

THE LAST BATTLESHIP

by

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Based on a true story

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BLACK:

SUPER: "Based on a true story."

FADE IN:

EXT. WIDE SHOT - THE PACIFIC - DAWN

The vast Allied Fifth Fleet: 1300 vessels from aircraft carriers down to PT boats. Zoom in on destroyer, USS Laffey.

SUPER: "April 7, 1945. Okinawa."

24 year-old Naval intelligence officer Lt. JG (Junior Grade) SOL LEVINE, skinny, oversized glasses, Jewfro short and slicked down, leans over the railing, watching the RISING SUN.

Nearby, a machine-gun manned by seaman BOONE, a 19 year old trying to act like a grown-up.

BOONE

(Memphis drawl)

Hey, Lieutenant Levine. The Japs are waitin' for us in Okinawa. That's the other direction.

SOL

I like this way better. And, Boone, I'm still just a Lieutenant *Junior Grade*.

BOONE

Full looey, JG, you still outrank *me*. Ya know, sir, most folks would rather see where the sumbitch what's gonna blow 'em fulla holes is waitin' for 'em. But you're out here every morning lookin' East. What's that way?

SOL

Massachusetts, Boone.

BOONE

Well, lemme know if you see anything worthwhile. Like a girl. They got them where you come from in Mass-a-two-shits, don't they?

SOL  
Yeah, and they can even speak  
complete sentences. Can they do  
that in Tennessee?

BOONE  
Talkin' ain't what I look for in a  
woman, to tell the truth.

Sol squints. Something is coming out of the sun.

SOL  
(pointing)  
Hey, Boone, what's that?

Boone sees it, too.

BOONE  
(Suddenly serious)  
Oh shit...how many are there?

There are dozens of planes approaching. No, *hundreds*.

BOONE (CONT'D)  
(in awe)  
Kamikazes...

Boone preps his weapon. Sol is transfixed. ALARMS SOUND, men run to battle stations. The sun is blotted out by the sheer number of planes. Anti-aircraft and machine guns OPEN FIRE.

One plane, then another, is shot down. But now the first wave hits. A plane SMASHES into the side of a nearby destroyer. The explosion is deafening, and the cries of the injured are heart-wrenching and terrifying even from a distance. One man, ON FIRE, runs off the edge of the deck, screaming in agony.

Boone blasts an oncoming plane which EXPLODES.

BOONE (CONT'D)  
Got one!!!

A wing from the disintegrating plane cartwheels toward the Laffey and SMASHES into Boone's station, killing him instantly. Sol shields himself from the shrapnel.

Sol sees a plane fly directly toward him, a few feet off the water, in slow-mo. He locks eyes with the pilot who, unexpectedly LANDS THE PLANE in the water just yards from the Laffey. The plane floats peacefully as the battle rages.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER Roberts, 35, grizzled career navy man, shouts orders to a group of seamen launching a skiff.

ROBERTS

Get that Jap and bring him onboard!

He turns to Sol.

ROBERTS (CONT'D)

Mister Levine - You're the spook  
who talks Jap, right?

SOL

I'm in the language corps of Naval  
Intelligence...

ROBERTS

So you get to interrogate this  
sonuvabitch?

Sol nods.

ROBERTS (CONT'D)

Let me inform him of his rights  
under the Geneva Convention first.

SOL

But the Japanese aren't signatories  
to...

ROBERTS

(smiling ominously)  
Now ain't that a shame.

INT. THE BRIG - LATER

A cell with the door ajar.

Naval Intelligence Lt. Green, 29, Ivy League, and Sol stand  
outside the cell. Green nonchalantly observes Sol's  
discomfort as Roberts beats the crap out of the PRISONER, on  
a chair, hands tied behind him. Judging by Roberts' sweat,  
he's been at this awhile. And enjoying every minute.

ROBERTS

(continues hitting)  
You Jap piece of *shit!* Remember  
Pearl *Harbor!?* My brother was on  
the *Arizona!*

SOL

(to Green)  
He's not supposed to interrogate  
prisoners like...*that*. Shouldn't we  
do something?

GREEN

You want to get ahead don't you,  
Levine?

SOL

Yes, but-

GREEN

The first thing a sailor learns is,  
"Don't rock the boat."

Roberts continues his brutal assault.

ROBERTS

So what the *fuck* do you know about  
the *Yamato*!

SOL

(to Green)

What is the *Yamato*?

Green hesitates, looks around.

GREEN

(quietly)

What I'm about to tell you is  
classified...

Sol nods as the savage beating continues in the background  
which he tries hard to ignore.

GREEN (CONT'D)

The *Yamato* is a Nip battleship.  
Bigger, faster, and with longer-  
range guns than anything we ever  
built. Worse, it has a series of  
interlocking valves and  
hermetically sealed compartments.  
That means a torpedo can't sink it.  
A *hundred* torpedoes can't sink it.  
Makes the *Bismarck* look like a  
rubber duck. Set out from Kure a  
few days ago. If it reaches us here  
in Okinawa it could scatter the  
fleet for months - potentially  
change the course of the war. We  
need to find out everything we can.  
Any way we need to.

Roberts socks the prisoner across the face and a TOOTH goes  
flying.

GREEN (CONT'D)

Roberts. Take a break. Let Levine spell you.

ROBERTS

But, Lieutenant. I think he's about ready to break.

Green looks at the battered prisoner - one eye swollen shut, cuts and bruises everywhere.

GREEN

I think he's broken enough, Mister Roberts.

There is a small table with a few towels and a pitcher of water and a glass on a table just inside the cell. Roberts grabs a towel, and steps out, drying off in a celebration of machismo.

ROBERTS

You're up, Levine.

Sol walks into the cell and gets his first good look at the prisoner. A malnourished 16 year old, his face displays youth, stoicism, and terror. Sol pulls up a chair.

THE REST OF THE SCENE IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES:

SOL

What's your name?

The prisoner doesn't respond.

SOL (CONT'D)

Your name, son.

PRISONER

(mechanically)

Nakamura Toho, Airman First Class,  
serial number--

SOL

Wait a minute.

He unties the prisoners hands. The boy looks up in wary gratitude. Sol hands him a towel. The boy wipes off his face. Pulling a silver case out of his shirt pocket, Sol offers a cigarette. The boy shakes his head.

PRISONER

No, my mother forbids...

Sol leans over and picks up the pitcher.

SOL

Water?

He nods "yes". Sol pours him a glass and he gulps it down.

SOL (CONT'D)

So, how long have you been a pilot?

The boy looks up at Roberts, standing just outside the cell, who is locked in a death stare with him.

PRISONER

Nakamura Toho, Airman First--

SOL

Wait a minute...

Sol catches Green's eye. Green nods almost imperceptibly.

GREEN

Mister Roberts...Yesterday, patrol picked up a fisherman - or at least a man who claims to be a fisherman. This morning we were attacked by kamikazes. His story seems to check out, but we need to find out if he's what he says he is or something else. Think you can get to the bottom of it?

ROBERTS

(smiling)

Absolutely, sir.

GREEN

He's in the next compartment.

He points to the door. Roberts exits, smacking his hand on his palm. Green pats him on the back, with a knowing glance at Sol, then sits down again out of the prisoner's direct line of sight.

SOL

That's better now, isn't it?

The prisoner bursts into tears.

SOL (CONT'D)

I know you're afraid but the worst is over. You survived.

PRISONER

(crying openly now)

I took an oath.

(MORE)

PRISONER (CONT'D)  
 To die for the glory of Nippon. For  
 the Emperor. I am...a disgrace.  
 The shame...

SOL  
 (quietly)  
 Remember when you said goodbye to  
 your mother? Did your mother want  
 you to die?

The prisoner looks at Sol like, "How did you know...?"

SOL (CONT'D)  
 I have a mother, too.

He offers the boy a cigarette again. He takes it. Sol lights  
 it. Green looks on intently, taking careful note of Sol's  
 interrogation technique.

SOL (CONT'D)  
 So, where did you grow up?

PRISONER  
 (takes a drag)  
 Hokkaido.

SOL  
 Ah, the home of the hairy Ainu. You  
 don't look that hairy to me.

PRISONER  
 My family is Japanese.  
 (beat)  
 But I have an uncle with a beard  
 like *this*.

He demonstrates a very long one. They LAUGH.

SOL  
 (casually)  
 So, what do you know about the  
 Yamato?

PRISONER  
 Nothing.

He looks at Sol's friendly face.

PRISONER (CONT'D)  
 Except...

He takes a deep drag.



PRISONER (CONT'D)

...that it is a great sea creature from the old stories. It will rise up and defend Nippon. It was built by Admiral Kitayama, wisest of all shipwrights. His genius will defeat the American Navy.

SOL

Have you ever seen this great sea creature?

PRISONER

(proudly)

I flew over it this morning!

SOL

It must have been spectacular!  
Where was that?

Green leans in. There is KNOCK on the door. It opens, revealing an ensign holding a piece of paper.

ENSIGN

(in English, salutes)

Lt. Green.

GREEN

(salutes back, a bit annoyed)

Yes?

ENSIGN

Urgent coded message, Sir.

He hands the paper to Green, salutes and leaves. Green quickly peruses the paper.

GREEN

Mr. Levine. Come with me.

Sol is frustrated but complies. He closes the cell door locking in the prisoner.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

SOL

He was about to tell me where the ship was...

GREEN

I know. Excellent work. But it's not important anymore.

INT. RADIO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A group of seaman are gathered, including the ensign from before, and Roberts, anxiously awaiting to hear the contents of the coded message.

GREEN

Gentlemen...from central command.

He holds up the paper and reads.

GREEN (CONT'D)

"Japanese battleship Yamato,  
attacked by 280 US warplanes.  
Struck by 11 torpedoes and six  
bombs. Sunk with all hands at 14  
hours 23 minutes."

Mad jubilation ensues. Roberts and the radio operator slap each other's backs and madly wave V for Victory fingers, the WWII equivalent of a high five.

SOL

So what do I do now?

GREEN

I suppose you can go back to  
talking to the prisoner about his  
mother.

Roberts snickers. Sol ignores him, addresses Green.

SOL

How old is that kid anyway? 16?  
Maybe? What sort of people would  
send children to do this?

ROBERTS

Japs.

A seaman comes running in, alarmed, and addresses Green.

SEAMAN

Sir.

Green and Sol follow him back.

INT. THE BRIG - A FEW SECONDS LATER

The prisoner has taken the towel and the rope that was used to tie his hands and made a makeshift noose. He is HANGING from a pipe, dead. Sol runs over to the boy, helpless.

SOL

Dammit. I never thought...

GREEN

Relax, Sol. One more we don't have  
to kill.

Off Sol's despair contrasted with the celebration of the  
sailors...

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF POST-WAR TOKYO - DAY

The widespread devastation of the largest city in the world.  
But, zooming in, there is busy reconstruction in the warm  
spring weather. The streets are cluttered and alive. Trolley  
cars roll by. Old men sell hot sweet potatoes from carts  
shouting "Yaki-imo!" Old women wearing kimonos bustle by, as  
do young women in western clothes. There are few young men  
and many of those are missing limbs.

SUPER: "One Year Later. American-occupied Tokyo."

We follow the course of one particular trolley as it wends  
its way through the labyrinthine streets of the capital city.  
We see the Imperial Palace, the Frank-Lloyd Wright-built  
Imperial Hotel, and a host of other landmarks.

SOL (V.O.)

My darling Betty,

How are you adjusting to Boston?

I have been called to headquarters  
to interview for an assignment with  
Admiral Ewell. He's a big shot  
here. This could be the break we've  
been hoping for.

We can finally get married like we  
planned - no matter what your  
mother thinks.

Love, Sol

The trolley stops and Sol steps off. He gazes upward at the  
massive edifice housing the Unified Allied Command  
Headquarters.

INT. OFFICE OF ADM. EWELL - DAY

Naval Intelligence Rear Adm. Ewell, 40s, rotund proud descendant of generations of privileged southern gentry, is reading Sol's file. Behind Ewell, on the wall, is a framed war propaganda cartoon that depicts a buck-tooth Japanese with squinty eyes and round glasses carrying off a naked white woman with the caption "Why We Fight." Also, a small carved figure of Jesus on the cross, looking over Adm. Ewell's shoulder.

Sol stands, at attention, in front of his desk.

EWELL  
(reading)  
Lt. JG Solomon Bernard Levine...

He pronounces it Lee Vine.

EWELL (CONT'D)  
Sit down.

Sol sits in a chair in front of Ewell's desk.

EWELL (CONT'D)  
...Navy Language Institute...Fluent  
in Spanish, French, German,  
Japanese...*Hebrew and Yiddish?*

Ewell looks up.

EWELL (CONT'D)  
On your induction papers, where it  
asked your religion, you wrote  
"none".

SOL  
(shifts uncomfortably)  
Jewish by birth. Secular by choice,  
sir.

Ewell clears his throat.

EWELL  
(reading again)  
Top of your class in engineering  
mathematics at Harvard...

SOL  
Uh, that's economics, sir.

EWELL

Engineering...economics...it's all numbers, is it not?...Says your tour ends soon. Plan to reenlist?

SOL

Depends on what happens with my Navy career, sir. I was hoping to get promoted. I'd like to be able to afford to bring my fiancé over, sir. I mean, once we're married.

Ewell gathers up his considerable girth and stands. He picks up a FILE, comes to the front of the desk, and leans back on it. He hands Sol the file.

EWELL

Son, you're going to be a translator for Admiral Kitayama Hiro. You'll be staying at his house where he's under house arrest. Ever hear of the Yamato?

Sol examines the file.

SOL

Yessir.

EWELL

Of course...Okinawa...Well, Admiral Kitayama was the Jap genius who designed it. He's been interrogated by Naval engineers for a month now. But he won't say a word.

SOL

Sir. How am I supposed to translate for someone who won't speak?

EWELL

That's what you get to figure out. I hear you have some kind of special voodoo with the Japs. You're going to need it. The last translator got so fed up with Adm. Kita-stonewall-yama that he threatened him with physical violence at a rather high decibel level. Still got nothing. Perhaps, your approach will prove to be more efficacious.

SOL

I hope so, sir.

EWELL

What we *do* know about the Yamato is discomfoting. Guns were the largest calibre ever built. Very fast, even had 7 planes. Designed so it couldn't be sunk. But it did. Theory is an inexperienced crew turned the cutoff valves the wrong way. But that doesn't wash with some of the higher-ups. We need to know what really happened and why.

SOL

Sir, with all due respect - as long as it sank, why does it matter?

Ewell takes a deep breath.

EWELL

You know that the war with the Japs is over but the one with Russkies is just beginning. The Navy is basing the design of its post-war fleet on the Yamato. We need to know everything about it. How they could build guns that big, how it could go that fast, and *why did it sink?* We need to know *that, asap*. Or we'll be at the mercy of that Russian bear - and he's coming to eat our lunch any day now. And the answers are in Adm. Kitayama's head.

SOL

So my job is to make him comfortable and draw him out? I might be able do that, sir.

EWELL

Lt. Junior Grade Levine, this is an important assignment. A *career changing* assignment. I suggest you do better than "might". If you do, there is no limit to where you could go. I've been told that you are someone who can get inside this gentleman's comfort zone.

Earn his trust then get him to give up his secrets when his guard is down. You people have a natural skill at that.

SOL  
 (puzzled, softly)  
 You people...?

FLASH of Ewell saying "Hebrew?"

SOL (CONT'D)  
 Ah...

EWELL  
 Are you our man, Mr. Levine?

SOL  
 (saluting)  
 Yessir!

He turns smartly and leaves. Ewell returns to his desk chair. A SIDE DOOR opens. Green - now a Lt. Commander - sticks his head in.

GREEN  
 How did it go?

EWELL  
 You better be right about your co-  
 religionist there, Lt. Cmdr. Green.  
 A lot is riding on one Lt. JG.

GREEN  
 Yes, it is.

INT. TOKYO STATION - DAY

The hustle bustle of thousands of people scurrying for trains and trolleys.

Sol is in a phone booth. Between the noise of the station and the connection he is nearly shouting.

SOL  
 Yes...I'll hold...thank you,  
 operator...Betty...Betty...darling.  
 ..is that you?

INT. LEVINE SHOE - NIGHT

The musty chaos of a shoe wholesaler's office - boxes piled everywhere. BETTY BILLETT, 23, sits at a plain desk with a phone by a large window overlooking Boston's garment district streets. She is pretty, bright, intellectual, cheerful - and very much not Jewish.

BETTY

(playful)

Yes, my handsome and brilliant fiancé. How wonderful to hear your voice! It was so nice of your father to let me use the phone at his office.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

SOL

Pa loves you, hon. They all will once they get to know you.

BETTY

Your sister, Selma, has offered to host a party to introduce me to her Radcliffe friends and some family members I haven't met yet.

SOL

And you found a job?

BETTY

Nothing special - back working at a chem lab. Just something to tide me over until you get home.

She gathers up courage for an awkward subject.

BETTY (CONT'D)

You know, I was talking to Selma about Radcliffe and she said the funniest thing. She asked me if I wanted to go to Radcliffe, too.

A Japanese hot sweet potato STREET VENDOR is wheeling his way past Sol, calling out his wares and making a general racket.

VENDOR

(shouting/singing)

Yaki-imo!

SOL

I couldn't hear you, hon. Something about Sel going to Radcliffe?

BETTY

Not Selma, *me*.

Sol has his finger in his ear to drown out the vendor, but still can't hear her.



SOL  
Wait a minute...

He opens the door to the phone booth and hands the vendor some money, who insists he take the potato.

SOL (CONT'D)  
(to vendor)  
Arigato...arigato..now GO AWAY!

He pops back into the booth and SLAMS the door. He juggles the still-hot potato as he speaks.

SOL (CONT'D)  
Hey, honey, I have some exciting news. The Navy's asked me to interpret for a famous Japanese Admiral who they are debriefing. I can't say much more about it because some of it is classified. Except that if I succeed in this mission, it could mean a *big* promotion.

BETTY  
That's great, Sol.

SOL  
We could finally afford to be together and start a family right away, just like you wanted.

Betty's face is impassive.

SOL (CONT'D)  
Of course, you'd have to move here, but, if all goes well, in no time at all - maybe just a few years, I could get be a Commander - or even a Captain! The Big Cheese, Rear Adm. Ewell, is treating me like "one of the boys". I think this could be the one that changes everything!

BETTY  
That's wonderful, Sol.

Betty looks at a year-long calendar on the wall. June 6 is circled in red. It says "Betty's Birthday" and, in giant letters, SOL COMES HOME.

EXT. WIDE STREET - DAY

SOL (V.O.)  
Well, I better go. This is costing  
a fortune! Love you, darling.

BETTY (V.O.)  
Love you, too.

A TROLLEY rumbles down the avenue. It slows at an intersection and the CONDUCTOR leans out. He looks to the left.

CONDUCTOR  
Hidari ahrai!

He looks to the right.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)  
Migi ahrai!

INT. TROLLEY CAR - DAY

Sol looks out the window, fascinated by every passing detail. By his feet is a DUFFLE BAG.

Another intersection. The Conductor looks to the left.

CONDUCTOR  
Hidari ahrai!

He looks to the right.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)  
Migi ahrai!

Past the intersection, the trolley comes to a stop. Sol hops out carrying the duffle and, reading directions, heads down a narrow alleyway.

EXT. GATE - DAY

Sol approaches a walled compound. Two American guards by the gate. He asks them something we can't hear, they point inside. All salute and Sol enters.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

To Sol's left is a traditional wood and *tatami* (woven reed mat) MAIN HOUSE, spacious by Japanese standards.

To his right, on the far side of the garden, is a tiny GARDENER'S HUT.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An ENSIGN guarding the house and Sol trade salutes. Sol enters the front door, puts down the duffle, and takes off his shoes. He puts on a pair of slippers from a half-dozen pairs in a rack by the door. The shoe-wearing ensign observes this ritual with curiosity.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

This once elegant room is covered with frayed and dirty *tatami*. To one side is a long western-style table and a line of chairs, four occupied by Naval engineers. From time to time, the Americans smoke cigarettes and occasionally drop ashes on the *tatami*.

On the other side sits Admiral KITAYAMA, 60s but seems older, filled with dignity and authority, wearing a traditional robe, sitting on a *zabuton* (sitting pillow) with an ornate CANE on the floor beside him.

Between them is a blank blackboard.

As Sol enters, the engineers rise to greet him including Lt. Cmdr. JOHNSON, PIPE in his mouth, Lt. CRAMER, Lt. JG ARTHUR, and ENSIGN CULVER. Kitayami remains motionless and unresponsive. Johnson puts down his pipe.

JOHNSON

Lt. JG Levine, our new translator,  
welcome. I am Lt. Cmdr. Johnson.

Sol starts to salute.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(offering handshake)

That won't be necessary. We're pretty informal here. This is Lt. Cramer, Lt. JG Arthur, and Chief Warrant Officer Culver. Cramer went to Georgia Tech, like me.

He shakes hands all round. He turns back to Johnson and Cramer.

SOL

I'm a Harvard man, but I've been accused of being a bit of a Ramblin' Wreck myself.

They LAUGH.

Johnson motions him to step outside the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JOHNSON  
The ole' boy there...

He indicates Kitayama, sitting like a statue in the other room.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Well, he's what you might call a tough nut. Hasn't said more than three words this past month. Adm. Ewell is getting antsy - the Russkies this, the Russkies that. He pretty much drove our last translator stark raving - Kitayama that is, not Ewell, although Ewell probably helped. You've got carte blanche to try anything. If you can get him to talk about the *weather* it would be a step forward.

Johnson leads the way back into the room.

INT. GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JOHNSON  
Take a seat.

SOL  
Thank you, sir.

Sol looks under the table and notices all the engineers are wearing shoes. He picks up a chair, carries it over beside Kitayama and puts it down.

JOHNSON  
So, Admiral, we were just discussing the unique metallurgy of the gun-barrels.

Sol leans in toward Kitayama and starts simultaneously translating.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Was this accomplished through extrusion or sintering?

Sol continues translating then gets stuck.

SOL  
 (to Johnson)  
 Excuse me sir, but what are  
 extrusion and sintering?

Kitayama looks up at Sol for the first time and does a double  
 take.

KITAYAMA  
 (startled whisper)  
 Saigo?

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES:

SOL  
 Excuse me?

KITAYAMA  
 (regaining his composure)  
 You resemble an illustrious  
 ancestor of mine: Takamori Saigo.

SOL  
 (bowing his head)  
 It is an honor to meet you, sir.

KITAYAMA  
 (nods more than bows)  
 You are...?

SOL  
 Lt. JG Solomon Levine. Your  
 translator.

Kitayama eyes him skeptically. Sol pushes the chair aside  
 and, instead, takes another *zabuton* from a nearby pile, and  
 sits on it, awkwardly.

KITAYAMA  
 Where did you learn Japanese,  
 Levine-san?

SOL  
 At the Naval Language Institute in  
 Colorado.

KITAYAMA  
 (considers)  
 Oh...And where are you from, Levine-  
 san?

SOL  
Boston, actually Brookline,  
Massachusetts. Why do you ask?

KITAYAMA  
Your accent sounds...  
(can't quite describe it)  
Chinese.

That was not a compliment. But then, Kitayama, using his cane, gets to his feet. He switches to heavily accented but perfect English.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
(in English)  
Gentlemen...Metallurgy...Shall we  
begin?

The engineers are flabbergasted. And impressed.

CRAMER  
(under his breath)  
Now how did Harvard Jewboy do *that*?

INT. GREAT ROOM - LATER

The blackboard has some equations and drawings on it. Kitayama, standing with the help of the cane, continues to speak in English.

KITAYAMA  
...and made the steel alloy using  
this new process.

Johnson, pipe in mouth, sees the Ensign at the door and nods.

JOHNSON  
Thank you, admiral. Our lunch has  
arrived.

The Ensign puts a pile of sandwiches and some bottles of Asahi beer on the table. Johnson motions Sol over.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Take a seat.

The engineers eagerly dive in. Sol looks through the sandwiches.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
They're all ham and cheese. That ok  
with you?

SOL

Sure.

He takes a sandwich and starts eating.

CRAMER

Jap beer tastes like piss, but it beats that o-cha green tea stuff. This country built the most advanced warship in the world but they don't know how to make a decent cup of coffee.

ARTHUR

You can say that again!

JOHNSON

So, Levine, how did you get the old boy to loosen up? Lt. McIntyre was here a month and couldn't get a peep out of him.

SOL

I'm not sure. He says I reminded him of some ancestor.

He looks over at Kitayama who sits by himself, elegantly eating with chopsticks from a *bento* box made of lacquered wood in contrast to the gobbling and guzzling Americans.

SOL (CONT'D)

Or maybe he just got lonely.

INT. SELMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sol's sister Selma's bohemian student flat in Cambridge, Mass. Poster of W.E.B. Dubois on the wall, a menorah on a side-table just below. Mostly young people - all women.

Selma is guiding Betty, who looks a little lost.

SELMA

You're going to fit right in.

Selma is not sure that's true. And neither is Betty.

BETTY

I'm just a farm girl from State College, PA. Everybody here looks so...*sophisticated*.

We see two women wearing pants. Another is in a corner, taking long drags on a cigarette and reading *Le Deuxième Sexe*.

SELMA

(gamely)

Hey, you went to college, too.

BETTY

That was a long time ago. Before the Navy. Before I met your brother.

CIGARETTE GIRL notices Betty looking at her.

CIGARETTE GIRL

*Parlez-vous français?*

BETTY

*Un peu.*

CIGARETTE GIRL

(smiles)

*Un petite peu*, judging from your accent. Here take this - you need it more than I do.

She hands Betty the book.

BETTY

But aren't you reading it?

CIGARETTE GIRL

For the *troisième* time. It's by this gal, Simone de Beauvoir. She says women need to stop letting themselves be defined by men. Men confuse their point of view with absolute truth.

SELMA

(leading her away)

I'd like to introduce you to my roommate, Virginia. Virginia's a grad student at Radcliffe, too. Virginia, this is Solly's fiance, Betty.

Virginia is a tall, confident African-American woman.

VIRGINIA

So pleased to meet you, Betty.

(conspiratorially)

Selma tells me you're one of us.



BETTY

What's that?

VIRGINIA

A *shiksa*.

SELMA

We don't use that term here.

VIRGINIA

Well, I'll bet your Aunt Hannah does. She just about plotzed when you introduced me. Does she know Betty's a *shi* - not Jewish?

SELMA

Hannah? *Oy gevalt!* The less she knows, the better  
 (to Betty)  
 My mother's aunt. Had to invite her. With any luck the old bigot won't come...

A commotion at the door. Aunt Hannah has arrived.

HANNAH

Where is that darling grand niece of mine?

SELMA

Uh-boy...  
 (to Hannah)  
 Dear Aunt Hannah. So nice that you could make it. I want to introduce you to Solly's lovely fiance, Betty.

Hannah checks her out skeptically.

BETTY

So very nice to meet you. Selma has told me so much about you.

Hannah launches into full-bore, lickety-split, Yiddish.

HANNAH

(Yiddish, with subtitles)  
 Solly is *such* a darling boy! I believe he is my *favorite* grand nephew! It's no wonder you fell for him!

Betty smiles and nods.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 (still in Yiddish)  
 You're *so cute*. No wonder he loves  
 you! I'm sure you'll have a dozen  
 gorgeous children. You want  
 children don't you?

Betty nods emphatically.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 (still in Yiddish)  
 You and Solly will come and visit a  
 lonely old lady, won't you?

BETTY  
 (Nodding affirmatively)  
 Mmmm!

HANNAH  
 (still in Yiddish)  
 Well, you are absolutely charming.  
 I will have to tell your mother-in-  
 law to be, Sybil, all about our  
 wonderful conversation.

A new COMMOTION at the door. SYBIL LEVINE, Sol's mother, has  
 arrived.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 (in English)  
 There's Sybil now!

Hannah motions Sybil her direction.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 Sybil I have just been talking to  
 Solly's *bashert*, Betty. What a  
*sheine maideleh!* And she speaks  
 such beautiful Yiddish!

Hannah walks away arm in arm with Sybil. She glances over at  
 Virginia and scowls.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
 (muttering)  
*Schwartz*.

Hannah and Sybil disappear into a far corner.

SELMA  
 (To Betty, impressed)  
 I didn't know you spoke Yiddish.

BETTY

I don't.

INT. SOL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sol is on his bed, fully clothed, reading a book, *Saigo Takamori: Samurai, Visionary, Rebel*.

He hears a NOISE and gets up to investigate.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Sol follows A SOUND, getting louder, across the yard toward the gardener's hut, which is lit up inside. He walks past a rock sculpture of concentric circles and a tiny neglected pond. Looking through a window, he sees Kitayama inside, performing some kind of ritual in front of a photograph, KEENING mournfully.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

Same setup as before but with Kitayama at the blackboard, supported by his cane, drawing and writing equations.

KITAYAMA

...following the standard  
compression formula  $CR = C - P + G$   
 $+ D + V$  over  $C - P + G + D$  where  
C,P,G,D, and V stand for combustion  
chamber, piston dome, head gasket,  
deck height, and cylinder swept  
volume respectively.

The engineers madly write in their notebooks. Johnson chewing on his pipe, as always.

JOHNSON

Thank you, Admiral. But with all  
due respect, that flies in the face  
of everything we know about piston  
design. According to Prof. Clarke's  
equations--

KITAYAMA

Clarke was wrong.

The engineers look at each other, not sure how to proceed.

JOHNSON

Why are you so sure, Admiral?

KITAYAMA

(shrugs)

Had he been right, you would not need to interview me.

A beat. The engineers look at each other. He's right.

JOHNSON

Good point, Admiral. Moving on.

(he shuffles some papers)

Can you tell us a bit about the interlocking valve system?

Kitayama does not respond. He looks as if he's gone into a trance.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

The safety valves that were designed to keep the ship from sinking in the event of an attack?

Kitayama just stands there.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Admiral?

Still nothing.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Let's take a break.

He motions Sol over.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(whispering)

He's given us great stuff on the metallurgy and the engine design, but every time I bring up anything to do with why the valves failed, he freezes. If we don't know *that*, we'll never learn why the damn boat sank. You gotta find that out, any way you can.

SOL

Maybe I have to find out first why it makes him freeze.

EXT. KYUSHU - DAY

Beautiful rolling agricultural countryside. Rice paddies and vegetable patches.

SUPER: "Kyushu, Japan. 1944."

KENJI SAKAMOTO, 16, and his FATHER, Daichi Sakamoto, 40s are fixing an ancient TRACTOR. Their modest thatch-roof house is a few feet away. Kenji squats, wrench in hand, tightening a bolt. His father stands behind him, leaning on a CANE, observing closely.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES

FATHER

That's it, Kenji. Don't overtighten it.

KENJI

Try it now, father.

His father limps to the tractor. One leg is practically useless. But with a practiced gesture, he hoists himself up.

FATHER

Here goes.

The engine starts with a ROAR. Kenji beams up proudly at his father who nods his head in approval. Kenji's MOTHER comes out of the house, agitated.

MOTHER

Both of you, come in right away.

INT. SAKAMOTO HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A tiny traditional Japanese farmhouse: cramped, rudimentary, and fastidiously clean. There is a small SHRINE around a photograph of a young man in a military uniform.

A RADIO is playing. The three of them enter and gather around it.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES

RADIO

...should not be denied the opportunity to gloriously and honorably serve our sacred emperor. Consequently, the War Department will now accept volunteers 16 years of age or older. It is expected that the response among our eager youth will be massive!

Kenji's mother is ashen-faced. Kenji's father limps over to the radio and TURNS IT OFF.

KENJI  
I will enlist tomorrow.

MOTHER  
(in tears)  
No, no! They can't take you. Not after what happened to Shinji!

She looks toward the shrine.

KENJI  
Most honorable mother. It is my time. Just as it was my father's time when the war with the Chinese began and my brother's time when the war with the Americans began. May I serve as honorably as they did.

He looks down at his father's bum leg.

MOTHER  
I will not let you go! I forbid it!

Kenji goes to speak but his father raises a hand to silence him.

FATHER  
"Volunteer" does not mean he has a choice. Either he goes or we will be disgraced. And once we are disgraced, he will go anyway.

Off Kenji's mother's devastated face.

EXT. YARD - EVENING

The engineers are preparing to go out on the town. Kitayama watches them, sitting on a chair-size rock in the garden. Sol stands in the doorway.

CRAMER  
Sure you won't come with us, Levine? We're gonna go find us some geesha girls.

SOL  
Can't, fellas. I'm engaged.

Cramer waves his finger with a wedding ring on it.

CRAMER

You're a long way from home,  
sailor.

SOL

Thanks, anyway. Bring me back a  
souvenir.

CULVER

As long as it's not the clap!

They LAUGH and head for the gate.

ARTHUR

(receding in the distance)  
Some of those slant girls just  
might be worth it.

Quiet. Sol lets out a long exhalation.

KITAYAMA

You did not really wish to go with  
them, even if you were not engaged,  
did you?

SOL

Was it that obvious? I do my best  
to fit in, but...

KITAYAMA

May I show you something?

Kitayama stands and walks toward his hut, moving slowly with  
his cane. He pauses in front of a ROW OF PERENNIALS, Japanese  
anemones. All are white except for one striking lavender  
exception.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

(gesturing to the flowers)  
My proudest accomplishment.

Sol

Very pretty. Especially that one.

He points to the lavender flower.

KITAYAMA

The one that doesn't fit in.

He looks up at a CHERRY TREE, just beginning to bloom. Sol  
comes and stands beside him. Kitayama SIGHS longingly.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow, Levine-san, you must go to Ueno Park. It is the Cherry Blossom festival.

SOL

Hey, don't get the wrong idea. I don't really go in for flowers that much. I mean, they're kind of..."girly".

KITAYAMA

Perhaps...But isn't a young girl's laugh the most enchanting sound one can imagine?

Kitayama looks back at the tree for a moment then continues toward his hut.

SOL

Hey, I've got some beer back in the house. Would you like one?

KITAYAMA

(smiles)

I've got something better.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

The hut is tiny but immaculate. *Tatami*, *futon* (floor mattress), a lamp on a small cabinet, not much else. Kitayama opens the cabinet and pulls out a bottle of *sake* and two cups. He pours and offers a cup to Sol who takes it. Sol, in turn, takes out a cigarette and offers one. Kitayama accepts and Sol lights him up. They sit on the floor.

KITAYAMA

You know I am *samurai*. In the old days, samurai followed *Bushido*, a code of conduct based on Zen Buddhism. If we were disgraced, we committed *seppuku* - ritual suicide.

SOL

Seems a little extreme.

KITAYAMA

The samurai would take a short blade - reserved just for this purpose - and stab himself in the abdomen.



SOL  
Sounds painful.

KITAYAMA  
It is. So before committing  
*seppuku*, the master would give his  
long sword to a second - a helper.  
When the pain got too much, the  
second would chop off the head of  
his friend and master.

SOL  
How...  
(looking for a polite  
word)  
...considerate.

KITAYAMA  
It is. This would prevent the  
master from doing anything  
embarrassing - like crying out -  
because of the pain.

SOL  
So the second's job was pain  
relief?

KITAYAMA  
No, it was preserving the honor of  
his master.

He takes a deep drag on his cigarette.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
These days, cigarettes and *sake*  
have become the modern *seppuku*.

Kitayama downs his glass and refills. He offers to Sol who  
waves him off. A little drunk now, Kitayama goes to the  
cupboard and takes out a *samisen*, a banjo-like instrument and  
begins to play.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
(singing - no subtitles)  
*sakura sakura*  
*yayoi no sora wa*  
*mi-watasu kagiri*  
*kasumi ka kumo ka*  
*nioi zo izuru*  
*izaya izaya*  
*mini yukan*

SOL  
 (slightly drunk also)  
 It's beautiful. Is it a very old  
 song?

KITAYAMA  
 Like many things in Japan that  
 people think are ancient it is not  
 so old. In fact, the lyrics only go  
 back to the Meiji Restoration.

SOL  
 Meiji what?

KITAYAMA  
 Restoration...although it was more  
 like a revolution. Japan was once  
 ruled by Shoguns - feudal lords.

EXT. A HILL OVERLOOKING YOKOHAMA BAY - DAY - 1853

A group of Japanese samurai with swords view the arrival of  
 an American frigate with concern.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)  
 For generations, the Shoguns walled  
 off Japan from the rest of the  
 world, but when an American,  
 Admiral Perry, sailed into Yokohama  
 Bay in 1853, some of the young  
 samurai realized that if Japan did  
 not modernize it would be  
 conquered. Inspired by the American  
 Civil War, they had a rebellion.

EXT. 19TH CENTURY JAPANESE BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Two armies, dressed in traditional samurai armor, engaged in  
 pitched battle.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)  
 This being Japan, though, they  
 could not call it a rebellion, but  
 rather a "restoration" of the  
 emperor Meiji.

SOL (V.O.)  
 Fascinating.

The battle concludes. The surviving losers bow obsequiously  
 to the leader of the victorious side, a singular looking man  
 with a very Western-looking nose.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)  
 One of the leaders of the  
 "restoration" was an ancestor of  
 mine, Takamori Saigo.

General Saigo holds an ornate SWORD with a distinctive family crest emblazoned on its hilt. He uses it to pardon the kneeling samurai.

SOL (V.O.)  
 Ah, the fellow you thought I  
 resembled when we first met.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)  
 Uh...yes.

EXT. REVIEWING STAND - DAY - 1870S

General Saigo, now in a military uniform, stands in front of thousands of troops dressed in military uniforms carrying rifles. He raises the ornate sword and shouts out something unintelligible. The men respond in unison.

KITAYAMA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 The Meiji Restoration brought  
 international trade, and modern  
 industry to Japan. Saigo created a  
 conscript army made of peasants  
 with modern weapons.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT - RETURN

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 To help establish the first public  
 schools, they brought in the world  
 experts on mass education:  
 Americans. To this day, most  
 Japanese think *Musunde Hiraite* is a  
 Japanese folksong.

SOL  
 Musu...?

Kitayama closes, opens, claps, and closes his hands while singing.

KITAYAMA  
 (sings)  
*Musunde hiraite*  
*te wo utte musunde*  
 (speaks)  
 (MORE)

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 You know it as "Go Tell Aunt  
 Rhody." There are many other  
 American influences. Do you know we  
 have been playing *basu-baru* since  
 1872?

SOL  
 Basu...Oh! Baseball! Do you play?

KITAYAMA  
 I used to play catch with...a  
 friend. He adored baseball - wanted  
 to be a pro, but then the war  
 intervened.

He is somewhere else for a moment.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 As the great general once said, he  
 wasted his life in the military -  
 he should have been a teacher.

SOL  
 Gen. Saigo?

KITAYAMA  
 Robert E. Lee. You see, Levine-san,  
 the destiny of your country and  
 mine have been connected for a very  
 long time.

They clink glasses. Kitayama refills his own again. Offers  
 Sol, who accepts this time.

SOL  
 Does it bother you that the Navy  
 has taken over your house and you  
 have to live in this?

Sol gestures to Kitayama's cramped quarters.

KITAYAMA  
 Every Japanese lives in his own  
 four-and-a-half mat room.

He takes another swig.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 What is a "kike"?

SOL  
 (unnerved)  
 A word ignorant people use. Where  
 did you hear it?

KITAYAMA

It is what the others call you when you are not around. Have you heard this term before?

Sol hesitates, but something about Kitayama's open curiosity and the *sake* allow him to open up.

SOL

(laughing)

Yes. I went to Harvard University.

KITAYAMA

Very famous. So you were an aristocrat?

SOL

Hardly. My father was a shoe salesman. And a Jew. "Kike" is an insulting word for Jew. I heard it often at "enlightened" Harvard. In fact, when I attended there were quotas on how many Jews they would allow in. I was lucky.

Kitayama nods.

KITAYAMA

Harvard must be very expensive. How could the son of a shoe salesman afford it?

SOL

I barely could. Like the other poor kids, I lived on the 6th floor of Dunster House - a walkup. But my brother was in the merchant marines. He was paid well for working in dangerous places. He knew he'd never go to college so he wanted me to, more than anything. When he gave me the money he said, "Show those *goyim* snobs how it's done!"

KITAYAMA

*Goyim?*

SOL

Non-Jews.

KITAYAMA

I am not a Jew. Does that make me a *goyim*?

SOL  
 (thinking)  
 Not sure. Let's have another one  
 and figure it out.

Kitayama pours them each another *sake*.

EXT. BOSTON, MASS. - DAY

A brisk early Spring day. Selma and Betty, in coats, walking down a street near the Public Gardens, visible in the background. They are carrying shopping bags.

BETTY  
 You know I work near here but I've  
 never bought anything in this  
 neighborhood.

SELMA  
 Nothing builds sisterhood like  
 shopping.  
 (points to Betty's bag)  
 That is one beautiful dress you  
 got. When Solly comes home he's  
 going to wonder, "Who is this  
*sheine maidelah?*"

BETTY  
 You're too kind.  
 (sighs)  
 I wish I knew when "Solly" was  
 coming.

SELMA  
 Oh?

BETTY  
 The latest is he's got an  
 assignment translating for a  
 Japanese admiral. It could be a  
 great opportunity for him - if he  
 stays in the Navy. In Japan.

Selma begins to get it.

SELMA  
 And he wants you by his side. So no  
 graduate school for you. Just being  
 the good wife and making babies?

Betty nods.

SELMA (CONT'D)

Betty, you're bright girl. There's a new world coming, and it's coming fast. The Radcliffe grad program is only a year and a half and it's free for veterans - for now. Not all those Rosie the Riveters are going back into the kitchen just because the war is over.

BETTY

Yes, but Sol wants--

SELMA

What do you want? Have you ever thought about that?

I love my brother but sometimes he can be such a...*man*.

Betty laughs. She spies a restaurant, Le Cochon Heureux.

BETTY

Hey, it's lunch time. *After* lunch time. Let me treat you.

SELMA

Not there, honey, they're restricted.

BETTY

Nonsense. I've been in there before. No one's ever said anything.

SELMA

That's because you're not Jewish.

BETTY

I insist.

Betty leads, Selma resignedly follows.

INT. LE COCHON HEUREUX - DAY

Snooty restaurant. Snooty MAITRE D' behind a lectern.

MAITRE D'

Yes.

BETTY

Table for two.

MAITRE D'

But, of course. We have a splendid seating by the fire for you two lovely ladies. Would that be acceptable?

Betty looks at Selma as if to say "See?", and nods an enthusiastic yes.

MAITRE D' (CONT'D)

Would you like us to take your things?

He SNAPS his fingers and a FLUNKY appears from nowhere to take their coats and bags.

BETTY

(softly to Selma)  
The only thing restricted here is my bank account.

Selma sighs. She hates to do this but...

SELMA

(to Maitre d')  
Is this restaurant restricted?

MAITRE D'

(suddenly uncomfortable)  
I'm not sure what you mean.

SELMA

(louder)  
Do you allow Jews to eat here?

MAITRE D'

(now genuinely worried)  
Are you...Jewish?

Betty is beginning to realize what's going on.

BETTY

What if we were? What if my last name was Levine? Does that matter to you?

MAITRE D'

(nearly panicked)  
Oh..ah...there has been a regrettable error. I'm afraid we don't have a table after all.

He rapidly SNAPS his fingers several times. The flunky reappears, confused.



MAITRE D' (CONT'D)  
Please, get these ladies their  
things. *Quickly.*

A couple enters through the door. The flunky reappears with Selma's and Betty's coats and bags. The Maitre d' addresses the new couple and pointedly ignores Selma and Betty.

MAITRE D' (CONT'D)  
Yes.

Selma gives Betty a "Like I said..." look and motions her out the door.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Betty is fuming. Selma is amused by her sister-in-law-to-be's rude awakening.

BETTY  
(looking back at the  
restaurant)  
I cannot believe they turned us  
away! Le Cochon Heureux. It means  
The Happy Pig. Perfect!

SELMA  
Pigs aren't kosher, anyway, dear.

BETTY  
They do have a creme brulee so good  
I have *dreams* about it, though. No  
one should be denied their dreams.

SELMA  
Or their just desserts.

Off their laughter.

EXT. UENO PARK - DAY

Cherry Blossom Festival. Sol has taken Kitayama's suggestion and wanders through the park taking in the spectacle of Japanese drummers and dancers amidst the breathtaking color of hundreds of cherry trees in full bloom. He is overwhelmed as if connecting with nature for the first time.

A tobacco vendor is selling from a cart.

TOBACCO VENDOR  
Toh-bah-koh...toh-bah-koh...

Sol stops and points to a PIPE and a bag of tobacco. He gives some coins to the vendor and both bow slightly.

The next cart is a food cart where the vendor is selling bento boxes.

SOL  
(Japanese w/subtitles)  
How much?

FOOD VENDOR  
(Japanese w/subtitles)  
100 yen.

Sol gives the vendor some coins and, exchanging nods, takes the *bento* box and a pair of CHOPSTICKS. He tries and fails to eat with chopsticks, gives up and takes a piece of sashimi in his fingers, hesitates, then eats it, holding it above his open mouth like someone dangling a goldfish.

Walking down the path, he stops in front of a statue of a SAMURAI and his DOG.

An adorable LITTLE GIRL keeps looking at him and giggling. He looks back at her and smiles. She points at Sol and shouts.

LITTLE GIRL  
(Japanese w/subtitles)  
The foreigner looks like Saigo!

Her mother hushes her and, apologetically bowing, leads her off. Sol sees the inscription on the statue (in Japanese):

TAKAMORI SAIGO.

He hears a voice from behind him in English.

VOICE FROM BEHIND  
I could see a resemblance...if you  
had four legs.

Sol turns and sees it's Lt. Green from the Laffey. They warmly shake hands.

SOL  
Lt. Green! Your Japanese is  
improving.

GREEN  
Just because you never heard me  
speak it doesn't mean I don't  
understand it. And it's Lt.  
*Commander* Green to you.

He indicates the insignia on his uniform.

SOL

Hey, congratulations on the promotion!

Green points to the sashimi in the box Sol is holding.

GREEN

I'd cook that, if I were you.

SOL

It's not bad - maybe it'll catch on back home someday.

GREEN

Right. And maybe "made in Japan" won't mean "cheap piece of crap" someday, either...You walking this way?

He points up the path.

SOL

Sure. I'm just taking in the sights.

They walk by a man-made POND. Children are playing with origami boats they have launched on its surface.

GREEN

I hear you're assigned to Ewell's team. How's it going?

SOL

Other than feeling the fate of western civilization rests in my hands, fine. How much are you cleared for?

GREEN

Kitayama. The Yamato. The whole megillah. You can speak freely.

SOL

I'm making headway but there is something he's hiding.

GREEN

No kidding. You build the most advanced ship in history and it sinks - that's kind of embarrassing.

SOL

There's something else. I just don't know what yet.

GREEN

Well, if you do figure it out, you'll be able to write your own ticket - unless Ewell claims it was his idea first. Look to Johnson for help.

SOL

Johnson?

GREEN

No love lost between him and Ewell. Johnson thinks the only reason he's a Lt. Cmdr. and Ewell is an Admiral is Ewell's family connections. And he'd be right. The rumor is that MacArthur brownnoses *him*.

You're a sharp young guy, Sol. I could use someone like you on my team.

SOL

Your team?

GREEN

Look Ewell, isn't going to be here that much longer. He misses his mint juleps and his mammy too much. And when he goes home, somebody is going to take his place. I plan on that somebody being me.

SOL

You are a lot more savvy at this stuff than I am.

GREEN

You want to survive you gotta learn the rules of the game. Even when they're unfair.

(beat)

Hey, Passover's coming up. Would you like to join me and some other Yids for Seder? You can bring a friend - if you got any.

SOL

Thanks, but I'm not really *Jewish* Jewish.

GREEN

Who is? But you got the schnoz for it - and if that statue is a fair resemblance, so did your man Saigo.

They approach the ZOO. A CHIMPANZEE is jumping around in his cage, SCREAMING.

GREEN (CONT'D)

Look - Admiral Ewell.

They are interrupted by a COMMOTION coming from down the walkway. A formation of men march toward them, dressed in identical clothes and head scarves, CHANTING in unison in a quasi military - but beautifully theatrical - fashion.

GREEN (CONT'D)

Didn't know there was floor show.

Sol turns to a Japanese MAN standing next to him.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES.

SOL

It this part of the Cherry Blossom festival?

MAN

No, it's a labor march.

SOL

(fascinated)

Really? It looks so...organized. In my country labor marches are more like mobs.

The man observes Sol in puzzlement.

MAN

Your country? Where are you from?

SOL

Boston...Massachusetts...*America*.

MAN

Odd. You speak Japanese like a Chinese.

EXT. GATE - NIGHT

Arriving back at Kitayama's house, Sol finds the guard post abandoned and SHOUTING coming from within the compound.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

The guards stand some distance to either side of Kitayama, batons at the ready, as he thrashes about with his cane, drunk and wild.

KITAYAMA

(Japanese with subtitles)

Let me out! I will no longer be a prisoner in a 4 1/2 mat room!

SOL

(to the guards)

Let me talk to him.

He closes in. Kitayama is about to strike then drops the cane.

KITAYAMA

Saigo...

He wraps his arms around Sol who leads him back to his hut.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES:

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...I didn't mean to hurt you...

SOL

It's alright. You didn't hurt me.

Kitayama stops and looks at Sol.

KITAYAMA

You're not Saigo.

SOL

No, I'm not.

Kitayama looks at him again.

KITAYAMA

(drunkenly hugging Sol)

Saigo...

Sol leads him to his hut.

EXT. SHIPYARD - DAY - WARTIME

SUPER: "Kure Shipyard. 1944."

The vast complex of Japan's largest shipbuilding facility. Giant machinery rumbles and whirs. An army of workers weld, pound, and assemble.

INT. SENDAI CLASS CRUISER ENGINE ROOM - DAY

Kenji, in sleeveless T and sailor pants, sweats as he adjusts the tension rod on a piston. His superior officer, Lt. OGAWA looks on much as his father did back home in Kyushu.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES

KENJI  
That should do it.

LT. OGAWA  
(calling out)  
Start her up.

Other sailors pass the word on and one turns the control to start the engine. With a reassuring THRUM, it gets up to speed.

LT. OGAWA (CONT'D)  
Seaman Sakamoto, you have a gift.

Kenji bows his head.

KENJI  
Thank you, sir.

They are interrupted by a group of superior officers descending the stairs. All snap to attention. The officers include the captain of their ship, as well as Cmdr. TAKAHASHI and a couple of others we don't see.

CMDR. TAKAHASHI  
Lt. Ogawa. Is this the man you were referring to?

He points to a grizzled man in his 30s.

LT. OGAWA  
No, sir. Here he is. Seaman Sakamoto step forward.

Kenji, nervous, does so. Is he in trouble?

CMDR. TAKAHASHI  
(looking Kenji over)  
Young man.  
(MORE)

CMDR. TAKAHASHI (CONT'D)  
You have been selected to join the  
crew of the greatest warship ever  
built, the Yamato, as a machinist  
second-class.

KENJI  
(salutes)  
Yessir!!!!

From behind Takahashi steps a crisp, fit Adm. Kitayama, sans  
cane. It is only two years ago, but it might as well be ten.

KITAYAMA  
(shaking his head)  
So young...so young.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The usual crew and the usual setup. Kitayama is quiet and  
depressed, maybe hungover. Johnson is looking at some  
blueprints. Sol is smoking his new pipe like a mirror image  
of Johnson.

JOHNSON  
(putting his pipe down)  
...so in these specifications, were  
you referring to mechanical power  
or electrical power? Which formula  
were you using?

Nothing from Kitayama.

SOL  
(putting *his* pipe down)  
Why don't we take a lunch break?

JOHNSON  
(looks at his watch)  
Sure. Thirty minutes.

The Ensign brings in the food as usual. Sol has ordered a  
*bento* box and sits beside Kitayama, who ignores his own and  
stares into nothing. Sol makes a valiant attempt to eat with  
chopsticks but one of them GOES FLYING, nearly hitting  
Kitayama in the face.

By reflex, Kitayama's hand comes up and snatches it out of  
the air. His face remains expressionless.

KITAYAMA  
The bottom *hashi* is always firm and  
unchanging.  
(MORE)



KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

The top *hashi* moves to accommodate whatever you encounter. You try.

He hands the chopstick back to Sol who gives it another shot. This time he is able to pick up a sushi roll and get it almost to his mouth before it falls back into the box.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Much better. Fortunately, one does not need *hashi* to eat sushi.

He takes a sushi roll out of his own box with his hand and pops it in his mouth. Sol sees an opening.

SOL

Say, would you like to come to a special ceremonial feast I've been invited to this upcoming Monday?

KITAYAMA

The Jewish festival of Passover?

SOL

(surprised he knows)  
Yes.

KITAYAMA

I have always been curious about the Passover feast - Seder it's called? There was not much opportunity to attend one when I was in Germany.

Sol can't tell if this is dry humor.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

But, as you know, I am forbidden to leave the compound.

SOL

Let me see what I can do.

The Ensign approaches Sol.

ENSIGN

I have a letter for you, Sir.

SOL

(taking the letter)  
Thanks.

He opens and reads to himself.

CHALMERS (V.O.)

Dear Sol,

I am flattered that you would ask your old faculty advisor for advice. But, frankly, *no one* is interested in Japanese labor relations and I can't see why they ever would be. To study labor, go to France or Italy, not a backwater like Japan.

Continue your career in the Navy. It sounds like you are making great strides there!

Yours,  
Prof. Vincent Chalmers, Harvard University.

Sol puts the letter away and sighs.

KITAYAMA

Bad news?

SOL

My Professor at my old school says there is no job for me doing what I wanted to do back home. He suggests I stay in the Navy.

KITAYAMA

Sometimes, a channel that is too shallow to navigate will open when the tide shifts - you must wait to set sail. If you don't run aground first.

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Betty's neat but tiny apartment. She sits up in bed, reading *Le Deuxième Sexe*. She puts down the book and stares.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

A HORSE REARS on its hind legs and NAYS. A RATTLESNAKE is loudly RATTLING its warning. On the back of the horse, Betty, in Navy uniform, trying to calm it.

SUPER: "Boulder, Colorado. 1943."

BETTY

Whoa, whoa!

The horse takes off like a shot, out of control, Betty holding on for dear life. A MAN GALLOPS up on his own horse. He grabs the reins of Betty's horse and expertly slows it down.

MAN

Whoa...whoa there fella...

Now that they are stopped, Betty has a chance to look at her rescuer. He is Lt. MATT DuMont, matinee idol tall dark and handsome, with manicured everything and a perfectly modulated baritone voice, also in uniform. She notices.

BETTY

Thank you, thank you. You saved my life.

He smiles. 1000 watts.

MATT

Don't I know you from the language institute?

BETTY

Yes, just arrived. I'm studying Japanese.

MATT

Me...German. And Hungarian.

BETTY

I'm Betty Billet, Penn State.

She offers her hand. He takes it rather familiarly and holds onto it.

MATT

Matt DuMont, Yale. I'm over in the men's dorms. 3rd floor, 3G.

He lets go of her hand.

MATT (CONT'D)

Come visit sometime.

He gives her one more heart-melting smile and rides off.

FADE TO...

INT. MEN'S DORM - EVENING

An austere men's dorm. Voices can be heard echoing down the hall. An intimidating place for a woman.

Betty approaches 3G trepidatiously, a baking pan in her hand covered with foil. She KNOCKS.

The door swings open. It's Sol.

SOL

Hello?

BETTY

(looking around him)

Is Matt here?

SOL

No, sorry, he's out with his girlfriend. Well, the girl he's dating this week, anyway. What can I do for you?

BETTY

Oh...I...uh...was just coming by to thank him for...and...uh...Do you like brownies?

SOL

Love them.

BETTY

Well...here then.

She hands him the pan. He takes the pan.

SOL

Thanks.

An awkward pause. Sol looks at his watch.

SOL (CONT'D)

Would you like to go get a bite?

FADE TO...

INT. DINER - EVENING

Sol and Betty chatting and laughing, m.o.s.

FADE TO...

INT. OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

They are dancing to a big band, first a fast number, then a slow one. Obviously connecting.

FADE TO...

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT

A huge moon looms over the picturesque town of Boulder. They sit in a roofless jeep, him in the driver's seat. It's chilly enough that they have a blanket wrapped around both of them.

BETTY

...my degree was in chemistry - but the only jobs available for a "girl chemist" were pretty boring. I thought, "There's a war on. Live a little." I saw an ad from the Navy looking for volunteers to learn Japanese. I said, "I'm good at math and music - why not Japanese?"

SOL

(charmed)

Why not?

BETTY

Being a Navy girl is fine for now but when the war is over, I'm going back to school to get a master's. I don't want to be one of those good little stay-at-home housewives who give up everything to raise a bunch of kids, and wake up one day, frumpy and fifty, wondering why their husband is having an affair with his secretary. What about you?

SOL

I wouldn't want to wonder why my husband was having an affair with his secretary, either.

She gives him a mock scowl and hits him with a blanket corner.

SOL (CONT'D)

(pretending to cower)

Okay...Okay...I was going to be an academic. But then came Hitler and...you know.

(MORE)

SOL (CONT'D)

Tried to volunteer for the army but my eyesight was too bad. That didn't stop the Navy - once they knew I was good at languages. Figure I'll serve out my time, come home, get my Phd, and teach somewhere.

BETTY

What will you teach?

SOL

My dad's a shoe salesman. I know a lot firsthand about the New England textile industry. People will always be interested in that.

BETTY

Will you?

SOL

Will I what?

BETTY

Always be interested textiles?

SOL

Until something better comes along.

He leans in to kiss her.

EXT. UNIFIED ALLIED COMMAND HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Establishing shot of the building housing Adm. Ewell's office.

INT. OFFICE OF ADM. EWELL - LATE AFTERNOON

Ewell holds court behind his desk. Sol stands.

EWELL

Lt. Cmdr. Johnson tells me you've done a bang up job getting the old boy out of his shell. But understand the Navy is running low on patience. Joe Stalin is on the move - Europe, Asia, even Latin America. The commie bastards refuse to leave Iran as they promised and now they want Greece. It's just a matter of time before they have their own A-Bomb, God help us!

(MORE)

EWELL (CONT'D)

It's war. Just not the way we're used to. Call it "The Cold War". Russkies got an army twice the size of ours. If they're going to be stopped it's going be up to the Navy to do it. We need to know what to build and how to build it, pronto. But we've still got nothing on the one question every naval engineer is asking: *why did the Yamato sink?*

SOL

That's why I came to see you.

EWELL

I'm listening.

SOL

(leaning on the desk)

I think Kitayama might loosen up if he didn't feel like a prisoner.

EWELL

(disappointed)

Look, we've tried the diplomatic approach. In fact, I wonder if the real problem is that Johnson is so "diplomatic" that the Admiral feels like he can just skate by until we get tired and go home.

SOL

Maybe being "diplomatic" doesn't work. But if this guy is going to give us what we want, we - I - have to build some trust. Some intimacy.

EWELL

(wary)

Have anything in mind?

SOL

I was thinking of asking him to go with me to a Sed...to a dinner with some friends.

EWELL

No! He feels like a prisoner because he *is* a prisoner. Do you know how many of our sailors died because of Admiral Zipmouth?

(MORE)

EWELL (CONT'D)

You can bet the Russians wouldn't have been so nice to him if he'd ended up in their hands!

You have *no idea* what kind of pressure I'm under. The Navy wants answers! The Secretary of the Navy wants answers! But meanwhile, the President wants us to make nice to the Japs so we have an ally against the Reds! It's about the only thing he and Gen. MacArthur agree on!

SOL

(quietly)

How badly do you want this information?

Ewell pauses.

EWELL

Badly enough to let you do something I'll probably regret.

SOL

You won't regret it.

EWELL

I think I already do. Alright, you can go have dinner out with your Japanese Admiral. But you will debrief in my office *first thing* the next morning.

SOL

Yessir!

Sol salutes, walks out the door...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...and does a little dance of joy.

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Sol sits on Johnson's desk holding the phone.

SOL

...And he was kind enough to let me make a quick overseas call...

(whispers)

...on the government's dime.



INT. LEVINE SHOE - NIGHT

Betty at Sol's dad desk as before.

BETTY

Sol...

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

SOL

(dreamy)

Yes...it's so *interesting* here.  
Everything is...just...different.  
People take baths in boiling hot  
water. They take off their shoes  
indoors. And they actually eat with  
chopsticks.

BETTY

Sol...

SOL

I've decided, I'm going to stay  
right here and make a career in the  
service. With this Cold War people  
are talking about, there's more  
opportunity in Naval Intelligence  
than in academia anyway. As soon as  
this assignment is wrapped up, I  
want you to get on the next plane  
and come out here!

BETTY

Sol...

She is holding a APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT from Radcliffe in  
her hand. Sol realizes something is up.

SOL

What hon?

BETTY

I don't want to come to Japan - at  
least not right away.

SOL

What?

BETTY

I want to get my Masters degree. At  
Radcliffe.

SOL

But you want to get married and have kids, just like I do.

BETTY

Sol, if you want to know what someone wants maybe you should try asking them. I know what I don't want. I go to Japan, we get married, I have a baby. Then another. And another. And soon I won't even remember why I ever wanted to go to school, anyway. And everything will look just fine on the outside. But I'll be dying inside.

SOL

Sounds like you've been talking to my sister. Look that's fine for someone who doesn't mind ending up an old maid. But it's no life for a married woman.

BETTY

Sol...I don't want to get married.

SOL

What?! Now you're just being silly! Get a good night's rest and you'll see it differently in the morning.

BETTY

Are you listening to me, Sol? I don't think we should be together anymore.

In Japan, there is a KNOCK on the door. Sol puts his hand over the phone.

SOL

Coming!

(back on the phone)

Honey, I got to go. We'll work this out. Bye!

He hangs up. She is holding the phone, grim.

BETTY

Good bye, Sol...

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

Kitayama, much cheerier, stands in front of the blackboard, drawing.

KITAYAMA

...and by Ohm's Law we know the  
resistance will be...

He writes a formula. Sol, clearly distracted, gazes out the sliding door at the cherry tree in the yard. Kitayama notices and puts down his chalk.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Levine-san is not getting enough  
practice translating. I will only  
speak in Japanese from now on.

(Japanese with subtitles)

Levine-san, come here.

Sol rises and reluctantly goes to the blackboard while Kitayama observes from his *zabuton*.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

(Japanese with subtitles)

Take the chalk.

Sol does so. Kitayama speaks in Japanese. Sol repeats his words haltingly in English while scribbling furiously on the board.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)/SOL

The external traction  $T$  is a bound  
vector...It is the force per unit  
at a location on the surface of a  
body...Given derivatives of  $F$  and  
 $S$ , traction  $T$  equals the limit of  
 $\Delta s$  approaching zero for  $\Delta F$   
over  $\Delta s$  which equals  $dF$   
over  $ds$ ...This is the  
definition of *stress*.

Sol wipes his brow with his sleeve. Even a non-mathematician can see Sol's equation is a mess. Kitayama nods and smiles.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

(in English)

That was very good, Levine-san.  
Very good. But what I actually said  
was...

He rises and returns to the board indicating for Sol to sit down. He erases Sol's pitiful effort and starts again, in English while illustrating on the board.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

The external traction  $T$  is a bound vector...

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

At lunch, Kitayama and Sol eat from *bento* boxes together. Sol's chopstick technique is improving.

SOL

I was doing *fine* with the Japanese.  
But I never studied *Greek*.

They laugh. The engineers are in their own world across the room.

SOL (CONT'D)

How did you learn English?

KITAYAMA

I picked it up when I was studying engineering in Germany because there were so many English students there.

SOL

You got your undergraduate degree in Munich, too?

KITAYAMA

No, at the Sorbonne.

SOL

Germany...France...Wasn't that a little unusual for a Japanese student?

KITAYAMA

My parents, my teachers - everybody - thought I was quite mad. But I was always - what do you call it? - a "strange swan"?

Sol looks at him, unsure.

SOL

An "odd duck"?

KITAYAMA

Yes, that's it.

SOL

I know the feeling...So you got your degree in naval engineering-

KITAYAMA

Actually, in biology. I became an engineer later. As they said at the Sorbonne: *Tout est bien qui finit bien.*

SOL

"All's well that ends well."  
So...why didn't the Yamato end well?

Kitayama smiles.

KITAYAMA

Ah, yes. The question everyone wants to know. Let me explain...A ship is like a *bento* box.

He lifts it and squeezes the top so it hold the bottom by pressure.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Let go and...

The bottom falls to the floor with a THUMP.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

...you are sunk.

EXT. BOSTON PUBLIC GARDENS - DAY

Betty, pensive and depressed, walks aimlessly through the Boston Public Gardens, in Spring glory not unlike Ueno Park was. The elegant Swan Boats float past on the pond behind her, but they are lost on her. She sits on a park bench and opens up her bag lunch.

VOICE

Are you going to eat all that or can you spare a bite?

She looks up, startled. It's Matt DuMont, from Colorado, looking as dashing as ever.

BETTY

Matt! My goodness! What brings you to Boston from New York?

He looks a little awkward. Despite her mood, she is polite.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Please sit down.

Smiling big, he sits next to her. A little close. She moves an inch away.

MATT

DuMont industries has a small outlying plant here in Boston. Father made the somewhat questionable decision to put me in charge.

BETTY

And how "small" is this operation?

MATT

Oh...2700 employees give or take.

She is impressed.

MATT (CONT'D)

And what are you doing here? Don't tell me you finally married my old roommate!

BETTY

No. We broke up.

MATT

Sorry to hear that.

He's not.

BETTY

He's still in Japan. He's working on something for the Navy.

MATT

The advantages of being in the European theater made even more clear to me.

Meaning being near her. She is both flattered and uncomfortable.

BETTY

Say, did you really want some of my sandwich?

She holds it up for him to examine.

MATT

While I am deeply intrigued by, uh, peanut butter and cucumber, may I suggest we go to a nearby restaurant that I think you might enjoy? We can catch up on old times. And talk about new ones.

She looks at her watch.

BETTY

Not today. I'm on lunch break and have to be back in five minutes.

MATT

Well, shall we say tomorrow then? At 1 p.m.?

BETTY

Tomorrow is Saturday.

MATT

Right you are. So much the better. We'll go for a ride on the Swan Boats and *then* get lunch.

BETTY

Well, I don't know...

MATT

Oh come now. A girl has to eat... Don't tell me you're afraid of the swans!

BETTY

(laughing)  
Oh alright, alright. But just lunch.

He crosses his heart and raises three fingers in a boy scout salute. A trolley rolls past behind him on the street.

CROSSFADE TO--

EXT. WIDE STREET - NIGHT

Matching establishing shot of a trolley going down the street. At the corners, the conductor leans out, looks each way, and says "Hidari ahrai...migi ahrai."

INT. TROLLEY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sol is in his civies. He carries a bottle of Manischewitz. Kitayama also wears western-style clothes.

Sol examines the bottle of wine. He turns to Kitayama.

SOL

My gal - I guess she's still my gal  
- Betty, says this stuff is too  
sweet. Don't care for it too much  
myself, either, to be honest. But  
you've got to bring a Jewish wine  
to a Seder.

KITAYAMA

How did you meet your "gal"?

SOL

Met her at the language institute.  
She was assigned to the East coast,  
me to the Pacific. Haven't seen her  
in two years.

He is lost in thought for a moment.

SOL (CONT'D)

How about you? Are you married?

KITAYAMA

My wife died of tuberculosis years  
ago.

SOL

Have any kids?

KITAYAMA

(stone-faced)

No.

As the trolley slows for an intersection, the conductor leans out to look.

CONDUCTOR

Hidari, ahrai...Migi, ahrai...

KITAYAMA

Because almost everybody in Japan  
has been on a trolley, when we  
trained the crew of the Yamato, we  
used the conductor's familiar  
words, "Migi, ahrai", to let them  
know to turn the valves to the  
right.



SOL  
 We say "righty - tighty, lefty -  
 loosey".

Sol realizes Kitayama has just revealed his first bit on why  
 the Yamato sank.

Why didn't they turn the valves to  
 the right when-

KITAYAMA  
 (abruptly)  
 This is our stop.

EXT. GREEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Walking down a narrow alley they approach a TOWNHOUSE. Before  
 they can reach the front door, it opens and they are greeted  
 by Lt. Cmdr. Green.

GREEN  
 Come in! Come in!

INT. GREEN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A large western-style table and chairs set with the  
 paraphernalia of a Passover ceremony on it: *maror*, *chazeret*,  
*charoset*, and small guide books. There are three other  
 Americans here, each, like Green, with a young Japanese  
 woman. Sol and Kitayama shake hands or bow as they are  
 introduced.

GREEN  
 Lt. JG Sol Levine and Mr. Kitayama,  
 my date, Ryoko. This is Lt. Jack  
 Goldstein and Yuri; JG Richie  
 Lazarus and...Kazuko, is it? And  
 Ens. Larry Wasserman and Rin.

Wasserman shakes Sol's hand and nods to his date.

WASSERMAN  
 When I first met her I thought she  
 was saying "Lynn" with a Japanese  
 accent.

All LAUGH. Green turns to Kitayama with an outstretched hand.

GREEN  
 And I am Lt. Cmdr. Hank Green.

GOLDSTEIN  
Used to be Greenberg.

Kitayama's eyes light up. He shakes Green's hand.

KITAYAMA  
You share a name with the great  
baseball player, Hank Greenberg?

GREEN  
I did. Until I realized I'd get  
further if I shortened it a little.

Lazarus addresses Kitayama.

LAZARUS  
So, how do you and Mr. Levine know  
each other?

KITAYAMA  
I am Mr. Levine's gardener.

The others register - a little odd.

GREEN  
Let's take our seats, everybody.

INT. DINING TABLE - NIGHT

MONTAGE: Seder Ceremony. Fragments of dialog. e.g. "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The Ten Plagues, the significance of the foods, etc.

INT. DINING TABLE - LATER

Plates cleared. Smoking. Laughter between the banter. During this scene only the men speak. The women giggle and smile, but that's it - and none of the participants feel this is unnatural.

GOLDSTEIN  
It's a good thing you're allowed to  
recline when you're eating this  
meal. I ate so much that I may just  
recline right onto the floor.

LAZARUS  
Are you sure that those four cups  
of wine don't have something to do  
with it?

WASSERMAN

Catholics are supposed to be the heavy drinkers, but only the God of the Jews *requires* you to drink four cups of wine at one sitting.

GREEN

Must be a benevolent God.

GOLDSTEIN

Oh yeah? He made us wander in the desert for forty years before we got to the Promised Land.

WASSERMAN

And the Jews have been getting a raw deal ever since! You can't get ahead in the world if you're a Jew!

SOL

Don't you think that's a little paranoid?

GREEN

Sol, do you think you'd still be a JG if that anti-Semite fancy-pants family Amd. Ewell weren't your C.O. With your experience and skills you'd be a full looey or even a Lt. Commander by now.

LAZARUS

You've done OK, *Lieutenant Commander Green.*

GREEN

Yeah, but that's because I know how to play the system against itself. As long as they're more afraid of the commies than the kikes there's an opening.

Trying to change the subject, Sol turns to Kitayama.

SOL

So, Kitayama-san, what did you think of the ceremony?

KITAYAMA

This story of the Jews fleeing the Pharaoh...it reminds me of how Zen Buddhism came to Japan.

This arouses interest around the table.

GREEN

How so?

KITAYAMA

When Genghis Khan conquered China some of the Chinese warriors escaped to Japan and brought Zen Buddhism with them. By the time Genghis' grandson, Kublai Khan, decided to invade Japan, the Japanese Shogun sought the advice of a Zen master to help him achieve *katsu* - victory. But, after meditating, the Shogun realized that true victory was to defeat the fear in himself.

LAZARUS

Helps to beat the other guy, too.

KITAYAMA

Twice the Chinese attacked with overwhelming force and twice they were defeated in terrible storms which sank the invading fleet. We Japanese think of this much as Jews think of God parting the Red Sea. We call those two storms *Kamikaze* - or Divine Wind.

Tension. All know the other meaning of *kamikaze*.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Of course, in my opinion, the fact that the Chinese used flat-bottomed boats may have had more to do with their defeat than divinity.

Tension broken. Laughter.

EXT. GREEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door. Guests are leaving. Thank-yous and goodbyes. Kitayama goes out before Sol. Green catches Sol.

GREEN

(eying Kitayama)

Gardener? Whose idea was that? Good luck with the mission - but look out for Ewell. He'll have no qualms about feeding you to the fishes if he thinks you're a liability.

(MORE)

GREEN (CONT'D)  
I've got your back. Just don't  
screw up.

EXT. ALLEY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The trolley stop is visible at the end of the alley. Sol and Kitayama are accosted by two very large drunken SERVICEMEN in uniform who we will call 'bama and Bootlick.

BOOTLICK  
Hey, boy. Whatcha doin' with that  
old Jap?

'BAMA  
(deep drawl)  
Fuckin' Japs are so pathetic - if  
we'd had some 'bama boys there at  
Pearl we would have whipped their  
ass on day one!

Sol wants to respond but Kitayama waves him off.

KITAYAMA  
(Japanese w/subtitles)  
Keep going. They are drunken fools.

BOOTLICK  
Hey, Jap! Whachu jus' say?

Sol is really spoiling now, but Kitayama pushes him forward. Bootlick grabs Kitayama's shoulder from behind and SHOVES him to the ground.

BOOTLICK (CONT'D)  
Bow down and lick my American  
boots, you slant-eyed piece of  
shit!

Sol turns to intervene but 'bama SUCKER PUNCHES him. His GLASSES go flying. Sol whacks him back. It's on.

Bootlick turns to double-team Sol but Kitayama rises and stands in front of him.

KITAYAMA  
(in English)  
Two on one is dishonorable.

BOOTLICK  
You little fuckwad!

He RUSHES Kitayama. Kitayama deftly steps to one side and slips his CANE between Bootlick's legs. He stumbles and SMACKS HIS HEAD into the stone wall and collapses, out cold.

Meanwhile, Sol has gotten the better of 'bama and has him pinned to the ground, beating the crap out of him.

KITAYAMA  
(calmly)  
Stop...stop...

Sol relents and rises. 'bama still on the ground but conscious.

'BAMA  
I'm gonna go find me some MPs and  
have you two arrested!

Sol looks at 'bama's uniform then gets in his face.

SOL  
So, *private first class* 'Bama Boy,  
do you want to tell them that you  
and your friend got drunk and  
attacked *Lt. Commander* Levine and  
his guest *Admiral* Kitayama? Or  
would you rather not spend the next  
three months in the brig?

Sol looks toward the trolley stop.

SOL (CONT'D)  
I think I see a couple of MPs right  
now. Hey!

Sol starts waving his arm.

'BAMA  
Never mind.

He dusts himself off and goes to help Bootlick who seems to have recovered but is still in pain.

Sol picks up his glasses - broken down the middle - and he and Kitayama head to the trolley in silence, Sol still angry.

KITAYAMA  
*Lt. Commander*...I see you've been  
promoted.

Sol is still mad. But bit by bit this strikes him more and more as funny until he and Kitayama are laughing, arms around each others' back.

INT. OFFICE OF ADM. EWELL - DAY

Sol salutes smartly and stands at attention. He sports a shiner and taped-together glasses. Ewell rises from his desk and looks at him, slowly, quizzically.

SOL

Army bum...Whipped his ass. Sir.

Ewell smiles broadly.

EWELL

I may have underestimated you, Mister Levine. Take a seat.

Sol sits.

EWELL (CONT'D)

So, what progress did you make - other than furthering inter-service relations?

SOL

I found out something. The Admiral told me that when they practiced tightening the valves they would say, "Migi ahrai." Sort of like "Righty tighty."

Ewell waits for more. None is forthcoming.

EWELL

That's it? Righty tighty?

SOL

This is a man who, only two weeks ago, would not even speak to us. Given a little more time-

EWELL

Ah, but, Mister Levine, time is what we are out of. The Navy is breathing down my neck. They have a multi-billion dollar decision to make that just might impact the survival of the Free World.

SOL

Then we need to get this right, sir.

EWELL

Yes. But we also need to get it soon.

(MORE)

EWELL (CONT'D)

Secretary Forrestal appears before a Senate committee in ten days to lay out the future of the Navy. He is a lot more worried about the Russians than he is about some Jap Admiral playing games with a JG who might have gone a little too native.

Sol flushes at the insult.

EWELL (CONT'D)

In the days after Pearl, we knew how to deal with these people. In California they put them in camps! Now we're supposed to cozy up to the same bastards who sneak attacked us.

SOL

Sir, with just a little more time-

EWELL

Enough is enough. You have two weeks to get a definitive answer on whether the Yamato sank due to human error or design flaw or I'm pulling the plug on this operation and turning him over to an interrogation team led by Lt. Owen Roberts.

SOL

(alarmed)

Owen Roberts from the Laffey?

EWELL

You know him?

SOL

He's not interested in information. He's only interested in inflicting pain. The man's an ass-- a sadist, sir.

EWELL

Then - if you wish your Japanese friend to avoid discomfort - get me answers.



EXT. BOSTON PUBLIC GARDENS - DAY

Betty and Matt are on a Swan Boat, a long flat pontoon boat with benches facing forward and a driver pedaling in the back behind a large swan statue. They are the only passengers.

BETTY

Now how is it that we are the only two people on this boat? Besides him, I mean.

She thumbs backwards to their teenaged driver.

MATT

DuMont Industries made a rather sizable donation to the Public Gardens last year and so they are not averse to the occasional reasonable request.

(whispers)

Plus I slipped the kid a sawbuck.

He casually puts his arm around behind her on the bench. Pretending she didn't notice, she stands and straightens her dress.

BETTY

You promised me lunch.

MATT

Oh, hungry, are we?

He catches the driver's eye and points to the shore. The boat pulls in. Matt steps off first and holds out his hand to Betty, who takes it but lets go once she's on the ground. They begin walking.

MATT (CONT'D)

There is a marvelous place near here. They have *un creme brulee fantastique*.

BETTY

Le Cochon Heureux.

MATT

You know it?

BETTY

Yes, I know it. Matt, that place is restricted.

MATT  
(puzzled)  
Restricted?

BETTY  
No Jews allowed.

MATT  
So...? Oh, Sol, right. I thought you were broken up. I have nothing against Sol, personally, but you really dodged a bullet there. I mean, did you ever think about what your life with him would have been like? What did your parents think about you dating a Jew? Bet they are thrilled you are kaput. It's a lot further from Beacon Hill to Brookline than you realize. You don't want to be a martyr to a cause you have no stake in.

She stops and glares at him.

BETTY  
Who says I don't have a stake in it?

MATT  
Because you're not one of *them*.

BETTY  
Oh, but I *am* one of them. One of those "little people" that smug privileged brats like you look down at. Sol is twice the man you'll ever be. In fact about the only thing you and he have in common is you both seem to think you have the right to tell me what I should and should not want.

EXT./INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT

Sol, outside, looks in and sees Kitayama again performing some sort of ritual in front of a framed photograph. Sol KNOCKS. Kitayama puts the photo face down.

KITAYAMA  
Yes, come in.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - CONTINUOUS

Sol removes his shoes and sits on the *tatami*.

SOL

I need to speak to you about -

KITAYAMA

Levine-san. Why do you remove your shoes?

SOL

Because I am a guest in this country. So I follow its customs. To a point.

KITAYAMA

Ah, someone who sees beyond the experiences and prejudices of those around him. Someone who sees the universal qualities of all mankind.

(beat)

Has this gotten you into trouble before?

SOL

Sort of.

KITAYAMA

Those who are comfortable with their own, more limited, perspective are often suspicious of such a viewpoint.

Do you know the legend of Momotaro?

SOL

The Peach Boy? That's what it means, right?

KITAYAMA

Yes. A childless couple find a giant peach sent from the heavens. They open it and find a boy, whom they adopt. He goes off to fight marauding demons with the help of his friends: a dog, a monkey, and a bird.

When I went to Europe to study, people here called me Momotaro. It was not a compliment. Momotaro made friends with animals, me with foreigners. I no longer "belonged".

(MORE)

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
And yet I remained, always,  
Japanese.

He holds Sol's gaze.

SOL  
I met with my commanding officer  
today. We need to know why the  
Yamato sank.

KITAYAMA  
I have told you all I can tell.

SOL  
You don't understand. My commanding  
officer has someone who will  
replace me if I don't get the  
answer. He is a very bad man. He  
will hurt you. He may kill you.

Kitayama looks at the face-down photo.

KITAYAMA  
Perhaps I am overdue to die.

Beat. Sol looks down and takes a breath.

SOL  
What do you want?

KITAYAMA  
I want nothing but to be left  
alone.

SOL  
What do you want?

KITAYAMA  
(amused)  
Did you not hear me? Nothing.

SOL  
What do you want?

KITAYAMA  
(getting angry)  
I want you to stop asking me stupid  
questions!

SOL  
What do you want?

KITAYAMA

(upset; verge of tears)  
I want to go back to the place I  
was before I was being tormented!

SOL

Where is that?

KITAYAMA

Where everything began. The  
birthplace of the Yamato.

SOL

What's there?

KITAYAMA

Someone I would like to see, one  
last time. If we can go there, I  
will tell you everything you need  
to know.

SOL

Let me see what I can do.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The engineers are listening intently to the RADIO. They look  
concerned.

RADIO

(Winston Churchill's  
voice)

...It is my duty, however, to place  
before you certain facts about the  
present position in Europe. From  
Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in  
the Adriatic, an **iron curtain** has  
descended across the continent...

INT. HOUSE OFFICE/OFFICE OF ADM. EWELL - CONTINUOUS

INTERCUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

SOL

...He said, "the birthplace of the  
Yamato." I assume that's Hiroshima,  
where it was built.

EWELL

Hiroshima? Too far. I can't take  
that kind of security risk.

(MORE)

EWELL (CONT'D)

Besides...the radiation - you weren't planning on having any progeny, were you, Mister Levine? No, I think your Admiral is playing you. You're a "nice guy" - maybe that's the problem. It's coming up on Easter weekend - you have until Monday to get an answer or Roberts relieves you.

SOL

But sir, you said I had two weeks before.

EWELL

Hearing's been moved up. We need answers. You have until Monday.

SOL

But, sir--

Ewell's phone hangs up. Sol looks at the phone as if deciding whether to call back when there is a KNOCK on the door.

SOL (CONT'D)

Come in.

The Ensign enters the room carrying some mail. He puts a pile on Johnson's desk but holds one in his hand.

ENSIGN

Mister Levine. I have one for you.

SOL

(taking the letter)

Thanks.

The Ensign leaves. Sol looks at the letter. The return address says

Betty Billett/ 38 Rutland St/ Apt. 3G/ Boston, Mass.

He is about to open it when Johnson sticks his head in.

JOHNSON

Mister Levine, we're waiting for you.

He puts the letter in his back pocket and follows Johnson out.

INT. GREAT ROOM - DAY

The usual crew. Kitayama stands in front of the board, in fine spirits, but Sol sulks on his *zabuton*.

Johnson opens his notebook.

JOHNSON

Let us return again to the valve system...

KITAYAMA

Ah, yes, much interest in that. Let me explain the principle.

The engineers look at each other - is he finally going to tell them what they want to know?

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

The Yamato's design takes advantage of the forward motion of the ship to provide the energy to drive the hydraulic pumps because it is *continuously circulating*. Thus, any water entering as a result of torpedo damage...

(he draws on the board)

...is pumped out and redistributed automatically, eventually exiting...

(he draws some more)

...out normal bilge channels.

CRAMER

And if the ship is not in motion?

KITAYAMA

Ah...my favorite part. When the craft is in forward motion it gathers and stores compressed air. When the ship stops, the compressed air pushes out any water faster than it can come in. After that, one is reliant upon battery energy, but the ship would have to be dead in the water for several days for the system to fail.

He smiles. He's *proud* of this. Sol is antsy.

SOL

Yet fail it did. Why?

The engineers lean forward.

JOHNSON  
Yes, why did it fail?

KITAYAMA  
(evasive)  
There are things a designer cannot control.

SOL  
And things he can. It's a simple question. Why did it fail?

Kitayama is silent. Withdrawing. Johnson is getting alarmed at Sol's increasingly hostile attitude.

SOL (CONT'D)  
(standing, agitated)  
C'mon...did the crew turn the valves the wrong way? Was "Migi ahrai" all wrong?

JOHNSON  
Calm down, Mr. Levine.

SOL  
(nearly shouting)  
Or was it something else? If you don't tell these fine gentlemen what happened, somebody's going to come and beat the living shit out of you until you do! And I won't be here to "translate" for you!

JOHNSON  
Enough, Levine!

KITAYAMA  
(mumbling to himself)  
Saigo, no...Saigo...

JOHNSON  
Let's call it a day. Levine! In my office!

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Johnson leans on his desk, arms crossed. Sol stands at attention.

JOHNSON  
What the hell was that? Just as our Jap pal was starting to spill the beans, you go all Section 8.



SOL

With all due respect sir, he only ever gives us a bean or two. If we don't find out what really happened then Adm. Ewell is going to make something really bad happen to our prisoner.

JOHNSON

Ah...Rear Admiral Desk-Jockey. If there was a medal for family connections and brainless paper-pushing Ewell would have it. I should have figured...

SOL

He says that there is a big Congressional hearing coming up and if we don't have all the answers he wants - by Monday - he's going to send in a team led Lt. Roberts.

JOHNSON

(shakes head)

Roberts? Oh, sweet lord, the last prisoner I knew that guy "interrogated" died suddenly of "natural causes". You're right, we have to get that information soon.

Beat.

SOL

I have an idea. But I'll need your help.

EXT. TOKYO STATION - DAY

This is the hub of Japan's train system. The size and sheer chaos put Grand Central to shame. Sol, in civies, scrutinizes the signs. He stands half a head taller than the Japanese around him. He starts to get in a line with a sign marked (in Japanese with subtitles) Points South: Osaka, Hiroshima, Kyushu. But Kitayama takes his elbow and, gesturing, leads him to different line. This one is marked Points Northwest: Niigata, Nagoaka, Sado.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Johnson is on the phone.

JOHNSON

Yes sir, I understand. Results.  
Yes. He's busy with the prisoner  
right now. No, I don't think an on-  
site visit is necessary. Thank you,  
s-

The other end has hung up.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Christ, Levine. I hope you know  
what you're doing.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

The train is packed with people and their belongings,  
however, it being Japan, everything is *neat*. There are four  
businessmen on two double seats facing each other, playing  
cards and smoking at a foldout table. They are stripped down  
to their boxers and tank tops, their suits carefully hung  
from hangers.

Sol and Kitayama sit together as rice paddy after rice paddy  
goes by.

SOL

Seeing as I may get court-martialed  
for this, the least you might tell  
me is where exactly are we going?

KITAYAMA

We are going to see Nishimura  
Sensei, the Fish Man of Niigata.

SOL

Fisherman?

KITAYAMA

No...Nishimura Sensei is a Fish  
Man. There is no English word.

SOL

You just called him "Sensei". That  
can mean "teacher" or "master".  
Which is it?

KITAYAMA

For me, he is both. Did you ever  
have a Sensei, Levine-san?

SOL

Not like that...

Sol drifts into his thoughts.

EXT/INT. DUNSTER HOUSE, HARVARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Establishing shot of Harvard Yard and exterior of Dunster House.

SUPER: "Harvard University. 1940."

We make our way into the student lounge.

Freshman Sol and charismatic Upper Classman, BOB HERSCHEL, come across house bully, BUSHWICKE, rich, arrogant and entitled; and his sidekick, MANLEY, torturing 16 year-old prodigy Freshman, NORMAN. Manley has Norman pinned to the floor, face down, while Bushwicke watches, arms crossed, slightly bored.

BUSHWICKE

Say it again...the oath of  
allegiance to the Emperor of Siam?

NORMAN

"Awa...tanass...Siam". Can I get up  
now?

Bushwicke nods to Manley who SMACKS Norman's face down on the floor.

BUSHWICKE

Faster.

NORMAN

(fast)  
Awa-tanass-Siam, Awa-tanass-Siam,  
Awa-tanass-Siam...

It sounds like "What an ass I am."

BUSHWICKE

Yes, you are, Norman. Yes you are.

Herschel looks at Sol as if to say, "Follow my lead."

HERSCHEL

Hi, Bushwicke...Manley...

BUSHWICKE

Hi, Herschel.

MANLEY

(nods)  
Hersch.

HERSCHEL  
 (pretending he doesn't  
 notice Norman)  
 What are you up to?

BUSHWICKE  
 Not much. You know, the usual.  
 Trying to get to classes in between  
 getting into the pants of the  
 Cliffies.

Bushwicke bends down and shouts in Norman's ear.

BUSHWICKE (CONT'D)  
 Say it faster!

NORMAN  
 (breathless)  
 Awa-tanass-Siam...

Herschel signals to Sol and they fly into action. Herschel  
 TICKLES Bushwicke and Sol TICKLES Manley. All four LAUGH and  
 STRUGGLE. In the chaos, Norman gets up and RUNS up the  
 stairs.

BUSHWICKE  
 That's right, Norman. Run back up  
 to the sixth floor where they keep  
 little turds like you. We'll know  
 where to find you when we want you.

Bushwicke and Herschel smack each others' shoulders and shake  
 hands like they are old buddies. But Herschel secretly gives  
 Sol a look that lets him know he is disgusted.

EXT. NIIGATA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Much smaller and less bustling than Tokyo. The port in the  
 distance is visible. Kitayama speaks on a pay phone and hangs  
 up.

KITAYAMA  
 Mr. Nishimura is not available  
 until later. But as your Mr.  
 Carnegie says, one must turn a  
 setback into an opportunity. Our  
 opportunity is to see the Niigata  
 Noh theater company. It is not far  
 from here.

SOL  
 Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist?

KITAYAMA

No, Dale Carnegie, the author. In his book, How to Make Influential People Your Friends.

SOL

You mean How to Make Friends and Influence People?

KITAYAMA

Is that it?

He WINKS.

SOL

Did you just wink at me?

KITAYAMA

You must be mistaken. I am an Admiral in His Imperial Majesty's Navy. Admirals do not wink.

He turns to leave the station. As he does so, he WINKS AGAIN. Dialog fades as they exit.

SOL

(trailing behind)  
You just did it again!

KITAYAMA

An involuntary tic, no doubt...

EXT. NIIGATA TRAIN STATION FRONT - DAY

As Sol and Kitayama emerge from the station a YOUNG MAN with a CAMERA around his neck observes them. He runs over to them and bows to Kitayama.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES.

YOUNG MAN

Admiral Kitayama.

KITAYAMA

Yes?

YOUNG MAN

A thousand pardons, sir. But I was an ensign on your staff.

KITAYAMA

Ah, yes, Ensign...

YOUNG MAN

Sato, sir. Your leadership was an inspiration to us all.

Kitayama is clearly uncomfortable with this situation and wants to leave but feels obligated to be polite.

THE REST OF THE SCENE IN ENGLISH:

KITAYAMA

This is my colleague, Solomon Levine, from Harvard University.

SOL

(bowing)

Ensign Sato. Very pleased to make your acquaintance.

YOUNG MAN

No longer Ensign, Levine Sensei. I am now a reporter for the Asahi Shimbun newspaper right here in Niigata. Where are you from, Prof. Levine?

Sol isn't quite sure how to deal with the word "Professor" but lets it go.

SOL

Boston.

YOUNG MAN

Ah, so. You sound like you are from China.

SOL

So I've been told.

YOUNG MAN

Would you mind answering our newspaper's question of the day?

SOL

What's that?

Sato pulls out a slip of paper and reads.

YOUNG MAN

"According to recent government statistics, the average weight and height of Japanese children is growing. Why do you think that is the case?"

Sol doesn't have a clue.

SOL

The diet?

YOUNG MAN

(very excited)

Really? That's good to hear from such an esteemed source. May I take a picture of the two of you? The hometown hero and the honorable professor.

They pose as he takes several shots.

KITAYAMA

(whispering)

I don't know which of us is more of a fraud - the hero or the scholar.

YOUNG MAN

The Diet! Thank you! Thank you!

He bustles off.

SOL

Why was he so excited just because I said that the food children eat has changed how big they are?

KITAYAMA

The "Diet" is the name for the body of democratically elected Japanese representatives. It's as if you had said, "Congress is making our children grow."

INT. THEATER - DAY

Sol and Kitayama slip in the back of the theater. It's a matinee performance attended by mostly older folks. They sit.

Onstage, the actors are performing *Sekidera Komachi*, a famous Noh play. All the actors are men, even the women's roles. Each character has a specific traditional mask. Although not an opera, there is musical accompaniment and some singing. Sol and Kitayama whisper.

SOL

Why are we here?

KITAYAMA

So Levine-san can learn more about Japan. That, plus Nishimuri Sensei is busy entertaining tourists.

SOL

Tourists?

KITAYAMA

Yes. Japanese people suddenly have a hunger to see the world. Most likely a passing fad.

SOL

What's the play about?

KITAYAMA

The preciousness and brevity of life.

The highly stylized movements of the play baffle Sol.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

There is nothing more Japanese than Noh.

SOL

Why do you say that?

KITAYAMA

Because all the actors wear masks.

EXT. NIIGATA TRAIN STATION - EVENING

Kitayama on the phone again. As he sits on a bench, Sol notices there is something in his back pocket. He pulls it out - it's the letter from Betty he got just before he left. He opens it and reads

BETTY (V.O.)

Dear Sol,  
Even though we are no longer engaged, I can't seem to get out of the habit of writing to you. I thought you'd like to know that Radcliffe has accepted me into its Masters program. I know you have what it takes to rise in the ranks in the Navy - if that's what you really want.

Love, Betty



Sol is ashen-faced. Kitayama come back from the phone, smiling.

KITAYAMA

He's home.

He notices Sol's distress.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

SOL

Just stuck one of those shallows you talked about. Hope the tide changes soon.

EXT. NIIGATA TRAIN STATION FRONT - EVENING

They hail a cab. It is cold enough that they are wearing coats.

INT. TAXI - EVENING

SOL

I couldn't hear what you were saying on the phone, but I certainly heard the word "*gaijin*" enough times to know you were talking about me.

KITAYAMA

*Gaijin* simply means foreigner. How do you know I wasn't talking about another foreigner?

Sol gives him a look. Kitayama reveals nothing.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

Nishimura Sensei says he will be honored to have us as guests. During the war, an American incendiary bomb struck Nishimura's house.

SOL

God...he's lucky to be alive.

KITAYAMA

His wife was killed.

Sol absorbs this.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 You will be the first *gaijin* to  
 ever enter his home.

INT. NISHIMURA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Nishimura, 80s, welcomes them in. He is ancient but radiates calm. The warmth between Kitayama and Nishimura is evident.

They hang up their coats in such a way that it clear it has gotten brisk outside.

EVERYTHING IN THIS SCENE IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES.

NISHIMURA  
 (bowing to Kitayama)  
 Hiro.

KITAYAMA  
 (bowing)  
 Nishimura Sensei.

Nishimura leads them in to a table built into the floor.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)  
 Ah, I remember this *katatsu*.

SOL  
*Katatsu?* What is a *katatsu*?

Nishimura and Kitayama exchange a glance.

NISHIMURA  
 Please sit down and you will see.

All three sit on *zabuton*, Sol cross-legged.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
 Please uncross your legs. There is  
 space.

Sol gingerly puts his feet down under the table. His feet rest on a grate suspended above a chamber containing hot coals.

SOL  
 (surprised)  
 Oh!  
 (now getting comfy)  
 Mm...

KITAYAMA

The Japanese are credited with many great inventions: the novel, the power loom, the dual pendulum clock. But surely, the greatest is the *katatsu*.

Nishimura pours them green tea from a teapot. Each cups his hands around it to feel the warmth.

NISHIMURA

(to Sol)

When Hiro was a boy he often would not go home. He said it was because he was studying the fish. I believe it was because his home did not have a *katatsu*.

KITAYAMA

Sensei, as always you have uncovered the truth.

They LAUGH.

SOL

(to Nishimura)

Admiral Kitayama called you the "Fish Man". Why is that?

NISHIMURA

When we finish our tea, I will show you.

INT. NISHIMURA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nishimura leads them to the central courtyard of his house where there is a koi pond. He motions them to sit beside him next to the pond on *zabuton*. Nishimura holds a bowl of RICE and some CHOPSTICKS.

NISHIMURA

Come here, my little ones.

A dozen or so KOI swim over to where Nishimura sits and stick their heads out of the water, mouths open. He deftly feeds them rice, putting the morsels directly into their mouths.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)

Rojin...Rojin come here. Meet our guests.

A very large fish slowly swims over. Nishimura reaches down into the water, picks Rojin up, and places the fish on his lap. He begins to stroke the head of the fish which does not struggle.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
(softly, like to a baby)  
Rojin...Rojin...

Nishimura puts Rojin back in the water and smiles.

SOL  
I have heard that koi can live to  
be very old.

NISHIMURA  
Rojin is 150 years old.

SOL  
How do you know?

NISHIMURA  
I got him from a temple when I was  
young. At the temple, the monks  
kept records of each fish.

KITAYAMA  
(to Sol)  
When I was young, I would come here  
every day after school and watch  
the fish swim and swim. Koi gills  
only function when the water is in  
motion. If the water stops moving,  
they suffocate.

NISHIMURA  
When the bomb struck my house, it  
caught fire. Most of what you see  
was rebuilt. But worse, the entire  
city lost electric power.

SOL  
Worse because...?

NISHIMURA  
With no electric power, the pump to  
the pond stopped working. With no  
pump, the fish began to die.

I connected my bicycle to the pump  
and kept the water flowing  
manually. I pedalled day and night  
until I collapsed with exhaustion.  
I lost all the koi except Rojin.

Beat.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)

After two days, the power came back. Only then could I go to my wife's funeral.

Silence as the impact of this sinks in with Sol.

KITAYAMA

I learned how to build ships from watching the carp.

SOL

How so?

KITAYAMA

For example, when carp jump out of the water they are clearing built-up carbon dioxide in their system by forcing oxygen through it. This is where I got the idea for the high-pressure exhaust tubes which could clear the Yamato of water faster than it could come in.

NISHIMURA

Hiro. Would you like to feed the fish? I have something I would like to show Levine-san [he pronounces it "Ray Bean San"].

KITAYAMA

Yes, Sensei, of course.

Kitayama happily feeds the fish while Nishimura leads Sol in to his bedroom.

INT. NISHIMURA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nishimura's bedroom is even more spare than Kitayama's, if possible. But it has one object beyond the barest of necessities: a PHOTO ALBUM.

Beyond the bedroom's sliding door, Kitayama feeds the fish with childlike abandon.

NISHIMURA

(showing Sol the album)

Here is Hiro when he first came to me.

A photo of a skinny teenager, in a school uniform, no older than 12, with none of the gravity he now possesses.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
...studying the fish...

A shot of him on his knees looking into the pond, notepad in hand.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
His first Naval assignment...

A picture of a 30s-ish Kitayama, in uniform, proudly standing by a small boat he apparently designed.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
...his wife, Yumiko, with my wife,  
Izumi.

A friendly-looking older woman and beautiful younger woman.

They hear, coming from outside, Kitayama LAUGHING, enthralled with the fish.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
I have not heard him laugh like  
that in such a long time. No doubt,  
it is because there is someone who  
reminds him of Saigo.

Sol is confused.

SOL  
Takamori Saigo?

NISHIMURA  
No...Saigo, his son.

Nishimura turns the page of the album.

NISHIMURA (CONT'D)  
Kitayama Setsue's nickname was  
Saigo.

A young man in a baseball uniform. The picture could be of Sol had he slightly more Asian eyes. Sol is stunned.

SOL  
(putting it together)  
...Saigo?

NISHIMURA

(nodding)

He died in the war. Kitayama has never been the same.

INT. DUNSTER HOUSE, HARVARD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Sol is in his room. He hears the sound of WEEPING. He rises and goes down the hall where a door is open a crack. He pushes it open and sees Norman with a LETTER in his hand, sobbing uncontrollably.

NORMAN

He's dead. The bastards killed him.

SOL

Who?

NORMAN

Herschel. The only person who was ever nice to me here. Besides you, Sol.

SOL

What happened?

NORMAN

On patrol in some godforsaken Pacific island. Shot dead in an ambush.

SOL

War is hell, Norman.

NORMAN

He was set up.

SOL

What do you mean?

NORMAN

They set it up to look like the Japs did it. It was a Jap bullet, no doubt. But they hated Herschel, they made it happen. I *know* it.

SOL

Who? What are you talking about, Norman?

NORMAN

The Bushwickses and the Manleys of the world.

(MORE)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Or the ones just like them that aren't rich and pretentious but still hate us for what we are.

SOL

Jews?

NORMAN

Thinkers.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Sol is stewing, angry. Kitayama is lost in his own thoughts.

SOL

Why didn't you tell me you had a son?

KITAYAMA

You asked, "Have any kids?" I do not.

SOL

Only because he's dead.

Kitayama is pained.

SOL (CONT'D)

Yes, I know. He died in the war. And he looks like me. Don't you think I should have known that?

Kitayama snaps back.

KITAYAMA

Why? You are not my son. You are not Saigo.

SOL

No, I'm not. I'm someone you had a deal with. *Have* a deal with. You promised to tell me everything if I got you to Niigata. So...?

KITAYAMA

You know all you need to know.

SOL

(raising his voice)  
Bullshit! You played me.

Heads turn.



SOL (CONT'D)

Yes, folks, this is the great and honorable Admiral who *doesn't keep his word*. I kept my side of the bargain. You got to visit your old pal and relive your childhood. Now keep yours. Tell me, *Why did the Yamato sink?*

Kitayama comes to a decision.

KITAYAMA

(quietly)

You are right. I will tell you everything. Once we are in private.

INT. YAMATO BELOWDECKS - DAY

CMDR. OKOSHI and the engine room crew demonstrate their preparedness for Adm. Kitayama.

IN JAPANESE WITH SUBTITLES:

OKOSHI

...and to seal off a compartment  
what do we do?

CREW

Migi ahrai!

C/u on Kenji, beaming with pride. Kitayama nods approval.

OKOSHI

What was that again?

CREW

Migi ahrai!

OKOSHI

One more time!

CREW

Migi ahrai...

CROSSFADE WITH...

EXT. TROLLEY CAR - NIGHT

CONDUCTOR

(leaning out the door)

...Migi Ahrai.

Sol and Kitayama step off the trolley and walk toward Kitayama's house.

SOL  
(ranting)  
No more baloney this time - right?  
You're really going to finally tell  
me what I need to know?

Kitayama says nothing.

SOL (CONT'D)  
You really had me going there, you  
know. I bought your whole noble,  
misunderstood genius act. So I have  
to go all the way Niigata to find  
out you haven't told me the most  
basic stuff - like the fact that  
you had a *son* and he looked like  
*me!*

KITAYAMA  
Please keep your voice down.

We see the gates to Kitayama's house in the distance.

SOL  
Or what? The neighbors will hear  
me? Frankly, I don't care. But what  
I do care is that you *keep your  
word*, Mr. Honorable Samurai. So the  
moment we get past those  
gates...Oh, crap...this doesn't  
look good.

EXT. GATE - DAY

The two regular guards plus two new ones are augmented by  
Cmdr. Roberts and Adm. Ewell. Johnson looks on sheepishly.

EWELL  
Mister Levine. How nice of you to  
return with the prisoner in tow.  
And thank you, Mister Johnson. Nice  
to know the Japanese trains run  
precisely as you reported they  
would.

Johnson gives Sol a "What could I do?" look.

EWELL (CONT'D)

Commander Roberts. Please escort the prisoner to a place where you can have an intimate and frank discussion.

ROBERTS

(relishing it)

Yessir!

EWELL

And you, Mister Levine...Oh how I rue the day I ever listened to your co-religionist Lt. Cmdr. Green and awarded you this assignment. But what could I do? The modern Navy insists that we give equal consideration to all, regardless of how questionable their origins are.

These two gentlemen...

(motions to new guards)

...will show you to *your* next destination, where I believe you will be staying for some time.

Cramer comes running up to Johnson. He hands him the newspaper.

CRAMER

Look at this, sir.

Johnson looks at the headline.

JOHNSON

You might not want to do that, Admiral.

EWELL

And why not, *Lieutenant Commander*?

JOHNSON

Do you really want to be the guy who puts a national hero in jail?

EWELL

Admiral Kitayama is already a prisoner.

JOHNSON

I meant Levine.

He flourishes the NEWSPAPER, the English language edition of the Asahi Shinbun. The headline reads:

AMERICAN SCHOLAR SAYS JAPANESE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN'S GROWTH.

JOHNSON (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

Internationally-known Professor Solomon Levine of Harvard University declared that the reason for the recent improvements in the height and weight of Japanese children was "the Diet". Japanese foreign minister, Watanabe Akira, said, "Prof. Levine is the kind of American we welcome here and would like to see more of in the future."

EWELL

Let me see that.

He snatches the paper from Johnson's hands and reads.

ROBERTS

I don't see how this changes anything. The Jap wasn't in the paper.

JOHNSON

No, but what if somebody blabs to the Nip press that the Jap is getting the once-over from some thug who calls himself an interrogator...

ROBERTS

Why you-

JOHNSON

And the Jap's translator - the symbol of our warm and trusting relations with the new Japan - is in the brig.

EWELL

You wouldn't...

JOHNSON

I would.

Ewell realizes he is checkmated.

EWELL

(to Roberts)

Let's go.

## INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT

As they enter the hut, Kitayama picks up and holds the photograph we saw earlier. We now recognize that it's his son, Saigo, in a baseball uniform. He puts it down and pours himself a sake. He offers some to Sol who shakes his head, "no". They sit.

KITAYAMA

Much excitement this evening. It does not look as though your Adm. Ewell will be troubling you again soon.

SOL

Yes. But you still get to keep your promise.

Kitayama nods.

KITAYAMA

Takamori Saigo led the Meiji Restoration, but he also led a counter-revolution, too, later, when he thought that too-rapid modernization was destroying the values he was trying to restore. He and some other samurai fought the peasant army he had organized. Swords and horses against Winchesters and cannons.

The samurai were defeated, the old order was dead. But, today, he is considered a great hero.

SOL

What does this have to do with--

Kitayama puts up his hand.

## EXT. MILITARY REVIEWING STAND - DAY

An endless trail of well-scrubbed and well-fed Japanese troops pass by a reviewing stand populated by a cluster of stern-faced officers including a young-looking Kitayama.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

In the early days, I supported the militarists. I wanted a Japan that was strong and proud.

EXT. NANKING - DAY

Aerial view of a burning city.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

Disillusionment came in steps. The first was the disgusting behavior of our army when it conquered Nanking.

Japanese soldiers shoot, stab, and bludgeon civilians - including children - randomly and gleefully. A group is gang-raping a woman and laughing. Still others set fires.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

"But they're just Chinese," people said, as if that excused it. As the arrogance of the fascists grew, I became more and more ashamed.

INT. MILITARY PRISON - DAY

Close in on a hospital-like door where we catch glimpses of white-coated men doing something on the other side.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

I began to hear rumors of things like Unit 731, where Japanese doctors did unspeakable things to captives.

The sound of a child SCREAMING as one of the men holds up an internal organ with tongs.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

But the worst was what they were doing to the Japanese people themselves.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

A brief montage of young uniformed Japanese being maimed and mutilated on a Jungle battlefield; ships at sea; and planes shot down.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

We were killing our young to feed the imperial ambitions of a small cadre of generals.

INT. MILITARY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Kitayama speaking m.o.s. to other generals and admirals.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

When I expressed my doubts, however carefully, others began to suspect I was not fully committed to the new Japan.

We see whispering among other brass, looking at Kitayama.

EXT. AIRFORCE BASE - DAY

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

My son, Setsue - Saigo - felt he had to do something to protect the family name. He was a fine pilot.

SAIGO stands in front of a group of fighter planes and salutes.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

When the first group of Kamikaze were formed, he volunteered.

Kitayama salutes back, ashen-faced.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

I was told he died "gloriously".

Kitayama finishes off his sake and pours himself another. He offers some to Sol, who refuses. Kitayama momentarily chokes up.

KITAYAMA

May I have a cigarette?

Sol gives him the pack. He takes one. Sol lights it.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

After that, I lost all faith in the government and the war.

INT. JAPANESE MILITARY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Kitayama sits at a large table with other military leaders and Emperor Hirohito at the head, m.o.s.

One of the other, higher up admirals is speaking to the assembled group and occasionally gesturing to Kitayama. Giant blueprints of the Yamato hang from a board.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

I was told that my creation was the last best hope of the regime. They said that if it could reach the American fleet it could prolong the war by years - maybe even change its course.

EXT. SHIPYARD - DAY

A hyper-real, color-saturated memory. The Yamato arrives in port in full regalia, sailors waving to the crowd in slo-mo.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

Just before the Yamato sailed for Okinawa it put up in Kure for repairs and refitting. I made a number of technical improvements.

INT. SHIPYARD OFFICE - DAY

Kitayama scribbling on blueprints as assistants, including the Young Man from Niigata (Ens. Sato) scurry to and fro.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

One of the last things the workers did was replace a dozen key valves in the safety system.

INT. YAMATO BELOWDECKS - NIGHT

The crew is furiously working to install the valves. Kenji looks up and smiles at a stone-faced Kitayama.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

These had the opposite orientation from the original specification.

EXT. PACIFIC - DAY

The Yamato, all alone on the open sea. POV of an American torpedo bomber coming in.



KITAYAMA (V.O.)

When the Americans attacked, the sky was filled with so many aircraft it blotted out the sun.

The sky is truly black with planes.

KITAYAMA

The torpedo bombers attacked again and again.

The Yamato is being attacked by hundreds of planes, ships and submarines. Despite many EXPLOSIONS, the crew fights off the onslaught.

INT. YAMATO BELOWDECKS - DAY

Crew is madly turning valves as water rushes in.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

But they were in no danger until, below decks, the crew did what they had been trained to do - turned the valves to the right.

OKOSHI

Migi ahrai!!! Migi!!! Migi!!!

The crew continues to turn to no avail.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

They sank their own ship.

Kenji looks up as the hatch to their compartment closes automatically, sealing them in.

Off Kenji's frightened face...

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The Yamato, surrounded by hundreds of American ships, Gulliver amidst the Lilliputians, sinks beneath the waves.

KITAYAMA (V.O.)

The magazines ensured there were few survivors.

From beneath the surface there is an EXPLOSION of enormous power, a plume shooting hundreds of feet into the air.

INT. SAKAMOTO HOUSE - DAY

Kenji's mother WAILING, beating on the chest of her stone-faced husband.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT

Kitayama's eyes brim.

KITAYAMA

I killed 2,800 young men, most no older than Saigo, to save hundreds of thousands more. But if it ever were to be known, my family name would be disgraced. Saigo's sacrifice would be meaningless. I could never let that happen.

Sol nods, finally understanding.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

I have something else I want to show you.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Kitayama leads Sol out to the garden, takes a small SHOVEL and digs up the perennials he called his proudest accomplishment. Buried beneath them is a SAMURAI SWORD in its sheath inside a protective covering. He takes the covering off, holds the sheath in one hand and takes the sword out with the other.

This is General Saigo's sword, beautiful and elegant in the way that only traditional Japanese things are. We see the family crest. FLASH on Gen. Saigo holding the same sword.

KITAYAMA

This is my family's sword, going back hundreds of years. I hid it in the garden because I thought the Americans would confiscate it as a weapon.

He puts the sword back into the sheath and hands it to Sol.

KITAYAMA (CONT'D)

I want you to have it. I have no more use for it.

SOL

But--

Kitayama holds up his hand again.

KITAYAMA  
Please. Do this for me.

Sol bows and says an elaborate Japanese thank-you.

SOL  
*Domo arigato gozaimasu.*

Sol heads back to the main house and Kitayama to the Gardener's hut.

INT. GARDENER'S HUT - NIGHT

Kitayama picks up the photograph of Saigo again and nods to it. The resemblance between Saigo and Sol is uncanny. He gets out his bottle of *sake*, pours himself a cup, and drinks it. Then another and another while lying on his futon. He takes a cigarette out of the pack Sol gave him and LIGHTS ONE UP. He lets it fall from his hand and it rolls on the *tatami*. He closes his eyes.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

Surreal colors indicate a dreamscape. Fall colors. Leaves underfoot. A vital and energetic Kitayama, in civies, playing catch with teenaged son, Saigo, in a baseball uniform like the photograph.

KITAYAMA  
(Japanese w/ subtitles)  
Go long, Saigo. Go long!

Kitayama throws the ball up high with all his might. Saigo fades back. The sound of his feet CRUNCHING LEAVES fades into...

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

...a soft, but growing, CRACKLING SOUND.

Floating past the tranquility of the bed of perennials, the chair/rock, the zen circles, the tiny pond, are all illuminated by a ghostly orange flickering light.

INT. SOL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sol, asleep in his quarters, is awakened by the SOUND OF FIRETRUCKS. He bounds out of bed.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Sol runs out to see the hut IN FLAMES. He tries to run into it but the fire is too intense. The FIREMEN grab him and drag him to safety. He stands there, motionless, as the intent of Kitayama's actions register.

EXT. MAIN HOUSE - MORNING

Sol sits on the step of the main house, wasted and soot-covered. Firemen are still hosing the smoldering remains of the hut. From across the yard we see Lt. Cmdr. Green conferring with the Fire Chief. He then turns and explains to Johnson and Cramer.

They make their way over to Sol.

CRAMER

Looks like the dumb fuck Jap fell asleep while drinking and smoking and his cigarette caught the place on fire.

JOHNSON

(to Cramer)

Show some respect.

(to Sol)

Mr. Levine, I know you were close to him. Did you learn anything more before...

Johnson gestures to the wreckage. Sol looks up slowly. Considering.

SOL

Yeah. The crew turned the valves the wrong way. Confirmed.

JOHNSON

You're sure?

SOL

100%. They sank their own ship. Old man told me himself last night.

Johnson looks relieved.

JOHNSON

Outstanding! The Navy will be happy to learn it. I can hear them now. "At least American sailors can tell their right from their left."

Sol is still in shock. Johnson and Cramer walk away talking. Green crouches to speak privately to Sol.

GREEN

You know, you really are the hero of this investigation, Sol. Before you came we didn't have anything but a mute prisoner and a lot of questions. Now we have a blueprint for the new Navy! I'll make sure you get promoted to Lieutenant. And then Lt. Commander after I'm promoted to Captain.

Sol looks at him blankly.

GREEN (CONT'D)

(misunderstanding)

Oh, don't worry about Adm. Ewell. He's not happy but he's leaving soon. And, besides, what can he say? That newspaper I sent over is pretty much game, set, and match. The *Diet*? Did you think that up, Sol? Brilliant!

Ewell would like to take credit for it all but he already told half the Navy that bringing you in was my fault. "Professor Levine", you are going to be a very valuable member of the team. You've got a great future in the Navy.

SOL

I don't want a future in the Navy.

GREEN

What *do* you want?

SOL

I want to go home.

INT. JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Sol is on the phone talking m.o.s.

INT. SELMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Betty, contained, nods and responds carefully, m.o.s. She hangs up the phone and smiles a little. Then a lot.

EXT. MILITARY AIRPORT - SUNSET

Sol looks at the setting sun for a moment, then boards a military transport. He carries a duffle bag. Kitayama's sword is tied to it.

INT. PLANE - SUNSET

Sol sits and fills out his discharge papers on his lap. Where there is a space for religion he hesitates for a moment then writes, JEWISH.

The plane takes off. As it circles he looks out the window back at Japan and sees the sun setting behind the mountains.

SOL  
Sayonara, Kitayama...*Sensei*.

The plane slowly disappears over the Pacific into the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: "Sol and Betty were married and had four children. Sol became a world-recognized expert on Japanese labor relations. Japanese people called him 'Sensei'." He never revealed publicly what he knew about the Yamato's demise.

SUPER: "Betty got her masters from Radcliffe and another from the Univ. Of Illinois. A room in the Psychology Dept. at the Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison was named for her."

SUPER: "After the war, Navies around the world decommissioned their battleships in favor of the more powerful aircraft carriers and more maneuverable destroyers. The Yamato was the last battleship ever sunk in combat."

THE END