

ANGELS OF BATAAN
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ANGELS OF BATAAN was originally performed by Mercy High School Theatre Department of Farmington Hills, MI. The show premiered on October 19, 2024, under the direction of Shelley Fager-Bajorek. The cast was as follows:

Helen Bailey	Julia Holt
Sally Bailey	Aubrey Gilliland
Edith Webb	Dorothy Propson
Millie Plinders	Maggie Geraghty
Jean Perkins	Arya Agulto
Laura Appleby	Madison Jackson
Josie Allen	Rebecca Morgan
Maude Daniels	Elise Lowry
Dr. Stevens/Kincaid	Braden Kendall
Joe Jeffries/Mr. Jameson	Noah Habel
Henry Bennet/Soldier	Ashton Grose
George Sanders/Radio Voice/Ed Martin	Jaxson Douglas
Betty Thompson	Joelle Kassabri
Ruby Thompson	Emily Dancy
Wounded Soldiers	Beatrice Lapuz, Sofia Santana, Alexis Rounds, Isabelle Ahme, Noah Habel, Emily Dancy, and Joelle Kassabri
Taps Honor Guard	Kyle Telang
Technical Director	Brian Groth
Producers	Holly Markiecki-Bennets and Aimee Crosby
Stage Manager	Hannah Kennedy
Assistant Stage Manager	Joye Pyronneau
Costume Design	Shirley Fager
Military Consultant	Platoon Sergeant David Neary
Medical Consultant	Heather Lowry
Stage Crew	Addison Witt, Quinn Fogg-Liedel, Laura Burras, Claire Rogan, Audrey Laing, Victoria Straub, Hazel Syke, Emily Pham, Emily Whelan, Holly Klingelhofer, and Isabela Romero
Light Crew	Natalie Terrill and Beatrice Lapuz
Sound Crew	Marilyn Medley,* Sydnei Brooks, Isabella Portillo,* and Ryley Kline
Projection Art	Victoria Straub and Linda Walter

Costume Crew Molly Whitney, Fiona Fountain,
 Brenda Hernandez-Ramirez, Olivia Kazak,
 Naomi Piasecki,* Veronica Bihar, Aurene Stoltz-Bango,
 Isabella Stansell,* Anabella Valencia, Madeline Kazak,
 Zahra Jamil, and Olivia Nazareno

Prop Crew Jasmine Joseph* and Cora Lee

Makeup/Hair Crew Aniba Raza, Zynaria Schick,
 Alexis Rounds, Lauren Dyer, Kimora Ford,
 Jamesyn Douglas, Helena Najar,* Yuri Lewis,
 Nylin Watson, Emily Cuthbertson, and Kierah Streather

Publicity Crew Layan Ayad, Maria Heilman,
 Ryann Toussaint,* Camilla Mendoza, Maeko Trocio,
 Haley Lipscomb, Hope Carmona, and Chisomaga Nwoke

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE ANGELS OF BATAAN is a work of historical fiction based on events that occurred in and around Manila, Bataan, and the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in the Philippines between 1941 and 1945 during World War II. The characters and incidents depicted have been shaped to serve the story. Some characters are entirely fictitious while others are based on multiple individuals.

CHARACTERS

HELEN BAILEY, 21. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; wants a life of adventure; sister of Sally; female

SALLY BAILEY, 18. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; a bit of a scaredy-cat; sister of Helen; female

EDITH WEBB, 22. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; quiet and attentive to her work; female

MILLIE PLINDERS, 20. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; glamorous, big-city kind of gal; female

JEAN PERKINS, 19. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; hopeless romantic hoping to find love; female

LAURA APPLEBY, 21. 2nd Lt. nurse in the U.S. Navy; has a fella in the army; female

JOSIE ALLEN, 29. 1st Lt. nurse in the U.S. Army; second-in-command; likeable and compassionate; female

MAUDE DANIELS, 52. Captain and command nurse in the U.S. Army; tough and no-nonsense; female

DR. EDWARD STEVENS, Major in the U.S. Army and staff physician; kind and capable; male

JOE JEFFRIES, 18. Soldier in the U.S. Army; loves a good joke; male

HENRY BENNET, 19. Soldier in the U.S. Army; stubborn; male

GEROGE SANDERS, 20. Soldier in the U.S. Army; soft spoken and kind; male

MR/MRS. JAMESON, mid 40s. Wealthy British citizen detained at Santo Tomas; any gender

BILL/BETTY THOMPSON, 39. American detained at Santo Tomas; any gender

RUBY THOMPSON, 15. Bill/Betty's teenage daughter, also detained; female

ED/EDWINA MARTIN, mid 60s. Older American detained at Santo Tomas; any gender

ENSEMBLE. Additional nurses, soldiers, and Santo Tomas POWs. If using ensemble, it should be at least 3 men and 3 women, but it can easily be much larger.

RADIO VOICE. Delivers news of the war; may be played onstage or off

ADMIRAL KINCAID. Offstage voice (can also be played onstage); male

NOTE ON CASTING

Feel free to designate all ensemble lines as you see fit. If not using an ensemble, feel free to cut those lines that are not needed, or reassign to characters already in the scene as able. If using a smaller cast, you can depict soldiers lying in the beds with use of props instead of live actors.

Note that amongst the American nurses stationed at Bataan and Santo Tomas were several Filipino nurses. If you have the ability to cast accordingly, I encourage you to do so.

Several characters are listed as any gender. Feel free to adjust pronouns as needed.

SETTING

Various army bases in Manila and Bataan, as well as the Santo Tomas Internment Camp, all located in the Philippines from 1941–1942 during World War II.

TIME

This play takes place primarily over a five-year period of time—1941 to 1945—during WWII.

SET

This play takes place over multiple locations in the Philippines, so the use of minimal set and props will help make transitions smoother, and this play lends itself well to that. However, if budget, time, and talent allow, feel free to expand the set as you'd like. Additionally, background music and sounds are noted for each scene to enhance the mood and atmosphere. You can omit those if you'd like. Note that the following locations are depicted:

- Clark Field, Manila: nurses' quarters, outside of a dance hall
- Camp Limay, Bataan: an outdoor-jungle hospital ward
- Santo Tomas: the courtyard of the internment camp
- Leyte Island: airport tarmac—suggested setting only
- Arlington National Cemetery, Washington D.C.—suggested set only (a single white tombstone)

Also note that an important element of this play is the sharp contrast of paradise and war. Even as the nurses struggled with the events unfolding around them, the palm trees continued to sway. There were even palm trees located in the courtyard of the Santo Tomas Internment Camp. Additionally, this contrast highlights the disparity between the image the Americans had of the Philippine Islands as a tropical destination, versus the poverty of many of the people who actually lived on the island. Those contrasts should be considered when devising the set for this play.

COSTUMES

All costumes should reflect the time, including nurse and soldier uniforms as well as civilian clothing for the nurses in Manila. The uniforms should become dirtier and more tattered as the play progresses. In Santo Tomas, all nurses and POWs should be in clothes that are quite tattered and worn. Note that for the opening scene, the nurses could also be wearing dress uniforms or might wear a blue nurse's cape over their white or khaki uniforms.

RUNTIME

Approximately 90 minutes. A 35–40 minute one-act competition version is also available.

SCENE TRANSITIONS

Scene transitions should be smooth and incorporated into the scene itself. Scenes are provided for designation of time and place and for ease of rehearsal.

ANGELS OF BATAAN

ACT ONE

Scene 1

At rise: an airport tarmac on Leyte Island, Philippines, February 20, 1945. A pool of light is center. Helen, Sally, Edith, Laura, Jean, and Millie are standing in the pool of light with their backs to the audience. They are in uniform with a Bronze Star Medal pinned to their chests.

KINCAID. And to the brave women in uniform who so proudly represented these United States of America during the Battle of the Philippines and in the months and years during their imprisonment, I present the Bronze Star Medal of Valor. May these nurses—these Angels of Bataan—spread their wings and soar into a bright future.

EDITH. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) Sixty-six. The number of U.S. Army nurses detained in the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in the Philippines during WWII. (*Salutes.*)

LAURA. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) Eleven. The number of U.S. Navy nurses also imprisoned in the nearby Los Banos Internment Camp. (*Salutes.*)

SALLY. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) Three-thousand eight hundred. The number of U.S. and European civilians detained in Santo Tomas alongside the nurses. (*Salutes.*)

MILLIE. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) One thousand and two. The number of days the nurses were imprisoned with little food, shelter, or medical supplies. (*Salutes.*)

JEAN. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) Thirty-two. The average

percentage of body weight the nurses lost due to starvation and disease. (*Salutes.*)

HELEN. (*Turns sharply, in military fashion.*) And the number of nurses who died? (*Salutes.*) Zero.

A pause, then all nurses hold up their right hand and begin to chant their oath.

ALL NURSES. As an Army nurse I accept the responsibilities of an officer in the Army Nurse Corps. I shall give faithful care to the men who fight for the freedom of this country and to the women who stand behind them. I shall bring to the American soldier, wherever he may be, the best of my knowledge and professional skill. I shall approach him cheerfully at all times, under any conditions I may find. I shall endeavor to maintain the highest nursing standards possible in the performance of my duties. I shall appear fearless in the presence of danger and quiet the fears of others to the best of my ability. My only criticism shall be constructive. The reputation and good name of the Army Nurse Corps and of the nursing profession shall be uppermost in my thoughts, second only to the care of my patients. I shall endeavor to be a credit to my country and to the uniform I wear.

All salute. All except Helen turn sharply, as before, and march offstage.

HELEN. Our uniforms...so crisp, so white, so...clean. (*Smiles, remembering.*) They nearly gleamed in the island sun, the tropical breeze teasing the hems of our skirts, begging us to come out and play at the end of the day. (*Takes off her cap or takes it out of her pocket and looks at it, thoughtfully.*) If only we'd known just how quickly it all would change.

Lights change as scene changes. The sounds of big band orchestra music fills the air. The lighting transports us to a tropical paradise.

Scene 2

At rise: inside the nurses' quarters at Sternberg General Hospital in Manila, Philippines, December 8, 1941. It is decorated with wicker and bamboo furniture, seashells, tropical flowers, and palm fronds. A vanity is also present. Edith sits, reading a book. Laura sits, primping and preening. Jean stands nearby, doing the same. All are wearing cocktail dresses. A radio is playing big band music lightly in the background.

JEAN. I'm gonna dance with three...no, four....no, *ten* officers tonight!

LAURA. (*Chuckles.*) Why don't you go ahead and dance with all of 'em, while you're at it?

JEAN. I just might.

LAURA. You hear that, Edith? Our Jean has plans to steal the heart of every officer at the dance.

EDITH. (*Without looking away from her book.*) Hmmm.

JEAN. What d'you care, Laura? You got a fella.

LAURA. Yeah, I do, don't I? (*Smiles, wistfully.*)

JEAN. So who cares how many officers I dance with?

LAURA. The other nurses, for starters.

JEAN. (*Dismissively.*) Oh, poo. Those other nurses can wait their turn. Everyone knows that dancin's the only way to find true love.

LAURA. (*With a smirk.*) Is that so? And what about Dr. Stevens? You've had a crush on him forever!

JEAN. Dr. Stevens doesn't know I'm alive. Tonight I'm gonna find me a beau, and ain't no one gonna stop me.

LAURA. You hear that, Edith? Ain't no one gonna stop her.

EDITH. (*Without looking away from her book.*) Hmmm.

JEAN. What about you, Laura? You gonna do any dancin'?

LAURA. Maybe. I haven't decided.

JEAN. Well, you can, you know. Frank don't mind. He said so in his last letter to'ya.

LAURA. I know. (*Sighs.*) Too bad he's stationed so far away.

JEAN. Europe ain't that far.

EDITH. (*Without looking away from her book.*) Seven thousand miles.

JEAN. Seven thousand miles...that's nothin'. Besides, he can come visit when he takes leave, can't he?

LAURA. If he gets leave. (*Worried.*) If the U.S. goes to war...

JEAN. (*Taking Laura's hand.*) We're not talkin' about no silly war tonight. We're talking about dancin'! And if I know Frank—

LAURA. (*Interrupts.*) Which you don't.

JEAN. Well, if I did, I just know he'd want to see you out on that dance floor!

LAURA. I guess...but when I think about dancing with anyone other than Frank, it just doesn't feel right.

JEAN. It's only dancin'.

LAURA. I thought you said dancing was the way to find true love.

JEAN. Whatcha doin' listenin' to me for? (*Dismissively.*) I'm a single gal from nowhere, Missouri. What do I know about true love?

LAURA. You hear that, Edith? Jean's finally admitted she doesn't know everything.

EDITH. (*Without looking away from her book.*) Hmmmm.

JEAN. I may not know everything, but I know an awful lot. (*Crosses to Edith and looks over her shoulder.*) Though not near as much as this gal, here. (*Takes Edith's book and snaps it shut.*)

EDITH. Hey! I was reading that!

JEAN. Why don't you get your nose out of this book and join us here on planet Earth? There's a dance goin' on in the mess hall, you know.

EDITH. I know. I put on a party dress, didn't I?

LAURA. Because we forced you to.

EDITH. Yeah, well, I said I would come to the dance and I will.

JEAN. You might as well be a million miles away.

EDITH. You said I had to come. (*Snatches book back.*) You didn't say I couldn't bring my book.

Edith sits down and begins to read again as Millie enters, carrying a large makeup case.

JEAN. (*A little resentfully.*) Well, look what the cat dragged in.

MILLIE. (*Leaning over to look in the mirror.*) Oh, give it a rest, Jean, you know I look good.

JEAN. You always look good, Millie. That's what I'm afraid of! One look at you and the officers will be sayin', "Jean, who?"

LAURA. (*Chuckles.*) Oh, they will not.

JEAN. You're probably right. Their tongues'll be hangin' so far out their mouths they won't be able to say anything at all! (*Leans in.*) Say, Millie, would'ya mind hangin' back about ten minutes or so? Let me head on in first, meet a few of the fellas, maybe have a dance or two?

MILLIE. (*Dismissively, waving her hand.*) Oh, I don't care a lick about any of those soldier boys.

JEAN. You tell them that when they come callin' for a dance, why don'cha? Give a girl a chance.

MILLIE. You can have every dance for all I care.

LAURA. Oh, trust me, she intends to.

MILLIE. (*Shoves Laura a little.*) Move over a little so I can finish putting my face on.

Laura moves over or stands up as Millie opens the makeup case and begins to apply makeup.

LAURA. That is a ton of makeup. What do you all have in there?

MILLIE. Let's see...lipstick, blusher, multiple colors of eye shadow, kohl liner, talcum, mineral oil, brushes, sponges, applicators. You know...the basics.

LAURA. (*Rolling her eyes.*) Right. The basics. You've practically got an entire drugstore in that makeup kit of yours.

MILLIE. I need to practice if I'm going to make it to Hollywood.

JEAN. Hollywood? (*Smirks.*) She must've made quite the detour

when she hit the Pacific Ocean, am I right? (*Elbows Edith, with a chuckle.*) Am I right?

EDITH. (*Without looking away from her book.*) Hmmmm.

MILLIE. (*Imagining it.*) I want it all...the glitz...the glamor...

JEAN. The noise...the overcrowding...

MILLIE. The flashbulbs going off as I make my way down the red carpet at my latest premiere...

JEAN. Falling flat on your face as you trip over your heels...

MILLIE. People lining the streets, screaming my name, and asking for my autograph...

JEAN. People hiding in your bushes and rifling through your trash...

MILLIE. Say, what's your problem, Jean? Can't a girl have a dream?

JEAN. Of course she can. I'm just trying to keep you grounded, that's all.

MILLIE. I don't want to be grounded. I want to be a star!

JEAN. Then what'd ya come all the way to Manila for?

MILLIE. It costs money to be a star. There's headshots and a new wardrobe and I'd have to find a place to live...nursing seemed like a good place to start. And what better place to be a nurse than on a tropical island?

LAURA. You sure can't beat it can you? (*Looks around.*) Bright sunshine...warm breezes.

JEAN. Only havin'ta work four-hour shifts.

LAURA. (*Chuckles.*) That is great, isn't it? More of a vacation than work most days.

EDITH. I think it's kind of boring.

JEAN. (*Excitedly.*) She lives! (*Snatches Edith's book away again.*) Edith has finally emerged out of the cocoon that is this book and now she's a butterfly!

EDITH. Hey! Give that back!

Jean opens and closes the book like flapping wings and prances around as Edith chases her, trying to get the book. They nearly crash into Helen and Sally who enter, both

*wearing white nursing uniforms and carrying small suitcases.
Edith snatches her book back and sits down.*

JEAN. Sorry about that.

HELEN. It's no trouble. (*Holds out a hand.*) I'm Helen Bailey and this is my sister, Sally.

SALLY. (*With a shy wave.*) Hi.

HELEN. We're the new recruits.

JEAN. Recruits?

HELEN. The new Army nurses stationed here at Clark Field.

MILLIE. (*Dismissively.*) Oh, they don't call the new nurses recruits. We're not really in the Army.

JEAN. Well, we kinda are.

LAURA. Some of us, anyway.

JEAN. (*Points a thumb at Laura.*) Laura's a Navy nurse. The rest of us are Army.

LAURA. I think what Millie was getting at is that we don't have all of that military protocol to follow. We just focus on our nursing duties.

JEAN. Which around here ain't much. (*Holds out her hand.*) I'm Jean, by the way.

Jean shakes Sally's hand.

HELEN. Nice to meet you. (*Puts suitcase down and shakes Jean's hand.*) What do you mean, it ain't much?

JEAN. Oh, I'm just saying that our nursing duties are pretty light. The Philippines don't see any action, so most of the time we're bandaging up cuts and scrapes when the boys play a little too rough out in the ball field.

LAURA. We have a lot of time to enjoy the island.

MILLIE. It's our own little slice of paradise.

HELEN. Just what I was looking for! (*Turning to Sally.*) See? I told you it wouldn't be so bad. (*Turning back to the other nurses.*) Sally didn't want to come...didn't want to enlist, if I'm being honest.

SALLY. I would've been just fine working with Doc Edwards in his clinic back home.

LAURA. Where's home?

HELEN. Beaconsfield, Iowa.

SALLY. Population one hundred and forty-eight.

HELEN. One hundred and forty-nine, actually. *(Turns to Sally.)* Remember, Nancy Watkins had her baby a couple of weeks ago.

MILLIE. Ah, so it's one of those small towns where everyone knows each other.

Helen and Sally say the next line in unison, Helen is annoyed and eye rolls, Sally is delighted and smiles.

HELEN and SALLY. Yep.

LAURA. I always thought small towns were charming.

HELEN. Charming? Sure. Exciting? Not so much.

LAURA. So you enlisted looking for a little excitement?

SALLY. *(Pointing to Helen.)* She did. I'm just along for the ride.

HELEN. *(To Sally.)* We had to get out of there. If not we would've become just like Mamma and you know it.

SALLY. What's wrong with that? Mamma's happy.

HELEN. Sure she is. But she's never stepped foot outside Beaconsfield and she never will. I wanted more for myself...more for us.

SALLY. Helen always thinks we have to do everything together.

HELEN. It's like Mamma says...as long as we're together, everything is going to be just fine.

SALLY. You promise?

HELEN. I promise. You'll see...it's going to be great! *(Excitedly.)* We'll have adventure and excitement...we'll meet new people and see new things. We'll finally get a chance to experience everything this world has to offer.

JEAN. Well, you came to the right place.

SALLY. What about the war?

MILLIE. *(Dismissively.)* The war? That's miles away.

SALLY. It's not that far. Didn't you hear about Pearl Harbor?

JEAN. Pearl Harbor ain't nowhere near here.

EDITH. *(Without looking up from her book.)* Five thousand miles.

JEAN. See? It's five thousand miles away. We got nothin' to worry about.

SALLY. If you say so.

HELEN. Don't mind her. She'll come around, just like she did when I convinced her to come here.

SALLY. Dragged me kicking and screaming is more like it.

EDITH. I can relate.

MILLIE. Oh, you'll love it here, Sally. Us girls are like one big family. We'll take care of you. Trust me.

SALLY. (*Looking pointedly at Helen.*) The last time I trusted my family to take care of me I ended up halfway around the world!

JEAN. Well, you're here now. No sense crying over spilled milk. (*Takes Sally's bag.*) Now tell me you have a party dress and some nice dancin' shoes in here.

SALLY. Dancing shoes? What would I need those for on an Army base?

JEAN. (*Looking incredulously at Helen.*) Didn't you tell your sister nothin'? (*To Sally.*) It's the Clark Field social tonight, darlin'!

LAURA. Once a month the officers and the nurses mix it up in the mess hall. There's music and dancing and refreshments. It's a really nice time.

MILLIE. Why don't we get you settled so you can freshen up before the social? Your rooms are on either side of mine.

SALLY. We get our own rooms?

MILLIE. Of course! This isn't one of those boring ole regular nursing assignments...this is paradise!

HELEN. (*Picks up her suitcase and turns to Sally.*) What do you say, Sally? Ready to dive into this new adventure headfirst?

SALLY. Do I have a choice?

EDITH. Probably not.

MILLIE. Follow me.

Millie exits, chuckling with Helen and Sally. Jean snatches Edith's book as Laura laughs. Lights slowly fade into a

spotlight on the radio as it gets louder, the sounds of big band music changing suddenly into a news bulletin.

RADIO VOICE. The U.S. is officially at war! Following their surprise attack on the U.S. military base in Pearl Harbor, Japan has declared war on the United States. But don't worry...the United States troops are on alert! On the ground, in the sea, and in the air, defense must be everywhere. Where will the Japanese military strike next? Only the Japanese Imperial Commander knows. But rest assured that wherever the next target may be, our boys will be there...ready and waiting.

End of news bulletin music plays and transitions into big band music playing from within the Army social. As lights fade out wider, we find ourselves outside the mess hall on Clark Field, later that evening. The radio is removed. The dance is about to take place. There are a few tables and chairs and possibly party lights. Jean is trying to dance with Edith, who isn't having it. Millie and Laura stand nearby, amused. Jean wears a silky scarf around her neck.

JEAN. No, Edith, it's step, step, turn...not step, turn, step!

EDITH. I told you I can't do this, Jean. I have two left feet.

JEAN. Now, you and I are both nurses, Edith, so I think we know enough about the human body to be able to identify one right and one left foot on the end of those gams there. *(Points at Edith's feet.)*

EDITH. *(Crossing to a table and sitting, dejectedly.)* You know what I mean.

MILLIE. Aw, leave her alone, Jean.

LAURA. *(Patting Edith on the shoulder.)* Edith doesn't have to dance if she doesn't want to.

JEAN. Fine! I'll leave her be.

Josie and Maude enter in uniform followed by Dr. Edward Stevens, who wears a shirt and tie and long white lab coat. He is intently looking at a clipboard. They cross as Jean says her next line and stop behind her, unseen.

But I'm gonna to dance so much Maude'll have to drag me out of bed tomorrow for my shift.

MAUDE. (*Stiffly.*) Thanks for the heads up, Perkins.

JEAN. (*Snapping to attention.*) Nurse Daniels! I didn't see you there.

MILLIE. (*Leaning over and whispering in Jean's ear, smirking.*) But did you see Dr. Stevens?

Dr. Stevens steps around Maude, looking at his clipboard.

JEAN. (*Nervous, fumbling.*) Oh! Hey there, Dr. Stevens.

DR. STEVENS. (*Looks up and smiles.*) Hi, Jean.

JEAN. (*Nervously.*) You goin' to the social tonight?

DR. STEVENS. Oh, I don't think so. I've got a lot of work to do over in the clinic.

LAURA. You work too hard, Dr. Stevens.

Maude steps in-between the nurses and Dr. Stevens, attempting to end the conversation.

MAUDE. He works just as hard as he needs to. (*To Josie.*) I'm going to head back to the clinic with Dr. Stevens. Josie, remind the girls how nurses should behave themselves while attending social gatherings on the base.

JOSIE. Yes, of course, Nurse Daniels.

Maude and Dr. Stevens exit. All nurses watch them exit.

JEAN. (*Imitating Maude.*) Now remember, girls, you must be on your best behavior at all times. (*Tapping Laura on the head.*) Laura... no dancing! (*Tapping Millie on the head.*) Millie, no laughing! (*Tapping Edith.*) And Edith...

Edith looks up.

Never mind. Edith is always on her best behavior. (*Aside to Helen.*) Booorring.

JOSIE. Now, Jean, you and I both know Nurse Daniels just wants the best for her nurses.

JEAN. She wants us in bed at eight o'clock! (*Taking Josie's arm and pulling on it in feigned agony.*) Eight o'clock, Josie!

JOSIE. (*Chuckling.*) She just doesn't want you getting into trouble.

JEAN. Now what kind of trouble can a girl get into around here?

Joe, George, and Henry enter, jovial and joking around.

JOE. I can think up some trouble if you're interested, Jeannie!
(Puts his arm around her and turns to George and Henry, chuckling.)

JEAN. *(Removing his arm.)* You're barkin' up the wrong tree, Joe.

JOE. Aw, you don't gotta be like that. I didn't mean nothin' by it.

GEORGE. You always mean somethin' by it, Joe.

HENRY. *(Laughs.)* Yeah, you ain't foolin' nobody.

LAURA. Are you guys on your way to the social?

GEORGE. You know it! I heard they got hamburgers in there. Can you imagine? Real hamburgers! With cheese on 'em and everything.

EDITH. Doesn't that make them cheeseburgers?

GEORGE. *(Thinks about it for a minute.)* I guess it does. *(Smiles at Edith.)* You know, you're really smart, Edith.

EDITH. *(Smiles, shyly.)* Thanks.

JOSIE. I've got some work I need to catch up on as well, so I'm going to head over to the clinic.

MILLIE. *(Disappointed.)* You're not going to the social?

JOSIE. Maybe next time. *(Starts to exit, then stops and turns around.)* And ladies, if you want to stay on Nurse Daniels's good side, just...don't do anything I wouldn't do.

JEAN. We won't.

Jean exits; with a devious look:

Or will we?

Helen and Sally enter, still in uniform and carrying towels and other supplies.

JOE. Well, well, well, it looks like we have some new recruits!

HELEN. We're not recruits. We're nurses.

JEAN. They can see that! Why are you still in uniform?

SALLY. Little miss adventure seeker wanted to impress the command nurse by restocking the clinic.

JEAN. There's plenty of time to restock the clinic... *(Takes some of the supplies.)* Tomorrow! *(Puts the supplies on the table/bench next to Edith.)* Tonight is for dancing!

The sound of an explosion is heard. All react.

MILLIE. What was that?

GEORGE. Transformer must've blown.

HENRY. Don't worry, girls, this sorta thing happens all the time.

Another explosion is heard.

SALLY. I guess so!

EDITH. I don't think that was a transformer.

The sound of an air-raid siren is heard.

HELEN. Is that...

JOE. The air-raid siren!

All look up.

LAURA. We're under attack!

During the next few moments, lights change and the sounds of explosion are heard. It's chaos; there's screaming and shouting. Soldiers and other nurses enter, running. Maude and Dr. Stevens enter, triaging. Some of the nurses triage as well. The ground shakes and many stumble and fall, some, including Joe, don't get up again. Sally, Jean, and Millie fall, injured. It culminates in one large explosion, during which the lights go out, except for one spotlight on Helen, who turns to audience, holding a letter in her hand. Action could also continue in slow motion as Helen reads.

HELEN. I'd never seen anything like it. Dust everywhere. Blood everywhere. Ears ringing so loud I couldn't hear Sally calling my name...couldn't hear her when she fell. (*Sad, but proud.*) You would've been so proud of her, Mamma. She didn't want to be there—she'd told me that so many times. But I'd promised her sunshine and warm breezes and paradise and she'd followed me halfway around the world...straight into a battlefield. We'd only been off the plane for a few hours...had only unpacked, really. Hadn't had a moment to relax, or even a patient on which to practice our newly-minted nursing skills when the first bomb hit the base. We were strangers in a strange land, but in that moment, we...the nurses and the soldiers...we were one. Thank goodness Sally and I were already on our way to the clinic with those supplies. Those supplies

saved so many lives that day...so many. And our girl, our Sally, she jumped right into action...making tourniquets out of the soldiers' belts to stop the bleeding, applying compresses to open wounds, bandaging what she could...saving limbs...saving lives. You should've seen her, Mamma. She knew just what to do. But then that last bomb hit... (*Scared.*) I thought I'd lost her, Mamma. I couldn't find her in the all the dust and debris. Once it cleared a little I saw her lying on the ground, her left leg covered in blood. And what did I do? (*Look down, ashamed, then looks up.*) I froze.

Lights change and we are in the aftermath of the bombing. Sally is sitting up, assessing her wounds and bandaging them. Laura is bent over Millie, working on her. Millie has a gash on her head. Dr. Stevens is helping Henry to stand. George lays nearby. Maude is triaging. Helen stands there, frozen.

SOLDIER. Ah, my leg!

MAUDE. I need towels! (*When no one responds, Maude looks up and at Helen.*) Bailey, I need towels right now!

HELEN. (*Not thinking clearly.*) She...

MAUDE. Oh, for goodness' sake, snap out of it, Helen!

HELEN. She...

MAUDE. (*Stands and crosses to Helen, putting a hand on each of her shoulders.*) You don't have time for shock. We need you.

HELEN. She...needs me.

MAUDE. We all need you! These soldiers need you. You're a nurse, Helen Bailey! You don't have the luxury of freezing up in a crisis. Now get going!

During the next few lines, Helen makes her way to Sally, who is putting the finishing touches on her bandages.

SOLDIER. Help!

NURSE. We need iodine!

NURSE. Bandages!

NURSE. Morphine!

HELEN. Sally!

SALLY. I'm alright.

HELEN. But the bombs...and the blood...

SALLY. I'm okay. I swear.

HELEN. This wasn't what I promised you. Not even close.

SALLY. I didn't become a nurse for tropical breezes. I became a nurse to help people. And that's what I'm going to do right now. *(Pats Helen on the shoulder.)* You too.

HELEN. Right.

Helen shakes her head, clearing it, then gets to work, passing out supplies while Sally triages.

Who needs supplies?

NURSE. Over here!

DR. STEVENS. How's the ankle, private?

HENRY. It'll hold. *(Looks around.)* Where's George?

GEORGE. *(Groaning loudly.)* Over here. *(Holds up a hand, then drops it quickly.)*

DR. STEVENS. Coming, George! *(Rushes over to George and starts working on him.)*

LAURA. Now, Millie, you've gotta hold still.

Millie swats Laura away and tries to get up.

MILLIE. I'm fine, really.

LAURA. You've got an awfully big gash on your head, Millie. You've gotta let me check it out.

MILLIE. It's nothing...just a scrape. *(Touches her forehead, near the gash, then looks at her fingers.)* Maybe a little more than a scrape.

LAURA. Lie back and let me dress it. We don't want a big ole scar on your face before you get to Hollywood.

MILLIE. A scar! *(Grabbing Laura's arm, upset.)* I can't have a scar...not on my face.

LAURA. Then lie back and let me work.

SOLDIER. Nurse! I need a nurse!

NURSE. Coming!

HENRY. Where's Joe?

JEAN. (*Trapped under a fallen piece of debris.*) Hey, can someone get this thing off of me?

DR. STEVENS. I've got it.

Dr. Stevens rushes to Jean and removes the debris.

JEAN. Thanks, Dr. Stevens. (*Starts to stand.*)

DR. STEVENS. (*Stops her.*) Wait! Let me check you out first—make sure nothing's broken.

JEAN. I'm alright, I swear. I just need to shake it off so I can get to work.

DR. STEVENS. You might've hit your head. You could have a concussion.

JEAN. (*Putting a hand on his shoulder, reassuringly and smiling.*) I'm fine. I promise.

Dr. Stevens helps Jean stand. They look at one another for a moment, then each go in opposite directions, back to work.

HENRY. Joe! Buddy, where are you?

SALLY. Do we have any more bandages?

HELEN. Right here.

Helen brings over supplies.

SALLY. How about some gauze?

HELEN. (*Looks in her supplies.*) Nope. All out.

SALLY. Any cotton? Muslin?

HELEN. (*Looking quickly through the supplies.*) No. We don't have any of that.

SALLY. (*Holds out her hand.*) Give me your stockings.

HELEN. (*Incredulously.*) My what?

SALLY. Your stockings. Quick, Helen, we don't have much time and I've got to stop the bleeding.

HELEN. Okay.

Helen takes off her stocking and hands them to Sally, who uses them on the soldier she's working on.

MAUDE. How's Millie doing over there?

MILLIE. (*Stands.*) I'm good, Nurse Daniels. Where do you want me?

MAUDE. (*Indicating the scene.*) Take your pick.

SOLDIER. Over here!

Millie and Laura each rush to a patient as Josie enters, carrying supplies.

JOSIE. The hospital's still standing, but I'm not sure how much longer.

MAUDE. Did you get everyone out?

JOSIE. Yes, we evacuated all the patients and I have a few nurses gathering up supplies. I brought some with me.

MAUDE. Good work, Nurse Allen.

EDITH. (*To Josie.*) Do you have any rubber tubing? I need to make a tourniquet.

JOSIE. (*Looking through her supplies.*) No, I'm sorry, I don't.

SALLY. Just use his belt. That's what I did.

EDITH. Good idea. (*Takes off the soldier's belt and ties it around his legs.*)

JOSIE. (*Crossing to Laura.*) What do you need?

LAURA. I need about three more sets of hands...but I'll take some tongue depressors and tape. (*Looks at her soldier.*) I need to splint this guy's hand.

JOSIE. I've got the tongue depressors but no tape.

HELEN. (*Crossing over.*) What about your stocking? Will they do the job?

LAURA. Yes! Great idea.

Josie crosses to help another fallen soldier while Laura takes off her stockings and uses them as Helen looks at Sally.

HELEN. Yep. It sure was.

HENRY. Joe? Has anyone seen Joe?

JEAN. (*Seeing Joe.*) I think he's over here. (*Rushes over and kneels by him.*) Joe! You all right? (*Checks his pulse.*) I'm not getting a pulse.

DR. STEVENS. (*Rushes over.*) Let me check. (*Kneels down and checks his pulse.*) There's no heartbeat. (*Looks at Jean.*) Quick. Let's roll him over.

Jean helps Dr. Stevens roll him over onto his belly using the Holger Nielsen technique as described in the next few lines.

Now carefully press down on his back to force the air out of his lungs.

Jean does.

Good.

Dr. Stevens lifts Joe's arm at the elbows, then lays them down.

Again.

Dr. Stevens and Jean do this a few more times, in sync.

JEAN. Well? Did it work?

DR. STEVENS. (*Leans down and checks Joe's pulse; sadly.*) I'm afraid not.

HENRY. Joe?

DR. STEVENS. (*Looks up, sadly.*) He's gone.

HENRY. (*Crying out.*) No!

GEORGE. (*Tries to sit up.*) What? What is it?

EDITH. (*Helping George lie back down.*) Shhh. Just rest right now.

GEORGE. Rest? Out here? (*Chuckles, ruefully.*) Honey, those days are long gone. This ain't paradise anymore. This is a battlefield. (*The sound of the air-raid siren is heard.*)

LAURA. Again?

EDITH. It's got to be the Japanese. They must be targeting the U.S. bases in the Pacific.

JOSIE. We've got to get the survivors out of here, fast.

DR. STEVENS. Listen up! Anyone who can walk, get moving and find some cover.

Henry and other soldiers exit, slowly and painfully.

MAUDE. Nurses, our priority right now is getting these boys to safety. Gather any supplies you can quickly and work together to move these boys out of harm's way.

ALL NURSES. Yes, Nurse Daniels.

All nurses except Jean start gathering supplies and helping to move the soldiers to exit. Jean crosses to Maude.

JEAN. What about Joe?

MAUDE. There's nothing more we can do for him.

JEAN. But we can't just leave him here!

MAUDE. I'm afraid we have to, Jean. We're at war now, and sometimes in war we have to make tough decisions and do things we never thought we would...things we didn't know we were capable of.

JEAN. I didn't sign up for this.

MAUDE. *(Puts her arm around Jean.)* None of us did, Jean...none of us did.

Jean and Maude help carry a soldier offstage as lights slowly fade into a spotlight on an Army radio. Scene transitions can occur during radio voice-over.

RADIO VOICE. After six days of heavy bombing by the Japanese, Clark Field base lies in ruins. Our boys did all they could to defend the U.S. stronghold in Manila, but the enemy in the sky proved to be too much for them. The number of casualties is tremendous. At Sternberg General Hospital, U.S. Army and Navy nurses work overtime to manage the constant flow of wounded and dead. Without enough beds, the wounded spill out into the hallways and corridors of the hospital, some even lying in the hot sun of the hospital lawns and tennis courts, with only scraps of wood, corrugated roofing or old doors as their beds. Supplies are running low but hopes remain high! And why shouldn't they when our boys have the best nurses in the world to get them back into fighting shape!

End of news bulletin music plays. Maude enters into the spotlight and turns off the radio. Moments later, Josie enters, holding a telegram.

JOSIE. This just in from General MacArthur.

Josie hands telegram to Maude. As Maude reads, Josie looks over her shoulder.

MAUDE. December 24, 1941. Effective immediately, all U.S. Army

nurses are to evacuate Sternberg Hospital at Clark Field in Manila and transport the soldiers under their care to Camp Limay, on the peninsula of Bataan in anticipation of the fall of Manila to enemy forces. All Navy nurses are to remain in Manila to support the patients that are unsafe to travel.

JOSIE. (*Horried.*) Camp Limay! But there's nothing there. Isn't it just—

MAUDE. Jungle. Thick, dense jungle.

JOSIE. How can we set up a hospital in the middle of jungle?

MAUDE. I don't know, Josie. But we're about to find out.

Maude puts the telegram in her pocket and exits, followed by Josie as lights come up on scene.

Scene 3

At rise: Camp Limay, Bataan, December 29, 1941. Jungle noises can be heard. A canopy of greenery surrounds the scene, including palm trees and tree trunks. A rustic outdoor hospital with carts or crates of medical supplies and cots or pallets of blankets and clipboards are present, on which soldiers, including George, rest. A large sheet or piece of fabric with a crudely painted red cross is hung up. Perhaps mosquito netting is present over some cots. Sally is redressing a soldier's wound while Edith reads to George and Millie wipes a soldier's brow. Dr. Stevens and Josie are moving a bed and supplies. Henry stands nearby, on crutches, watching. All nurses are now wearing khaki or green slacks/button-up shirts or coveralls and boots. Their hair is tied back with bandanas or they wear a khaki Army hat. Dr. Stevens wears similar attire, though with a khaki tie and his white lab coat. They all wear white bands with red crosses on their arm. They are all dirty and sweaty.

EDITH. (*Reading.*) Now this is the Law of the Jungle—as old and as true as the sky; And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.

As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back—

For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.

SALLY. See? We're just like one big pack of wolves, out here in the jungle.

MILLIE. Do we have to be wolves? Wolves are so hairy and smelly. Can't we be a pack of tropical birds or something prettier?

EDITH. A group of birds is called a flock, not a pack.

MILLIE. Fine, then we're a flock of birds.

SALLY. I don't think so. A wolf pack conveys strength and a sense of family. A flock of birds...not so much.

EDITH. That's why Kipling's *The Jungle Book* was such a masterpiece.

HENRY. Isn't that a kid's book?

EDITH. Oh, it's so much more than a kid's book. Listen to this part: (*Reads.*) Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but never too deep;

And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the day is for sleep.

The Jackal may follow the Tiger, but, Cub, when thy whiskers are grown,

Remember the Wolf is a Hunter—go forth and get food of thine own.

Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle—the Tiger, the Panther, and Bear.

And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar in his lair. When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither will go from the trail,

Lie down till the leaders have spoken—it may be fair words shall prevail.

GEORGE. Okay, that was way too many words for me. (*Smiles at Edith.*) But you sure sounded great saying them.

EDITH. Kipling used animals to describe human behaviors and characteristics. The themes of freedom, law, and abandonment are prevalent throughout this book. (*Holds up the book.*)

GEORGE. I'd never abandon you, Edith.

EDITH. (*Smiles.*) Thanks, George.

MILLIE. (*Stands.*) Well I would abandon this jungle hospital in a heartbeat. (*Scratching at her arm.*) At this point my mosquito bites have mosquito bites.

SALLY. Don't scratch them. It just makes them worse. (*Stands and brings Millie some cream.*) Here, try this.

MILLIE. Thanks. (*Applies cream.*) Say, Dr. Stevens, any idea when MacArthur's going to get us out of here?

DR. STEVENS. No word yet, but I'm guessing we're going to be here for a while.

JOSIE. (*Indicating a spot.*) How about this for our surgical pavilion?

DR. STEVENS. That could work. (*Moves a bed into the center of the spot.*) This could be our operating table. (*Moves cart/crate nearby.*) And we can keep these supplies nearby.

HENRY. Did you just call that dirty, old cot your operating table?

DR. STEVENS. It's the best we can do out here.

JOSIE. Don't worry, Henry, we'll cover it with fresh sheets.

HENRY. (*To George.*) Remind me not to need surgery anytime soon.

DR. STEVENS. Then stay off that foot. If it gets infected, it's going to have to come off.

HENRY. (*Hobbling quickly to a bed or tree trunk.*) You got it, Doc.

Henry sits as Jean and Maude enter. Jean is carrying a small crate.

MAUDE. Supply transport just dropped these off.

JOSIE. Great! (*Rushes over, then is disappointed.*) That's it?

JEAN. 'Fraid so.

JOSIE. (*Sighs.*) I guess it'll have to do.

Josie takes the supplies and she and Maude restock the cart/pass them out while Jean crosses to Dr. Stevens.

JEAN. You figurin' out where we're gonna do the surgeries?

DR. STEVENS. (*Without looking away from the surgical area.*) Yes. I'm thinking right over here will work just fine.

JEAN. (*Leaning closer.*) Anything I can do to help?

DR. STEVENS. (*Still not looking her.*) I think Josie and I have everything covered.

JEAN. (*Disappointed.*) Oh, okay.

MAUDE. Jean, quit flirting with Dr. Stevens and help us organize these supplies.

Dr. Stevens looks up, surprised, his focus finally shaken.

JEAN. Sure. (*Crosses, dejected, to Maude.*)

DR. STEVENS. (*To himself, unaware.*) Flirting? (*Thinks for a moment, shakes his head and returns to work.*)

MILLIE. Can you believe we missed Christmas? This is the first year I didn't celebrate.

EDITH. It's my favorite time of the year. The decorations and the presents...

SALLY. Trimming the trees and singing carols...

GEORGE. And the food! The fellas in the kitchen always found a way to make us a nice meal in the mess hall on Christmas. (*Shakes his head.*) Who woulda thought I'd ever miss canned turkey and boiled potatoes?

MAUDE. General MacArthur's orders came on Christmas Eve. We had a lot to do to get our patients transported. There was no time for celebration.

EDITH. (*Sadly.*) I know. I just wish I'd at least gotten a card or something from back home. (*Looks around.*) Might have made all this a little more bearable.

SALLY. Can we even get mail out here?

MAUDE. I don't know. The Army hasn't had much use for this camp. (*Looks around.*) There's not too many people who even know where we are.

JEAN. (*Jokingly.*) Not even Santa?

MAUDE. (*Seriously.*) Especially not Santa.

HENRY. (*Picks up Army radio.*) I wonder if we could get some Christmas carols on this thing?

MILLIE. You think?

HENRY. It's worth a try.

Maude crosses to Henry and snatches the radio out of his hands.

MAUDE. That's government-issued property. It's for military communication, not Christmas carols.

JOSIE. (*Crossing to Maude.*) Can't we bend the rules a little? It is Christmas after all.

MAUDE. It's December 29th. Christmas has come and gone.

JOSIE. Please? Just this once?

MAUDE. (*Sighs.*) Fine. But if MacArthur gets wind of this, you're taking the blame.

JOSIE. (*Smiles.*) Yes, Nurse Daniels.

Josie takes the radio and sets it down then turns the dial until instrumental Christmas music is playing. Lights fade into a spotlight on the radio. Helen enters into the spotlight or another spotlight, holding a small mail sack in one hand and a Christmas card in the other.

HELEN. (*Reading.*) To my daughters, Helen and Sally. I'm sending this card early in the hopes it gets to you by Christmas...if it gets to you at all. I don't know what to think. Papa and I went down to the cinema just so we could watch the newsreel. Can you imagine? Papa and I at the cinema! He wore his nicest coveralls and washed his face and everything. If we weren't so worried about you girls it'd almost have been a date! (*Pauses, then reads again, somber.*) They said all the nurses had been moved to some peninsula...a jungle camp or some such thing. I'm guessing that's where you both are. Oh, I hope you're still together! That's the only thing that gives me any comfort when I'm lying awake at night...just thinking that as long as you girls are together, you'll keep each other safe and everything will be just fine. You will do that for your poor old mamma, won't you? Keep each other safe? That's all I want for Christmas this year...to know my two girls are together and protecting one another. (*Pauses, a little more upbeat.*) Well, I guess that's all I'll say about that. It's Christmas after all, isn't it? No sense dwelling on the things we can't do anything about. Papa and I are trimming the tree later today, which, I suppose means I'll be doing most of the trimming—you know how Papa is. I'll be thinking of you girls while I'm putting on the ornaments, wishing Helen was here to string the garland and Sally was here to put the star on top, like always. Maybe I'll leave the tree up until you're both home safe and sound (wouldn't Papa just love that!) and we'll have a big ole Christmas dinner to celebrate your return. Until then, I love you and...Merry Christmas. Yours truly, Mamma.

Helen smiles looking at the card, then closes it as lights come up on scene. Helen holds up the mail bag and calls out to all assembled.

Mail's here!

Millie, Edith, Josie, and Sally rush over. Henry crosses as quickly as he can.

JEAN. *(To Maude.)* See? Santa did find us after all!

Jean rushes over to Helen, who passes out mail.

JOSIE. I got a letter from back home!

HENRY. *(Who has two letters.)* Me too! *(Looks at the other letter.)*
Looks like you got something, George.

GEORGE. Let's have it, then!

Henry crosses to George and hands him the letter, which George opens and reads.

EDITH. Anything for me?

HELEN. *(Smiles.)* Here you go. *(Hands Edith a couple of red and green envelopes.)*

EDITH. Christmas cards!

MILLIE. What about me?

HELEN. *(Pulls out a manilla envelope.)* You've got a big one, Millie.

MILLIE. *(Excitedly opens up the manilla envelope.)* The latest issue of *Photoplay* magazine! *(Clutches it to her chest.)* Oh, darling, how I've missed you. *(Finds a spot and opens it to read.)*

SALLY. Did Mamma or Papa send anything?

HELEN. *(Hands Sally the open card.)* Of course she did. You know Mamma.

Sally takes the card, finds a spot, and reads.

JEAN. You got anything left in that sack of gifts for a good girl like me, Santa?

HELEN. *(Reaches into sack and pulls out letter.)* There's just one more. *(Reads the envelope.)* Looks like it's for Laura. *(Hands it to Jean.)*

JEAN. It's from Frank.

EDITH. The mail room made a mistake. They must think Laura's still with us, instead of back in Manila with the other Navy nurses.

JOSIE. Didn't you hear? Manila's fallen to the Japanese.

MILLIE. Oh no!

SALLY. What happened to the nurses that were left behind?

MAUDE. They were captured by the Japanese. They're most likely prisoners of war now.

EDITH. (*Shakes her head.*) Those poor girls.

JEAN. Poor Laura.

HELEN. Sorry, Jean. I don't have anything for you.

JEAN. That's alright. I'll just hang onto this letter for Laura...keep it safe until we see her again. (*Puts the letter in her pocket.*)

EDITH. (*Unsure.*) If we see her again.

JEAN. (*Angrily, crossing to Edith.*) What do you mean, if?

EDITH. You know what I mean, Jean.

JEAN. She's our friend and you're just gonna write her off like that?

MAUDE. (*Crossing to Jean.*) Now, Jean, there's no reason to get worked up.

EDITH. I'm not writing off anyone!

JEAN. You might as well be. You don't know what's happened to her...what's happened to any of them!

DR. STEVENS. (*Crossing to Jean.*) Of course, Jean. I'm sure Edith didn't mean anything by it.

EDITH. I'm just trying to be realistic, that's all.

JEAN. Realistic? (*Laughs ruefully.*) That's rich. If we're being real, then just admit you don't know what you're talkin' about.

EDITH. What I'm talking about is the Japanese Imperial Army. We've all heard the stories about how they treat their prisoners. And they're not exactly known for being particularly modern in their views about women.

JEAN. (*In tears.*) That doesn't mean she's dead! (*Turns into Dr. Stevens's shoulder and cries.*)

EDITH. (*Softens, putting her hand on Jean's shoulder; after a beat.*) Laura's strong and smart. If anyone can get out of there alive, it's Laura.

JEAN. (*Looks up, wiping her eyes.*) That's all I was trying to say.

JOSIE. Why don't we switch gears...focus on something a little more...pleasant.

MILLIE. (*Incredulously.*) Pleasant? (*Swatting away a mosquito.*) We're out in the middle of the jungle, covered in dirt, and sweating the rouge right off our cheeks. If you can find anything pleasant about that then it really *will* be Christmas!

HELEN. Christmas! That's it! We should have a big Christmas feast.

EDITH. Okay, *now* who's not being realistic?

SALLY. I love your enthusiasm, Helen, but have you seen our food stores? (*Crosses over to a crate and pulls out a can.*) Canned corn beef hash. (*Picks up a bag of rice.*) Rice. (*Looks in the crate.*) That's pretty much it.

HELEN. We might not have a lot of government-issued food, but we can go find our own! (*Looks around.*) Who here knows how to fish?

EDITH. (*Raises her hand.*) I do!

HELEN. Great. Edith and Millie, there's some bamboo fishing poles lying over there. See what you can find in that river we saw on the west side of camp.

MILLIE. (*Wrinkling her nose, squeamish.*) Do I have to touch the fish? Because I'm not okay with that.

EDITH. (*Chuckling.*) Don't worry, Millie, I'll handle the fish for you.

MILLIE. Thank goodness.

Maude exits with Edith, picking up bamboo fishing poles on the way.

HELEN. Sally, Josie, see if you can find any mangoes or papayas for dessert.

SALLY. Will do, sis.

Sally exits with Josie.

HELEN. Dr. Stevens—

DR. STEVENS. (*Interrupting.*) It's a great idea you've got there, Helen, but I've already got a job. (*Indicates the patients.*)

HELEN. Right. The patients...

JEAN. Don't worry, Helen. You take care of the meal. (*Smiles at Dr. Stevens.*) I'll help Dr. Stevens.

DR. STEVENS. (*Smiles back.*) Thanks, Jean.

Jean and Dr. Stevens work on the soldiers.

GEORGE. What about us?

HELEN. What about you?

HENRY. How can we help?

HELEN. Do you know how to fold napkins into the shape of a Christmas tree?

GEORGE and HENRY. Nope.

HELEN. Well, you're about to learn.

Helen takes napkins out of food crate and starts to cross to George. Before she can reach him, Maude stops her and takes the napkins out of her hands.

MAUDE. You know, Nurse Bailey, we really ought to save those napkins to use for patient care in case we run out of supplies.

HELEN. I know, Nurse Daniels, but with everything going on out there...Manila, Laura...the war...I just think we all need a little bit of home out here in the jungle. And those napkins, well for me, that's a little bit of home.

MAUDE. (*Sighs.*) Very well.

Maude hands the napkins back to Helen and crosses to a soldier. Helen hands napkins to George and Henry and takes one for herself.

HELEN. (*Demonstrating.*) You start by folding the upper right like so...

Helen demonstrates and George and Henry attempt to fold napkins as Josie enters, carrying a telegram.

JOSIE. (*Holds out a telegram to Maude.*) Nurse Daniels, this telegram just came.

MAUDE. Thank you, Nurse Allen. (*Takes telegram and reads it.*)

JOSIE. (*Trying to read over her shoulder.*) Well? What does it say?

MAUDE. Our rations have been cut.

Dr. Stevens looks at Maude.

JOSIE. Not again!

DR. STEVENS. *(Crossing to Maude.)* Let me see that. *(Takes telegram and reads.)* We're down to two meals a day...fifteen hundred calories. *(Looks at Maude.)* That's not enough calories...not out here in the heat, not with the kind of work we do.

MAUDE. I know. *(Points at crate.)* But that's all we've got until relief comes through with more supplies.

JOSIE. Can we wait to tell everyone until after dinner? I just...I mean...it's Christmas.

MAUDE. *(Thinks, then smiles.)* That it is, Josie. That it is. *(Tears up the telegram.)* Of course we can wait.

Edith and Millie enter, each carrying a fishing pole on which a fish dangles.

EDITH. Look what we've got!

HELEN. Great job, ladies!

MILLIE. And more importantly, I touched a fish!

HELEN. *(Chuckling.)* Good for you, Millie.

MILLIE. It wasn't too bad at all.

EDITH. *(Rolling her eyes.)* You were screaming the entire time.

MILLIE. It was slimy...and has eyeballs!

All laugh as Sally enters, carrying a couple of papayas or mangoes.

SALLY. Will this do?

HELEN. *(Smiles.)* That'll do just fine, Sally.

Helen looks around at assembled food as Laura enters, her clothing filthy and torn. She looks exhausted. Initially she is not seen by the nurses or soldiers.

I think this is going to be a fine Christmas dinner. All we need is a fire and—

JEAN. *(Interrupting, calling out excitedly.)* Laura!

HELEN. Yes, of course it would be great if Laura were here, but—

JEAN. She's here!

Jean runs over to Laura and nearly tackles her, giving her a hug. All run over to Laura as well.

EDITH. Laura, what are you doing here?

MILLIE. We heard Manila was taken over by the Japanese! How did you get away?

SALLY. Are the other Navy nurses here too?

Josie pushes through the assembled group to give Laura some room.

JOSIE. I know everyone's excited, but let's give Laura a little breathing room.

LAURA. Thanks, Josie. *(Smiling at Jean and others.)* And thanks to the rest of you for such a warm reception. *(Growing darker.)* I really needed that after the last few days.

JEAN. *(Leading Laura to a seat.)* Here, sit down and tell us everything.

LAURA. *(Sits, shakily.)* I don't know if I'm ready to talk about everything just yet.

HELEN. *(Gently.)* Maybe you could just tell us how you got here?

LAURA. *(Sighs.)* Well, it was like this...two days after you all left for Bataan, MacArthur declared Manila an open city, pulling out the rest of the troops and giving the Japanese easy access to take over.

MILLIE. The cad!

MAUDE. *(Upset.)* Nurse Plinders! That's no way to talk about an Army general.

MILLIE. Sorry, Nurse Daniels.

LAURA. In truth, MacArthur didn't have much of a choice. The Japanese were raining down on us pretty hard. He wanted to save Manila further destruction and devastation.

HELEN. What happened to the nurses at Clark Field once the Japanese took over?

LAURA. I...I don't know. I escaped just before Manila fell.

EDITH. Escaped!

LAURA. Yes. When all seemed lost I gathered a few of my things and crept out into the early morning light. A Filipino farmer had

just dropped off some goods and was heading back to his farm, so I crept into the back of his truck and made it out the city just in time.

GEORGE. Wow! Laura's like a real-life superhero!

LAURA. The nurses I left behind are the real superheroes. (*Overcome with emotion.*) I can't imagine what challenges they're facing right now.

DR. STEVENS. (*Patting Laura on the shoulder.*) You can't dwell too much on that, Laura. What's important right now is that you're safe.

LAURA. (*Patting Dr. Stevens's hand.*) And I'm so grateful for that.

JOSIE. Well this definitely calls for celebration!

HELEN. And what better way to celebrate than with a Christmas feast!

LAURA. But Christmas is already over...and a feast? On Army rations? (*Chuckles.*) Wait till Frank hears about this!

JEAN. (*Remembering.*) Oh! Speaking of Frank... (*Takes the letter out of her pocket and gives it to Laura.*) This came for you.

Laura opens letter and starts to read while around her, nurses are preparing to celebrate. Jean watches Laura as Laura's face falls.

LAURA. Oh, dear.

JEAN. What? What is it?

LAURA. Now that the U.S. has declared war on Germany, Frank's unit is going into battle. (*Turning to Jean with tears in her eyes.*) I can't lose him Jean. I just can't!

JEAN. (*Hugging Laura.*) He'll be alright Laura. I just know he will. Everything will be alright...

Lights slowly fade into a spotlight on the radio as it gets louder, Christmas music changing suddenly into a news bulletin.

RADIO VOICE. The U.S. has officially entered war! Only hours after German Chancellor Adolf Hitler declared war on the United States, President Roosevelt made a declaration of his own, engaging the United States military in the war in Europe. Meanwhile, war continues to rage between the United States and Japan on the tropical island of Luzon in the Philippines. Having declared Manila an open

city, General MacArthur has consolidated his troops on the Bataan Peninsula where undoubtedly they will fight hard against the invading Japanese, who, in the early months of 1942 under orders from General Homma, continue to push their way down the East Road to Limay, resulting in hundreds of newly wounded U.S. soldiers every day. As for the Army nurses caring for our troops out in the jungle, help is on the way! General MacArthur has called for reinforcements of troops and supplies. So hang in there ladies! Relief is coming!

End of news bulletin music plays. Jean enters into the spotlight and turns off the radio as lights come up on scene. It's several months later in April 1942. The sounds of the jungle can be heard around them, along with occasional explosions heard in the distance. The nurses are ragged, their clothing dirty, their faces tired and worn. Helen, Sally, Millie, Josie, and Laura are attending to soldiers. George is sitting up, feeling better. Henry walks using a wood walking stick, like a cane. Edith is lying on one of the cots/pallets, obviously ill. Other nurses and soldiers can also be present. If so, soldiers are lying/sitting on cots/pallets and nurses are attending to them.

JEAN. (*Angrily, just after turning off the radio.*) Relief my—

EDITH. (*Interrupting.*) Jean! That's no way to talk in front of the men.

JEAN. You're starting to sound just like Maude, you know that, Edith?

EDITH. Well, I—

Maude enters with Dr. Stevens, unseen by Jean.

JEAN. (*Interrupting.*) If Maude tells me to behave like a lady one more time I'm gonna give her a piece of my mind!

MAUDE. (*Stiffly.*) Thanks for the heads up, Perkins.

JEAN. (*Snapping to attention.*) Nurse Daniels! I didn't see you there.

DR. STEVENS. How are the patients doing today?

MILLIE. Which ones? We've got so many it's getting hard to keep track.

JOSIE. (*Crossing to Maude and wiping her hands on a towel.*) No kidding. Do you know our surgical teams performed one hundred

and eighty-seven surgeries in the last twenty-four hours? It's a wonder we haven't amputated the wrong leg at this point!

MAUDE. That's why our charting is so important. (*Picks up a clipboard and holds up a piece of paper with a large chunk missing.*) What happened to this soldier's chart?

SALLY. It's the humidity. We can't keep anything dry anymore... papers, bandages, wounds...

DR. STEVENS. We have to do our best. If we can't keep the soldiers' wounds dry they can develop infections, become septic...

HELEN. What about banana leaves?

DR. STEVENS. What about them?

Helen picks up a nearby banana leaf to show Maude and Dr. Stevens.

HELEN. The leaves of a banana plant are waxy, so they won't adhere to the wound, but they are also impervious to water, so they can keep the wound dry and allow the infection to drain.

MAUDE. (*Takes the leaf.*) That could work! (*Turns to Dr. Stevens and shows him the leaf.*) What do you think, Dr. Stevens?

DR. STEVENS. (*Looking at the leaf.*) I think it's brilliant! Good thinking, Helen!

HELEN. (*Beaming.*) Happy to help, Dr. Stevens.

DR. STEVENS. (*To Maude.*) Let's assemble a team to harvest as many banana leaves as we can find.

HENRY. I'll help!

DR. STEVENS. Thank you, Henry.

Henry exits with Dr. Stevens.

GEORGE. (*Stands, a little shaky.*) Me, too!

LAURA. I think you'd better stay here and rest up, George.

Laura tries to help George sit back down, but he resists.

GEORGE. No! I'm sick and tired of laying here, watching everyone around me working themselves ragged. The nurses are starting to fall ill themselves! (*Crosses to Edith.*) Look at Edith! (*Picks Edith's book up from the ground near her cot.*) The poor girl came here to help people and now she's so sick she can't even read!

EDITH. (*Weakly, tries to sit up.*) It's only a bout of dysentery. I'll be better in a few days, I promise. (*Falls back down into a lying position.*)

GEORGE. I've got to do something!

SALLY. You are doing something, George. You're healing so that you can get back out there and fight for our country.

GEORGE. I'm ready to fight now!

JOSIE. Not now, George, but maybe soon. (*Takes the book and guides George to Edith's bedside.*) But you know what you can do?

GEORGE. What?

JOSIE. (*Hands George the book.*) Here.

GEORGE. What am I supposed to do with this?

JOSIE. Read to Edith...give her a little comfort. That's something nurses like Edith do for their patients every day.

GEORGE. (*Smiles.*) I can do that.

George sits down next to Edith and mimes reading quietly as a louder explosion is heard. All react and look in the direction of the noise.

HELEN. That was a loud one.

MAUDE. It sounded awfully close. I'd better see if there's been any communication from higher up.

Maude exits.

JEAN. These bombs are fraying my nerves.

LAURA. I worry about Frank when I hear them.

MILLIE. Every time one of those bombs hit, my face squishes up like this. (*Squishes up her face.*) Do you know how many wrinkles I'm getting? By the time I get to Hollywood I'm going to be stuck playing wrinkled old ladies instead of beautiful young ingenues!

A few chuckle.

SALLY. (*Serious.*) The bombs and gunfire are getting louder. By the sound of things I wouldn't be surprised if the Japanese will be here in Bataan in a matter of days.

LAURA. (*Points to red cross banner.*) Will that red cross do us any good once the Japanese arrive?

HELEN. (*Crossing to banner.*) That's an international symbol that gives protection to the wounded and sick. They have to leave us alone, don't they?

JOSIE. We can hope, but this is war, Helen. And everyone knows, all's fair in love and war.

JEAN. If that's true, then I don't care what Maude says. I'm going to finally tell Dr. Stevens how I feel about him.

EDITH. (*Sitting up halfway.*) Ha! I'll believe that when I see it.

JEAN. I will. Next time I see him.

LAURA. (*Putting an arm around Jean.*) We love you, Jean, but everyone knows you're all talk when it comes to men.

JEAN. That's not true! (*Crossing her arms.*) I'm only half talk! Besides, when it comes to Dr. Stevens... (*Uncrosses her arms, suddenly shy, looks down.*) It's...well, it's different. (*Looks up at Laura.*) I think I might actually love him.

LAURA. (*Hugs Jean.*) Aw, that's wonderful, Jean!

JEAN. Is it though? You should know better than anyone, Laura... out here, with the sickness and the death...with bombs exploding and the enemy at our door...this is no place for love.

LAURA. (*Grasping Jean by both arms and looking her in the eye.*) This is exactly the place for love, Jean. That's the only thing that's going to get us through this! Knowing what's waiting on the other side. Knowing what it is we're fighting for. It's in everything we do as a nurse...in every wound we clean, in every limb we set. It's at the core of who we are. Can't you see, that Jean? There's nothing more important in this world than love, so if it you can't find it here... (*Looks around.*) Amongst the fear and the chaos and the uncertainty...well, I don't know where you'll find it.

JEAN. I guess you're right. (*Takes a deep breath.*) I'll...I'll tell him when he gets back.

LAURA. (*Smiles.*) That's my girl.

A loud explosion is heard. All react.

HELEN. That was close.

SALLY. The Japanese will be here before we know it.

Maude enters, holding a telegram.

MAUDE. We have a telegram from General Wainwright.

JOSIE. What is it?

MAUDE. (*Reading.*) April 9, 1942. The fall of Bataan at the hands of enemy forces is now a certainty. It has been determined that the women in service are particularly vulnerable and must evacuate. Effective immediately, all U.S. Army nurses are to depart Camp Limay for the Malinta Tunnels on the island of Corregidor in anticipation of the fall of Bataan to enemy forces. Upon arrival in Corregidor, a small number of nurses will have the opportunity to board a Navy PBV seaplane en route to Australia.

SALLY. What about the soldiers? What does the telegram say about them?

HELEN. Yeah, you just said the nurses were to evacuate...you didn't say anything about the patients in our care.

MAUDE. (*Sighs, then looks at Helen solemnly.*) That's because they're not going.

JOSIE. Not going!

MAUDE. General Wainwright's orders apply only to the females in service...the nurses of Bataan.

MILLIE. So we're just supposed to leave them all behind...these men we've been caring for all this time? Men like Henry and George?

MAUDE. I'm afraid so.

EDITH. (*Taking George's arm.*) Oh, George!

GEORGE. (*Patting her hand.*) It's alright, Edith. I'll be okay.

EDITH. (*Patting the book in George's hand.*) I want you to keep this.

GEORGE. Your copy of *The Jungle Book*? I can't do that. It's your favorite. (*Tries to give it to her.*)

EDITH. Finish reading it. Then when I see you again we can discuss how it ends.

GEORGE. Okay. (*Looks down at the book sadly, then at Edith.*)

JEAN. What about Dr. Stevens? Surely he can come with us?

MAUDE. I'm afraid not.

JEAN. (*Anguished, to Laura.*) I never got to tell him! (*Buries her face in Laura's shoulder, crying.*)

MAUDE. I need to send a list of nurses who would like the opportunity to be removed from duty here in the Philippines and be posted in Australia.

SALLY. Are you saying we could leave this war behind? Go to Australia where it's safer? Where bombs aren't exploding all around us? Where men aren't dying every day?

MAUDE. That's exactly what I'm saying. I need to know which of you are going with me to Corregidor and who wants to leave this war behind and go to Australia instead.

All are quiet for a moment as they consider.

JOSIE. Nurse Daniels?

MAUDE. Yes, Nurse Allen?

JOSIE. (*Steps forward in a military-like fashion.*) I'm going with you. (*Salutes.*)

MILLIE. (*Steps forward in a military-like fashion.*) Me too. (*Salutes.*)

JEAN. (*Wiping her eyes.*) If Dr. Stevens is stuck in this war then so am I. (*Steps forward in a military-like fashion.*) I'm going with you. (*Salutes.*)

LAURA. I'd like to think that if my Frank ever needs help, there's a nurse like me, ready and waiting. (*Steps forward in a military-like fashion.*) I'm going too. (*Salutes.*)

HELEN. (*Steps forward in a military-like fashion.*) Count me in.

EDITH. (*Tries to get up.*) Me too.

MAUDE. (*Helping Edith lay back down.*) Thank you, Nurse Webb, but you just rest for now. (*Smiles.*) I'll make sure everyone knows you're with us.

HELEN. (*To Sally.*) Well, Sally, what about you? Are you with us too?

SALLY. (*Thinks, then smiles.*) You promised me adventure, Helen. (*Crosses to Helen and takes her arm.*) I guess I'd better see where this adventure takes me. (*Salutes.*) I'm in.

MAUDE. (*Smiles.*) Very well. I'll radio transport and let them know the nurses of Bataan are ready to make their way to Corregidor.

Maude exits. All nurses begin to pack up items or tend to patients. Sally turns to Helen.

SALLY. We're going to be alright, won't we Helen?

HELEN. It's just like Mamma says...as long as we're together, everything is going to be just fine.

SALLY. *(Looking Helen in the eye.)* Promise?

Helen pulls Sally into an embrace, so she can't see Helen's worried face.

HELEN. I promise.

The sound of distant bombing and bullets continue as lights fade on scene.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene 1

At rise: courtyard of the Santo Tomas Internment Camp, July 2, 1942. It is a place where elements of society and the world at large collide...Santo Tomas is a university of higher education and opportunity, now being used as a prison. There is barbed wire and ramshackle shanties made of lumber, blankets, palm branches, etc., awkwardly hung up. But there are also palm trees and other tropical plants. At the start, the scene is in darkness except for a spotlight on radio playing big band music. A center structure that looks like a small wooden stage is center. A moment later the music changes to a news bulletin.

RADIO VOICE. Our ladies in the Pacific are on the move again! After evacuating from the peninsula in Bataan to the island fortress of Corregidor known as “The Rock,” U.S. Army nurses in the Philippines once more found themselves creating a hospital where there once was none. Deep underground, in the corridors of the Malinta Tunnels, the nurses cared for their patients day and night, undeterred by the Japanese bombs that rained from the sky overhead. After their ordeal in the jungles of Bataan, these cool concrete catacombs were just what the doctor ordered! But the safety and seclusion of the nurses wouldn’t last for long. Less than a month after their arrival, Corregidor fell to Japanese forces under the command of General Masaharu Homma and the nurses stationed at The Rock were taken into captivity and confined to the Santo Tomas Internment camp in downtown Manila. These brave women have now become the largest group of women in U.S. history to be taken as prisoners of war. What will become of these heroic ladies? Only time will tell. We can only hope the Japanese will show them mercy and that they know here at home we’re all anxious for their safe return.

End of news bulletin music plays. Helen enters into spotlight, carrying a suitcase, whose contents are sticking out of every side, as if it has just been ransacked, and twists the dial on the radio. Sad/melancholy jazz music plays lightly in the background. Helen turns to the audience, holding a letter.

HELEN. *(Reading.)* We never expected it to end up like this. Even though we'd come from all over the U.S...big cities, small towns, tiny apartments, clapboard farmhouses...we nurses came to the Philippines looking for our version of the same thing...paradise. And whether that meant exciting adventures or warm sand under our toes, or a light breeze on our face as we rested and relaxed...or even if it meant finding our one true love and dancing under the moonlight as the palm trees swayed...we were sure we'd find it here. And I guess we did...if only for a moment. *(Sighs, darker.)* Now here we are...locked inside these walls, barbed wire surrounding us, our captors cruel. They don't know what to make of us...women in the military.

It's not something the Japanese are familiar with, having no women in their ranks themselves.

For a little while they isolated us in the Convent of Santa Catalina, but today we're moving to the main prison camp located in the university. I'm told the nurses will be working in the prison camp to care for the sick and injured, which is great. Truth is, I can handle the crowded rooms and the lack of food...the jungle prepared us for that. But what I struggle with the most here in Santo Tomas is the boredom. Just give me something to do! Let me use my skills, my training! Let me use these hands to heal, not count off the minutes as they tick by, one after the other in an endless, mind-numbing rhythm. *(Smiles.)* Sally is really coming into her own here, Mamma. When we arrived here in the Philippines she was so scared, so unsure. And now... *(Chuckles.)* I think she's stronger than I am! She's got a bit of a cough right now, but it's nothing to worry about. With thousands of people all crammed in one place we're bound to catch a cold every now and again. I'm taking good care of her. Heck! We're taking care of one another, just the way you taught us. *(Wistfully.)* I hope you and Papa are well. You might want to go ahead and take down that Christmas tree before Papa has a fit. I

don't know how long we'll be in here, and you know Papa. But we can put it up again when Sally and I get home. And if this letter makes it home to you, I want to make sure you're not spending every day worrying about us. It's like you always said...as long as we're together, everything is going to be just fine. Sally and I might not exactly be in paradise, but we're together. And that's all that matters.

Lights change and we are in the courtyard of Santo Tomas. Sally, Millie, Laura, and Jean are standing near a crudely thrown-together shanty. In another area, Maude and Josie are talking to one another, planning a hospital space. Josie has a clipboard with papers on it. Mrs. Jameson, Bill, Ruby, Edwina, and other POWs are also present, playing cards, reading, sleeping, and engaging in other activities. Ruby has the radio. Sally coughs occasionally throughout the scene. Helen looks around.

JEAN. (*Waving her hand.*) Helen! Over here!

Helen crosses to Jean and the rest of the group.

SALLY. What took so long? We've been here since yesterday morning.

HELEN. Who knows? They kept me in holding an extra night but didn't tell me why.

LAURA. (*Shrugs.*) Welcome to Santo Tomas Interment Camp, where you have no rights and the guards can do whatever they want.

MILLIE. (*Indicating Helen's suitcase.*) Looks like they ransacked your suitcase too.

HELEN. Yep. They took all of my jewelry.

LAURA. They took my pens and picture frames.

JEAN. They took the watch right off my wrist! Now tell me how I'm supposed to time heartbeats without my wristwatch?

MILLIE. They took my makeup! (*With an exaggerated cry.*) My precious makeup!

SALLY. Hey, it could be worse. You heard what happened to the soldiers that were left behind in Bataan.

All look down, sadly. Jean starts to cry.

LAURA. (*Consoling Jean.*) You've got to stay strong, Jean. You need

to believe that somewhere Dr. Stevens is safe and one day soon you'll see him again. That's what I'm doing when it comes to Frank.

JEAN. I know. I just...I just wish I'd told him how I felt.

LAURA. You'll tell him when you see him again.

Jean nods at Laura and they embrace as Maude and Josie cross to them.

JOSIE. I think we've found a good location for patient triage over there. *(Indicates where she and Josie just were.)*

MAUDE. We've talked to the guards and the most critical patients will be taken over to the convent, which is being converted into a makeshift hospital.

SALLY. That's great. With nearly four thousand people here in Santo Tomas, we need somewhere to isolate and care for the extremely ill.

JOSIE. But we will still have to do our initial evaluations and many treatments here in camp.

MAUDE. We've chosen a location here in the courtyard that we're calling the clinic. I'm going to need everyone to pitch in to get it up and running as soon as possible.

HELEN. We're happy to help.

MILLIE. Yeah, what else are we gonna do?

JEAN. Sure beats sitting around doin' nothin'.

MAUDE. We'll all take shifts both here in the triage center and at the convent along with the Navy nurses who have been here for a couple of months and the civilian nurses and doctors who are also imprisoned here.

JOSIE. *(Passing out papers from her clipboard.)* I've created a schedule so that everyone knows their shifts.

All nurses look at their schedule.

HELEN. *(To Sally.)* Hey! It looks like we're working at the convent tonight!

SALLY. Great!

MILLIE. And I'm working at the clinic.

JEAN. I see you've got Edith on the schedule. Is she feeling strong enough to work?

Edith enters, smiling.

EDITH. I sure am.

ALL NURSES. (*Excited.*) Edith!

All nurses rush over to Edith and give her a hug, pat her on the back, etc.

EDITH. Hi everyone.

MILLIE. You look so much better, Edith!

EDITH. Thanks, Millie. You look... (*Looks at Millie, scrutinizing.*) different.

MILLIE. They took my makeup! Can you believe that?

EDITH. All of it?

MILLIE. Most of it. (*Pulls a compact out of her pocket.*) I was able to smuggle in this little beauty.

JEAN. Let me see that!

Jean tries to swipe it from her, but Millie pulls it back, quickly.

MILLIE. Nice try, but this baby is mine.

EDITH. Well, you may look different without all your makeup, but you're beautiful, inside and out.

JEAN. I know. It's maddening, isn't it? The rest of us look like a steaming pile of garbage—

LAURA. Hey! Speak for yourself!

JEAN. (*Continuing.*) While Millie over there still looks like a Hollywood starlet, fresh off the red carpet.

MILLIE. Yeah, well, let's hope the casting directors agree with you when we get out of here.

EDITH. *If* we get out of here.

JEAN. (*Sternly.*) Now, don't you go starting that "if" business again, Edith. We've all got to stay strong. We've got to believe that one day soon we'll be home again. (*Turning to Laura.*) Isn't that right?

LAURA. (*Smiles.*) That's right.

EDITH. I'll do my best.

MAUDE. That's all we can do...our best. So get yourself settled and then meet me at the clinic so we can get it set up.

HELEN. Set up with what? (*Holds up her suitcase.*) They took nearly everything we had when we arrived.

JOSIE. The guards give the camp executive committee an allotment of thirty-five cents per person per day to cover food, utilities, medical supplies, sanitation...you name it.

HELEN. Thirty-five cents...that's it?

JOSIE. Yep. And the committee gives us the portion allotted for medical supplies.

Bill looks up and listens as Ruby fiddles with the radio.

HELEN. But where do the supplies come from? It's not like we have companies to order from or stores to shop at.

MILLIE. (*Chuckles.*) You'd be surprised. (*Points offstage over her shoulder.*) I saw a shanty over there that's selling sugar and coffee.

SALLY. I saw one selling tobacco.

JEAN. That's nothin'. I saw a shanty selling toilet paper!

HELEN. Toilet paper! Don't they have enough of that in the bathrooms?

MILLIE. Again...you'd be surprised.

HELEN. But where does all this stuff...this...toilet paper and medical supplies...how does it get inside the camp? After the way we were all searched when we arrived I can't imagine the guards are just letting all this stuff through the gates.

MAUDE. The Japanese have allowed certain Filipino merchants, officially designated, to come in and sell supplies as well as fresh fruit and vegetables, candy, clothes...that sort of thing.

Bill taps Ruby on the shoulder, indicating they should introduce themselves, then stands and crosses to Maude and inserts himself in the conversation. Ruby tucks the radio out of sight and follows.

BILL. If I may... (*Holds out his hand to Helen and others.*) Name's Bill Thompson. (*Indicated Ruby.*) This here's my daughter Ruby. We heard you talking about the Filipino merchants.

RUBY. My dad was eavesdropping. He does that a lot.

SALLY. (*Chuckles.*) Hard not to around here.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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