

ACT I—SCENE 9

When the No. 2 Tabs open they reveal Brackett's office. EMILE is there. At rise BRACKETT is seated at desk. CABLE is D.R. level with desk. HARBISON is U.C. just R. of the door. EMILE is D.L. standing with one foot up on the chair. His hat is on chair. [Music fades at establishment of scene.

BRACKETT *[Continuing conversation]*. Now, before you give us your answer I want to impress you with three things. First, you are a civilian and you don't have to go. Second, this is a very dangerous mission and there's no guarantee that you'll survive or that it will do any good. Third, that it might do a great good. It might be the means of turning the tide of war in this area.

EMILE. I understand all these things.

BRACKETT. Are you ready to give us your answer?

EMILE. Yes, I am. *[Turns and faces BRACKETT.]* My answer must be . . . no.

CABLE'S foot comes down off shelf . . . HARBISON uncrosses arms. BRACKETT and HARBISON exchange looks.

When a man faces death he must weigh values very carefully. He must weigh the sweetness of his life against the thing he is asked to die for. The probability of death is very great. For both of us. I know that Island well, Lt. Cable. I am not certain that I believe that what you ask me to do is . . . is . . .

BRACKETT *[Strong]*. We're asking you to help us lick the Japs. *[Easy.]* It's as simple as that. *[Strong.]* We're against the Japs.

EMILE. I know what you are against. What are you for? *[Folds arms, faces front.]* When I was twenty-two I thought the world hated bullies as much as I did. I was foolish—I killed one. And I was forced to flee to an island. Since then I have asked no help from anyone or any country. I have seen these bullies multiply and grow strong. The world sat by and watched them.

CABLE *[Leans forward, hands on desk]*. Aw to hell with this, de Becque, let's be honest. Aren't you just a guy in love with a girl and you're putting her above everything else in the world?

EMILE *[Turns to CABLE]*. Yes, I do care about my life with her more than anything else in the world. It is the only thing that is important to me. This I believe in. This I am sure of. This I have. I cannot risk to lose it. *[Takes hat from chair, moves to door.]* Good day gentlemen.

EMILE exits. There is a long pause. HARBISON crosses down to chair D.L. puts foot up.

HARBISON. He's an honest man, but he's wrong. Of course we can't guarantee him a better world if we win. Point is we can be damned sure it'll be worse if we lose. Can't we?

No answer from the others, HARBISON turns to them holly

Well, can't we?

BRACKETT *[Rising, putting on cap]*. Of course. Cable, there's a bottle of Scotch in my bottom drawer. See you tomorrow.

BRACKETT exits quickly. HARBISON crosses up behind desk, gets bottle and two glasses from bottom D.M. drawer starts to pour one glass. CABLE steps down fast with