Floatin' in de sky,
Lookin' like a lily on a lake;
Talk about a bird
Learnin' how to fly,
Makin' all de music he can make—

Happy talk,
Keep talkin' happy talk!
Talk about tings you'd like to do.
You got to have a dream;
If you don' have a dream,
How you gonna have a dream come true?

Talk about a star
Lookin' like a toy,
Peekin' t'rough de branches of a tree;
Talk about a girl,
Talk about a boy,
Countin' all de ripples on de sea—

Happy talk,
Keep talkin' happy talk!
Talk about tings you'd like to do.
You got to have a dream;
If you don' have a dream,
How you gonna have a dream come true?

(*LIAT now performs a gentle, child-like dance. At the end of it, she returns to CABLE's side and BLOODY MARY resumes her song.*)

Talk about a boy
Sayin' to de girl:
"Golly, baby! I'm a lucky cuss!"
Talk about a girl
Sayin' to de boy,
"You an' me is lucky to be us!"

(*LIAT and CABLE kiss. MARY's voice becomes triumphant.*)

Happy talk,
Keep talkin' happy talk!
Talk about tings you'd like to do.

You got to have a dream;
If you don' have a dream,
How you gonna have a dream come true?

If you don' talk happy
An' you never have a dream,
Den you'll never have a dream come true.

(Speaking eagerly)

Is good idea . . . you like?

(She laughs gaily and looks in CABLE's eyes, anxious to see the answer. CABLE is deeply disturbed. He takes a gold watch from his pocket and puts it in LIAT's hand.)

CABLE

Liat, I want you to have this. It's a man's watch but it's a good one—belonged to my grandfather. It's kind of lucky piece, too. My dad carried it all through the last war. Beautiful, isn't it?

(LIAT has taken the watch, her eyes gleaming with pride)

BLOODY MARY

When I see you firs' time, I know you good man for Liat. And she good girl for you. You have special good babies.

(Pause. CABLE looks tortured.)

CABLE

(Forcing the words out)

Mary, I can't . . . marry . . . Liat.

BLOODY MARY

(Letting out her rage and disappointment in a shout as she grabs LIAT's arm)

Was your las' chance! Now she marry Jacques Barrere. Come,

Liat! *(LIAT runs to CABLE. BLOODY MARY pulls her away.)* Give me watch. *(LIAT clasps it tight in her hands. BLOODY MARY wrests it from her and yells at CABLE:)* Stingy bastard!

(She throws it on the ground and it smashes. CABLE looks on, dazed, stunned. MARY pulls LIAT off. CABLE kneels down, gathers up the pieces and puts them in his pocket. Meanwhile, several of the men come on, dressed for the finale of the show. They are looking back over their shoulders at LIAT and BLOODY MARY, whom they must have just passed.)

PROFESSOR

Hey! Did you get a load of that little Tonkinese girl?

(They continue up to the stage door as they speak)

MARINE

Yeah.

(Applause offstage. NELLIE's voice is heard through the loudspeaker.)

NELLIE

(Offstage)

Now, boys, before we come to the last act of our show, it is my great pleasure to bring you our skipper, Captain Brackett.

(Applause. CABLE has been looking off at LIAT as she passes out of his life.)

CABLE

(Singing)

Younger than springtime were you,
Softer than starlight, were you,
Angel and lover, heaven and earth
Were you to me . . .

Scene Three

The lights fade to complete darkness. BRACKETT's voice is heard over the loudspeaker. During his speech the lights come up, revealing:

The G.I. Stage, as before. BRACKETT is speaking into a microphone.

BRACKETT

Up to now, our side has been having the hell beat out of it in two hemispheres and we're not going to get to go home until the situation is reversed. It may take a long time before we can get any big operation under way, so it's things like this, like this show tonight, that keep us going. Now I understand that I am not generally considered a sentimental type. (*Laughter and cries of "oh, boy!" "Check," "You can say that again," etc., from the boys on the corners of the stage*) Once or twice I understand I have been referred to as "Old Iron Belly."

VOICES

Once or twice! Just about a million times.

(Loud laughter)

BRACKETT

I resent that very much because I had already chosen that as my private name for our Executive Officer, Commander Harbison. (*Big laugh. Applause. He calls into wings.*) Take a bow, Commander. (*Two of the girls pull COMMANDER HARBISON out*)

SAILOR

I wish I was a commander!

(HARBISON, flanked by the two girls, stands beside BRACKETT as he continues)

BRACKETT

I want you to know that both "Old Iron Bellies" sat here tonight and had a hell of a good time. And we want to thank that hardworking committee of Nurses and Seabees who made the costumes out of rope and mosquito nets, comic books and newspapers . . .

(He fingers the paper skirt of one of the girls)

SAILOR

Ah, ah—Captain!

(BRACKETT frowns, but pulls himself together)

BRACKETT

. . . and thought up these jokes and these grand songs. And I just want to say on this Thanksgiving Day, to all of them from all of us, thank you. (*Applause from the boys, but it is comically feeble. Obviously they'd like to get on with the show.*) And now I'm going to ask Commander Harbison to announce the next act which is the finale of our Thanksgiving entertainment.

(He hands HARBISON a small card. HARBISON reads from it)

HARBISON

The next and last will be a song sung by Bosun Butch Forbush . . . (*He looks kind of puzzled*) . . . and that siren of the Coral Sea—gorgeous, voluptuous, and petite Mademoiselle Lutheria . . . (*Ending in a high, surprised voice, as he reads the name of his pet abomination*) . . . Billis!

BRACKETT
(*Laughing*)

Come on, Bill.

(*He leads off HARBISON, who is looking at the paper, puzzled. The music of "Honey Bun" starts and NELLIE enters, dressed as a sailor, in a borrowed white sailor suit, three times too big for her.*)

NELLIE
(*Singing*)

My doll is as dainty as a sparrow,
Her figure is something to applaud.
Where she's narrow, she's narrow as an arrow
And she's broad where a broad should be broad!

A hundred and one
Pounds of fun—
That's my little Honey-Bun!
Get a load of Honey-Bun tonight!

I'm speakin' of my
Sweetie Pie,
Only sixty inches high—
Every inch is packed with dynamite!

Her hair is blonde and curly,
Her curls are hurly-burly.
Her lips are pips!
I call her hips:
"Twirly"
And "whirly."
She's my baby,

I'm her Pap!
I'm her booby,
She's my trap!
I am caught and don't wanta run
'Cause I'm havin' so much fun with Honey-Bun!

(*NELLIE starts a second refrain, meanwhile having considerable difficulty with her sagging trousers. Now BILLIS enters, dressed as a South Sea siren in a straw-colored wig, long lashes fantastically painted on his eyelids, lips painted in bright carmine, two coconut shells on his chest to simulate "femininity" and a battleship tattooed on his bare midriff. He and NELLIE dance. For an exit, she leads him off, singing a special ending.*)

NELLIE

She's my baby,
I'm her Pap!
I'm her booby,
She's my trap!
I am caught and I don't wanta run
'Cause I'm havin' so much fun with Honey-Bun.
(Believe me, sonny!)
She's a cookie who can cook you till you're done.
(Ain't bein' funny!)
Sonny,
Put your money
On my Honey-Bun!

(*After they exit, NELLIE returns for a bow. Then BILLIS enters with EMILE'S flowers and presents them to her. Thinking they are from BILLIS, she kisses him. He exits in a delirious daze. She exits as the GIRLS enter, singing.*)

GIRLS

A hundred and one
Pounds of fun—
That's my little Honey-Bun!
Get a load of Honey Bun tonight!
I'm speakin' of my
Sweetie Pie,
Only sixty inches high—
Every inch is packed with dynamite!

(The girls are dressed in homemade costumes representing island natives. The materials are fish net, parachute cloth, large tropical leaves, and flowers—anything they could find and sew together. At the end of their line is BILLIS, still dressed as a girl. As the song proceeds, he is the butt of many a slur from his comrades. While passing one of them, he is shocked and infuriated to feel a hand thrust up his skirt. He turns to swing on him, but he can't get out of line and spoil the number; "On with the show!" he is grim and stoic—even when another boy lifts one of the coconuts in his "brassiere" and steals a package of cigarettes therefrom. The GIRLS and BILLIS continue singing through these impromptu shenanigans.)

GIRLS

Her hair is blonde and curly,
Her curls are hurly-burly.
Her lips are pips!
I call her hips
"Twirly" and "Whirly."

She's my baby,
I'm her Pap!
I'm her booby,
She's my trap!

I am caught and don't wanta run
'Cause I'm havin' so much fun with Honey-Bun!

(ALL line up for the finale)

And that's the finish,
And it's time to go for now the show is done.
(Balance of the "COMPANY" cast comes on)

We hope you liked us,
And we hope that when you leave your seat and run
Down to the mess hall
You'll enjoy your dinner each and every one.

(NELLIE makes a special entrance, now wearing a new costume)

NELLIE

(Very brightly)

Enjoy your turkey!

ALL

(Pointing to BILLIS)

And put some chestnut dressing on our Honey-Bun!

(The curtain is slow. NELLIE signals for it and jumps up to help pull it down. The lights are off. Boys on the stage wave their flashlights out at the audience, addressing them as if they were all G.I.s. "See you down at the mess hall," etc. When the clamor dies down, the following two lines are distinguishable.)

SAILOR

How d'ya like the show?

MARINE

It stunk!

Scene Four

Now the lights come up on the scene behind the stage.

The girls come off the stage and file into their dressing shack. BILLIS follows them in. After a few moments, he comes hurtling out, minus his wig. A few seconds later, the wig is thrown out by one of the girls in the dressing room.

BILLIS

Oh, I beg your pardon.

(At this moment, he turns and faces NELLIE, who has just come down the steps from the stage with another girl)

NELLIE

(Seeing BILLIS)

Oh, Luther, you really are a honey-bun! These beautiful flowers! I needed someone to think of me tonight. I appreciate it, Luther—you don't know how much.

BILLIS

(Very emotionally)

Miss Forbush, I would like you to know I consider you the most wonderful woman in the entire world—officer and all. And I just can't go on being such a heel as to let you think I thought of giving you those flowers.

NELLIE

But you did give them to me and I—

BILLIS

(Shoving a card at NELLIE)

Here's the card that came with them. *(She reads the card, then turns away—deeply affected)* Are you all right, Miss Forbush? *(She nods her head)* I'll be waiting around the area here in case you need me. Just— just sing out.

(He exits. NELLIE is on the verge of tears. CABLE, who has been sitting on a bench below the ladies dressing shack, now rises and approaches NELLIE)

CABLE

(Sympathetically, but taking a light tone)

What's the matter, Nellie the nurse? Having diplomatic difficulties with France?

(NELLIE turns, startled)

NELLIE

(Immediately becoming the professional nurse)

Joe Cable! Who let you out of the hospital?

CABLE

Me. I'm okay.

(She leads him to the bench and feels his forehead and pulse)

NELLIE

(Accusingly)

Joe! You're trying to get over to Bali Ha'i. That little girl you told me about!

CABLE

(Nodding thoughtfully)

Liat. I've just seen her for the last time, I guess. I love her and yet

I just heard myself saying I can't marry her. What's the matter with me, Nellie? What kind of guy am I, anyway?

NELLIE

You're all right. You're just far away from home. We're both so far away from home.

(She looks at the card. He takes her hand. EMILE enters. He is earnest and importunate)

EMILE

Nellie! I must see you.

NELLIE

Emile! I—

EMILE

Will you excuse us, Lieutenant Cable?

(CABLE starts to leave)

NELLIE

No, wait a minute, Joe. Stay. Please! *(To EMILE)* I've been meaning to call you but . . .

EMILE

You have asked for a transfer, why? What does it mean?

NELLIE

I'll explain it to you tomorrow, Emile. I'm—

EMILE

No. Now. What does it mean, Nellie?

NELLIE

It means that I can't marry you. Do you understand? I can't marry you.

EMILE

Nellie—Because of my children?

NELLIE

Not because of your children. They're sweet.

EMILE

It is their Polynesian mother then—their mother and I.

NELLIE

. . . Yes. I can't help it. It isn't as if I could give you a good reason. There is no reason. This is emotional. This is something that is born in me.

EMILE

(Shouting the words in bitter protest)

It is not. I do not believe this is born in you.

NELLIE

Then why do I feel the way I do? All I know is that I can't help it. I can't help it! Explain how we feel, Joe—

(CABLE gives her no help. She runs up to the door of the dressing shack)

EMILE

Nellie!

NELLIE
(*Calling in*)

Dinah, are you ready?

DINAH

Yes, Nellie.

NELLIE

I'll go with you.

(DINAH comes out and they exit quickly. EMILE turns angrily to CABLE.)

EMILE

What makes her talk like that? Why do you have this feeling, you and she? I do not believe it is born in you. I do not believe it.

CABLE

It's not born in you! It happens *after* you're born . . .

(CABLE sings as if figuring this whole question out for the first time)

You've got to be taught to hate and fear,
You've got to be taught from year to year,
It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear—
You've got to be carefully taught!

You've got to be taught to be afraid
Of people whose eyes are oddly made,
And people whose skin is a different shade—
You've got to be carefully taught.

You've got to be taught before it's too late,
Before you are six or seven or eight,

To hate all the people your relatives hate—
You've got to be carefully taught!
You've got to be carefully taught!

(*Speaking, going close to EMILE, his voice filled with the emotion of discovery and firm in a new determination*)

You've got the right idea, Becque—live on an island. Yes, sir, if I get out of this thing alive, I'm not going back there! I'm coming here. All I care about is here. To hell with the rest.

EMILE

(*Thoughtfully*)

When all you care about is here, this is a good place to be. When all you care about is taken away from you, there is no place . . .
(*Walking away from CABLE, now talking to himself*) I came so close to it . . . so close.

(*Singing*)

One dream in my heart,
One love to be living for,
One love to be living for—
This nearly was mine.

One girl for my dream,
One partner in Paradise,
This promise of Paradise—
This nearly was mine.

Close to my heart she came,
Only to fly away,
Only to fly as day
Flies from moonlight!

Now, now I'm alone,
 Still dreaming of Paradise,
 Still saying that Paradise
 Once nearly was mine.

So clear and deep are my fancies
 Of things I wish were true,
 I'll keep remembering evenings
 I wish I'd spent with you.
 I'll keep remembering kisses
 From lips I'll never own
 And all the lovely adventures
 That we have never known.

One dream in my heart,
 One love to be living for,
 One love to be living for—
 This nearly was mine.

One girl for my dream,
 One partner in Paradise,
 This promise of Paradise—
 This nearly was mine.

Close to my heart she came,
 Only to fly away,
 Only to fly as day
 Flies from moonlight!

Now . . . now I'm alone,
 Still dreaming of Paradise,
 Still saying that Paradise

Once nearly was mine.
(He drops to the bench, a lonely and disconsolate figure)

CABLE
(Going to him)

De Becque, would you reconsider going up there with me to Marie Louise Island? I mean, now that you haven't got so much to lose? We could do a good job, I think—you and I. *(EMILE doesn't answer)* You know, back home when I used to get in a jam, I used to go hunting. That's what I think I'll do now. Good hunting up there around Marie Louise. Jap carriers . . . cargo boats . . . troopships . . . big game. *(He looks at EMILE, considering how much headway he has made)* When I go up, what side of the island should I land on?

EMILE
 The south side.

CABLE
 Why?

EMILE
 There's a cove there . . . and rocks. I have sailed in behind these rocks many times.

CABLE
 Could a submarine get in between those rocks without being observed?

EMILE
 Yes. If you know the channel.

CABLE

And after I land, what will I do?

EMILE

You will get in touch with my friends, Basile and Inato—two black men—wonderful hunters. They will hide us in the hills.

CABLE

(His eyes lighting up)

Us? Are you going with me?

EMILE

(A new strength in his voice)

Of course. You are too young to be out alone. Let's go and find Captain Brackett.

CABLE

(Delirious)

Wait till that old bastard Brackett hears this. He'll jump out of his skin!

EMILE

I would like to see this kind of a jump. Come on!

(They go off quickly together. BILLIS rushes on and looks after them. Obviously he's been listening. He thinks it over for a moment, "dopes it out." Then, with sudden decision, he takes one last puff on a cigarette, stomps it out, and follows after them.)

Scene Five

The lights go out and almost immediately the sound of an airplane motor is heard, revving up, ready for the takeoff. The lights come up between the tapa-cloth and the dark green drop.

Several Naval Aircraft mechanics are standing with their backs to the audience—They look off, watching tensely. As the plane is heard taking off, they raise their hands and shout in an exultant, defiant manner.

The music reaches a climax and the lights fade out on them, as they exit.

Lights in center come on simultaneously, revealing:

Scene Six

This is the communications office or radio room. The back wall is covered with communications equipment of all sorts: boards, lights, switches. There is a speaker, a small table with a receiving set, various telephones and sending equipment. A COMMUNICATIONS ENLISTED MAN is sitting at the table with earphones. He is working the dials in front of him. BRACKETT is seated on an upturned wastebasket. On the floor are several empty Coca-Cola bottles and several full ones. He is eating a sandwich and alternately guzzling from a bottle of Coca-Cola. There are a couple of empty Coca-Cola bottles on the ENLISTED MAN's desk, too. BRACKETT is listening avidly for any possible sound that might come from the loudspeaker. After a moment, there is a crackle.

BRACKETT
(Excitedly)

What's that? What's that? (*The ENLISTED MAN cannot hear him because he wears earphones. BRACKETT suddenly becomes conscious of this. He pokes the enlisted man in the back. The ENLISTED MAN, controlling himself, turns and looks at BRACKETT, as a nurse would look at an anxious, complaining patient. He pulls the earphones away from his ear.*) What was that?

ENLISTED MAN
(Quietly)

That was . . . nothing, sir.
(*He readjusts his earphones and turns to his dials again.*)

BRACKETT, *unsatisfied by this, pokes the ENLISTED MAN again. ENLISTED MAN winces, then patiently takes the earphones from his ears.*)

BRACKETT

Sounded to me like someone trying to send a message . . . sounded like code.

ENLISTED MAN

That was not code, sir. That sound you just heard was the contraction of the tin roof. It's the metal, cooling off at night.

BRACKETT

Oh.

ENLISTED MAN

Sir, if you'd like to go back to your office, I'll let you know as soon as . . .

BRACKETT

No, no, I'll stay right here. I don't want to add to your problems.

MCCAFFREY

(*He turns back to his dials*)

Yes, sir.

(*BRACKETT impatiently looks at his watch and compares it with the watch on the ENLISTED MAN's desk. He talks to the ENLISTED MAN who cannot hear him.*)

BRACKETT

We ought to be getting a message now. We ought to be getting a message, that's all. They'd have time to land and establish some

sort of an observation post by now, don't you think so? (*He realizes that the ENLISTED MAN cannot hear him*) Oh.

(*He sits in a position of listening. HARBISON enters. He is very stern, more upset than we have ever seen him.*)

HARBISON

Captain Brackett?

BRACKETT

Yeah, what is it? What is it? Don't interrupt me now, Bill. I'm very busy.

HARBISON

It's about this Seabee out here, sir, Billis! Commander Perkins over at Operations estimates that Billis's act this morning cost the Navy over six hundred thousand dollars!

BRACKETT

Six hundred—By God, I'm going to chew that guy's . . . Send him in here!

HARBISON

Yes, sir.

(*He exits. BRACKETT goes over and taps the ENLISTED MAN on the shoulder. The ENLISTED MAN removes earphones.*)

BRACKETT

Let me know the moment you get any word. No matter what I'm doing, you just break right in.

MCCAFFREY

Yes, sir.

(*He goes back to his work. BRACKETT paces another second and then BILLIS enters, wary, on guard; his face is flaming red, his nose is a white triangle, covered with zinc oxide. He wears an undershirt. His arms are red, except for two patches of zinc oxide on his shoulders. He is followed by LIEUTENANT BUZZ ADAMS and HARBISON, who closes the door.*)

HARBISON

(*Pushing BILLIS in*)

Get in there! Captain Brackett, this is Lieutenant Buzz Adams, who flew the mission.

BRACKETT

H'ya, Adams.

ADAMS

Captain.

(*BRACKETT beckons BILLIS to him. BILLIS walks over to him slowly, not knowing what may hit him.*)

BRACKETT

One man like you in an outfit is like a rotten apple in a barrel. Just what did you feel like—sitting down there all day long in that little rubber boat in the middle of Empress Augusta Bay with the whole damn Navy Air Force trying to rescue you? And how the hell can you fall out of a PBY anyway?

BILLIS

Well, sir, the Jap anti-aircraft busted a hole in the side of the plane and—I fell through—the wind just sucked me out.

BRACKETT

So I'm to understand that you deliberately hid in the baggage compartment of a plane that you knew was taking off on a very dangerous mission. You had sand enough to do that all right. And then the moment an anti-aircraft gun hit the plane you fell out. The wind just sucked you out . . . you and your little parachute! I don't think you fell out, Billis, I think you jumped out. Which did you do?

BILLIS

Well, sir . . . er . . . it was sort of half and half . . . if you get the picture.

BRACKETT

This is one of the most humiliating things that ever happened to me. Adams, when did you discover he was on the plane?

ADAMS

Well, sir, we'd been out about an hour—it was still dark, I know. Well, we were flying across Marie Louisa. The Jap anti-aircraft spotted us and made that hit. That's when Luther . . . er . . . this fellow here . . . that's when he . . . left the ship. I just circled once . . . time enough to drop him a rubber boat. Some New Zealanders in P-40s spotted him though and kept circling around him while I flew across the island and landed alongside the sub, let Joe and the Frenchman off. By the time I got back to the other side of the island, our Navy planes were flying around in the air above this guy like a thick swarm of bees. *(He turns to grin at HARBISON, who gives him no returning grin. He clears his throat and turns back to BRACKETT.)* They kept the Jap guns occupied while I slipped down and scooped him off the rubber boat. You'd have thought this guy was a ninety-million-dollar cruiser they were

out to protect. There must have been fifty-five or sixty planes.

BILLIS

Sixty-two.

BRACKETT

You're not far off, Adams. Harbison tells me this thing cost the Navy about six hundred thousand dollars.

BILLIS

(His face lighting up)

Six hundred thous . . . !

BRACKETT

What the hell are you so happy about?

BILLIS

I was just thinking about my uncle. *(To ADAMS)* Remember my uncle I was telling you about? He used to tell my old man I'd never be worth a dime! Him and his lousy slot machines . . . Can you imagine a guy . . .

(He catches sight of HARBISON's scowl and shuts up quickly)

BRACKETT

Why the hell did you do this anyway, Billis? What would make a man do a thing like this?

BILLIS

Well, sir, a fellow has to keep moving. You know . . . you get kind of held down. If you're itching to take a trip to pick up a few souvenirs, you got to kind of horn in . . . if you get the picture.

BRACKETT

How did you know about it?

BILLIS

I didn't know about it, exactly. It's just when I heard Lieutenant Cable talking to that fellow de Becque, right away I know something's in the air. A project. That's what I like, Captain. Projects. Don't you?

HARBISON

Billis, you've broken every regulation in the book. And, by God, Captain Brackett and I are going to throw it at you.

ADAMS

Sir. May I barge in? My co-pilot watched this whole thing, you know, and he thinks that this fellow Billis down there in the rubber boat with all those planes over him caused a kind of diversionary action. While all those Japs were busy shooting at the planes and at Billis on the other side of the island, that sub was sliding into that little cove and depositing the Frenchman and Joe Cable in behind those rocks.

BRACKETT

What the hell do you want me to do? Give this guy a Bronze Star?

BILLIS

I don't want any Bronze Star, Captain. But I could use a little freedom. A little room to swing around in . . . if you know what I mean. If you get the picture.

BRACKETT

Get out of here. Get the hell out of here!

(Moving up after BILLIS. BILLIS flees through the door)

HARBISON

I'd have thrown him in the brig. And I will, too, if I get the ghost of a chance.

(Suddenly the RADIO OPERATOR becomes very excited and waves his arms at BRACKETT. We begin to hear squeaks and static from the loudspeaker and through it we hear EMILE'S voice. Everyone on the stage turns. All eyes and ears are focused on the loudspeaker.)

EMILE'S VOICE

. . . And so we are here. This is our first chance to send news to you. We have made contact with former friends of mine. We have set up quarters in a mango tree—no room but a lovely view . . . First the weather: Rain clouds over Bougainville, The Treasuries, Choiseul, and New Georgia. We expect rain in this region from nine o'clock to two o'clock. Pardon? Oh—my friend Joe corrects me. Oh—nine hundred to fourteen hundred. And now, our military expert, Joe.

CABLE'S VOICE

All you Navy, Marine, and Army pilots write this down. *(ADAMS whips out notebook and writes as CABLE speaks)* Surface craft—nineteen troop barges headed down the bottleneck; speed about eleven knots. Ought to pass Banika at about twenty hundred tonight, escorted by heavy warships. *(BRACKETT and HARBISON smile triumphantly)* There ought to be some way to knock off a few of these.

(CABLE'S voice continues under the following speeches)

ADAMS

Oh, boy!
(He goes to the door)

HARBISON

Where you going?

ADAMS

Don't want to miss that takeoff. We'll be going out in waves tonight—waves—
(He exits quickly. BRACKETT sits down on wastebasket and opens another Coke)

BRACKETT

Sit down, Bill. *(HARBISON sits, listening intently. BRACKETT hands him a Coke. HARBISON takes it.)* Here.

HARBISON

Thanks.

BRACKETT

You know what I like, Bill? Projects—don't you?
(Lights start to fade)

CABLE'S VOICE

(Which has been continuing over above dialogue)
 As for aircraft, there is little indication of activity at the moment. But twenty-two bombers—Bettys—went by at oh six hundred headed southwest. There was fighter escort, not heavy . . . they should reach—
(The lights are off the scene, but another part of the stage is lighted, revealing a group of pilots around a radio set, being briefed by an OPERATIONS OFFICER)

Scene Seven

OPERATIONS OFFICER

Listen carefully.

EMILE'S VOICE

Ceiling today unlimited. Thirty-three fighters—Zeros—have moved in from Bougainville. Their course is approximately 23 degrees—Undoubtedly, heavy bombers will follow.

OFFICER

(To pilots who are writing)

Got that?

(Lights out. Light hits another group)

NAVY PILOT

(To a group of officers)

Well, gentlemen, here's the hot tip for today. Joe and the Frenchman have sighted twenty surface craft heading southeast from Vella Lavella. Christmas is just two weeks away. Let's give those two characters a present—a beautiful view of no ships coming back.

AN OFFICER

Okay with me. Let's go!

(They exit. Lights fade off and return to center of stage, revealing:)

Scene Eight

The Radio Shack again.

BRACKETT *is pacing up and down.* HARBISON *is standing near the door, a pleading expression on his face.*

HARBISON

Sir, you just have to tell her something sometime. She hasn't seen him for two weeks. She might as well know it now.

BRACKETT

Okay. Send her in. Send her in. I always have to do the tough jobs.
(HARBISON *exits. A second later, NELLIE enters, followed by HARBISON. She goes to BRACKETT and immediately plunges into the subject closest to her heart. Her speech is unplanned. She knows she has no right to ask her question, but she must have an answer.*)

NELLIE

Captain Brackett, I know this isn't regular . . . It's about Emile de Becque. I went to his house a week ago to . . . You know how people have arguments and then days later you think of a good answer . . . Well, I went to his house, and he wasn't there. I even asked the children . . . he has two little children . . . and they didn't seem to know where he'd gone. At least, I think that's what they said—they only speak French. And then tonight while I was on duty in the ward—we have a lot of fighter pilots over there, the boys who knocked out that convoy yesterday—you know

how fighter pilots talk—about “Immelmanns” and “wingovers” and things. I never listen usually but they kept talking about a Frenchman—the Frenchman said this, and the Frenchman said that . . . and I was wondering if this Frenchman they were talking about could be—*my* Frenchman.

(Pause)

BRACKETT

Yes, Miss Forbush, it is. I couldn't tell you before but . . . As a matter of fact, if you wait here a few minutes, you can hear his voice.

NELLIE

His voice? Where is he?

BRACKETT

With Lieutenant Cable behind enemy lines.

NELLIE

Behind . . . !

(The RADIO OPERATOR snaps his fingers. All heads turn up toward the loudspeaker. They listen to EMILE'S voice on the radio.)

EMILE'S VOICE

Hello. Hello, my friends and allies. My message today must be brief . . . and sad. Lieutenant Cable, my friend, Joe, died last night. He died from wounds he received three days ago. I will never know a finer man. I wish he could have told you the good news. The Japanese are pulling out and there is great confusion. Our guess is that the Japs will try to evacuate troops from Cape Esperance tonight. You may not hear from us for several days. We must move again. Two planes are overhead. They are looking for us, we think. We believe that . . . *(His speech is interrupted.)*

There is the sound of a plane engine. EMILE'S voice is heard shouting excitedly "off mike." What? . . . What? ("In mike.") Good-bye!
(There is a moment's silence. The RADIO OPERATOR works the dials.)

BRACKETT

Is that all? Is that all? Can't you get them back?

MCCAFFREY

No, sir. They're cut off.

NELLIE

(Tears in her eyes)

Poor Joe. Poor little Joe Cable. *(She grabs BRACKETT and holds tightly to his arms)* Captain Brackett . . . Do you think there's a chance I'll ever see Emile de Becque again? If you don't think so, will you tell me?

BRACKETT

There's a chance . . . of course there's a chance.

NELLIE

(Turning to HARBISON)

I didn't know he was going.

BRACKETT

Of course not. How could he tell you he was going? Now don't blame Emile de Becque. He's okay . . . he's a wonderful guy!

(NELLIE tries to answer, swallows hard, and can make only an inarticulate sound of assent)

NELLIE

Uh-huh!

(She exits quickly)

BRACKETT

He has got a chance, hasn't he, Bill?

HARBISON

(Hoarsely)

Of course. There's always a chance!

BRACKETT

Come on! Let's get out of here!

(Both exit, as the shack recedes upstage and a group of officers and nurses enter downstage to walk across the company street)

Scene Nine

The officers and nurses are singing the refrain of "A Wonderful Guy."

NELLIE walks on from the opposite side, looking straight ahead of her, a set expression on her face.

NURSE

(As they pass her)

Coming to the dance, Nellie?

(NELLIE just shakes her head and passes them)

A LIEUTENANT

What's the matter with her?

(Three girls in a trio and in a spirit of kidding NELLIE, sing back over their shoulders at her, "She's in love, she's in love, She's in love, she's in love with a wonderful guy." Even before they have reached the end of this, the lights have started to dim. Now the lights come up in back, revealing:)

Scene Ten

The beach.

NELLIE walks on. The strain of "I'm in love, I'm in love, I'm in love" ringing in her ears and cutting deeply into her heart. She walks up and looks over the sea. Pause. Then she speaks softly.

NELLIE

Come back so I can tell you something. I know what counts now. You. All those other things—the woman you had before—her color . . . *(She laughs bitterly)* What piffle! What a pinhead I was! Come back so I can tell you. Oh, my God, don't die until I can tell you! All that matters is you and I being together. That's all! Just together—the way we wanted it to be the first night we met! Remember? . . . Remember?

(She sing softly)

Some enchanted evening
When you find your true love,
When you feel him call you
Across a crowded room—
Then fly to his side,
And make him your own,
Or all through your life you may dream all a . . .

(Music continues. She speaks.)

Don't die, Emile.

(As the last line of the refrain is played, BLOODY MARY walks on and addresses NELLIE, timidly)

BLOODY MARY

Miss Nurse! (NELLIE, *shocked by the sudden sound of an intruding voice, turns with a start*) Please, please, Miss Nurse?

NELLIE

Who are you? What do you want?

BLOODY MARY

Where is Lootellan Cable?

NELLIE

Who are you?

BLOODY MARY

I am mother of Liat.

NELLIE

Who?

BLOODY MARY

Liat. She won't marry no one but Lootellan Cable.

(LIAT *walks on slowly*. BLOODY MARY *moves her forward and shows her to NELLIE*. NELLIE *looks at this girl and realizes who she is.*)

NELLIE

Oh. (NELLIE *rushes to her impulsively and embraces her*) Oh, my darling!

(*As she clasps LIAT in her arms, the noises of the company street burst harshly as the curtains close and we are plunged into:*)

Scene Eleven

The company street is crowded with members of all Forces, ready to embark. There are sounds of truck convoys passing. Over the loudspeaker the following is heard:

VOICE ON LOUDSPEAKER

All right, hear this. All those outfits that are waiting for loading, please keep in position. We'll get to you as soon as your ship is ready for you.

(BILLIS, STEWPOT, *and the* PROFESSOR *enter*)

STEW POT

Hey, Billis, let's head back, huh? Our gang's about a mile back down the beach. Suppose they call our names?

PROFESSOR

Yeah! They may be ready for us to go aboard.

BILLIS

They won't be ready for hours yet . . . this is the Navy. (*He turns and regards the scene offstage*) Eager beavers! Look at that beach . . . swarmin' with ten thousand guys—all jerks! (*Picking out a likely "jerk."*) Hey, are you a Marine?

MARINE

(*Turning*)

Yeah!

BILLIS

Are you booked on one of those LCTs?

MARINE

I guess so, why?

BILLIS

They'll shake the belly off you, you know. *(He takes out a small package)* Five bucks and you can have it.

MARINE

What is it?

BILLIS

Seasick remedy. You'll be needing it.

MARINE

Aw, knock off! *(Pulls out handful of packages from his pocket)* That stuff's issued. We all got it. Who are you tryin' to fool?

BILLIS

(Turning to STEWPOT)

These Marines are getting smarter every day.

OFFICER

(Passing through)

All right, all right. Stay with your own unit. *(To a nurse in combat uniform)* Ensign, you too. For heaven's sake, don't get spread out over here. We're trying to get this thing organized as quickly as possible, so for God's sake, stay with your outfit! *(To BILLIS)* Say, Seabee . . . you belong down the beach.

BILLIS

(Saluting officer)

Excuse me, sir, could you tell me where we could find Captain Brackett?

OFFICER

He's up at the head of the company street. He'll be along any minute now.

BILLIS

(Salute)

Thank you, sir. That's all, sir.

(The OFFICER having started off, stops in his tracks, stunned and rocked off his balance by being thus "dismissed" by BILLIS. Oh, well—too many important things to be done right now! He goes on his way, shouting:)

OFFICER

All right! Stay in line! How many times have I told you . . .
(He is off. A NURSE comes by)

BILLIS

Hello, Miss MacGregor. You nurses going too?

NURSE

Only a few of us. We're going to fly back some wounded.

BILLIS

Is Miss Forbush going with you?

NURSE MACGREGOR

I don't know. She may be staying here with the hospital.

(She starts to leave)

BILLIS

Oh, Miss MacGregor . . . you don't get airsick, do you? I was thinking maybe if you got three bucks handy, you might be able to use this little package I got here.

NURSE MACGREGOR

(Looking down at it)

Oh, that stuff's no good . . . we gave that up last month.

BILLIS

(Turning to STEWPOT)

That's a female jerk! (BRACKETT and HARBISON enter) I beg pardon, sir . . . could I speak to you a moment?

BRACKETT

(Peering through the semi-darkness)

Who's that?

BILLIS

Billis, sir . . . Luther Billis.

BRACKETT

Oh. What do you want, Billis? We're moving out pretty soon.

BILLIS

Yes, sir, I know. I'd like to do something for Miss Forbush, sir. Stewpot and the Professor and me was wondering if anything is being done about rescuing the Frenchman off that island. We hereby volunteer for such a project . . . a triple diversionary activity, like I done to get 'em on there. You could drop us in three

rubber boats on three different sides of the island . . . confuse the hell out of the Japs . . . Get the picture?

BRACKETT

It's very fine of you, Billis . . . but you're too late for diversionary activity. That started this morning before the sun came up. Operation Alligator got underway. Landings were made on fourteen Japanese-held islands.

BILLIS

I think that's very unfair, sir. The first thing they should have done was try to rescue that Frenchman.

HARBISON

The Admiral agrees with you, Billis. Marie Louise was the first island they hit.

BILLIS

Did they get him? Is he alive?

BRACKETT

We don't know. Lieutenant Buzz Adams flew up there to find out. He hasn't come back. But if the Frenchman's dead, it *is* unfair. It's too damned bad if a part of this huge operation couldn't have saved one of the two guys who made it all possible.

HARBISON

(Gazing off)

Look at the beach . . . far as you can see . . . men waiting to board ships. The whole picture of the South Pacific has changed. We're going the other way.

SHORE PATROLMAN

Captain Brackett, sir—the launch is ready to take your ship.

BILLIS

You got a ship, sir?

BRACKETT

Yes, Harbison and I've got a ship. I'm no longer a lousy island commander. Come on, Bill.

BILLIS

Good-bye, Commander Harbison.

HARBISON

Good-bye, Billis. Oh, by the way, I never did get you in the brig . . . did I?

BILLIS

(Laughing almost too heartily at his triumph)

No! Ha-ha.

HARBISON

Oh, I forgot!

BILLIS

(Still laughing)

Forgot what, sir?

HARBISON

Your unit'll be on our ship. I'll be seeing all of you. *(Dismay from BILLIS, STEWPOT, and the PROFESSOR)*

BRACKETT

Come on, Bill.

(BRACKETT and HARBISON exit)

OFFICER

(Entering)

All right . . . let's start those trucks moving out—all units on the company street. We're ready to load you. All Nurses will board assigned planes—Seabees to embark on Carrier 6. All Marines to board LCTS. Any questions? MOVE OUT!

(The sound of trucks roar. The music which has been playing under the scene mounts in volume. The men march off. Nurses in hospital uniform stand waving to the men and the nurses in combat uniform who leave with them. Soon the groups are all dispersed and lights come up in back, revealing:)

Scene Twelve

EMILE's terrace.

It is late afternoon. Sunset—reddish light. The drone of planes can be heard. JEROME stands on a table. NELLIE holds him. NGANA is beside her. All look off.

NELLIE

(Pointing off)

The big ones are battleships and the little ones are destroyers—or cruisers—I never can tell the difference. *(She looks up in the air)* And what on earth are those?

JEROME

P-40s.

NELLIE

Oh, that's right. They're all moving out, you see, because, well . . . there's been a big change. They won't be around here much anymore, just off and on, a few of us. Did you understand anything I said? *Vous ne comprenez pas?*

NGANA

Oui, oui, nous comprenons.
(JEROME nods his head)

JEROME

Oui.

NELLIE

Now, while I'm down at the hospital, you've got to promise me to manger everything—everything that's put before you on the table—sur le tobler. Sur la tobler?

NGANA

(Smiling patiently)

Sur la table.

NELLIE

(She smiles, congratulating herself)

Now come back here, Jerome, and sit down. *(She starts to place the children at the table, on which a bowl of soup and some bowls have been set. At this point BUZZ ADAMS appears upstage—a weary figure. Behind him comes EMILE in a dirt-stained uniform, helmet, paratroop boots and musette bag. ADAMS calls his attention to the planes droning above. Neither sees NELLIE nor the children. NELLIE pushes the children down on the bench as they playfully balk at being seated.)* Ass—say—yay—*voo.* *(They sit. EMILE turns sharply at the sound of her voice.)* Now you have to learn to mind me when I talk to you and be nice to me too. Because I love you very much. Now, *mangez.*

(EMILE's face lights up with grateful happiness. ADAMS knows it's time for him to shove off, and he does. NELLIE proceeds to ladle soup from the large bowl into three small bowls.)

JEROME

(His eyes twinkling mischievously)

Chantez, Nellie.

NELLIE

I will not sing that song. You just want to laugh at my French

accent. (*The children put their spoons down—on strike*) All right, but you've got to help me.

NELLIE, NGANA, AND JEROME

Dites-moi

Pourquoi

(*NELLIE is stuck. The children sing the next line without her.*)

La vie est belle.

NELLIE

(*Repeating, quickly, to catch up to them*)

La vie est belle,

(*Meanwhile, EMILE has crossed behind them. NELLIE is looking out front, not seeing him, trying to remember the lyrics, continues to sing with the children.*)

Dites-moi

Pourquoi . . .

(*She turns to the children*)

Pourquoi what?

(*She sees EMILE*)

EMILE

(*Answering her, singing*)

La vie est gai!

(*NELLIE gazes at him, hypnotized—her voice gone. The children rush to embrace him.*)

Dites-moi

Pourquoi,

Chère mad'moiselle—

(*EMILE leans forward and sings straight at NELLIE*)

EMILE

Est-ce que

Parce que

Vous m'aimez—

(*The music continues. The children drink their soup. NELLIE comes back to consciousness enough to realize that EMILE must be hungry. She leans over and hands him the large bowl of soup with an air of "nothing's too-good-for-the-boss!" Then she passes him the soup ladle. But he doesn't use it. Instead, he thrusts his hand forward. NELLIE clasps it. Looking into each other's eyes, they hold this position as the curtain falls.*)