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Never So Few

By Millard Kaufman

Yeah, this is it.
This is it, men!
Get this stuff back to the bivouac.
All you guys, and you, stay away
from the booze. We'll ration it later.
Okay, Hiawatha, start toting.
Don't you call me Hiawatha.
As a matter of fact, Sergeant Rich Boy,
you just keep your mouth shut.
A.J., Uba, pick them up, come on.
- When do you expect the Nips?
- Full moon tonight.
They'll hit early. Figure we're
gonna have booze for supper.
Can't win. Miss the drop and the yellows
starve you, take it down the chimney...
- ... they spot you and attack.
- Clever, these Japanese.
Brilliant.
- Busted as usual, huh?
- Yes. The morphine's had it too.
Again no doctor, Dua?
Nope. Here's the doctor.
To the gods of drink.
The spirit of spirits.
- Dua Tom, you our doctor.
- You one very fine doctor.
I.F. Amplifier.
Probably the local oscillator.
There's not one of those
within 500 miles.
It's got the cranks again.
Stop making excuses for that damn thing
and make it work.
We'll give it the old college try.
Okay, Hiawatha, belch a little Navajo.
Hold it.
I told you, Sergeant Rich Boy,
don't you call me Hiawatha.
On your feet.
What's your problem, Danforth?
I don't like this lash-up.
You volunteered.
This is what you volunteered for.

These are the people you work with.
I didn't volunteer to take puke
from Sergeant Rich Boy here...
...because I'm Navajo.
And I'll tell you something else.
I didn't volunteer to take orders
from that Nautaung that you sent.
He's a gook.
And I take no orders from gooks.
You know, Danforth,
it's a very small world.
You and Nautaung are relatives.
Yeah, you're blood brothers.
I was once told that the Kachins are
the revered ancestors of the Navajo.
I find that fascinating.
Like one of those indoctrination lectures
about democracy and the big picture.
I'm not sure I can spell democracy...
...and I don't know what
the big picture looks like.
But I do know you got a big mouth.
If you open it again spouting
about gooks...
...you're gonna get none of this
to pour into it.
- Now, let's go to work.
- Yes, sir.
It's on the berserk again.
Mail, Dua.
- Thank you, buddy.
- Moon coming up.
Tonight we make fine ambush.
Always fine ambush.
Only, how long we go on like this?
Who knows?
We're the only active force in the hills.
Now it works.
- Hope the walkie-talkies are working.
- Here, Danny.
You chaps make a fine lot of decoys.
- Burn this up for me.
- I try, Danny.
Great way to play poker.

Come on, you sitting ducks, ante up.
From old man.
Column of Japanese are crossing river.
Taking the east trail
through the jungle.
They're right on.
Didn't I say they'd be right on?
- Drink, Dua Jim.
- Not tonight.
He says the hardware business
is good.
He bought two more stores cheap.
He thinks I should pray once in a while
because prayer never hurt anybody...
...and it don't cost a dime.
America very funny place.
Full of prayers and money.
Another column coming from the east.
Estimate over 200 men.
One smaller column crossing river.
Three.
Right on edge of perimeter. Get ready.
This is no way to fight a war.
Well, another evening of joy
unconfined.
Medic! Mike! Mike Island!
Sucked them in rather good, eh?
He got it in his stomach. It's hopeless.
He may last till morning, I don't know.
I wish to God we had that morphine.
Sorry, Dua.
You're a real soldier now, Bye Ya.
You've tasted the pain
of wound in combat.
- Get out.
- Tom.
Tom, you can't do it.
Would you rather he suffered
for another 12 or 15 hours?
You'd shoot a lousy horse
to end his misery. Now get out.
- A human is not an animal.
- Don't give me sermons.
- You're not the chaplain.

- You can't murder a man...
- ... without killing part of yourself.
- I've been killing all night.
- Now, get out.
- So have all of us.
- But that doesn't give you the right-
- Get out.

Why? Why'd you have to do that?

- Get back to your squawk box.
- Why didn't you let Nautaung do it?

Because it's my job, that's why.

You get back to your job.

Get hold of the colonel.

Tell him I'll meet his plane...

- ... at coordinates George six point three.
- Yes, sir.

Charlie Fox Dog calling Zebra four-two.

Over.

Zebra four-two, over.

George six point three.

Coded. Over.

Over.

They wanna know your purpose
for coming in.

My name's Ringa, sir.

Colonel Parkson's driver.

- Where's the colonel?
- Locked in a military mission.

He said he'd meet you at headquarters
at 0800 in the morning, sir.

What's he expect us to do till 0800 in
the morning? Play a fast game of jacks?

He suggested the captain use the time
to adjust himself to civilization.

You know, girls, booze. You got more
weapons here than a bank dick. Sir.

Yeah. We put no trust in slingshots.

Well, the jeep and I are both
at the captain's convenience.

Any questions, sir?

Yeah. You wouldn't happen to know
a Red Cross lady named Margaret Fitch?

- Fitch.
- Fitch.

Seems to me that the Empress Hotel
and a couple other creep joints...

...they're Red Cross country.

I'll find her.

- Thank you, corporal.

- Thank you, sir.

- This is a grand way to live.

- This is even a better way to die.

Well, thanks for the toboggan ride,
corporal.

- But you really belong in a PT boat.

- My pleasure.

I'm just kind of sorry we didn't have
a flat tire or something, sir.

- Ma'am.

- Good night.

Well, when do we eat?

Take it easy, this isn't hurrying-up time.

This is slowing-down time.

- Drink easy and long and consistently.

- Right-o.

We'll drink ourselves
into a tortured hunger.

Darling! Oh, darling!

Well, what's happened to you?

You've changed.

Yeah, but you haven't.

Like to bent me double.

Where have you been? Everybody acted
as if you're top-secret or something.

Margaret, this is Danny.

He speaks English like he hates it.

- Margaret Fitch.

- What pumpkin did you pop out of?

- The Empress Hotel.

- You see?

Just like good old Corporal

Thank-You-Sir Ringa stated.

Would you think me terribly jay if I were
to ask just what you're doing in the war?

I'd rather tell you what I do.

I'm working on military secrets.

I'm looking for a beautiful spy
to sell them to.

Do you number
a beautiful spy among your friends?
We'll find you a girl, Danny.
As a matter of fact, if it weren't for Tom
and this and that...
...you'd have me completely enslaved.
I think it's the monocle.
- I think it's very chic.
- Oh, it's smashing.
I have an injured eye, through which I
take a rather jaundiced view of the world.
- Don't ask him how he keeps it in.
- How do you keep it in?
Well, the problem is getting it out.
You see, it can't even be dislodged
by a severe blow. Shall we demonstrate?
- Let's not play that game.
- Come on, Thomas old man.
One blow for the edification
of the lady.
Remarkable, isn't it?
Hello, Fred.
I suppose there's no use pretending
I don't know you.
Miss Carla Vesari, Mr. Nikko Regas...
...this is Reynolds and DeMortimer.
- How do you do?
- How do you do?
- Won't you join us?
- Delighted.
Oh, Margaret Fitch, this is Miss Vesari,
Mr. Regas and Colonel Parkson.
So these are the twin legends
you were telling us about?
- You're disappointed?
- Oh, no. Not at all.
It's just that you are rather young
to be legends.
Well, we're over 21.
- How do you plan to spend your leave?
- No leave. No plans.
We could shoot off a couple
of firecrackers or something.
We should be able to provide you with

something more exciting than sparklers.

Any suggestions, Carla?

I think the captain

will fill up his time eventually.

I could use a little help with that.

Would you like to dance?

Of course, my dear.

Have you been in India long,

Miss Fitch?

Several months.

Allow me.

Or is it a brand of ownership?

Not at all. It's just a good old

American salutation.

- It means nothing?

- Nothing.

You'd be surprised at some of

the customs of my people.

- Well, relax.

- I beg your pardon?

Let it go.

I'm a mild-mannered, soft-spoken man,

a gentleman and an officer.

And I never make a sudden move.

I'm very pleased to hear it.

And what's your rank

and serial number?

I'm cautious, conventional

and very, very careful.

And you're on the green side of 25.

You're put together

like a Christmas package.

And you remind me of a pretty girl

I saw in a perfume ad...

...before I became a lonely soldier.

And I, too, am looking for signs

of ownership.

Are you attached to

the handsome old gentleman?

You're amusing.

It seems to be one

of your more astounding traits.

- Name another.

- Your love of combat.

You even bring the war back here
with you.
Well, sometimes men brawl
to forget combat.
Captain Reynolds,
is this your first war?
It is definitely my last.
I think you love it.
Like most men, you relish war.
Miss Vesari, this may come
as a shock to you, but I do not like war.
What did you do back home?
I worked in my father's hardware store
in Indianapolis, Indiana.
Look at you. You're having
more fun than you ever had in your life.
You're off on a great adventure.
Living in the middle of a travel poster.
And all because you found in yourself
a rare ability...
...for violence.
You are a gifted killer.
- Somebody had to leash the dogs of war.
- Of course. You're patriotic.
A fighter for freedom.
All right. So I like war.
What do you like?
I like mature men, Captain Reynolds.
They ripen a girl,
if you know what I mean.
They know how to speak
to headwaiters.
They know how to behave in public.
But certainly a little thing
like an attachment...
...wouldn't make any difference
to you?
Hell, no.
However, I'm always interested
in improving myself.
What could you offer me?
I could send you flowers,
I could mow your lawn...
...I could buy you an ice cream soda.

- And we could hold hands in the movies.

- You tempt me.

But on second thought,
you couldn't even afford my cook.

- I'm not in the same league with-

- The old gentleman?

Financially.

You are not in the same league with him
in any department.

Miss Vesari...

- ... can I see you again?

- Hell, no.

Nikko?

Yes, my dear?

Thank you for your hospitality.

I'd like to return it. We are going
tomorrow to our cottage in Kawagar.

Very rural. Very away from it all.

If you do ever get leave,
please stop around anytime.

- Good night.

- Good night.

- Good night.

- Good night, Miss Fitch.

I will see you in the morning?

Yes, sir. 0800, sir.

Good night, gentlemen.

Well.

Danny, you know anything
about this guy, Regas?

- Well-

- Supposed to be in shipping...

...but I think he's an opium smuggler
in wolves' clothing.

What about Carla Vesari?

She's quite a crock of curry.

Nikko Regas is a shy, retiring
bloodsucker of all trades.

- What about Carla?

- What do you suppose...

- ... Fred's doing with him?

- What do you suppose she's doing?

What she's doing with him is obvious.

I think we've exploited

the possibilities of this joint.
Waiter, check.
All right, Ringa. Out.
Out!
Now, look, Ringa, I don't-
Good show.
One minute, sir.
Back in a minute, sir.
Sorry about the delay, sir.
Any time the captain's ready.
About those guardians
of law and order.
Yeah, well, he shouldn't have
jerked me up like that, sir.
Any trouble or violence, naturally I
wanna be 1000 miles away from it.
But cops make me nervous.
Corporal, what did you do with them?
Oh, they're relaxing, sir.
They're sort of allies of ours. Don't you
think there might be repercussions?
Well, not on an official level, sir.
I mean, I know these guys.
They've got their professional pride.
They'll probably report they were
hit by a truck or something. Ma'am.
What about an unofficial level?
Oh, well, I'll apologize.
I'll buy them a drink,
ask to see pictures of their children.
Say, you know that big Indian fellow?
Well, he's got four kids.
What will it be?
Something big and brassy, sir?
- Yeah, that's fine.
- Charge!
Excuse me for saying so, sir...
...but you look terrible.
Inside of my mouth tastes like
the outside of a crocodile.
There's some toothpaste in here.
You can use it on your finger.
And water for rinsing out your mouth.
But I'd caution the captain

against drinking that water.
It has a tendency to cause ulcers.
Now, for swallowing,
I suggest the gin, sir.
Gin?
Yes, sir. Old Panther. Very, very popular
among the enlisted personnel.
You mean to say they drink this?
Guzzle it.
Like the old story about

the crap game:

It's crooked,
but it's the only game in town.
Well, where do they get it?
From me, sir.
I make it, bottle it, label it, sell it.
I even drink it.
God, you've got guts.
- You interest me, Ringa.
- Well, thank you, sir.
Knock off the "sir" detail.
You ever seen any combat?
Here and there, sir, a little bit.
Well, where and where, a little bit?
New York City, mostly.
I've seen action in Williamsburg,
Hell's Kitchen, Yorkville, Weehawken-
Well, of course, that's in New Jersey.
Funny part about it is, since I've joined
the Army and the war started...
...I've led a comparatively
sheltered life.
Well, you're gonna be
about 10 minutes late.
Good morning.
He's waiting for you.
- Good morning.
- Good morning, sir.
Good morning.
Well, what can I do for you?
I want a doctor, Fred,
and I want one right away...
...or you won't have

a single Kachin left.
Did you fly down here
just to bicker about doctors?
Among other things,
but most important, the doctor.
We've only been here a few hours,
but I've seen 10, 15 doctors.
Where they coming from?
Where they going?
I'll listen to anything you gotta say.
But just who do you think you are?
You and your jungle wallahs
coming here, flexing your muscles.
You're not the only guys
fighting a backwash war.
We're the only guys without a doctor.
Find yourself an unassigned doctor
and I'll tag him for your outfit.
- What else?
- Morphine and medical supplies.
Those guys have been dropping them
in egg crates, busting them.
I'll demand extra care in packing.
Give each medical chest a double chute.
What else?
What's being done to take
pressure off the Kachins?
Forty thousand Nips are rolling down
from Ubachi Air Field. Forty thousand.
There's a strike scheduled for Ubachi.
We'll throw everything at them.
- When?
- You'll be the first to know.
- What's the catch, Fred?
- Catch?
- What are you up to?
- Want you and Danny to take a holiday.
Pick any rest area in the Himalayas.
Take two weeks.
Holiday?
No.
Out of the question. I couldn't
stay out of the hills for two weeks.
Kachins got by for hundreds

of years before you...
...and they'll get by long after
I spit on your grave.
At least for another two weeks.
Which you will take, and that,
as we desk colonels say, is an order.
We'll take the two weeks,
providing...
Providing?
Providing the Kachins
are moved out to a rest area.
- And?
- We get Ringa.
- Who?
- R-I-N-G-A. Your driver.
Why, he's a kid.
He's a baby-faced kid.
- Is he?
- We want him.
You got him.
Where do you want to go?
Kawagar.
Kawagar?
Yeah, you heard what the man said.
Like to go up there and think things over,
like getting a doctor for my campaign.
- And a few other things. Right?
- Right.
- Colonel.
- Goodbye, sir.
- Do you have a reservation for Reynolds?
- Yes, sir.
- Captain, letter for you.
- Thank you.
Oh, we're invited to a party tonight.
By Mr. Nikko Regas.
How did he know?
There's something spooky
about that man.
How can you say that?
He's the squarest shooter
on the road to Mandalay.
I wish I had a copy
of Who's Who in India.

Or the Bombay Police Blotter.
I'd like to look up friend Regas.
Anybody who invites us
to a party can't be all that bad.
And let's not bite the hand
that buys the booze.
Some cottage.
Very rural.
Stately, but rural.
You can bet he didn't get it
by trading beads with the natives.
Welcome, allies.
Mr. Regas.
We didn't realize you were
tossing a gala.
Oh, nonsense. This sort of thing
goes on every night.
But I want you to consider this
your home in Kawagar.
Your foxhole away from
your foxhole, so to speak.
Now, after you've enjoyed all this,
perhaps the pool might amuse you.
And tomorrow,
the gymnasium, the stables.
Stables?
Yes, I have a few Arabians.
Ex-polo ponies. They hack quite well.
Carla rides every day.
Jeannine.
That takes excellent care
of the captain in any language.
Now...
I say, how about some caviar instead?
Carla.
- How are you?
- Very well, thank you. Nice to see you.
Break any nightclubs lately?
Could I interest you in some caviar?
European seeks Chinese doctors...
...lawyers, merchants and thieves.
You're a terrible poet.
Mr. Regas throws quite a net.
- He has many friends.

- And much money.

It's just like Indianapolis,
except this goes up and down.

- Isn't it beautiful?

- It is.

You live here with Nikko?

I want to tell you something, captain,
and then perhaps you'll let me alone.

I live here with Nikko.

So why don't you go back to the hills
and play with your popguns.

I still think he's a little old for you.

Your innocence is touching.

Do you really think the young have
all the advantages of the world?

I was thinking of certain advantages.

Tell me about Nikko.

He buys and sells things,
in seven languages, at all hours.

Nikko tells me you ride every morning.

Not every morning.

Would you ride with me tomorrow?

Perhaps.

- Danny lived like that once.

- For a while, but I couldn't stand it.

So I came back to the world
of men and their commodities.

I couldn't stand that either.

Hey, you all right, chum?

I feel a bit clammy.

Too much nightlife and lazy living.

- You come here often?

- Yes.

The sadhus-

I don't know how to say it-

Fascinate me.

They believe in prayer and contemplation
and take no interest in worldly pleasures.

Might set you a good example.

I could never make it.

I no longer qualify for the state of grace.

I've been a soldier for three years.

What do you believe in?

Live and let live.

It's funny when you think
of the business I'm in.
Danny, what is it?
I always get a bit shaky when
there's an attractive girl around.
He has typhus. Better
get out of here, all of you.
I haven't got typhus.
I beg your pardon?
I have not got typhus.
You have a medical degree?
What is your opinion?
Cerebral malaria.
Cerebral malaria.
The tests will tell.
I'll make them at once.
- He's right. Why don't you leave.
- No, I've seen typhus and malaria.
He's got malaria.
- Let me out of here!
- Wait!
Let me go. I'll kill you!
We're gonna have to tie him down.
We have to sweat him
to break his fever.
Yeah.
Take it easy, Danny.
I obtained his medical history
from headquarters.
He's had cerebral malaria.
It's obviously flared up again.
He was trying to tell me.
How long has this been here?
A little over three minutes.
Nothing more to do
except keep sweating him.
Fever's breaking up.
Quinine in the morning.
- He shouldn't be moved for a few days.
- Of course.
I'll see him tomorrow.
Good night.
- Good night.
- Good night.

Good night, doctor.
What are you trying to do,
bring me back alive?
You scared the hell out of me.
- I put on a good show, eh?
- Smashing.
Now, you get some rest.
You've near ruined my leave as it is.
You wouldn't dare go and have fun
and leave me flat on my duff.
Don't be ridiculous.
Of course I wouldn't.
I feel like an old serial.
- When does the train run over me?
- Oh, shut up and go to sleep.
How's the Englishman?
- He'll live.
- And the American?
He'll live too.
And you?
I'll live forever.
I'm going into China for a few days.
Would you like to come with me?
I'd better stay here, if you don't mind.
We have guests
and one of them is ill.
Carla, dear,
beware of sickbed scenes...
...particularly against
a background of war.
A man and a woman
hovering over a sickbed...
...make an abomination of romance.
She sees him as a selfless,
devoted pillar of strength.
He sees her as tender and merciful,
a ministering angel.
- So, what happens?
- The patient dies?
No matter whether he lives or dies,
the romance is a success.
Nikko, dear, I hate to dispel
your fantasy, but-
Now, let me dwell just for

one moment on the American male.
They're absolutely insidious, Carla.
They're full of the lonesome
prairie and the smell of tumbleweed.
They're sincere and dedicated,
and your Tom Reynolds-
Really, Nikko, he's not
my Tom Reynolds.
Your Tom Reynolds is no exception.
A regular Abe Lincoln in North Burma.
A girl like you
with a sophisticated palate...
...is a pushover for the type.
What a terribly civilized man you are.
You never lose your balance.
Let me be honest with you.
I understand appetite,
and I know what it is to want things.
But I must tell you something
rather disagreeable about myself.
I'm a bad loser.
If I stay with you, Nikko...
...it won't be because
I'm afraid of you.
In this day and age, my dear...
...fear is a very good basis
for a relationship.
I thought an old monkey-lover
like you would appreciate it.
When I was a kid, my grandfather
took me to the circus.
There was maybe 20, 30 monkeys.
I thought they were
all of the monkeys in the world.
Tell me about when you were a kid.
Well, I was a sneak and I was satanic.
That's enough.
Tell me about your grandfather.
He was a sneak and he was satanic.
He told me he could never trust a
man...
...who claimed that he never
hankered for women.
"Hankering"?

Hankering.

To hanker...

...means to have a strong desire
for something or someone.

- In this case, a girl.

- I see.

You hanker.

I hanker for you alone.

Don't sweep me off my feet.

What would you like for Christmas?

A 12-foot statue of your grandfather.

No, be serious.

We jump off on December 25th
and the days are getting shorter.

You are the most depressing
seducer I ever fought off.

Then don't fight.

And then what?

Your jungle, hand in hand?

Or should I wait

until you can take me...

...to live above the hardware store
in Indianapolis?

Don't. Please, stop sniffing
around me like an animal.

You know the kind of world I want.

And you know the kind
of world I've got.

You've got a few

boyish notions about love.

I know love's reality.

Let's go back.

Nikko will be waiting for me.

He's in good shape.

I won't have to see him again.

Well, when do I get out of here?

You mean, when will you

be ready to play soldier again?

Three days.

When will you be ready?

Ready? For what?

We needed you in our outfit.

And I put in a request for you
and it was granted.

The request was gr-?
You might have asked me
how I felt about it.
I'm not interested
in your considerations.
We needed a doctor and you're it.
We take a plane in three days
and bail out over the Kachin hills.
- Bail out?
- Bail out.
- You mean?...
- Jump.
Parachute, old man.
We'll see about this.
He's gonna love it up there
in the hills.
- Good evening, sir.
- Good evening.
- How about dinner with us tonight?
- No, thanks. It's more comfortable here.
Carla.
Carla.
Carla.
Carla.
Carla.
I'm in here. Come on in.
I'm sorry. I must have
misunderstood you.
Come in and sit down.
How is Danny tonight?
Oh, he's-
I guess he's all right.
When do you think it will be over?
The war, I mean.
I don't know.
It may never be over.
When it is over, what will
you do back in America?
I've never thought about it.
I may never go back to America.
Relax.
Where would you go?
I better stay in the jungle.
It's a lot simpler there.

Tom, wait.
Please, wait.
Wait for what?
Must it be like this just because
I'm not in the market for an affair?
Oh, you're in the market.
It's just a matter of price.
I know when I'm well off.
Do you now?
Is that why you invited me
in your bath?
Don't be so provincial. In Japan,
men and women bathe together.
This is not Japan,
and you well know it.
It was a mistake. I'm sorry.
- Does that satisfy you?
- No.
Your stern Midwestern
morality is so refreshing.
All right, you wanted me
to squirm, so I did.
But there's another thing.
I don't like striking out
until I get to bat.
You've got the wrong girl.
Wrong place, wrong time.
Okay. I'll see you get a Good Conduct
Medal to add to the rest of your loot.
Meantime, let me pin this one on you.
You're very sure of yourself.
I am now.
I kissed you, lady,
and you kissed me back.
- You-
- I got the message.
This, lady, is the Staten Island ferry.
We've sent the kids to my mother's...
...and this is the first time
we've been together in a week.
Hi, junior.
Little Petey just got over a cold.
We've had the chicken pox bit.
And you said,

"Get me out of the house, or else. "

How many children do we have?

Four, and Jenny's on the way.

Do we have room
in the house for Jenny?

Of course. I'm gonna
move out to the fire escape.

Carla.

And I have one of those wonderful
American wraparound electrical kitchens?
Giant economy size?

- The payments are breaking me.
- All the food is frozen, no?

Nope. Your place, woman,
will be at the stove...
...whipping up pasta, minestrone,
lasagna and zabaglione.

What do you want for tonight?

Lasagna.

In the summer we go to the country.
And the children drink goat's milk.
At Coney Island?

Is that where one gets goat's milk?

Yes, darling,
that's where you get goat's milk.
I'm going to miss you.
Where I'm going
nobody smells of soap.
I shall worry about you.
Don't worry.
I'm not your responsibility.
That's precisely why I am worried.
It was fun though, wasn't it?
That's the way I am.
A lot of fun with a heart
as big as the Himalayas.
That's not what I had in mind.
I've been looking for answers
to certain problems.
I don't think I've been asking
the right kind of questions.
Well...
I'm falling in love with you, I think.
Are you sure?

I can't be sure of anything.
But I know one thing.
I didn't figure it would
turn out this way.
You tripped over your own shoelaces.
No.
I realized that I wanted somebody
to come back to. And I want you.
Stay alive for yourself.
My plans include you,
all of my plans from now on.
Please, Tom. We'll talk about it
when you come back.
Let's talk about it now.
You change your address.
Tell Nikko it's over. Finis.
Tell him you're going down
the social scale.
You've taken up with a no good Gl...
...who's gonna keep you barefoot
and pregnant and on the edge of town.
We're gonna be married.
I'll be back.
Learn to cook.
Here's your spot, captain.
Hit the silk.
Happy landings, doc.
Maybe I should've practiced.
What's the sense of practicing what
you can only do wrong once, doc?
Merry Christmas.
Merry Christmas.
Well...
...a little breast of peacock,
water buffalo...
...and the tiniest dollop
of monkey brains.
I'm a hairy brute
with an empty stomach.
Merry Christmas, Dua.
- Hey, what do you use for bait?
- Hand grenade.
Grenade.
That's a funny way to kill fish.

Or people.
Well, hi, boss. Hey, old Dad's...
...kind of on a Yale-afternoon drunk.
Hey, did you see what
Billingsly got me for Christmas?
He went out on a mule-buying
expedish- Expedish...
He went out to buy some mules,
and he came back with this.
I took her off his hands real cheap.
She's fine, boss, she's really fine.
I am humble before you, Dua.
I have heard great tales
about your many battles.
No, wait a minute.
She's pretty nice, huh?
And if you're interested, chap,
then the line forms- Come here.
Let her go, Danforth.
You fixing to pull rank, sir?
You're a big man with the bars, huh?
They come off easily enough.
Well, don't you worry about it, because
I'm gonna take them off for you. Okay?
The whites are sure restless tonight.
The line forms behind me.
Give me that gun and get on your job.
What's happening?
Ringa.
You won't need that, sir.
They're gone. It was hit-and-run.
You wanna hold that there, sir?
How did we come out?
We got hurt.
Jim?
Jim.
Hi, Danny.
What's been going on?
You're pretty good with the mortar.
Where'd you learn it?
I didn't. I was just trying to find
something to shoot them with.
- Here we go.
- Easy, now.

All right, doc, knock off the whistling.
Nobody's interested in how
medically unconcerned you are.
How is the wound, Dua?
It's a good wound, old man.
A million-dollar wound.
It'll get me hospital leave and get
me out of sight of your ugly old face.
I still can't understand
how the Nips had us figured out.
According to the scouts,
there wasn't a yellow within 40 miles.
I imagine we'll soon find out.
Ringa's got a Jap out there,
and I imagine he'll talk.
You got a count on the wounded?
Thirty walking, 22 litter.
Danny, get the walking
wounded back on the line.
It'll keep them from griping
and feeling sorry for themselves.
You know, the movies
have got it all wrong.
A cigarette tastes lousy
when you're wounded.
He's a tough one, pappy.
A real tough one.
But he split.
Right down the middle.
Nautaung wants to tell you himself.
He'll be right in.
You have a hard day, boy?
At the office?
You hear what I said, doc?
I asked him if he had a hard day
at the office.
I stand in disgrace before you, Dua.
He who betrayed us is of my people.
It was Billingsly.
Billingsly and the Shan girl.
What is your wish, Nautaung?
What is the wish of your people?
Billingsly will be put
in the circle tomorrow.

And the girl?
She must be shot.
Reynolds, you're not judge and jury.
You'll spill the plasma.
You're a lousy barbarian.
- You're a murderer.
- You're an idealist.
And a lousy idealist.
Well, maybe I am.
But this is murder,
and we're all part of it.
You've got a lot to learn, Travis.
You got a kid safe at home.
Suppose the information Ringa got
off the Jap could keep him safe at home.
Would you call Ringa a murderer?
And if the Kachins
assassinate a traitor...
...in order to save their own lives,
you think they would be murderers?
Or us?
Go to bed, doc. You got assistants.
- They're tired.
- Sure.
And tomorrow you'll be tired
and all screwed up.
But they'll be well rested.
Is that the important thing?
Well, when I give an order,
there's a reason for it.
I'm sorry.
Do as you're told until you find out what
year it is and you won't have to be sorry.
- Yes, sir.
- Have a drink.
- Not while I'm working.
- Don't be an ass, have a drink.
I wish there was time to tell you
everything, but...
Look, we don't drink to get drunk.
We- We nip.
The booze just helps to keep you going.
Take my word for it.
How are the men?

What men? They're boys.
Say, didn't you do the field operating
around here?
Yeah.
Yeah, well, you were lousy.
The base surgeon said so.
That's why I wanted you, doc.
Maybe you can teach me
a few things.
You know...
...the base surgeon didn't say
you were lousy at all.
Matter of fact, he said
you were pretty good.
I kind of made that up.
- What's this?
- It's your airlift tag.
I'm shipping you
to the base hospital tomorrow.
Yes, sir.
Here's your lunch.
Well, you're a new one.
Mind if I ask you
the famous question?
- Where am I?
- Still at the base at Assam.
All right, knock it off, you guys.
Drop your griping and grab your socks.
Hey, Dua, no good in here.
No rice, Dua.
What's that all about?
- Give me that robe.
- You stay right in bed.
Give me the robe.
Stay in bed and watch your language.
You're not in the jungle.
Stand back, lieutenant.
Thank you.
If you'll excuse me.
Please, there are very sick men
in here.
You fellas wanna spend your lives
in the feathers?
Go back to the jungle

where you belong.
No can do, Dua.
- There's no food.
- Can't eat.
- No good.
- Our bellies sing with hunger.
And they feed us torn-up weeds.
No food.
Captain, please.
And hot water smelling dead chicken.
- No good.
- Can't eat.
- Can't eat, Dua.
- No good.
This we'll soon remedy.
You get back into bed.
That's an order.
Get back into bed.
One day, I'm gonna meet a nurse who
doesn't sound like a troop commander.
Captain, I'm going to report you
to the colonel.
Tattletale.
- Hey, come back here.
- Where you going?
Colonel.
Now, just what is this?
Colonel, I'd like to have a few words
with you about this stuff.
Captain, may I remind you that
this is a hospital, and not a circus?
That's just an opinion.
Put that down.
Surely you don't mind
if we have a drink.
I'm not running a bar for Kachins.
Well, you feel they're below
your station, doctor?
You know, your type of so-called
democratic American burns my butt.
The captain is a mental case.
I'm gonna have to report this.
- You realize how weak these patients are?
- Well, of course I do.

They're wounded.
They've got dysentery.
Why do you suppose that is?
- It's the water.
- It's the diet.
Salad.
Chicken soup.
Corn bread?
We don't have the personnel
to cater to-
These people are brought up
on pure red peppers, doctor...
...and when they can't get red peppers,
they get dysentery.
Now, do you feed them rice?
We do the best we can.
Doctor, let's assume that you were
wounded in a strange place.
And you were fed red peppers
and rice and monkey entrails.
That's what they eat.
Don't you suppose that would
knock the slats out of your system?
If you've got nobody to cook for them,
they'd be happy to cook for themselves.
That's the way they are,
and you gotta respect it.
Now, let's cooperate, shall we?
I just had a rather interesting discussion
about garbage.
I heard the last part of it. I won't ask
how you feel. What can I do for you?
Well, you can get me some Scotch.
And what can I do for you?
Soon as you get back to the hills, your
Kachins will attack the airfield at Ubachi.
It's garrisoned by only a token force.
How large a token force?
We're not sure.
- Your Kachin detachment will attack.
- You mean, all 324 of us?
Infiltrating enemy positions...
...blowing ammo dumps, gas tanks,
destroying all aircraft on ground.

You'll chop it up good.
What about some support, Fred?
You'll have trucks
from the Chinese border.
Among other things, the trucks
will carry explosives and artillery.
They'll give you support.
Chinese border.
That's a long way.
- Think they can make it?
- They'll be unpleasant.
That's a lousy detail.
I'd rather shinny up a thorn tree
with an armful of eels.
Tom, you and your Kachins are
the only ones we've got for the job.
Okay.
I'll get you the Scotch.
You've got a visitor.
In there.
Well, I'm glad to see
you have both your arms...
...and they are still
strategically placed.
Can't you say something?
I don't know what to say, I-
I'm just so glad to see you.
Well, you were saying enough in there,
and at the top of your voice.
I didn't expect to see you again
so soon. How did you know?
Nikko and I were in town again.
The colonel told us you were
badly chewed up.
I'm so glad he exaggerated.
They didn't even lay a Band-Aid
on me.
Can you break out of here?
Can you sneak out the back door?
I don't like back doors, Carla.
Whatever you say.
I don't care, darling.
Tomorrow, then.
And in the meantime,

don't burn down the hospital.
I kiss you and the bells ring wildly
in my temples.
Temple bells.
Why do you suppose that is?
Because you put me in a turmoil.
Oh, it's too difficult to explain.
Wouldn't it be wonderful if
there were no more goodbyes?
It would indeed.
That day will come, and when it does,
I'll lead you a terrible life.
I will never let you out of my sight.
I will be greedy for you
every hour of every day.
I will be jealous too.
And 20 years from now, if you dare
to look at another woman...
...I wouldn't be ashamed
of making a scene.
All this, so beautiful.
You like it?
Yeah.
You do not like it.
How do you expect me to?
Take a look around.
Here we are playing house
in a hotel room, courtesy of Regas.
Flowers, courtesy of Regas.
Even the booze, courtesy of Regas.
Tom.
That day in the boat you made
a beautiful case for us.
For us alone.
It was a fairy tale, Carla.
- It was nice to believe for a while, but-
- But what?
I told you about the kind of world
I live in.
And this isn't it.
What's the matter with you, Tom?
You once told me I had
boyish notions about love...
...and that you knew love's realities.

Why must you spoil everything?
You said, "I think we'd better go
because Nikko will be waiting. "
And you were right.
So let's be honest.
That's the way it should be.
That's the way you want it.
Now I know what kind of man you are.
So brave in battle, but so afraid of life.
You talk of the future, but you won't
take a chance on it.
I won't plead with you, Tom.
I can't.
I don't know how.
Hey, Danny, where are those trucks?
I'm sick and tired and weary
of all this bird-dogging.
The trucks aren't there.
You want me to break out
another scouting party?
We've had scouts out for two days.
We're gonna move on Ubachi.
Without the artillery,
we got no support.
We're gonna hit Ubachi.
- We're gonna get murdered.
- You take the flank.
Well, things are gonna boil tonight.
Move your men out, Danny.
- What's your hurry? Let's think this out.
- Let's not.
Tom, you're a man
of gruesome courage...
...but moving on Ubachi without support
is as sensible as a hotfoot in hell.
Nothing in this war makes sense.
Why do you expect it
to make sense now?
Ammo...
...gas dump...
...barracks.
I think it's time for a meeting.
It's all right, Hiawatha.
It's all right.

Hiawa-?
Why, you lousy...
...Sergeant Rich Boy.
Danforth.
All right, old man, you can come out.
It's over.
Nautaung.
Old man.
Is it bad?
You have been good to me...
...Dua.
I'm sorry...
...to leave you.
I don't get it.
This is the convoy
we were supposed to meet.
I don't see how the Japs could've killed
our men without casualties.
Unless they've been carrying off
their own dead.
Get a load of these hats.
And what are these uniforms
they're wearing?
I found these men
in the village up ahead.
They say these guys weren't killed by
the Nips, they were killed by the Chinese.
What kind of Chinese?
- Ton quon or dai chak?
- Dai chak.
Renegades. Chinese troops of a warlord.
Holed up across the Chinese border.
According to them, they got G1 gear,
guns and everything else.
These warlords or troops or whoever,
they just didn't knock off a convoy.
They've been killing our men.
How would you people like to go
over the border to China?
- You can't cross the border.
- They paid us a visit.
- Let's return the courtesy.
- You out of your mind?
- China's a bit off our beat.

- I'd follow them to the North Pole.
- Take your suffering Kachins with you?
- I will. And you and the rest of you.
- Boss.
- Get the colonel.

Tell him we're gonna cross over to
China. Release these guys. Let's move.
Go home.

Little beauties asleep?

Yeah, they're not only asleep...

...I'll bet you a fiver they're drunk.

Good.

Good.

Get out.

- Jim.

- Yeah, boss?

- Your radio operating?

- It sure is.

Tell the colonel we've
occupied this place...

- ... we're taking these lice as prisoners.

- Right.

Danny.

Can you translate that?

Yeah.

It's a warrant from
the Chongqing government.

"The bearer is charged and entrusted...

...to preserve the territorial integrity
of China...

...by preventive measures,
if necessary...

...within or beyond the
geographical bounds of the Republic. "

- "Preventive measures"?

- Yeah.

"The bearer is further authorized
to confiscate all military materiel...

...to deal with all invaders,

to rout out all traitors...

...domestic or foreign. "

Do you mean that this thing gives
these lice the right to raid and loot?

And split the take with Chongqing.

- Fifty-fifty.
- Chongqing issued that?
That gives these bandits the green light
to kill Americans.
I've heard of warrants like this before.
All protected warlords have them.
Chongqing licensed these warlords
to knock off American convoys...
...and sell our gear to the Japanese,
and Chongqing pockets half the loot.
Say, what kind of a war is this?
Our government couldn't know
about that.
I thought I knew what a rat was.
I had no conception.
I got a message for you, boss.
Before I could get the other one off,
this came.
"Chinese government most disturbed
your crossing border.
Has filed complaint highest
American authority.
Do not make any attack. Repeat.
Do not make any attack.
Rearm and release any prisoners you
may have taken. Destroy any documents.
Headquarters will expect
immediate apology to Chongqing.
More afraid this is an incident.
Sorry. Signed, Fred. "
Looks like we're gonna get
a court martial.
They couldn't have understood right,
boss.
We're gonna get a court martial...
...for stopping the Japs from getting our
gear. For stopping these dirty little rats.
Round up the prisoners and
anchor them somewhere.
Yes, sir.
Whiskey.
- Just liberated it.
- How do you know it's not poisoned?
I don't. That's why I decided

to share it with you.
Thanks, chum.
What am I gonna do, Danny?
You're the boss.
It's your decision.
How tangled can a knot get?
If I were you, I wouldn't
stick your head out any further...
- ... or somebody's gonna knock it off.
- You rather I kept it buried?
I want to see justice done
just as much as you do.
You can't right all the wrongs
yourself, or you'll be destroyed.
What's the sense of fighting a war
if you can't yell for what's right?
How can you be so damn sure
you know what's right?
I'm not sure. But I'm gonna
do something, even if it's wrong.
You know this war seems
to go on forever.
The longer it lasts, the smaller
my loyalties seem to get.
We've been together
for what seems like a lifetime.
Despite your hard and thorny nature,
I rather like you.
And I don't want to lose you now.
Travis! Travis! Ringa!
Travis!
Execute the prisoners, Ringa.
Shoot them all, right now.
Lay them out in a line
so the rest of these rats can see.
Message to Parkson.
To Parkson for Chongqing:
"Go to hell. "
To Parkson for headquarters, CBl:
"Go to hell. "
To Parkson for Parkson,
if he goes along: "Go to hell. "
Now, move.
Move it, Norby!

Your plane's ready, boss.
I'm afraid I'm gonna have to
bad-news you, Jim.
This is not a particularly good time
to do it.
In this lash-up, one time's as bad
as the next.
- Someone's gonna have to run the outfit.
- Ringa?
I'm gonna jump him over you.
I was afraid you were
gonna take me off the squawk box.
Nothing as drastic as that.
Keep your glasses clean, junior.
I'm giving you a field commission.
Second lieutenant.
You let it change your ways
and you're a damn fool.
Yeah.
Meat-headed second lieutenant.
William Lewis Ringa. A gentleman.
By act of Congress.
I'm just sorry it had to happen
this way.
But I'll tell you one thing.
I'd give you the shirt off my back.
You already did, remember?
This is one of our general
staff bungalows, sir.
The colonel said you're to consider
yourself under arrest.
Confined to quarters here,
the colonel said.
I can imagine what the colonel said.
May I go on, sir?
The colonel said he'll come
to see you. It won't be too long.
You have a visitor.
Your first and last, the colonel said.
I know why you are here, Tom.
I know how serious the charges are,
and what the penalty can be.
You seem pretty well-informed.
Nikko?

Tom, from what I've said to you...
...the way I've acted, and the people
you've seen me with...
...you should know that Nikko and I
are close to high authority.
I've never had any doubt.
He's with Allied Intelligence,
and I worked with him.
You acted the fool by trying to be noble
the last time we were together.
You mustn't be foolish now
or you'll be charged with murder.
Or they can certify you insane, or...
I couldn't stand that.
Funny thing.
I thought it was all over between us.
It's not all over between us, Tom.
It will never be. I want you,
not the medals of a hero.
What you did was right.
You must make them understand
you were suffering from battle fatigue.
You must make them realize this.
You've got to tell them, Tom.
I can't tell them, Carla.
I can't.
At ease, Reynolds.
You might get an infection.
Not after I soak them in this stuff.
This is General Sloan.
The general's out of headquarters
in Washington.
You like a drink, general?
Thanks, Reynolds. I'd like one.
The colonel would like one too.
Thanks.
Well, Reynolds...
...looks like you really did it.
This is one of the warrants from
Chongqing that I picked up.
This is my answer to anything
you people have to say.
Those documents
were ordered destroyed.

Have you any idea of the far-flung complications that you have provoked? The drastic effect it has on American-Chinese relation? General, I know a little something about you. You were a Medal of Honor winner in the First World War. Self-made millionaire in civilian life. In both areas, your exploits are, what they say in the comic books, a legend. I expected something different from you, instead of the usual old hogwash. Like to say one thing, general, before we go any further. Captain Reynolds has had a hard tour of duty. Too much for any one man. Butt out, Fred! I don't need a public defender. I'm here to nail down a few things myself. The hell you are. You're here to hang, unless you come up with the right answers. Over there in the main house is General Chao... ..official representative of the Chinese government. He's patiently waiting for your personal apology. I'll stand trial. I'll resign my commission. But I will not apologize. Suppose we confiscate this document. I couldn't stop you. Except I got a couple of them stashed away in safe places. Fairly tricky. But you don't know what genuine trickiness is. I've got a couple of tricksters. Real star-spangled-banner, hell-for-leather tricksters, right outside that door. An investigating team

from headquarters, CBI.
They're panting to chew you up.
I only hope I don't have to use them.
I've just seen 34 American GI's with
their heads blown off by Chinese troops.
And I wanna know why.
This is sickening.
Doesn't it strike you that your actions
were, to say the least, unprecedented?
Doesn't it strike you that we're fighting
a rather unprecedented kind of war?
Isn't that right, general?
Well, it has its bad moments.
But in the long run-
I don't give a damn about the long run
if it adds up to this.
You can't deny what's been going on.
What will continue unless
something's done about it.
I know I'm right about this.
And if you don't know it, I pity you.
Colonel Reed, Captain Aloffson.
Drink?
Proceed, doctor.
No, not while you're in the room,
colonel.
Doctor, you know the regulations.
I've a right to a private examination.
Particularly since every
blood-sucking politician...
...in the CBI is looking to snap me
out on a Section Eight.
Who said you were to be examined?
I didn't say that anyone said it,
did I, colonel?
Reynolds, you're in a sling. According
to your 201 File, your actions...
...have for some time refuted your
psychological fitness for command.
You should have my problems, colonel.
You really should.
Proceed, doctor.
You got a very neurotic friend there,
doc.

That's all that's left of
the 34 men we found.
Reynolds, I've got to examine you.
Okay. Mind if I smoke?
Supposing I said
I wished you wouldn't?
If you gave me a good reason,
I probably wouldn't.
But seeing as how you don't
outrank me, I think I will.
- That's a specific, logical answer.
- Thank you, doc.
About your 201 File...
...I guess we both know what
Colonel Reed had reference to.
For instance?
For instance...
...your killing one of
your own men. Kachin.
I had to put him out of his misery.
We had no morphine. He couldn't
be saved. We had no doctor.
Without a doctor, how do you know
he couldn't have been saved?
I've seen a lot of bad belly wounds, doc.
This one was one of the worst.
What else?
You challenged the authority
of an Army physician...
...in his own hospital.
In his report to headquarters...
Man, they really stack the deck,
don't they?
About the Ubachi strike,
where you lost so many troops...
...would you say you were
under stress at the time?
Yeah, I think so.
Would you say that your subsequent
action in attacking the bandits...
...was influenced by the same kind
of stress?
No, doc, I knew exactly
what I was doing.

Chongqing is most understanding.
If Captain Reynolds is sick...
...and hospitalized, my government
will be satisfied.
Nevertheless, he must apologize
for his absurd charges.
Without an apology,
Chongqing would suffer...
...what many Orientals
characterize as a severe loss of face.
As an American, I must say I am
outraged at Captain Reynolds' attitude.
Doctor?
It's advised that Reynolds be
sent to the American hospital...
...in Delhi for further observation.
Gentlemen, shall we take
first things first?
How about that?
Those warrants were ordered
destroyed.
Well, you see, sir, Captain Reynolds
has several more of those...
...safely hidden away.
I am sure they could be recovered...
...but what bothers me is, why were
they issued in the first place?
Are you questioning, sir, the judgment
of the Chongqing government?
I'm questioning the use
of these warrants.
You see, sir, if there's nothing
wrong with them...
...why do you want them destroyed?
These warrants were issued to troops
of independent Chinese generals...
- ... whose integrity cannot be questioned.
- Warlords.
For the purpose of prosecuting
enemies of the Chinese Republic.
Americans were, as you say,
prosecuted.
We of the Chongqing government
have no proof of that.

You have the sworn deposition
of an American officer.
Whose qualifications have already
been confuted by his own superiors...
...and whose rebelliousness
I personally find unbearable.
I must insist on Reynolds' apology.
And I, sir, must insist that these
warrants were misused by a warlord...
...who took it upon himself
to kill Americans.
And it's his conduct that should be
examined, not Reynolds'.
The high command of the American and
Chinese should be made aware of that.
So there will be no apology.
Certainly not by Captain Reynolds.
You see, this boy has influence
in Washington.
Influence? Who?
Me.
Colonel Reed, I think you
fiddle-fouled this whole detail.
You and Aloffson both.
It seems to me that Captain Reynolds
is saner than either of you.
Is that what you would
have us report?
I'll do the reporting, to your government,
and to the Chongqing government.
Do you wish to speak further
with me on this?
In the words of an old hymn:
"You go to hell. "
Sir.
Gentlemen.
As for you, I could pulverize you
on a hundred raps...
...and make them, each of them, stick.
Disobedience of orders.
Yes, sir.
Conduct of a nature to bring discredit
upon the military.
Yes, sir.

Use of provoking words and gestures
to an officer, disrespect towards same.

Yes, sir.

Conduct against the prejudice
of good order and discipline.

Colonel, you got any more
of that foot wash?

Yes, sir.

Conduct unbecoming an officer
and a what-do-you-call-it.

Yes, sir.

Now, may I say that I owe you
a debt of gratitude.

Perhaps you're not aware of the fact
that I got my Medal of Honor...

- ... for disobeying orders.

- No, sir.

I'd forgotten how fine it feels
to do what you think is right...
...regardless of the consequences.

I think there's one more thing
you should know.

"The Chongqing government sincerely
deplores the actions of renegade bandits.

Possession and misuse of warrants
issued by the Republic of China...

...are being investigated
by proper authority.

Our wish Captain Reynolds be
exonerated of all charges immediately.

Signed, Chiang Kai-shek. "

Well, I guess the generalissimo
needed a little time to think things out...

...like the rest of us mortals.

I'll have an airplane
take you back to your Kachins.

I guess congratulations are in order,
all around.

Yes, sir.

I want our house painted white,
with blue curtains.

I want brass candlesticks
and a clock on the mantel.

And I want a little rocking chair

for the baby's room.

Already it starts.

We have to hold our head up
in the neighborhood, don't we?

Anything you say, cara mia.