

the whole fifteen miles just so Wykowski would hate me more . . . But maybe Toomey was right. If nobody obeys orders, I'll bet we wouldn't have more than twelve or thirteen soldiers fighting the war . . . We'd have headlines like, "Corporal Stanley Leiberman invades Sicily" . . .

(*Lights off on EUGENE. Lights up on barracks. ARNOLD enters from latrine, EUGENE goes to his locker.*)

EUGENE. (*continued*) Hey, Arnold, it was incredible. You missed it. We were in the swamps up to our necks. There were water snakes and big lizards that crawled up your pants and swooping swamp birds that swooped down and went right for your eyeballs . . . What's wrong, Arnold? . . . Arnold? . . .

ARNOLD. Leave me alone!

EUGENE. What is it? Are you sick?

ARNOLD. Get away from me. You're like all the rest of them. I hate every God damn one of you.

EUGENE. Hey, Arnold, I'm your friend. I'm your buddy. You can talk to me.

ARNOLD. (*sits up, looks around*) . . . I'm getting out. I'm leaving in the morning. I'm going to Mexico or Central America till after the war . . . I will not be treated like dirt, like a maggot. I'm not going to help defend a country that won't even defend its own citizens . . . Bastards!

EUGENE. Because you pulled latrine duty? We all have to pull latrine duty. You have to adjust . . . It's all a game, Arnold. Only it's their ball and their rules. And they know the game better than we do because they've been playing it since Valley Forge.

ARNOLD. . . . I was in the latrine alone. I spent four hours cleaning it, on my hands and knees. It looked bet-

Arnold #1

- Start

ter than my mother's bathroom at home. Then these two non-coms come in, one was the cook, that three hundred pound guy and some other slob, with cigar butts in their mouths and reeking from beer . . . They come in to pee only instead of using the urinal, they use one of the johns, both peeing in the same one, making circles, figure-eights. Then they start to walk out and I say, "Hey, I just cleaned that. Please flush the johns." And the big one, the cook, says to me, "Up your ass, rookie," or some other really clever remark . . . And I block the doorway and I say, "There's a printed order on the wall signed by Captain Landon stating the regulations that all facilities must be flushed after using" . . . And I'm requesting that they follow regulations, since I was left in charge, and to please flush the facility . . . And the big one says to me, "Suppose you flush it, New York Jew Kike," and I said my ethnic heritage notwithstanding, please flush the facility . . . They look at each other, this half a ton of brainless beef and suddenly rush me, turn me upside down, grab my ankles and—and—and they lowered me by my feet with my head in the toilet, in their filth, their poison . . . all the way until I couldn't breathe . . . then they pulled off my belt and tied my feet on to the ceiling pipes with my head still in their foul waste and tied my hands behind my back with dirty rags, and they left me there, hanging like a pig that was going to be slaughtered . . . I wasn't strong enough to fight back. I couldn't do it alone. No one came to help me . . . Then the pipe broke and I fell to the ground . . . It took me twenty minutes to get myself untied . . . Twenty minutes! . . . But it will take me the rest of my life to wash off my humiliation. I was degraded. I lost my dignity. If I stay, Gene, if they put a gun in my hands, one night, I swear to God, I'll kill them both . . . I'm not a murderer.

Arnold #1

continue

Arnold #1

BILOXI BLUES

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I don't want to disgrace my family . . . But I have to get out of here . . . Now do you understand?

stop

EUGENE. But you can't go AWOL. They'll catch you. They have agents all over the world . . . You'll get back at them one day. Don't you believe in justice?

ARNOLD. . . . You're so damn naive, Eugene.

(*WYKOWSKI and SELRIDGE come out of the latrine in their underwear, carrying towels, toothbrushes and toothpaste.*)

WYKOWSKI. (*scratching*) I got a hundred and twelve God damn mosquito bites.

SELRIDGE. (*shivers*) I pulled twelve leeches off me. I pulled one off near my crotch, it wasn't a leech. Maybe I pulled something else off. (*He gets into bed, still shivering. CARNEY and HENNESEY come out in their underwear, towels.*)

CARNEY. I heard a top secret rumor today. I'm not supposed to repeat it.

WYKOWSKI. What is it?

CARNEY. I can get in trouble if it gets out.

WYKOWSKI. No one's gonna talk. What is it?

CARNEY. I hear they're getting ready to invade Europe and Japan on the same day.

HENNESEY. Where'd you hear that?

CARNEY. On the radio. It was one of them small stations.

EUGENE. Why on the same day?

CARNEY. Surprise attack. You hit them both at dawn. Then they don't have enough time to warn each other.

EUGENE. Hey, Carney. When it's dawn in Europe, it's a day later in Japan. They don't have dawn at the same time. Japan could read about it in their newspapers.