

The Battle of Midway! Live! Onstage!

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©Book and Lyrics by John Fisher
Music by Don Seaver

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ACT ONE

(An ANCIENT VETERAN [AV] is wheeled onstage, quickly. He wears an old campaign hat and holds a small American flag. He addresses the audience before they can settle down.)

ANCIENT VETERAN

Shut up! Shut up, all of youse! The show's starting. Shut the fuck up! No respect for live performance! You're all used to movies with sound so loud you can talk on your cell phones and fart. Well have some respect. This is a theatah. You youngsters don't appreciate traditions, where we come from. Well, this is a show about the most important tradition: waaaaaar. You think war is something that happens in the Stans. Afghanistan. Pakistan. Iraq-i-stan. Those aren't wars! We once fought noble wars, good wars. Like the one in the Pacific. We were great then, noble. And the Japanese were great, noble. This is that story, the story of that noble war. Pay attention, Millennials.

(FLETCH enters. He is a middle-aged admiral.)

FLETCH

In the beginning there were planes.

(The stage fills with ACTORS flying about like airplanes. The MEN are all dressed in khaki US navy uniforms and envelope hats à la 1940s; the WOMEN are dressed in navy uniforms and strap on hats à la JAPANESE NAVY World War II era. The JAPANESE are all played by women, the AMERICANS by men. Thus the play takes on a subliminal battle of the sexes feel – ooooooo, so symbolic. NIM, another American admiral enters.)

NIM

(AV, who has shed his outfit to reveal admiral outfit underdress)

Then guns were added to the planes.

(The ACTORS begin shooting at each other, making machine gun noises. Some planes crash.)

FLETCH

But the planes could not cross the oceans so man created flat tops.

(A huge flat board is brought on stage. Everyone hums ominously like in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The "planes" land on the board.)

NIM

And now the flat tops could carry the planes across the ocean to fight with other planes. The biggest ocean was the Pacific.

(Everyone creates an ocean by waving their arms. Someone trips on the flat top.)

NIM

Ok, strike the flat top. (To the tripper) Come on, we rehearsed this.

(Flattop is struck upstage.)

NIM

The biggest ocean was the Pacific. On one side the Japanese.

(All the WOMEN rush to one side of the stage.)

FLETCH

On the other side the Americans.

(The MEN rush to the opposite side. YAMMY, a Japanese admiral, speaks to the audience.)

YAMMY

Now you'll notice that there's a division of the sexes. The reason we've done this is utilize a battle of the sexes metaphor to demonstrate geopolitical conflict.

NIM

Just get on with it. Fuck the exposition.

FLETCH

Yeah, they'll figure it out the dramaturgical underpinnings.

NIM

Audiences these days are smart.

(The cast smiles at the audience, shit eating grins.)

YAMMY (To NIM)

The Pacific is a Japanese lake.

NIM (To YAMMY)

The Pacific is an American swimming pool.

YAMMY

No it's not.

NIM

Yes, it is.

(Both sides join in the argument riffing on “No, it’s not!”/”Yes, it is!”)

NIM (Interrupting)

Can we please get on with it!!! (To audience) The Americans kept their flat tops at Pearl Harbor.

(HANK, an American pilot, daintily places a pearl in the middle of the stage.)

HANK

That represents Pearl Harbor. Get it? Pearl? Oooo, so clevah.

YAMMY

And one day the Japanese set out with their flat tops to get the Pearl.

Song: “Nippon/US” [The Big Opening Number]

JAPANESE

*WE’RE THE GLORIOUS RACE, THE RACE OF WINNERS
WE EAT RAW FISH FOR OUR DINNERS
IT KEEPS US IN GOOD TEMPEROR.
WE EVEN HAVE AN EMPEROR,*

AMERICANS

*WE’RE A MIGHTY, MULTI-RACE OF WINNERS,
WE EAT ROAST BEEF FOR OUR DINNERS.
WE’RE RICHY-RICH BUT LYRICAL
HATE TAXES BUT ARE LIBERAL.*

JAPANESE

WE’RE GOOD AT ORIGAMI AND TOFU AND SASHIMI.

AMERICANS

WE HAVE PAINTERS SUCH AS POLLACK AND LIVE ON FRIES AND BURGERS.

JAPANESE

WE MAKE TOFU AND WE SHIMMY

AMERICANS

WE MAKE MONEY OFF OF MERGERS.

JAPANESE

WE’VE DEFEATED THOSE CHINESE.

AMERICANS
WE'VE DEFEATED MEXICO.

JAPANESE
THE PACIFIC IS OUR LAKE.

AMERICANS
THE PACIFIC IS OUR SWIMMING POOL.

JAPANESE
WE HATE THE AMERICANS.

AMERICANS
WE HATE THE NIPPONESE.

JAPANESE
THEY ARE RACIALLY INFERIOR.

AMERICANS
THEY ARE FISCALLY ANTERIOR.

JAPANESE
WE'LL FIGHT THIS WAR

AMERICANS
AND WE'LL MAKE-

(Everyone, with wings spread, flies about the stage.)

JAPANESE/AMERICANS
*A BRAVE NEW WORLD
WITH FLAGS UNFURLED.
A WORLD OF DREAMS
AND RACIAL TEAMS
A WORLD FOR US
A WORLD FOR YOU
A WORLD WHERE THUS
THE DREAMS DO COME TRUE.*

(A MAN in a tie-dye t-shirt with peace symbol steps forward.)

PEACENIK
(Pleading)
Peace, peace. There must be a way to peace!

(PEACENIK is beaten mercilessly.)

JAPANESE
*COME WHAT MAY WE'LL WIN THIS WAR
WE'LL STOP THOSE YANKEES KNOCKIN'
ON OUR DOOR.
WE'LL CRUSH THE FOE TILL THEY'RE NO MO'
WE'RE THE NATION FULL OF
INDIGNATION.*

AMERICANS
*IT'S TIME TO SING AND TO SHOUT
WINNIN' THIS WAR IS WHAT
WE'RE ALL ABOUT
WE'LL STEP ON THEM, DESTROY
ALL 'DEM.
'MERICA'S THE BEST FROM EAST
TO WEST.*

(Music continues under the following – ominously.)

YAMMY
Sunday morning.

NIM
December 7th, 1941.

HANK
All was Peace and Quiet.

FRANK
Along Battleship Row.

(The AMERICANS stand and cross away from center to reveal Battleship Row: nine tiny battleships lined up on the floor. These are all made of paper that is sturdy but pliable. Each battleship has its own little stand and is about a foot long.)

YAMMY
The Japanese were commanded by Admirals Yammy and Naggy.

NAGGY
We had six carriers between us.

(They each hold up three paper aircraft carriers – these are like the battleships.)

HANK
(Flying about the stage)
The Americans were looking for them.

YAMMY
But we sailed north.

NAGGY
Far north.

(They move way UR.)

YAMMY

And avoided the American scouts.

(HANK flies towards them but YAMMY and NAGGY lift their carriers up above HANK's head as he passes. He doesn't see them. He flies away.)

YAMMY

We launched our planes at 500 AM.

(SHIGERU and YUKIO enter – they are two Japanese pilots who wear Rising Sun headbands. They fly about. SHIGERU stops and talks to the audience.)

SHIGERU

(To audience)

Ok, I know what it looks like but we're not Kamikazes.

YUKIO

(To audience)

Not every Japanese in a pretty headband is a Kamikazes.

SHIGERU

We're not stupid.

(They resume flying, circling YAMMY and NAGGY.)

NAGGY

Pearl Harbor is that way.

YAMMY

Sink the carriers. That's most important. Get the American carriers.

SHIGERU

Righto.

(They fly about the stage.)

YUKIO

We came in over Oahu from the north.

SHIGERU

The Americans were playing golf.

(GOLFER has entered DR. He swings.)

GOLFER

Four! (Seeing SHIGERU and YUKIO flying by, he waves.) Hey, good morning!

(SHIGERU and YUKIO "wave" their wings.)

YUKIO

Skinny dipping.

(SKINNY DIPPER comes on stage and swims a bit. He looks up, sees SHIGERU and YUKIO, and waves his member in reply.)

SKINNY DIPPER

Good morning!

(SHIGERU and YUKIO "wave" their wings.)

SHIGERU

We came in low over Pearl Harbor.

YUKIO

Nine battleships.

SHIGERU

Like sitting ducks.

YUKIO (Wickedly to the battleships)

Quack. Quack.

SHIGERU

And we kissed them.

(They jump on the Battleships and smash them with their fists.)

SHIGERU/YUKIO

First wave.

(They stand up and circle around the stage and then back to the battleships. This time they kick the battleships around the stage.)

SHIGERU/YUKIO

Second wave.

(They repeat the move but before they can get back to the battleships...)

SHIGERU

On the third wave the Americans tried to defend themselves.

(HANK and FRANK fly over to SHIGERU and YUKIO. A fistfight ensues.)

YUKIO (To audience)

War is of course a metaphor for male homosexual relations.

(The fistfight turns into deep rubbing and caressing and groaning.)

NIM (Breaking it up before it reaches a climax)

Ok, we got it, we got it.

(The fistfight resumes. SHIGERU and YUKIO win, of course. YUKIO and SHIGERU return to the little paper battleships, tear them up and scatter the remains on the audience. Awwwww.)

YUKIO

We went home.

(YAMMY and NAGGY come DR. SHIGERU and YUKIO land on the carriers by each flying in behind YAMMY and NAGGY and hugging them from behind: SHIGERU on YAMMY; YUKIO on NAGGY.)

YAMMY

How many carriers did you get?

SHIGERU

Carriers?

YUKIO

Um.

SHIGERU

There weren't any.

NAGGY

You mean the carriers weren't there?

SHIGERU

Didn't see any.

YUKIO

Nope.

YAMMY/NAGGY

You mean you didn't get the carriers?!?

(Music: Dum-dum-dum.)

NAGGY

As the music indicates: that's bad.

YAMMY

And so the greatest naval war in history began.

Reprise: "Nippon/US"

JAPANESE
*COME WHAT MAY WE'LL WIN THIS WAR
WE'LL STOP THOSE YANKEES KNOCKIN'
ON OUR DOOR.
WE'LL CRUSH THE FOE TILL THEY'RE NO MO'
WE'RE THE NATION FULL OF
INDIGNATION.*

AMERICANS
*IT'S TIME TO SING AND TO SHOUT
WINNIN' THIS WAR IS WHAT
WE'RE ALL ABOUT
WE'LL STEP ON THEM, DESTROY
ALL 'DEM.
'MERICA'S THE BEST FROM EAST
TO WEST.*

(During the above song the ACTORS have all clumped in the middle of the stage and are moving about as a unit, singing. The music continues as various people peel off from the clump and introduce themselves to the audience.)

NIM

Admiral Chet W. Nim, Commander-in-Chief Pacific. Call me Nim. My strategy: Beat the Japanese. My tactic: carrier strikes on the Japanese homeland. My secret weapon:

BULL

Admiral Bull Hall. Carrier commander.

NIM

The Bull. The greatest fighting admiral of all time!

BULL (To NIM)

Thanks, Chet. I was at sea during Pearl Harbor with all four carriers. Biggest Japanese mistake of all time was missing me.

NIM

My other carrier commander: Admiral Frank Jack Fletch. Sad Sack Fletch I call him.

(NIM and BULL smirk and laugh at FLETCH like class bullies.)

FLETCH

I had one carrier. An old one.

BULL

Cover me, Jack! Cover me!

(BULL busts out, a dance solo to a techno beat. FLETCH watches him. Soon BULL has whipped off his shirt and is doing Rocky-style pushups – very impressive.)

FLETCH

I hate Bull Halsey. Fucking Pre Madonna with a press agent. I'm the best Admiral in the US Navy. The problem is nobody knows it. Well, that's gonna to change. I never saw myself as a seeker of fame, of glory. I'm a simple man, trained to do my duty, trained to fight and win. (ACTORS begin humming the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" behind him.) Thank you. But now I see men like the Bull stealing all the attention, strutting around like popinjays and winning the accolades, and I'm disgusted. In my soul. Well, I'll get my fight, my battle. And I'll write a name for myself in the stars that will make the Big Dipper look like a teaspoon designed for shoveling dry poo. Fletch, Admiral of the Ocean Sea. That's what they called Columbus. Let's see if I can discover myself some glory. Hacha cha cha.

(FLETCH whips off his shirt. Not as impressive. He struggles to do a push-up. NIM and BULL look on horrified. Techno beat has returned. NIM angrily indicates for FLETCH to return to formation and for the music to change.)

AMERICANS

IT'S TIME TO SING AND SHOUT

(AMERICANS all snap to attention, march downstage with a strut.)

WINNIN' THIS WAR IS WHAT I'M (WE'RE) ALL ABOUT.

(They peel off upstage as music continues and YAMMY comes downstage)

YAMMY

Why? Why would they win? That's what I'd like to know. Because they're bigger? Maybe. Because they're smarter? No way. The Great Democracy? Shiiiiit. Stephen Sondheim a great musical about us, about how great we are. *Pacific Overtures*? It's a great show. Hey, we were doing poetry before Shakespeare, and knights in armor before King Arthur. We have Noh and Kabuki and poets up the butt. And we have a navy. And we learn fast. Very fast. He wants a name? I'll give him a name. Mudd. With two Ds. That's a name for him. Admiral Mudd. Bottom of the sea.

JAPANESE

COME WHAT MAY WE'LL WIN THIS WAR!

(Clap-clap, then into traditional postures.)

JAPANESE
*COME WHAT MAY WE'LL WIN THIS WAR
WE'LL STOP THOSE YANKEES KNOCKIN'
ON OUR DOOR.
WE'LL CRUSH THE FOE TILL THEY'RE NO MO'
WE'RE THE GREATEST NATION FULL OF
INDIGNATION.*

AMERICANS
*IT'S TIME TO SING AND TO SHOUT
WINNIN' THIS WAR IS WHAT
WE'RE ALL ABOUT
WE'LL STEP ON THEM, DESTROY
ALL 'DEM.
AMERICA'S THE BEST FROM
EAST TO WEST.*

(Everyone suddenly drops out of character and becomes the Board of Theatre Hippopotamus – They hold up the flattop as if it were the boardroom table.)

SAMSON (Played by Actor who plays NIM)
The Board Meeting of Theatre for a Queer Audience is hereby called to order.

BOARD MEMBERS (Chanting)

*QUEER, QUEER, GO QUEER!
QUEER, QUEER, GO QUEER!
QUEER, QUEER, GO QUEER!*

(That out of the way, the board meeting precedes.)

BALTHAZAR (PEACENIK)
Minutes of last meeting.

BOARD MEMBERS
Approved.

BALTHAZAR
Budget.

MEMBERS
Approved.

SAMSON
Approved? We're broke!

BALTHAZAR
We're always broke.

DELILAH (Played by YAMMY)
Any other matters?

SAMSON

Why are we doing *The Battle of Midway*?

JACK (FLETCH)

It's a Musical Fantasia on American Themes!

BALTHAZAR

I was wondering that too. Why is a queer theatre company doing a play about war mongering?

JACK

It's actually a metaphor for the struggles of non-profit theatre making in a capitalistic economy.

SAMSON

How is it gay?

JACK

It's campy.

SAMSON

This is exactly why we're losing funders. Doing shit like this.

DELILAH

Samson, calm down.

SAMSON

And who are you?

DELILAH

I am the head lesbian on the board and I preach calmness! Got it?

SAMSON

Calmness? We're the board of directors of a theatre company with no income and no and we're mounting a five-hour musical about water and explosions. This is ridiculous.

SIMON (HANK)

Is this meeting almost over? I have a date.

BALTHAZAR

With what?

SIMON

Someone I met on-line. He's hung.

BALTHAZAR
How did you find him?

SIMON
Hung.com.

CHAZ (Who has been staring at his phone)
Oh, my God, someone in this room is on Grindr!

SIMON
That's me.

CHAZ (Disappointed)
Oh. (Pressing a button on his phone) Block.

SAMSON
Can we stay focused?

SIMON
Is my only role in all this to hold up the table?

SAMSON
Yes. So what's the verdict?

DELILAH
I recommend we borrow for this month and hope for the best.

SAMSON
How much will the bank loan us?

JACK
25,000.

SAMSON
How much will this musical cost?

JACK
35,000.

DELILAH
Second?

SIMON
I second.

DELILAH
All in favor.

ALL
Aye.

SAMSON
I abstain.

DELILAH
Why don't you just say nay?

SAMSON
Because I'm in the show and I need the role.

JACK
Why don't you just say aye?

SAMSON
Because I disapprove. This show isn't queer and it's not multi-culti and the funders will hate us for doing it and we have no money.

(Silence.)

SIMON
And your point is...

DELILAH
Move to adjourn.

SIMON
So moved.

DELILAH
Adjourn. Ladies, Cubbyhole!

LADIES (As they exit)
Is it still there? I thought it was shut down. I don't think it's gay anymore. No, it's Millennial.

JACK
I'll give you a solo.

SAMSON
That's not what this is about.

JACK

I'll give you your own curtain call.

SAMSON

This theatre is going down the toilet and I'm the only one who cares.

SIMON

I care. (To BALTHAZAR) Can I have a lift?

BALTHAZAR

I thought you were going on a date?

SIMON

Oh, yeah. Can we pick him up on the way home?

BALTHAZAR

Only if you fuck me first.

SIMON

Ok.

(They leave chattering.)

CHAZ (Still looking at phone)

There's another Grinder in this room.

(He picks out someone in the audience and points to back of the house for a rendezvous. He exits.)

JACK

I'll see you at rehearsal.

SAMSON

No, I'll see you at our meeting with the Spewitt Foundation tomorrow morning at 700 am.

JACK

Oh, yeah.

SAMSON

They're pissed that we waste their money.

JACK

They're not actually pissed.

SAMSON

Yes they are. That's what their letter said.

JACK

What did it actually say? I mean, really?

SAMSON (Handing him a letter)

"We're pissed." Those were their exact words.

JACK (Reading it)

They misspelt "pissed." I wouldn't take it seriously.

(We're back in the show. The JAPANESE and AMERICANS cluster and shuffle back and forth about the stage as a unit, they "drop off" individuals for scenes but continue to shuffle and vamp underneath the subsequent dialogue. YAMMY and NAGGY are making plans.)

YAMMY

If we take the Coral Sea we'll cut off Australia and the US is finished. They won't have any forward bases.

NAGGY (Excited)

This is all so historically accurate!

YAMMY

Then we'll take Midway and their fleet will be surrounded.

NAGGY

The detail is amazing! Like the History Channel!

YAMMY

Take your carriers south and secure the Coral Sea, cut off Australia.

NAGGY

And if the Americans show up I'm supposed to.....

YAMMY

Zap 'em.

(NIM peels off from behind clump and makes a sweeping cross DC. He is joined by FLETCH.)

NIM

The Japanese combined fleet is going to cut off Australia.

FLETCH

Ok.

NIM

The Bull's in charge. He's bringing his carriers back from the Doolittle Tokyo Raid.

(BULL peels off from the group and places a small paper model of Tokyo on the stage.)

BULL

This is Tokyo and this is what I'm doing to it. (He smashes the little city, laughing maniacally.)

NIM

Hot dog!

BULL

With relish!

(FLETCH rolls his eyes. BULL exits. NIM continues, FLETCH makes babyish "Bull's in charge, Bull's in charge" gestures behind NIM's back as NIM strategizes. Soon FLETCH is making barfing motions, hand down throat, dry heaves, really having a vomit fest behind NIM's back.)

NIM

Bull will come south to join you and then under his command you'll stop the Japanese when they try to seize the Coral Sea. Bull's the man, brave, true, sound and dapper. With him in the glory seat we'll stop the Jap left hook with our own one-two.

(Noticing FLETCH acting barfy behind him.)

NIM

You all right?

FLETCH (Covering)

Spasm, in my neck. Old sports injury. Badminton.

NIM

Badminton?

FLETCH

Hockey!

NIM

If Halsey's held up, you're in charge.

FLETCH

Really?

NIM

Yeah, really. But don't fuck up. You lose one of my carriers I'll spoon castrate you, Fletch. Slowly. Got it?

FLETCH

Yessir.

NIM

Do not fuck up.

(FITCH peels off from the cluster holding two carrier models – these are made of thick paper, sturdy but easily destroyable when necessary, each about a foot long, just like the Battleships.)

NIM (Introducing him)

Admiral Fitch. Fitch, Fletch. Fletch, Fitch.

FLETCH

Fletch.

FITCH

Fitch.

FLETCH

Fitch.

FICTH

Fletch.

NIM (Handing carriers from FITCH to FLETCH)

Here's the Yorktown and the Lexington. Yours to command till Halsey shows up. Take care of them.

FLETCH

I will, sir.

NIM

No fucky, fucky, Fletch.

FLETCH

No, sir.

No fucky fucky. NIM

No. FLETCH

No, fucky fucky. NIM

No fucky. FLETCH

No fucky fucky. NIM

No fucky fucky. FLETCH

None. NIM

None. FLETCH

None none none. NIM

None. FLETCH

(Rif on “none” and “fucky” with NIM simulating bufu on FLETCH to make his point. At the end of this NIM rejoins the cluster.)

(YAMMY peels off from cluster with his two carriers – the “Shuikaku” and “Zuikaku.” FLETCH has his two.)

YAMMY
For three days the enemies searched for each other in the Coral Sea.

NIM
Two carriers versus two carriers.

(NAGGY appears with a smaller carrier – the “Shoho” - behind FLETCH.)

FLETCH
Wait, where did that come from?

NAGGY

We have a third carrier.

(NAGGY begins chasing FLETCH and FITCH.)

FLETCH

But! Stop chasing me! Where did that one come from? Stop chasing me!

NAGGY

I'm launching planes!

FLETCH

I'm launching planes!

(Planes of both sides fill the air and attack the carriers: HANK, FRANK, arms outstretched for America, SHIGERU and YUKIO for the Japanese. FLETCH and NAGGY dodge attacks, hiding their carriers from planes. Suddenly HANK grabs carrier out of NAGGY's hand and smashes it onstage, maniacally tearing it to shreds and laughing with glee throughout. NAGGY cries over its remains.)

HANK

Flyboy to Yorktown, Jap carrier sunk.

FLETCH

You're kidding?

HANK

No, confirmed. People drowning in water.

(NAGGY flips on back over to drown, gargling, spitting water.)

HANK

Glorious site. Many people drowning.

(FLETCH dances about the stage. NIM peels off and talk as if into radio.)

NIM

Fletch, we just realized Fitch has flight experience.

FLETCH

Fitch!

NIM

He's in command down there.

FLETCH

But...

(FITCH takes carriers from FLETCH.)

FLETCH

But I just sank...

(FITCH dances about the stage with carriers. Ballet music.)

FLETCH

But...

(FITCH puts on quite a ballet.)

FLETCH

But I...

(FITCH executes a glorious pirouette. FLETCH grabs carriers back from him.)

FLETCH

Give me those!

(And he runs away. Blackout.)

HANK

That night the planes had to land in the dark.

FRANK

We got back too late from the raid.

(We see searchlights in the dark – flashlights actually. Then we see other lights circling. These are the landing planes – bike lights actually. We can't see any people.)

FLETCH

Come on in, boys. We got you. Fletch has got you.

(We see the planes lights land, come to rest.)

FLETCH

Next morning.

(Lights up. SHIGERU and YUKIO have landed next to FLETCH.)

SHIGERU

Hey.

But. FLETCH

You're not. YUKIO

No. FLETCH

Woops. YUKIO

Wrong flat tops. SHIGERU

(SHIGERU and YUKIO quickly run offstage. NIM peels off and talks to audience.)

A note to the historically curious. NIM

This is fiction based on fact. FLETCH (Also to audience)

Some incidents are exaggerated. NIM

Or just ridiculous. FLETCH

Please don't learn your history from plays and movies. NIM

It's very dangerous! ALL

(FITCH enters and pursues FLETCH who runs away with the two carriers.)

Give me those! FITCH

No! FLETCH

(They run about the stage. HANK and FRANK enter flying about.)

HANK
We can't find the Japanese.

FLETCH (Stopping his flight)
Why not?

FRANK
Cloud covering.
(YAMMY and NAGGY sneak on behind cheap cloud prop. The Cloud is moved SL.)

HANK
Clouds everywhere.

FLETCH
I sunk a carrier!

FITCH
Give me those.

FLETCH
I'm going to sink another.
(CLOUD has moved to CS. Suddenly SHIGERU and YUKIO appear from behind CLOUD, flying. HANK sees.)

HANK
Umm, we think they're behind that cloud.
(Carrier "Shuikaku" pops up above CLOUD.)

FRANK
Yep. They're back there.
("Shuikaku" disappears.)

HANK
No we've lost it.

FLETCH
Get back their and sink it!
(They fly up to CLOUD and knock on it like a door.)

FRANK
Nope, can't see though the cloud covering.

Nope. HANK

Keep looking. FLETCH

Knock knock. FRANK

Who the fuck's there? YAMMY (From behind board)

Americans. HANK

Americans who? YAMMY

Americans lookin' for you, muthafucka! (HANK and FRANK laugh at their joke and high five.)

(Pause. Silence.)

There's nobody back there. FRANK

You see. HANK

Nada. FRANK

You idiots! Attack! FLETCH

(HANK and FRANK disappear behind board and we hear yelling back there, bodies flopping up in the air as if in a terrible fight. The fighting continues. FLETCH is watching. While he is distracted. YUKIO comes up from behind him, grabs "Lexington," squashes it, and flies away.)

The Lexington! FITCH

FLETCH (Dumbfounded)

Ummm.....

(FLETCH shakes it a bit. Seeing if he can make it work.)

FLETCH

Umm....

(NIM has entered DL.)

NIM

What happened?

FLETCH (Handing "Lexington" to FITCH)

Here, you can have this one. (To NIM) Fitch is in command of Lexington.

(SHIGERU comes up and squashes "Yorktown" in FLETCH's hand and flies away.)

FLETCH

Oh come on. Come on!

NIM

What's happening?

FLETCH

Ummm... (He turns his back and fiddles with "Yorktown.")

NIM

What's happening?

(FLETCH spins about holding lamely repaired "Yorktown.")

FLETCH

It's all good. No worries. Its fine.

NIM

What's happening?

FLETCH

Well, my carrier is fine and Fitch's is bitched. It's snitched. It's pitched. It's flitched.

(YUKIO comes up, grabs "Lexington" from FITCH and smashes it onstage savagely and passionately, ending by chewing the bits and spitting them out orgasmically in a moaning climax on FITCH.)

FITCH

Oh! Oh! Oh, yes! Awwww...

FLETCH

It's sunk!

(HANK and FRANK emerge from behind cloud, headed to "Lexington," and see it's smashed.)

HANK/FRANK

Oh.

FRANK

Oh, dear.

HANK

Well, let's go over here.

(They go to "Yorktown." They see it's damaged and put their hands on hips.)

HANK (To FLETCH)

Oh come on, girl.

FRANK

We're supposed to land on that?

FLETCH

It's perfectly ok.

HANK

Oh, please.

FRANK

It looks smooshed.

(FLETCH yanks them to either side of him.)

FLETCH

Get over here. What happened?

HANK

Well we found the carriers.

FLETCH

Yes?

FRANK
We dropped our bombs.

FLETCH
Yes? Yes?

HANK
We dropped our torpedoes.

FLETCH
Yes, yes, yes?

FRANK
But we missed.

(“Shuikaku” and “Zhuikaku” sail off with tap-dancing YAMMY.)

HANK
Too much cloud cover.

(Cloud tap dances off with NAGGY.)

FLETCH
What?

HANK
Yeah, the rain in Spain gave us a pain in the ain.

(They laugh at their joke, high five, woop, etc.)

FLETCH
Shut up! Shut up!

NIM
What’s happening?

FLETCH
Um... Three Japanese carriers attacked, one sunk, two probably sunk.

HANK/FRANK
But...

FLETCH (Sotto voce)
Shut up!

Oh, oh, that's good. NIM

One American carrier sunk. The one under Fitch's command. FLETCH

Huh? FITCH

Shut up. FLETCH

Hey. HANK

Hey look. FRANK

Japanese have left. HANK

They're gone. FRANK

Wow. HANK

Where'd they go? FRANK

(Silence.)

Huh. HANK

Japanese in full retreat. Coral Sea secure, free of Japanese shipping, Japanese invasion stopped! FLETCH (Spinning in place)

Well, look at her spin. FRANK

Hmmm... HANK

(Everyone cheers. NIM crosses to FLETCH.)

You lost one of my carriers. NIM

No, no, it was Fitch. FLETCH

Huh? FITCH

I told you, do not... NIM

But I stopped the invasion. I defeated the Japanese. They're gone, retreated. FLETCH

I told you... NIM

No, no, I'm a hero. FLETCH

I told you. NIM

But... They'll tell you, ask them. FLETCH

(NIM looks at HANK and FRANK. They just shake their heads in disappointment at FLETCH.)

But... But... Uh, this is so unfair. FLETCH

Get back to Pearl. NIM

But, Dad. FLETCH

Get back to Pearl. NIM

I protest. I protest. FLETCH

One. NIM

Oh, now. FLETCH

Two. NIM

But. FLETCH

Don't make me say three... Don't make me say three... NIM

But... I... FLETCH

(Rif with NIM starting to say "thr... thr... thr... and FLETCH saying "But, but, but.")

You don't have the guts to say three! FLETCH (Finally)

Three! NIM

(FLETCH tears off the stage. NIM turns to HANK and FRANK, who are giggling. He makes a "Phhhhhh..." gesture and they tear off the stage. He crosses to FITCH weeping over torn up Lexington.)

Christina, clean up this mess. NIM (To FITCH)

(NIM exits SL.)

Jesus Christ. NIM

(FITCH sadly gathers up remains of "Lexington" and exits SL. JOHANNES enters and speaks to JACK and SAMSON, who have reentered in sweaters.)

JOHANNES
(Played by same actor who plays HANK, he now has a German accent)
Welcome to the Von Spewitt Foundation.

Hi. SAMSON/JACK

We're pissed. JOHANNES

Yes, we read your letter. SAMSON

Actually it was misspelt. It said you were piest. JACK

(JOHANNES just stares at him.)

What would you like to see us do? SAMSON

Diversify your staff. JOHANNES

We only have one employee. Me. JACK

Well then. JOHANNES

You mean fire me and hire someone else. JACK

When a funder wants you to diversify and you're the only employee I guess that's what that means. JOHANNES

I'm not going to fire myself. JACK

I guess then the board will have to do it. JOHANNES (To SAMSON)

We can't fire him. We're his friends. SAMSON

If you want our money, you'll have to get rid of him. He's old and white and his queer theatrical aesthetic is bizarre. Excuse me. I have a meeting with the other queer theatre in town. They're building a new facility and Frank Gerry is designing JOAHNNES

it. It's going to have a Von Spewitt Education Center, a Von Spewitt Water Fountain and a Von Spewitt Parking Ramp. Good morning. (He exits.)

JACK

Are you going to fire me?

SAMSON

Not till the show's over. I invited Joe Mantello to come see me in it.

JACK

Great. I'll see you at rehearsal.

SAMSON

No, you'll see me at the meeting with the City Art Commission at noon.

JACK

Are they pissed?

SAMSON

No.

JACK

Oh, good.

SAMSON

They're incensed. (Shows him the letter) They called us amateurs. They hate our shows.

JACK

They misspelt amateurs.

SAMSON

Putting a word in caps is not misspelling it.

JACK

I thought they loved the shows.

SAMSON

When they stomp out at intermission it means they hate your shows.

JACK

Wow. I thought that was a good sign. Most people leave long before intermission.

(Back into the action. YAMMY and NAGGY enter.)

YAMMY

Meanwhile the Japanese had devised Operation MI.

NAGGY

My?

YAMMY

Emm. I. We will take Midway Island by invasion. Midway will allow us to bomb Hawaii. Soon we will be masters of the Pacific.

NAGGY

Excuse me, why is it called 'MI'?

YAMMY

It's secret code for Midway Island.

(NIM enters with his arms spread wide. BULL enters smiling. NIM embraces him warmly.)

NIM

Welcome back to Pearl, Bull. The hero of the Tokyo Raid.

(Everyone cheers. FLETCH enters holding crumpled "Yorktown.")

NIM

Hey, Fletch. You remember the Bull.

BULL

Fletch!

FLETCH (Through gritted teeth.)

Congratulations.

BULL

It's Saturday night! I'm a hero! Let's party!

(Cheers! Music. They are all at party mingling during following dialogue.)

NIM (To FLETCH)

Don't stand there like a bump on a log! Fix that thing!

(FLETCH exits and reenters with ironing board and iron. He sets up ironing board, ties dew rag around head, puts cigarette butt in his mouth so it dangles and begins ironing out the "Yorktown." Japanese SPY enters, not that well disguised, and tries to blend in. NIM sees her and approaches.)

NIM

Hey baby, what can I tell you to win your heart?

SPY

Tell me the strategic objectives for the US Navy for the next six months.

NIM

Oh, baby, you're making me warmish.

(He whispers in her ear. NIM is dancing with SPY, NIM making elaborate descriptive gestures of strategy. BULL has bent over with a horrible hacking cough but his PARTNER merely adjusts by bending over as well – they continue to dance even as BULL continues hacking. FLETCH dances with his ironing board. ROCHEFORT, an AMERICAN in a bathrobe and ruffled hair, steps forward and talks to NIM.)

ROCHEFORT

Excuse me Admiral, Commander Rochefort.

NIM

What is it?

ROCHEFORT

I've decoded some interesting Japanese communications. Something's cooking.

NIM

Well keep decoding. And take a bath!

(YAMMY and NAGGY enter, in Japan, and cross downstage, talking strategy, with big gestures. ROCHEFORT raises a Dixie Cup to his hear, points it at them and follows them about the stage. SPRU peels off and picks up two fresh carriers "Enterprise" and "Hornet." He dances about the stage with them. He dances up to BULL, all smiles.)

SPRU

Enterprise and Hornet ready for action, sir.

BULL

Thanks, Spru. (Introducing him to PARTNER) This is my side kick Admiral Spru. (Introducing PARTNER to SPRU) This is my dancing partner. She has no name.

(BULL falls to his knees in a coughing fit. SPRU dances with BULL's partner. FLETCH, who has noticed SPRU, quickly spruces up "Yorktown," which doesn't look that good, and puts his ironing board and equipage away. YAMMY and NAGGY cross downstage again, still in Japan and still followed by ROCHEFORT who now has Dixie Cup strapped to his head so he can take notes with note pad as he listens in. NIM spins his partner, who peels off and joins YAMMY and NAGGY as they exit.

ROCHEFORT has spun off and joined NIM, SPRU, and FLETCH. BULL is being given CPR by PARTNER, recovers and joins all downstage, looking quite fit.)

NIM

Rochefort here says they're going to take Midway. He's sure of it.

BULL

How are you sure of it?

ROCHEFORT

I've broken the Japanese code. It was very sophisticated but I did it.

(YAMMY enters with NAGGY they speak in Pig Latin. ROCHEFORT listens in.)

YAMMY

etgay attopflay ownay.

ROCHEFORT (Translating)

Get flat tops now.

BULL

Brilliant.

FLETCH

But how do you know it will happen at Midway?

ROCHEFORT

Well it's interesting, there was one designation in their codes which I couldn't quite figure out. It was AF, they kept talking about an objective called AF. I wanted to confirm that AF was Midway so I...

(The others all fall asleep from boredom during this explanation.)

ROCHEFORT

I sent out a message saying "AF out of water." Then I monitored the Japanese radio traffic and they said, "AF out of water." Actually, in code, they said, "Fay utoay terway..."

(NIM looks really annoyed with this boring explanation. The others now completely snoozing.)

ROCHEFORT

And that's how I did it.

NIM

Didn't I tell you to take a bath?

BULL

I think, I think we should divide the force. I'll push on ahead with Spru here, find their main fleet with my search teams and engage.

(FLETCH is making "oh, you're so smart gestures" behind BULL. "Wow, you're so smart!" These become more mean with FLETCH dancing contemptuously behind BULL, pelvic thrusting him, making FU gestures to his bottom and head, shoving imaginary dildo up his ass and pumping for all he's worth. BULL continues to rattle off technical data.)

BULL

The Japs have four carriers but we only have three. That's ok because we have a fourth carrier, the Island of Midway. It doesn't move but you can't sink it.

NIM

We'll need all the luck we can get. If we lose Midway there's nothing between the Japanese and California, between us and total defeat plus a lifetime of Wasabi.

BULL

That's why we gotta defeat them. We gotta! And I'm the man to do it.

(They all suddenly turn on FLETCH, who is caught in the act of masturbating with imaginary dildo and who freezes in an awkward position. He smiles lamely. They exit shaking their heads, except BULL who whips off his shirt and does push-ups, sit-ups, etc. FLETCH looks on depressed.)

FLETCH

Thank God, I have a wife who loves me.

(Nothing happens.)

FLETCH

Thank God I have a wife who loves me.

(NIM rushes on struggling into old lady wig. He whistles off stage and a purse is thrown on to him. Now composed as MARTHA he whispers an apologetic "Sorry" to FLETCH.)

FLETCH

Martha, my Martha.

MARTHA (High pitched)

Don't let them get you down, Fletch. You're the greatest fighting admiral America's ever produced.

FLETCH

Thanks, Martha.

MARTHA (Staring at BULL)

Bull might be big and strong and bald and beautiful and hung like a mastodon-

FLETCH

Martha.

MARTHA

I can't suppress my libidinal urges, Fletch. They're only human. But that's chemicals, Fletch. Pheromones! You're the one for me. You're a thinker, you're an intellectual. Bull might have horsemeat but you have bat smarts.

(BULL exits.)

FLETCH

Could you love a bat, Martha?

MARTHA

I could. If he had fangs like yours, Fletch.

Song: "We're Fifty" [A peppy love song for older folk – up tempo but romantic.]

MARTHA

*WHEN YOU'RE FORTY YOU FEEL SNORTY
WHEN YOU'RE FORTY-FIVE, BARELY ALIVE.
THEN AT FIFTY, WELL PAST NIFTY.
YOU'RE ANCIENT AND IN A DIVE.*

FLETCH

*BUT.... YOU DON'T CARE, YOU JUST DON'T CARE.
THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER CAUSE YOU JUST DON'T CARE.
YOU LIKE TO EAT, YOU LIKE TO SLEEP,
AND WHEN THE SHIT HITS THE FAN YOU SAY, "C'EST LA VITE."*

MARTHA/FLETCH

*WHEN YOU WANNA EAT, WELL, YOU JUST EAT.
WHEN YOU WANT A NOODLE WITH YOUR DOODLE YOU JUST BLEET
YOU'RE PAST ALL THAT THINKING SO YOU JUST DON'T GIVE.
YOU'RE FIFTY AND SO CLOSE TO DEATH YOU LIVE!*

(They dance.)

MARTHA

Oh, Fletch. I'm so glad you've given up on fame and are ready to settle down with me.

FLETCH

Who said anything about settling down with you?

FLETCH

*I'M FIFTY AND A STUD.
LIVED MY LIFE IN PEACETIME MUD.
NOW I'M KILLING THE ENEMY
I'LL BE IN THE TIMES
WAIT AND SEE.*

MARTHA

BUT-

FLETCH

SO I AM FIFTY.

MARTHA

I WANNA RETIRE.

FLETCH

ACTUALLY I'M FIFTY-TWO.

MARTHA

SIT BY THE FIRE.

FLETCH

FIFTY-TWO PLUS TWO.

MARTHA

A HOUSE IN HAWAII.

FLETCH

PLUS TWO MORE.

MARTHA

OR MAYBE KUAUI

FLETCH

ALL RIGHT, I'M FIFTY-EIGHT!

MARTHA

OH, FLETCH MY SWEET.

FLETCH

BUT WAIT!

MARTHA

WHAT?

FLETCH/MARTHA

*BUT... YOU DON'T CARE, YOU JUST DON'T CARE.
THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER CAUSE YOU JUST DON'T CARE.
YOU LIKE TO EAT, YOU LIKE TO SLEEP,
AND WHEN THE SHIT HITS THE FAN YOU SAY, "C'EST LA VITE."*

FLETCH/MARTHA

YES, WE ARE SIXTY!

(CITY ART COMMISSION FUNDER enters and talks to JACK and SAMSON.)

CITY

(Played by the same actor who plays NAGGY)

It's got nothing to do with you being old and white.

SAMSON

What is it then?

CITY

You're old and white and not showing a profit.

JACK

But we're a non-profit theatre.

CITY

How are you different from the other gay theatre in town? Other than the fact that you're losing money?

JACK

We do lesbian plays.

CITY

I thought your last lesbian play was disgusting.

SAMSON

I didn't like it either.

JACK

Whose side are you on?

I'm just saying. SAMSON

I didn't like all the sex. CITY

Lesbians do have sex. JACK

I know that. I'm a lesbian. CITY

Oh. Do you ever have sex? JACK

The sex seemed amateur. Like the actresses didn't know what they were doing. CITY

Well, most of them were straight. JACK

Maybe that's the problem. Couldn't you get lesbians to play lesbians? CITY

I could but the only lesbians who auditioned were amateurs. JACK

At sex? CITY

At acting. JACK

You have some fundamental issues to sort out. Your city funding's in jeopardy. CITY

Ok. JACK

If putting on lesbian plays is the only thing that makes you unique you should get a lesbian to run the theatre. CITY

You mean fire Jack? SAMSON

CITY
I didn't say that.

SAMSON
You implied it.

CITY
I didn't say that. If you say that I said that I'll deny it and bring charges against you through the civil disobedience ordinance and the Freedom of Information Act.

SAMSON
Ok.

CITY
But that's what I meant, yes.

SAMSON
Ok.

JACK
Thanks. (CITY exits.) What's our next meeting?

SAMSON
Rehearsal. I want to discuss my new song.

JACK
You don't like it?

SAMSON
No, I don't. But that's not the point. I don't like doing it in drag.

JACK
You're hysterical in drag.

SAMSON
Of course I am. But I think drag is demeaning.

JACK
To you?

SAMSON
To the audience and to women. And to me.

JACK
Ok. So you're incensed.

SAMSON

No, I'm hungry. I'm going to have lunch. I'm overweight and depressed. I need to eat.

(He exits. BULL enters with NIM and SPRU – NIM's costume changes are handled quickly in the course of the dialogue.)

BULL

And after Midway we'll push on through to the Solomons and the Philippines.

NIM

Way to go, Bull.

BULL

We should divide the force. I'll hammer on ahead, find their main fleet with my search teams, and engage. I'll send in my PBYs and my B-17s, then my SBDs and my TBDs and I'll put up a cloud of Grumans over my CVs and my CAs. Too bad we don't have any BBs but we have plenty of DDs and DDEs.

(FLETCH is making "oh, you're so smart gestures" behind BULL. "Wow, you're so smart!" These become more contemptuous with FLETCH imitating BULL by mime masturbating and then wanking an enormous cock which shoots and drowns him with imagined spooge. BULL continues to rattle off technical data. NIM catches FLETCH acting up and stares him down. FLETCH is sheepish. Suddenly BULL starts itching his skin. The others turn to look at him.)

NIM

You ok?

BULL

Yeah, yeah, fine. Ahhhhh! (He itches himself insanely, rolling on the floor itching.)

NIM

Bull! Bull!

(BULL is yanked off stage by NURSE.)

NIM

What is it?

SPRU

Beri-beri.

NIM

Never heard of it.

SPRU

He's beri-beri sick.

NIM (Stomping around)

Dammit, dammit, dammit! (To FLETCH) Ok, you're in charge.

FLETCH

You're kidding?

NIM

No, get the "Yorktown" ready, take Spru here and get to sea. Your mission, find the Japanese carriers headed for Midway and sink 'em!

(NIM exits. FLETCH is ecstatic.)

FLETCH

I got it. I got it. Oh, yeah, I got it. I got it, oh yeah I got it. Bull Halsey, suck mine, sucka. "He's the boogie woogie boy of company C..." (Getting jazz scatty) "...made to blow his bugle for his Uncle Sam." Oh, yeah.

SPRU

You seem happy, Admiral.

FLETCH (Suddenly paranoid)

Is that bad?

SPRU

No, I was just...

FLETCH

Just what? What? Shouldn't I feel happy, Admiral? Are you such a neurotic you can't feel happiness, can't even allow it in other people?

SPRU

No, I...

FLETCH

Well.... Well... I am so sorry. Sorry to show my emotions. (Makes disgusted face.)

SPRU

Forgive me, Admiral.

FLETCH

Fuck you, Admiral! I'm not your mama! Why should I forgive you?

SPRU

Really, Admiral, language.

FLETCH (Calming)

Please forgive my recession from gentlemanly comportment.

SPRU

What's your plan?

FLETCH

I think, I think... we should divide the force. I'll hammer on ahead, find their main fleet with my search teams, and engage. I'll send in my PBVs and my B-17s, then my SBDs and my TBDs and I'll put up a cloud of Grumans over my CVs and my CAs. Too bad we don't have any BBs but we have plenty of DDs and DDEs.

SPRU

What about A-20s and B-20s?

FLETCH

What about P-40s and P-38s?

SPRU

What about B-17s and B-25s?

FLETCH

What about B-Ms?

SPRU

I don't know those.

FLETCH

They're brown.

(SPRU and FLETCH exit bickering. MICHYKO runs on pursued by HIROSHI. They are two young Japanese. MICHY should wear a skirt for this number. She is played by same actor who plays BULL.)

MICHY

Don't go. Don't leave me.

HIRO

I must.

MICHY

But we're so young.

HIRO

I want to fly. This is the moment I've always waited for. I want to kill me a Californian.

MICHY

Come back safe, so we can be happy and married and live in Tokyo or Osaka or Kyoto or Nagasaki or Hiroshima or some other beautiful Japanese city.

HIRO

Yes, let's have many babies and raise them in Hiroshima.

MICHY

They'll be so big and strong.

HIRO

Bigger than other babies!

MICHY

With more fingers!

HIRO

And heads the size of watermelons!

MICHY

I love you so.

HIRO

But...

MICHY

But what?

HIRO

I thought only women played Japanese.

MICHY

I got sick of there being no Asians in these roles. Sick of it!

(The moment passes. They are in love again.)

Song: "Young Love" [Classic musical love song, ballad – the breakout single]

MICHY

LOVE.

<i>LOVE SO TRUE.</i>	HIRO
<i>YOUNG JAPANESE LOVE.</i>	MICHY
<i>MY LOVE FOR YOU.</i>	HIRO
<i>WE'RE SO IN LOVE.</i>	MICHY
<i>WE'RE LOVE ITSELF.</i>	HIRO
<i>LOVE BACKWARDS IS EVOL.</i>	MICHY
<i>WE'LL EVOLVE IN LOVE.</i>	HIRO
<i>LOVE FOR ME IS LOVE FOR YOU A CANDY-CANE, BUT DYED BLUE. LOVE CAN CRY, LOVE CAN HISS. BUT LOVE FOR YOU IS ALWAYS BLISS.</i>	MICHY/HIRO
<i>IT'S LOVE, LOVE SO TRUE.</i>	HIRO
<i>YOUNG JAPANESE LOVE.</i>	MICHY
<i>MY LOVE FOR YOU. WHEN I SEE THE SUN SET.</i>	HIRO
<i>I KNOW IT WILL RISE</i>	MICH
<i>WHEN I DRIFT OFF TO SLEEP.</i>	HIRO

MICH

I KNOW I'LL REPRISE.

MICHY/HIRO

*LOVE FOR ME IS LOVE FOR YOU
A CANDY-CANE, BUT DYED BLUE.
LOVE CAN CRY, LOVE CAN HISS.
BUT LOVE FOR YOU IS ALWAYS BLISS.*

HIRO

LOVE.

MICHY/HIRO

YOUNG JAPANESE LOVE.

(YAMMY enters.)

YAMMY

Young man.

HIRO (Snapping to attention)

Yessir.

YAMMY

Here's a training film.

HIRO

Yessir.

YAMMY

It will show you what happens to those who surrender.

(Lights change – slight flickering like old time movie: A Japanese PRISONER enters with his arms raised. An AMERICAN enters with gun drawn. He clubs PRISONER across head with gun and then strangles him. The strangling death takes a while. Then AMERICAN puts a napkin under his chin, takes out a knife and fork and starts to cut dead PRISONER preparatory to eating him. The film ends.)

YAMMY

What conclusions do you draw from this film?

HIRO

Well, I thought the acting was a little stiff.

MICHY

Yeah, and the characters weren't well developed.

HIRO

Good point. You have to care about the characters. I just didn't care about anyone.

MICHY

I don't know, the American at least was hungry.

HIRO

Yeah, I could relate to that.

YAMMY

He was hungry for Japanese blood!

HIRO

Oh... I didn't get that.

MICHY

No. Neither did I. I just thought he was very, very hungry.

HIRO

Maybe it can be fixed in editing. Post production.

YAMMY

Think about this film when you want to surrender.

HIRO

Oh, ok, I imagine I'll have other things on my mind at the time. But I'll try to think about it. Thank you, sir.

MICHY (Curtseying)

Pleasure to meet you.

(YAMMY exits. MICHY and HIRO exit opposite direction holding hands. FLETCH meets SPRU DC having entered from opposite sides. SPRU looks queasy.)

FLETCH

All right, Spru, I know you're a genius so... what's the matter with you?

SPRU

Seasickness. Hold these.

(SPRU hands "Enterprise" and "Hornet" to FLETCH.)

SPRU

Excuse me.

(He removes a paper bag from his back pocket and barfs noisily in it.)

FLETCH

We're going to steam north of Midway and launch our planes.

(SPRU heaves again.)

SPRU

Yessir.

FLETCH

We'll then retreat to the east to lengthen the distance between us and the Japanese.

(SPRU heaves again.)

SPRU

Yessir.

(NIM appears DL.)

NIM

What's happening?

FLETCH

Spru appears to be seasick. He's spraying chunks all over the place.

(SPRU heaves again.)

NIM

Are you criticizing him?

FLETCH

No, I'm just...

NIM

You're a jealous, competitive bastard, Fletch. (SPRU heaves.) Spru is a genius. If you don't recognize that (SPRU continues to heave) you're a fool.

FLETCH

He's a heaving genius.

NIM

Find the enemy and attack. Attack! Attack! Attack!

(NIM exits. FLETCH hands "Enterprise" and "Hornet" to SPRU.)

FLETCH

Hold these. And don't barf on them. (FLETCH retrieves "Yorktown.") Now steam north with me to intercept.

(FLETCH and SPRU move SR as MIDWAY ISLAND enters – it is an actor holding a large burlap shape, with a chunk of coral on his head.)

MIDWAY ISLAND

I am Midway Island, small and barren, cast in the middle of an endless sea. (He throws down the Island.) My shores are peopled with Seagulls, my reefs with coral. An airfield has been scraped onto my back. Ow!

(SHIGERU and YUKIO enter and fly towards MIDWAY ISLAND.)

FLETCH

Fletch to Nim, Japanese bombers attacking Midway Island. There are also a lot of Zeros escorting.

(SHIGERU throws a bunch of "0"s in the air.)

SPRU

Our Marine fighters have gone up.

(HANK and FRANK enter with their scarves flapping behind them and fly towards SHIGERU and YUKIO.)

FLETCH

Dogfight over Midway!

(HANK and FRANK fight like dogs with SHIGERU and YUKIO. They bark and growl and try to bite. Soon they are rolling on the floor like hounds in a melee. In the background YAMMY and NAGGY enter each holding two carriers.)

FLETCH

We've lost seventeen fighters. The zeros got 'em.

(HANK and FRANK each hold a small "0" to their throats as if attacked. They slowly succumb. SHIGERU and YUKIO kick MIDWAY ISLAND the prop into a pile.)

SPRU

Midway Island devastated.

(SHIGERU and YUKIO beat up MIDWAY ISLAND the character a la Marx Brothers and then fly off.)

SPRU

Japanese carriers spotted!

FLETCH

Launch aircraft! Attack! Attack! Attack!

(ROSIE, A FEMALE RIVETER, enters and interrupts the action.)

ROSIE

And what about the women's contribution on the home front? Yes, the men did all the fighting but where would they be if not for the contribution of the American women in the factories?

Song: "Rosie the Riveter was a Big Dike!"

[A boisterous number a la "Rose's Turn" with references to Richmond, CA.]

ROSIE

*I'M A RIVETER.
SPENT THE THIRTIES AT A STOVE,
MY HEAD IN THE OVEN, MY HANDS ON THE WASH.
THE HUBBY WENT AWAY, NOW I'M RIVETING ALL DAY
AND I'M EATING BUSH AT NIGHT.
I'M ROSIE!*

(POSIE – another Riveter – enters and sings with ROSIE.)

POSIE

SHE'S ROSIE, I'M POSIE!

ROSIE

I'M ROSIE, SHE'S POSIE!

POSIE

I RIVET AWAY, WHILE THE MEN GO OUT AND PLAY

ROSIE

SHE NAILS ME SO TRUE.

POSIE

I SCREW HER TILL SHE'S BLUE.

ROSIE

I'M ROSIE!

POSIE

I'M POSIE!

ROSIE/POSIE

*AND WE'RE RIVETERS!
FROM RICHMOND!*

(They dance.)

POSIE
SHE'S ROSIE, I'M POSIE!

ROSIE
I'M ROSIE, SHE'S POSIE!

POSIE
I RIVET AWAY, WHILE THE MEN GO OUT AND PLAY

ROSIE
SHE NAILS ME SO TRUE.

POSIE
I SCREW HER TILL SHE'S BLUE.

ROSIE
I'M ROSIE!

POSIE
I'M POSIE!

ROSIE/POSIE
*AND WE'RE RIVETERS!
FROM RICHMOND!*

Thank you. NIM (Standing up from being dead as MIDWAY)

(RIVETERS exit passing FRANK.)

FRANK
I thought all Americans were men.

POSIE
We're not Americans.

ROSIE
We're lesbians.

(They exit.)

YAMMY
Midway attacked and destroyed. Now looking for US carriers.

(HANK and FRANK now stand up and fly upstage as YAMMY and NAGGY curl DR and cross from DR to DL.)

NAGGY
Yammy?

Yes, Naggy.

YAMMY

Look.

NAGGY

(They both look upstage at HANK and FRANK.)

Where did they come from?

YAMMY

(HANK and FRANK now begin a “run” downstage towards YAMMY and NAGGY who are simultaneously steaming, slowly, SR to SL. As HANK and FRANK are about to hit YAMMY and NAGGY’s carriers they each raise them so that HANK and FRANK miss and pass downstage of them. This attack is done with HANK and FRANK throwing beans that miss the carriers and fly into audience. HANK and FRANK veer SL and upstage and try the attack once again, repeating this maneuver. They miss again and veer off SR.)

Missed!

NAGGY

Land based aircraft.

YAMMY

So we didn’t destroy Midway.

NAGGY

(Dum-dum-dum as YAMMY and NAGGY stare at each other, concerned. HIRO flies on and points.)

American fleet spotted!

HIRO

Good news. I need a breakfast sushi.

YAMMY

Or a brunch tika.

NAGGY

(They exit SL. FLETCH and SPRU enter SR.)

Ok, so we’ve spotted them, we know where they are.

FLETCH

Yup. (He starts to barf.)
SPRU

Don't you dare.
FLETCH

Sorry.
SPRU

FLETCH
Get ready to launch a massive strike with Enterprise and Hornet. I'll support you with Yorktown once I've recovered my spotters.

Got it.
SPRU

(YAMMY and NAGGY enter DL.)

YAMMY
Ok, so we know their fleet is out there.

NAGGY
But those planes came from Midway.

YAMMY
How do we know that? I mean, for sure.

NAGGY
It's a long and boring explanation involving pages of expository dialogue. Take my word for it.

YAMMY (To HIRO.)
When you say you spotted their fleet, did you mean carriers?

HIRO
Um... I'll check again.

(HIRO looks over FLETCH and SPRU's shoulder to see if they're holding carriers. They try to hide them from view; HIRO tries harder to see them.)

YAMMY
Ok, so get the torpedoes ready to arm the aircraft.

(Huge torpedo is carried on by SHIGERU. It is very phallic.)

NAGGY

Wait a minute. We need bombs, to bomb Midway.

YAMMY

We need torpedoes to bomb carriers.

NAGGY

But we don't know if there are carriers out there yet.

YAMMY (To HIRO)

Do you see carriers?

HIRO (Still struggling to see)

I can't see... they keep hiding in rain squalls.

(FLETCH and SPRU hide carriers in plastic bags and spray them HIRO with spray bottles.)

NAGGY

I say bomb what we know. Midway.

YAMMY

Ok, put the torpedoes away and bring on bombs.

SHIGERU

Oh, come on, man.

YAMMY

Just do it.

(Torpedo is taken off stage by SHIGERU. YAMMY and NAGGY wait.)

YAMMY

This takes an hour you know, to switch.

NAGGY

I know.

(They wait. HIRO pushes between FLETCH and SPRU and sees carriers.)

HIRO

Carriers, carriers confirmed!

Carriers!
YAMMY

Carriers!
NAGGY

(Two huge bombs, also very phallic, now are carried on by SHIGERU.)

YAMMY
Put the bombs away and bring on torpedoes!

SHIGERU
Oh, come on.

NAGGY
Do it!

(SHIGERU exits grumbling.)

YAMMY
One hour.

(They wait.)

SPRU
Admiral?

FLETCH
Yes, Admiral.

SPRU
If we launch now, right now, we might just catch them re-arming their planes. We know they've got to recover all their aircraft and re-arm them before striking again. Their decks will be covered with explosives. Their carriers will be floating bombs waiting for us to detonate!

FLETCH
We're still too far away.

SPRU
Not for a one way trip.

FLETCH
What about our pilots? They won't be able to get back.

SPRU

We'll get them back. Somehow. Faith!

FLETCH

OK. Attack! Attack!

NIM

What's happening?

FLETCH

We're launching a massive strike on their carriers.

NIM

Have they spotted you?

SPRU

Yeah, but that's a good thing. It means they're close.

NIM

Don't lose another one of my carriers.

FLETCH

Sir, risk is part of advantage.

NIM

You lose another one of my carriers I'll soon castrate you!

FLETCH

Sir, we can afford to lose...

NIM

Don't! Don't! Don't! Don't!

FLETCH

Fine. Sorry. I won't. Jeez.

(HANK and FRANK are flying, they bank and FLETCH and SPRU move upstage. HANK and FRANK are flying towards YAMMY and NAGGY who stand staring at their watches, nervously, tapping their feet impatiently. Finally the torpedo comes back onstage. with SHIGERU.)

SHIGERU

All aircraft armed with torpedoes!

(HANK and FRANK appear beside YAMMY and NAGGY. HANK and FRANK smile wickedly.)

HANK

Squadron 1 to Yorktown. Commencing attack.

YAMMY (Concerned)

Oh.

NAGGY (Ditto)

Oh, dear.

FRANK

Their decks appear to be covered with armed planes.

NAGGY

Fuck man.

YAMMY

Bad timing.

FRANK (Wickedly to YAMMY)

Quack.

HANK (To NAGGY)

Quack, quack.

Reprise: "Nippon/US"

AMERICANS

AND WE'LL MAKE-

JAPANESE/AMERICANS

*A BRAVE NEW WORLD
WITH FLAGS UNFURLED.
A WORLD OF DREAMS
AND RACIAL TEAMS
A WORLD FOR US
A WORLD FOR YOU
A WORLD WHERE THUS
THE DREAMS DO COME TRUE.*

End of Act One

Intermission

Act Two

(CITY and JOHANNES are standing around at intermission, holding programs and looking annoyed.)

CITY

How long is this intermission anyway?

JOHANNES

It's only been thirty minutes. That's standard with this company. What do you think?

CITY

It's ok.

JOHANNES

Yeah, it's fine.

CITY

At least there were some lesbians.

JOHANNES

When?

CITY

Those riveters.

JOHANNES

I didn't get that they were lesbians.

CITY

It was pretty subtle.

(JACK enters in dressing gown with paper towels stuffed into his collar.)

JACK

Hi.

CITY

Shouldn't you be getting into costume?

JOHANNES

Or character.

JACK

I wanted to see how you were doing.

CITY

It's very amateurish for an actor to hang out in the lobby at intermission.

JACK

Sorry.

JOHANNES

But we were wondering when you were going to say hello.

(SAMSON enters in boxer shorts and t-shirt.)

SAMSON

Don't you love all the nuanced references to our struggles with the foundations?

CITY

When?

SAMSON

In the show.

CITY

Umm...

JOHANNES

So that's what's going on. You're equating us with a fascistic Asian empire.

CITY

If that's what's going on it's racist and misogynistic.

JACK

But I'm portraying myself as stupid and over-ambitious.

JOHANNES

You got that right.

CITY

I can't believe I'm staying for Act Two.

JOHANNES

I can't believe we're paying for this crap.

CITY

How much money did we give you last year?

Five thousand. JACK

Is that all? Well, it's too much! CITY

This is outrageous! JOHANNES

(The lights flash.)

There're the lights for Act II. CITY

And I didn't get a cookie. Fuck! JOHANNES

Can I buy you one? SAMSON

Is this a bribe? JOHANNES

No, I just thought... SAMSON

I'll remember that. I'll remember you tried to bribe me. And yes, I'd like a double chocolate chip. JOHANNES

I'll have a glass of wine. CITY

Outrageous!!!! JOHANNES/CITY

(Act Two of the show starts as CITY and JOHANNES exit. The full cast comes on and intones ominously.)

Song: "War"

ALL

INGLORIOUS WAR
DEVASTATING TO DEVELOPMENT WAR.
GOOD FOR MALE EGO BUT BAD FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS WAR

*IT'S WAR FOR NOW, WAR FOR YOU, WAR FOR ME
AND WAR FOR FREE*

-DOM.

*IT'S WAR TODAY, WAR ALWAYS, WAR FOR DAYS
AND WAR AS MAY*

-HEM.

(And the action continues where we left off.)

YAMMY

Torpedo attacks!

NAGGY

Torpedo attack on starboard bow.

(HANK and FRANK will now begin a series of runs on tiny Japanese carriers. These involve lining up with a particular carrier from a distance, moving towards it, and releasing a torpedo - a pencil - so it slides across the floor towards the carrier.)

HANK

Enterprise torpedo bomber attack on the flagship Akagi.

(HANK makes his run, releases his torpedo, "Akagi" swerves at last minute in YAMMY's hand and avoids torpedo.)

YAMMY

Fighter screen, take care of torpedo bombers.

(YUKIO and SHIGERU enter flying high and, because HANK and FRANK are so low on their runs, YUKIO and SHIGERU get low to floor themselves to meet torpedo bombers.)

YUKIO

Adjusting altitude to meet American TBDs.

FRANK

Yorktown torpedo bomber attack on carrier Kaga.

(FRANK makes his run, releases his torpedo, YAMMY swerves "Kaga" at last minute and avoids torpedo. As FRANK comes out of the run, YUKIO pounces on him and strangles him.)

NAGGY

Zeros devastating Yorktown TBDs.

(YUKIO holds up big rubber Zero, snares FRANK in it, and strangles him with it. It is a vicious and sexually kinky death – “Shout my name! Shout my name!”)

HANK

Enterprise torpedo bomber attack on the carrier Hiryu.

(HANK starts his run on “Hiryu”, controlled by NAGGY. This is a low run in.)

HANK

I’m going to get this mother.

(HANK is approaching slowly. NAGGY anticipates his line of approach and swerves. HANK adjusts to swerve with new line of approach. NAGGY registers HANK’s adjustment and swerves again. HANK makes another adjustment as he gets closer. NAGGY swerves again. HANK is almost on him. HANK makes a final, last second adjustment, releases pencil. NAGGY swerves “Hiryu” at final second and barely avoids HANK’s pencil.)

HANK

Dammit.

(HANK has passed “Hiryu” only to meet YUKIO on opposite side of “Hiryu.” YUKIO dangles his Zero wickedly.)

YUKIO

Hello.

HANK

Shit, man.

(YUKIO strangles HANK with glee.)

FRANK

Final Yorktown TBD attack on final Japanese carrier Soryu.

(FRANK has lined up with NAGGY steering “Soryu.” This run is much the same as the previous, except this time FRANK and NAGGY make a hundred adjustments and swerves as FRANK approaches. This seems so go on forever. Who will win? At the last possible second NAGGY swerves “Soryu” successfully, pencil misses, FRANK clears “Soryu” to find YUKIO and SHIGERU waiting for him with Zeros. They strangle him with prolonged relish. He is dead. As each carrier was saved it was placed to the side of the stage with the comment. “TBD attack on _____ failed.”)

YAMMY/NAGGY

The Japanese fleet is intact.

YUKIO/SHIGERU

American torpedo squadrons are devastated.

(Because the Japanese are all low to the floor for this action they do a rolling dance of victory on the floor. HANK and FRANK enter from UL. They are flying high.)

HANK/FRANK

American dive bomber squadrons now arrive on the scene.

YUKIO/SHIGERU/YAMMY/NAGGY

Dive bombers!

HANK

Flying high and ready for action.

NAGGY

Yammy, my Zeros are all still low.

YUKIO/SHIGERU

From dealing with the TBDs.

YAMMY

Get them, Zeros!

(YUKIO and SHIGERU try to snare HANK and FRANK from the ground, but they can't get their hoops up to HANK and FRANK's level.)

HANK

You're worthless.

FRANK

Just a bunch of zeros.

HANK

Yorktown attack on Flagship Akagi.

NAGGY

Because they're coming from above swerving makes no difference.

(HANK is approaching "Akagi" from above. YAMMY makes "Akagi" twist and turn frantically but HANK simply comes in from overhead and very simply and viciously slams his fist down on "Akagi," right on it.)

NAGGY

Akagi blows up because it's deck is full of torpedo armed planes.

(HANK smashes his fist down again and again.)

NAGGY

It blows up for nine hours.

(HANK is going frantic pummeling “Akagi.”)

NAGGY

It sinks.

(HANK throws “Akagi” against back wall and does wicked imitation victory dance of Japanese rolling on floor, making farting noises as she does so. Japanese look on miserable.)

YAMMY

That was really hard to take.

FRANK

Enterprise SBD attack on Kaga.

NAGGY

Oh, Christ.

YAMMY

Nope.

NAGGY

Oh, Buddha.

YAMMY

Maybe.

NAGGY

Oh, shit.

YAMMY

Yep.

(FRANK comes in high on NAGGY controlling “Kaga.” YUKIO and SHIGERU make half-hearted waves with their Zeros. NAGGY is frantically swerving “Kaga.” FRANK kicks him out of the way.)

FRANK

Give it up.

(FRANK lingers over “Kaga,” smiling, he is enjoying the moment.)

NAGGY
Oh, come on,

YAMMY
Get it over with.

FRANK
You never know. Maybe I miss.

YAMMY
Really?

FRANK
Wind is a factor.

HANK
Dud bombs sometimes.

FRANK
Yeah, American munitions at the time were notoriously unreliable.

YAMMY
That's true.

NAGGY
I never thought of that.

(Pause.)

HANK/FRANK
Not!

(FRANK pummels "Kaga" to bits and throws it against back wall.)

NAGGY
Shit man.

YAMMY
Fuck.

HANK
SBD attack on Soryu.

NAGGY
Oh, come on.

YAMMY
Give it a rest.

HANK
SBD attack on Soryu.

YAMMY
This really blows.

HANK
SBD...

YAMMY
Yes, yes, yes.

(YAMMY sets "Soryu" down. HANK begins his run. YUKIO and SHEGURO, so bummed by the hopelessness of it all, barely raise their Zeros to catch him. YAMMY looks at them annoyed.)

YUKIO
We can't get up there.

SHIGERU
We were just too low after getting the TBDs.

YAMMY
You could if you tried.

SHIGERU
We can't.

YAMMY
You could if you cared.

YUKIO
We cannot.

SHIGERU
Sorry.

(YAMMY just shakes his head.)

HANK
Aren't you going to swerve?

YAMMY
What's the point?

HANK
Come on. Take evasive action.

YAMMY
No.

HANK (Very Ruth Gordon)
Ah, come on...

YAMMY
Fine. Ok?

(YAMMY cynically swerves "Soryu" a few times with a mocking expression.)

YAMMY
Happy?

HANK
Yeah, I'm happy. I'm slap, slap happy.

YAMMY
Just get it over with.

(HANK puts his foot on "Soyu" and slowly, ever so slowly, depresses it, slowly crushing the carrier, relishing every last second of its destruction. Japanese look on miserably. Having flattened "Soryu," HANK daintily kicks it upstage. He then struts about like Mick Jagger - "You Can Start Me Up!" He and FRANK have a crazy disco-vogue dance ending in glamour drag poses.)

YAMMY
Yeah, yeah, ok.

HANK
Wait.

FRANK
Oh, wait.

HANK
What about...

HANK/FRANK
The Hiryu!

YAMMY
Go!

(NAGGY darts off stage with "Hiryu.")

YAMMY
Woops. What happened? I guess while you were voguing or strutting or whatever you call it, the Hiryu slipped away! Ha-ha-ha.

HANK
Don't get cocky, Yammy.

FRANK
We're three for four.

HANK
And you're on the floor. (For indeed, YAMMY, YUKIO and SHIGERU are on the floor.)

Song: "Tactics" [Up tempo]

AMERICANS
*WHAT DID WE LEARN?
TORPEDO ATTACKS
NOT SO WHACK.
THEY SEE US COMING AND CAN SWERVE.
HERE COMES A TORPEDO
AND THEY SWERVE...*

*BUT...
DIVE BOMBER ATTACKS
GET THE SMACK
THEY CAN'T SWERVE
WE HIT THEIR NERVE.
COME FROM ABOVE, YOU CAN'T HIDE.
COME FROM THE SKY, WE SKIN YOUR HIDE.*

*DIVE BOMBERS! NOT TORPEDOS! DIVE BOMBERS!
WILL KEEP US FREE!*

JAPANESE
*WHAT DID WE LEARN?
OUR ZEROS TOO LOW.
THAT WAS LOW
DEALING WITH TORPEDO BOMBERS
GOT US TOO LOW*

WE GOT THEM...

*BUT...
DIVE BOMBERS CAME IN
WE'RE TOO LOW
CANNOT WIN
WHEN OCEANS WE SKIM.*

*GOTTA STAY HIGH WHERE THE ACTION IS
THAT WILL MAKE US WIN!*

*AMERICANS/JAPANESE
WE'VE LEARNED A LOT, A LOT OF LESSONS.
DEFEAT'S NOT BAD IF YOU LEARN LESSONS.
ADULT EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT
THAT'S HOW WE GROW, EVEN AS ADULTS.*

*YAMMY
But we've lost three carriers!*

(JAPANESE and AMERICANS comfort him and sing soothingly as they raise him to his feet.)

*AMERICANS/JAPANESE
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
EVEN AT FIFTY*

*NAGGY
He's fifty-eight.*

*YAMMY
EVEN AT FIFTY-EIGHT,
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.*

*JAPANESE
NEXT TIME ZEROS STAY HIGH*

*AMERICANS
NEXT TIME DIVE BOMBERS ONLY.*

*AMERICANS/JAPANESE
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
ADULT EDUCATION!*

(The ACTORS all shake each other's hands as if to say, "That number went well. Good work." And they start to exit. YAMMY has stayed behind thinking.)

YAMMY

Wait. I learned something else.

(The ACTORS all stop exiting, look at one another and return to song positions, annoyed because they have to go on with the number.)

ACTORS

WHAT?

YAMMY

AND I LEARNED

DON'T DILLY DALLY WITH TORPEDOS AND BOMBS

YOU'LL GET BURNED

MY DECKS WERE CONVERED WITH TORPEDOS AND BOMBS

I WAS A SITTING DUCK FOR BOMBS.

THAT'S HOW WE GROW

ADULT EDUCATION!

(The actors now all dart off the stage so the number can't continue. NAGGY re-enters with "Hiryu.")

NAGGY

Hiryu still ready for action, Yammy.

YAMMY

Launch aircraft, Naggy.

NAGGY

Yes, sir.

YAMMY

Target, Yorktown.

NAGGY

Yes, Yammy.

YAMMY

And Naggy.

NAGGY

Yes, Yammy.

YAMMY

Launch dive bombers.

(Dum-dum-dum.)

YAMMY

SO I'VE LEARNED, SO I'VE LEARNED, SO I'VE...

(He exits. FLETCH enters, followed by SPRU.)

FLETCH

I'M THE TOP!

I'M THE COLLOSEUM

I'M THE TOP!

I'M THE... (He can't remember the lyric.)

SPRU

LOUVRE MUSEUM.

(NIM enters SL.)

NIM

What's happening?

FLETCH

Three Japanese carriers sunk, all American carriers intact.

NIM

Good work.

FLETCH

I'M THE TOP...

SPRU

Next steps?

FLETCH

Ok, ok, next steps, let's see. I'll recover aircraft, you take Enterprise and Hornet and get that fourth carrier.

SPRU

Yessir.

FLETCH

And Spru.

SPRU
Yes, Admiral?

FLETCH
Good work.

SPRU
You too, Admiral.

FLETCH
CAUSE IF BABY THEY'RE THE BOTTOM

SPRU
CAUSE IF BABY THEY'RE THE BOTTOM

FLETCH/SPRU
CAUSE IF BABY THEY'RE THE BOTTOM
WE'RE THE TOP!

NIM
Good work, Fletch.

FLETCH
Thank you, sir.

NIM
Get that other carrier.

FLETCH
Yes sir!

NIM
And don't lose any of mine.

FLETCH
No sir.

NIM
Don't fuck up.

FLETCH
No fuck up, sir.

NIM
No fucky.

FLETCH
No fucky.

NIM
No fucky fuck.

FLETCH
No fuck.

(Rif on “fucky-fuck,” more silly playful this time, with NIM tickling FLETCH and eventually tweaking his nipples and FLEYCH laughing wildly like an insane baby. Suddenly FLETCH is serious.)

FLETCH
Yorktown, launch dive bombers – target Hiryu.

SPRU
Enterprise, launch dive bombers, target Hiryu.

(HANK and FRANK circle and exit. HIRO and SHIGERU enter and head towards FLETCH with “Yorktown.”)

HIRO/SHIGERU
Yorktown spotted, going in for attack.

(They all look at one another.)

YUKIO/SHIGERU/FLETCH
Here we go!

(YUKIO and SHIGERU fly towards “Yorktown” and FLETCH does an elaborate deception dance to confuse them, waving “Yorktown” in their faces, then pulling it away suddenly as they bring down their fists – missing their quarry. This goes on for a while with FLETCH successfully evading their attacks and SPRU cheering him on. Finally he is dancing in the face of SHIGERU, with the “Yorktown” behind his back when HIRO casually reaches out and squishes “Yorktown” with his hand. FLETCH looks back at him. HIRO smiles.)

HIRO
Sorry.

FLETCH
Shit, man.

HIRO
But in pulling out of my dive run, I’m hit by AA fire.

(FLETCH pokes him several times in the stomach.)

HIRO
My plane is on fire.

(He pulls fire ribbon out of his back pocket and waves it.)

HIIO
And as my plane burns I think of Michyko.

(MICHY appears.)

Reprise: "Young Love"

MICHY
YOUNG LOVE.

MICHY/HIRO
YOUNG JAPANESE LOVE.

HIRO
And I start to bail out of the plane.

(HIRO starts to open cockpit.)

HIRO
Then I think of what Yammy told me.

(FRANK enters brandishing knife and fork and crosses towards HIRO, licking his lips, as in the training film. The music is ominous.)

HIRO
And I sit back down in my aircraft.

(HIRO closes cockpit.)

HIRO
Then I think of Michyko.

MICHY
YOUNG LOVE

MICHY/HIRO
YOUNG JAPANESE LOVE.

HIRO
And I start to bail out.

(HIRO starts to bail out again.)

HIRO
Then I think of my country and glory.

Reprise: "Nippon"

JAPANESE
*COME WHAT MAY WE'LL WIN THIS WAR
WE'LL STOP THOSE YANKS KNOCKIN'
ON OUR DOOR.*

HIRO
And stupidly, selfishly, like an idiot – I sit back down in my burning pane.

MICHY
Turn it slowly about.

HIRO
Point it at the "Yorktown."

FLETCH
And fly right at me.

(HIRO flies right at FLETCH, in slow motion.)

FLETCH
And I'm watching him, thinking, "What the hell is he doing? He's on fire. Why doesn't he bail out?"

HIRO
The plane has just enough oomph.

FLETCH
Where the hell is he going?

HIRO
That if I stay at the controls.

FLETCH
Is he going to pass over us?

HIRO
I can just steer it.

FLETCH
Oh, Christ.

HIRO
Right into the Yorktown's flight deck.

(HIRO is standing right in front of FLETCH. HIRO starts to poke him teasingly, FLETCH getting the giggles in response. This goes on for a bit and then - suddenly - HIRO tackles FLETCH. Having knocked down FLETCH he leans over and gives the "Yorktown" a final, death dealing smash. It is truly flattened now.)

SPRU
Wow.

FRANK
That was depressing.

SPRU
Yeah.

HIRO (Trying to break the comber mood.)
Anyway.

FLETCH
I stand up. Transfer my flag to the cruiser Astoria and send a signal to Spru.

SPRU (Answering phone from off-stage)
Hello.

FLETCH
Yorktown dead in the water, listing to port, sinking. Take command carrier task force.

SPRU
Oh, ok. You sure?

FLETCH
Yes.

SPRU
Bad news. Sorry to hear that.

FLETCH

And to add insult to injury, the Japanese then proved they could do something we couldn't.

SHIGERU

Torpedo attack on Yorktown.

(SHIGERU lines up with "Yorktown" and begins a torpedo run. FLETCH tries to maneuver the ship as YAMMY did before but SHIGERU manages to shove a pencil into its base, then another, then a third.)

SPRU

Wow.

FRANK

Yeah, better torpedoes.

(Everyone sits on the stage and contemplates the screwed up "Yorktown." MICHY steps downstage and sings.)

Song: "Oh, Hiro" [Ballad – Eleven O'clock Number]

MICHY

*ONCE THERE WAS LOVE
NOW JUST EXPLOSIONS AND BOMBS
JAPAN WAS SO PRETTY
NOW GRIEVING WIDOWS AND MOMS.*

*WHERE CHERRY BLOSSOMS FELL
NOW TEARS AND FEARS WILL EXCEL
WHERE HARPS PLAYED OF BLISS
NOW THEY MORNFULLY INTONE FOR THOSE WE MISS.*

*OH, HIRO.
WHY'D YOU HAVE TO BE A HERO?
PROPAGANDA JUST SUCKS,
TURNS SUCKERS INTO FUCKS.*

*YOU WERE MY HIT, MAN
NOW YOU'RE NOTHING BUT SHIT, MAN.
I'M A ONE GUY GIRL,
I COULD JUST HURL.*

*I WALK TO THE SEA,
AND LOOK OUT ONTO YOUR GRAVE,*

*YOUR SALTY SEA GRAVE,
LOOK FOR ASHES ON A WAVE.*

*BUT WATER'S ALL I SEE,
GRAY WITH KELP AND SEA FOAM.
I DON'T FEEL ANY BETTER,
SO I JUST TURN AND WALK HOME.*

*OH, HIRO.
NOW MY LIFE IS A ZERO.
NOW MY LIFE'S A RUTT
PATRIOTISM SUCKS BUTT
OH, HIRO.*

(YAMMY hands her a flower. She throws it on the floor. YAMMY shrugs, picks it up, and puts it in his hair. FRANK cross to Yorktown.)

FRANK
Later that night we go aboard and try to repair the Yorktown.

(FRANK and FLETCH start to straighten it out.)

FLETCH
Then I hear something.

(FLETCH cups his hand at his ear.)

FLETCH
I hear something on the radar.

(SHIGERU slithers along apron floor making "ping" noises a la WWII submarine. FRANK listens with FLETCH. More "pings" as SHIGERU approaches.)

FRANK
Could be a whale.

FLETCH
No, whales go "eeeeee," "eeeeee," "eeeeee."

FRANK
Could be crabs.

FLETCH
No, crabs don't make any sound, they just itch.

(SHIGERU suddenly springs up and slams down fist on repaired "Yorktown.")

FRANK

Oh, yeah, you were right. Sorry. We try again.

(They try again to straighten out “Yorktown.” SHIGERU again smashes it.)

FRANK

We try-

(SHEGURO now grabs it and starts to pull it down as if it were sinking.)

SHIGERU/FRANK/FLETCH

But it is dragged down, down, down to the depths. (Dramatically) Down....
Dooooown.... Dooooown.....

(They exit intoning “Dooooownnn...” as YAMMY and NAGGY enter from the opposite direction.)

NAGGY

Yorktown sunk.

YAMMY

Good.

NAGGY

And we still have all the aircraft from Hiryu.

(GUCHI enters holding “Hiryu.”)

YAMMY

Good, tell Admiral Yamaguchi to keep that flat top afloat. The honor of Japan rests with him.

NAGGY

You hear that Guchi?

GUICHI

Yes.

(GUCHI holds up “Hiryu” and dances about stage to the final passage of Wagner’s *Götterdämmerung*. HANK and FRANK, with FLETCH and SPRU enter and surround GUICHI. They dance about the stage, chasing GUICHI, who is holding “Hiryu” protectively. On the climax GUICHI has ducked low, briefly placing “Hiryu” on the stage, but long enough for SPRU to slam his fist down on it. GUICHI lifts it aloft, damaged but intact. He dances and swoops down again avoiding attack above but places it on the stage long enough for FLETCH to slam his fist down on it. This time

GUICHI cannot lift it as high as before and when he returns it to the stage in a duck it is slammed by HANK. GUICHI can get it even less high next time and when he returns it to the stage HANK, FRANK, FLETCH and SPRU pounce on it on the orchestral climax, each pummeling it repeatedly. GUICHI lifts it up severely damaged, and tilts it as if it were sinking. HANK takes it from GUCHI and holds it at a tilt. GUICHI dances in place at a tilt as if he were on board the sinking “Hiryu.” As the music grows quiet:)

NAGGY

He’s lost it. He’s going down with the ship.

(YAMMY takes “Hiryu” and angles it more steeply. As the music builds again YUKIO dances forward and hands GUCHI a glass of clear liquid, NAGGY hands him a cracker. Leaning in his dance, GUICHI nibbles the cracker and then sips the liquid – it is a death ritual. The glass and remaining cracker are taken away from GUCHI and he dances about the stage as the “Hiryu” goes almost vertical in its descent. GUCHI does huge ecstatic “Leibestod” leaps. The “Hiryu” is now vertical and slowly sinks towards the stage as GUCHI goes through his own death throws, sinking in his dance towards the stage.)

YAMMY

We’re not going to have much left if everyone commits seppuku.

NAGGY

It is our way.

YAMMY

It is a waste.

HIRO (To YAMMY)

So it’s worse than making young men into kamikazes?

FLETCH

Admirals going down with their ships. Gee, I wish I had that kind of courage.

SPRU

Spru to Nim, Hiryu sunk.

(NIM enters.)

NIM

Good work, Spru. Fletch.

FLETCH

Yessir.

NIM
What about the Yorktown? How's it doing?

(FLETCH can barely speak – he stutters.)

NIM
Well?

(FLETCH stutters some more.)

NIM
Speak up, man.

FLETCH
Well, well, wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa wa , well you see...

NIM
What about the Yorktown?

FLETCH (Very quiet)
It's sunk.

NIM
What?

FLETCH
It's sunk.

NIM
I can't hear you.

FLETCH
It sunk.

NIM (Prompting him)
It...

FLETCH
S s s s s s s....

NIM
It s s s s s s...

FLETCH
S s s s s s s....

NIM
S s s s s s....

(NIM desperately trying to draw it out of FLETCH.)

FLETCH
It sunk!

NIM
What? There was interference.

FLETCH
It sunk.

NIM
It... sunk?

FLETCH
Yes.

NIM
It sunk?

FLETCH
Yes.

(NIM thinks about this.)

NIM
Oh.

(He thinks some more.)

NIM
Well....

(He thinks a bit more.)

NIM (Philosophically)
Ok, well... that's ok. They lost four, we lost one. That's ok.

FLETCH
It is?

NIM
Of course.

FLETCH

Oh, ok.

NIM

YOU FUCK UP!

(He starts chasing FLETCH about the stage. He corners him finally DC. FLETCH pleads on his knees.)

FLETCH

Please... please... please... please... please.

NIM

Fletch, you're a fuck up. We can't afford to lose carriers. I told you that, again and again. Victory without loss. I know it's impossible but it had to happen. Victory without loss. Thank God Bull got Beri-Beri sick. I can't afford to sully his reputation. I need good press and Bull is a hero. I'm sorry. You're taking the fall.

FLETCH

It was deliberate. You could have ordered him to go.

NIM

Yep. But I wanted to send a loser.

FLECTCH

So I'm fired.

NIM

No. You're going to Guadalcanal.

FLETCH (Happy)

Really?

NIM

Yes, it's another lost cause. Thousands will die and it will be a frustrating, maddening campaign. Act like a fraidy-cat and don't lose any more carriers. Just stay in the fight. But stay out of harm's way. That's all I need from you. He successful. But be a coward.

FLETCH

Shit man.

(JOAHNNES and CITY enter and talk to NIM, who has now become SAMSON having removed shirt to reveal t-shirt.)

JOHANNES

Do you understand?

SAMSON

Yes, I think so.

CITY

So long as we're clear.

SAMSON

I'm clear.

(CITY and JOHANNES leave. JACK stands having replaced paper towels in collar.)

JACK

What was that about?

SAMSON

Don't worry about it.

JACK

Did they like the show?

SAMSON

No. But that's ok.

JACK

But the funding will continue?

NIM

Yes. I made a deal with them. I'll explain it to you.

FLETCH (Removing paper towels)

I was sent to Guadalcanal with the Enterprise and the Saratoga.

(NIM, having put shirt back on, hands FLETCH the "Enterprise" and the "Saratoga." FLETCH holds "Enterprise" in his hands and sets "Saratoga" down onstage in front of him.)

FLETCH

At the Battle of the Eastern Solomons the Enterprise was dive bombed.

(SHIGERU swoops by and half squashes "Enterprise." NIM almost collapses with frustration.)

FLETCH

Then the Saratoga was torpedoed.

(SHIGERU has lain down in the forestage and made a slither across the apron, making ping sounds as he goes, and then half-smashed the "Saratoga" with his fist. NIM is almost weeping.)

FLETCH

Admiral, the purpose of the fleet is to sail in harm's way and engage the enemy. How can I do that if all I'm supposed to worry about is not letting my ships get sunk?

NIM

Fletch. I started this war with six carriers. Six. You've lost four of them.

FLETCH

Because I seek out...

NIM

You're fired.

(Pause.)

FLETCH

You can't fire me.

NIM

No, but I can promote you and kick you upstairs. Sorry.

FLETCH

The war ended with Bull a hero.

(BULL enters topless and is photographed. He exits.)

FLETCH

And Spru a hero.

(SPRU enters and, choking back nausea, is photographed. He exits barely holding back the vomit.)

HANK

Fletch, the victor of Coral Sea, Midway and the Eastern Solomons, was forgotten.

FLETCH

Nim was the most celebrated Admiral of all.

BULL

They named the most important thing in Christendom after him.

(All intone with religious fervor.)

NIM

A freeway!

FLETCH

And his name was immortalized.

YAMMY

Where's the on damn on-ramp for the Nimitz?

NAGGY

Traffic backed up again on the Nimitz.

FRANK

I hate driving on the Nimitz.

(NIM smiles and is photographed.)

YAMMY

I was assassinated by Nim.

(ROCHEFORT enters.)

ROCHEFORT

I found out he was on a plane to Bougainville.

(YAMMY makes a paper airplane.)

NIM

And I ordered him shot down.

(YAMMY throws paper airplane across the stage towards NAGGY, who is holding a branch of Bougainville. HANK enters and grabs plane out of the air before it can reach branch and squashes it.)

NAGGY

I committed suicide on Saipan.

YAMMY

Leaving no one in charge.

NAGGY

It was my last act of honor.

YAMMY

A selfish thing to do.

(The mood has become dour. Now it gets lighter.)

HANK

Fun facts about the battle:

YUKIO

There was an American pilot.

FRANK

Whose plane got shot up while he was attacking the Hiryu.

YUKIO

And he decided.

(HANK crashes into GUICHI, tackling him to the floor.)

HANK

To fly it into the Hiryu.

YUKIO

Suicide bomber. Americans had kamikazes too!

NIM

Fletch could have been a hero, but...

HISTORY GEEK (Entering)

I'm writing a history of the conflict. I'd like your in-put.

FLETCH

Why should I trust you?

HISTORY GEEK

You shouldn't. But I'll be much nicer to you in the history if you're nice to me.

FLETCH

And who exactly are you? That I should be nice to you?

HISTORY GEEK

I am posterity. I'm more important than anyone.

FLETCH

Simply because you can write?

HISTORY GEEK

Something like that. I'm an academic.

FLETCH

Forget it.

HISTORY GEEK

And from that day forth.

ALL

Fletch was lambasted in the histories.

HANK

He retired to Maryland with Martha.

Reprise: "We're Fifty"

MARTHA

SIXTY YEAR OLD LOVE.

FLETCH

SEVENTY YEAR OLD LOVE.

MARTHA/FLETCH

EIGHTY YEAR OLD LOVE.

WE'RE LOVE.

(CITY and JOHANNES appear.)

CITY

We are thrilled to award Theatre for a Queer Audience funding.

JOAHNNES (Looking at card)

And we're thrilled at your new hire as Executive Director... (Showing name on card to CITY) can you pronounce that?

CITY

No. I think it's female though. Or at least transgendered.

JOHANNES

Well we're thrilled.

CITY

And best of luck to... what was his name?

JOHANNES

Who?

CITY

The old white guy.

JOHANNES

Does it matter?

CITY

I'm lying down.

JOHANNES

So am I.

(Everyone is lying on the stage, dead. Everyone suddenly springs to his feet for the finale.)

Finale - Reprise: "Tactics"

ALL

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

FAME IS FUTILE

WAR IS CRUEL

YOU SEE IT COMING, YOU CAN SWERVE,

HERE COMES A WORLD WAR

YOU CAN SWERVE.

BUT...

LOVE, SUCH MAGICAL LOVE,

YOU SEE IT COMING

IT HITS A NERVE

LOVE FROM ABOVE, YOU CAN'T HIDE,

LOVE FROM BELOW, DON'T BE SNIDE.

YOUNG LOVERS! NOT WORLD WAR!

OLD LOVERS!

WILL KEEP US FREE!

WE'VE LEARNED A LOT, A LOT OF LESSONS.

WAR'S NOT SO BAD IF YOU LEARN LESSONS.

(Shouted, not sung) *AND THE LESSON IT TEACHES – WAR IS BAD!*

ADULT EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT,

THAT'S HOW WE GROW, EVEN AS ADULTS.

*THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.*

*MARTHA/FLETCH
EVEN AT EIGHTY!*

*ALL
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.
THAT'S HOW WE GROW.*

ADULT EDUCATION!

Blackout

End