

ACT I

SETTING/ AT RISE: (An impression of what could be.) MURIEL's memory. "JUST AS THOUGH YOU WERE HERE" plays through a radio. MURIEL enters with stationary and envelopes, wrapped in a ribbon. She loses a ribbon from around the letters and they begin to float around her like butterflies. They circle her, growing, stretching their wings until they envelope the entire stage becoming the backdrop. As they stop, we see on them a large map of the Pacific Theatre of World War II, which perhaps continues to undulate. Different island groups emerge, some of which are circled in ink. Titles of songs from the 1930's and early 1940's emerge alongside in elegant, yet readable script. There is on SR a typical kitchen table and 2 chairs, along with a radio. On SL is a table and chair as you'd find on a US Navy ship for a young officer, and a small radio. This area is now darkened. Between is the space reserved for memories and dreams.)

(Music plays over the radio. ARLEN approaches.)

ARLEN

I picked up these two maps today...  
(MURIEL doesn't hear him over the radio.)  
I said I picked up...  
(ARLEN sneaks up behind MURIEL and the two begin dancing. After a few moments, ARLEN stops, and turns off the radio.)

MURIEL

Oh...I love that song.

ARLEN

But you love me more, right?  
(Short pause.)  
Right?

MURIEL

I don't know...that's a really good song.

ARLEN

I picked up these two Esso maps of the Pacific. See, it's all on one big page.

MURIEL

So you don't think this could be a slip of the lip?

ARLEN (laughs)

What's there? Songs. Unless the Japs make their way to Lanesboro and kidnap you in the middle of the night, it's perfectly safe. It's pure obfuscation.

MURIEL

Obfuscation? My goodness, were did you learn such language?

ARLEN

I'm a US Marine, my dear, and a college graduate to boot. Get it?

MURIEL

Oh, I got it all right.

ARLEN

You seem very sure of yourself, my girl. Perhaps you're a spy. Are you working for the Emperor? I think I should conduct an interrogation.

MURIEL

I didn't realize you were trained in interrogations.

ARLEN

Konichiwa.

MURIEL

What?

ARLEN

Did you ever travel to Hawaii prior to 7 December, 1941?

MURIEL

Oh, for heaven's sake...

ARLEN

Answer the question.

MURIEL

Can you see me on the beaches of Hawaii in this?

ARLEN

What do you know about the strength and location of the Japanese forces?

MURIEL

Arlen, we don't have time...

ARLEN

Are you receiving coded messages from Tokyo?

MURIEL

You got me. My real uncle is the emperor.

ARLEN

I knew it! It is time for torture.

(ARLEN's "torture" of MURIEL becomes sensuous. The next two lines are overlapping.)

MURIEL

Stop that. Arlen. Stop it.

ARLEN

Admit it! You are a spy!

MURIEL

That's enough.

ARLEN

You have beautiful eyes. Maybe you're telling the truth, but I don't think I can let you go just yet.

MURIEL

We need to finish this, or I'll never know where you are once you're gone.

ARLEN

Trying to get rid of me?

MURIEL

Not on your life. But by this time tomorrow...

ARLEN

Right. You're right. Shall we start with the obvious? Hawaii?

MURIEL

Fine. Give me an example of your obfuscation skills.

ARLEN

Well...I would write something like...

MURIEL

With that beat up old pen?

ARLEN

My pen is fine. I've had this pen since high school.

MURIEL

It leaves big globs of ink all over. Look at this.

ARLEN

Well, I haven't any money left after buying this ring. So with my beat up old pen, I'll write letters with obfuscations like...My Dearest, most picturesque wife whom I love more than anything in the whole wide world and whose beauty outshines the...

MURIEL

We don't have the time to fool around.

ARLEN

I'll write something like... "I'll be listening to 'White Christmas' when I get the chance."

MURIEL

So Hawaii is "White Christmas?" I like that.

ARLEN

And if I say something like... "Our radio station hasn't played 'White Christmas' at all this week," it would mean that there's no news about going to Hawaii.

MURIEL

Don't write things like that. Don't even mention "White Christmas" until you're on your way. So write it down...Hawaii. "White Christmas." Write it down.

ARLEN

I've got it.

MURIEL

Take your beat up old high school pen and write it down. There are so many islands. Do we name them all?

ARLEN

Let's do the major chains at least.

MURIEL

Don't you have an idea where you'll be?

ARLEN

It depends on how the war goes. Let's see...Japan should be "Deep Purple."

MURIEL

You think you'll be in Japan?

ARLEN

It's possible.

MURIEL

We should use "String of Pearls."

ARLEN

How about the Philippine Islands?

MURIEL

All right. And Australia should be "Alice Blue Gown."

ARLEN

And Guadalcanal should be "Red Sails in the Sunset."

MURIEL

Guadalcanal?

ARLEN

It makes sense to name it. Plenty of Marines there already.

MURIEL

Guadalcanal. "Red Sails..." What do you think these islands look like? A lot of sandy beaches and palm trees, I suppose.

ARLEN

And volcanic rock. Most of these islands were formed by volcanoes.

MURIEL

What's this name? It's awfully small print.

ARLEN

Those are the Marshall Islands.

MURIEL

For those, let's use..."Over the Rainbow."

ARLEN

And the Marianas Islands can be "Night and..."

MURIEL

Wait...what about me? Don't I get to use any code words?

ARLEN

You can use "In the Mood" when you write about our time in San Francisco.

MURIEL

Oh, is that right? I was thinking about what I should use for Lanesboro. "Walking by the River?"

ARLEN

I was thinking "My Devotion."

MURIEL

Perfect.