

ARNOLD. Wait a minute. (*As WYKOWSKI extends book, ARNOLD snatches it from his hand.*) I think I deserve to hear *my* life story.

EUGENE. Arnold, I beg you. Don't read it. They're my private thoughts and if you take them, you steal from me.

ARNOLD. I gather then it's unflattering. Don't you know me by now, Gene? I can't be unflattered. I'm past it . . . However, if you don't want me to read it, I won't read it. But I don't think we'll be able to be truly honest with each other from this moment on.

EUGENE. (*looks at him*) . . . Put it back when you're through. (*He gets up and walks out of the room. ARNOLD opens the book and starts to read to himself.*)

WYKOWSKI. Don't we get to hear it?

ARNOLD. Sure, Kowski. This is what we're fighting the war about, isn't it? (*He reads.*) "Arnold Epstein is truly the most complex and fascinating man I've ever met and his constant and relentless pursuit of truth, logic and reason fascinates me in the same proportion as his obstinacy and unnecessary heroics drive me to distraction. But I love him for it. In the same manner that I love Joe DiMaggio for making the gesture of catching a long fly ball to center seem like the last miracle performed by God in modern times. But often I hold back showing my love and affection for Arnold because I think he might misinterpret it. It just happens to be my instinctive feeling—that Arnold is homosexual, and it bothers me that it bothers me." (*He closes the book. He looks at the others who are all staring at him.*) . . . Do you see why I find life so interesting? Here is a man of my own faith and background, potentially intelligent and talented, who in six weeks has come to the brilliant conclusion that a cretin like Wykowski is going to win the Medal of Honor and that I, his most esteemed and dearest friend,

Arnold #2

start

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BILOXI BLUES

is a fairy. (*He tosses the book on EUGENE's bunk.*)
This is a problem worthy of a Talmudic scholar. Good-
night, fellas . . . It is my opinion that no one gets a wink
of sleep tonight.

5 top

(*Light up on the steps outside the barracks. A bare light
bulb hangs above. EUGENE sits on the steps, smok-
ing a cigarette and looking in the depths of despair.
After a few moments, DON CARNEY comes out, leans
against the post and lights up a cigarette.*)

CARNEY. . . . Did she really give you a second one for
free? (*There is a moment's silence.*)

EUGENE. Listen, I'm sorry about what I wrote in the
book. I didn't mean it the way it sounded.

CARNEY. Forget about it. You don't really know me
anyway.

EUGENE. No. I suppose I don't.

CARNEY. . . . Is that what you think? That I'm some-
one who can't be counted on?

EUGENE. I don't know. You're just somebody who can
never make up his mind. You say, "Let's go eat Chinese
food." We walk in and order and then you say, "No, let's
go get some burgers" . . . We play basketball and you
never take a shot. You always pass off to somebody.

CARNEY. Because I'm not a good shooter.

EUGENE. You're as good as the rest of us. You just
think about it too long. Then it's too late to take the
shot . . .

CARNEY. And that's why I can't be counted on?

EUGENE. I wasn't writing about peacetime. I'm sure
you're very dependable in peacetime. But we're at war.
We're going to be fighting for our lives soon. I mean,
somebody throws a grenade into your foxhole, you don't