

# FLEET GIRLS

by R.W. Schneider

*Characters, 9 f, listed in order of displacement.  
These roles can be played by actors of any hue or shade.*

<i>Mutsuki</i> , destroyer	1,468 t
<i>Hibiki</i> , destroyer	2,050 t
<i>Fubuki</i> , destroyer	2,050 t
<i>Mikuma</i> , heavy cruiser	13,668 t
<i>Mogami</i> , heavy cruiser	13,670 t
<i>Nagato</i> , battleship, fleet executive commander	38,498 t
<i>Kaga</i> , fleet carrier	38,813 t
<i>Akagi</i> , fleet carrier	42,000 t
<i>Yamato</i> , super battleship	72,000 t

The central conceit (borrowed from a Japanese anime) is this: before reaching puberty, young girls discover that each contains the soul of a warship of the Imperial navy. With training, they learn to don the armor, guns and aircraft of their titular ship and so *become* that ship. Enrolled in the naval academy, the Fleet Girls are molded into an elite force pledged to defend the emperor at any cost. In other ways, they're just like high school girls anywhere. Morale is high until one day, northeast of Midway Island, things go terribly wrong. When asked to make the ultimate sacrifice, the young women must assess the value of their civilian lives in practical terms.

Ver 6

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## 1. MUSTER

*We hear a taiko drum. Lights up. A young girl wearing the sailor suit uniform of a Japanese schoolgirl is discovered. She bows.*

HIBIKI

*Konnichiwa!* The fate of war has chosen me to tell this story. My sisters and I were the finest navy in the world. We were proud and eager, having sworn to defend the emperor. As we sailed into battle, our hearts were made light by the simplicity of the wager we'd made. Only two outcomes were possible: victory or death. As it turned out... As it happened... *(a beat)* I've gotten a bit ahead of myself. Our story starts before the war. It starts with our training at the Etajima Naval Academy.

*(A klaxon sounds. Light floods the stage. Hibiki straightens at her mark. Fubuki and Mutsuki appear, quarreling as they run to their marks beside her.)*

FUBUKI

You did!

MUTSUKI

I did not!

FUBUKI

You did! You did and you won't admit it.

HIBIKI

What did she do?

FUBUKI

She took the last sheet of toilet paper and didn't change the roll.

MUTSUKI

I didn't take the last sheet!

FUBUKI

There was only the tiny bit left that's glued to the cardboard!

*(Mikuma, a confident woman in her early twenties, walks on quickly.)*

MIKUMA

Stop it, kids. This isn't recess.

*(Mogami follows. She's pouting.)*

MOGAMI

Don't I get a kiss?

MIKUMA

You'll get a kiss later. Are the carriers coming? It's almost time...

*(Akagi and Kaga, late twenties, appear, smoothing down bits and pieces of themselves.)*

AKAGI

We're here, Mikuma. Geez, when they put you in charge of something...

MIKUMA

It's almost time.

KAGA

Hey! No sweat means no rust.

MIKUMA

Where's Yamato? Has anybody seen Yamato?

HIBIKI

No, m'am.

MUTSUKI

No.

FUBUKI

Here's Nagato.

*(The klaxon sounds again. Nagato enters. She's scarcely older than the carriers but noticeably more mature. Deep in thought, she moves to her mark purposefully.)*

MIKUMA

Nagato-san, did you see Yamato leave her room?

NAGATO

What?

MIKUMA

Did you see Yamato leave her room?

NAGATO

She was at breakfast.

MUTSUKI

Here she comes!

*The Klaxon sounds twice. Yamato appears. She feels the same urgency as the others but moves to her mark sinuously, almost voluptuously. Now we see the complete battle line for the first time. The destroyers are adolescents wearing schoolgirl uniforms. The cruisers and carriers are young women, pretty and self-possessed, their uniforms more sophisticated and very feminine. The battleships are positively glamorous; they wear tight-fitting tunics, short skirts and heels. Somehow these outfits still suggest naval uniforms. The girls and young women have been called to duty; it's time for them to don their attributes of war. We hear an amplified female voice call cadence.*

THE VOICE

FLEET GIRLS! CLOSE UP! EXECUTE!

*(The fleet girls space themselves and come to attention.)*

THE VOICE (CONT)

DESTROYERS!

HIBIKI

Hibiki, ready!

FUBUKI

Fubuki, ready!

MUTSUKI

Mutsuki, ready!

THE VOICE

CRUISERS!

MIKUMA

Mikuma, ready!

MOGAMI

Mogami, ready to serve!

THE VOICE

FLEET CARRIERS!

AKAGI

Akagi, ready!

KAGA

Kaga, present!

THE VOICE

BATTLESHIPS!

NAGATO

Nagato, Command Coordination, ready!

YAMATO (*an edge to this*)

Yamato, ready to leave port.

THE VOICE

PREPARE FOR FLEET MANEUVERS!

*A buzzer sounds. Lights change. The ships begin a series of choreographed movements to arm themselves. Each stage of the transformation has corresponding lights and sounds. In the first sequence they acquire massive steel hulls and turbine engines.*

HIBIKI, FUBUKI, MUTSUKI

A hull of steel and I slice through the waves like the sword of a samurai! My torpedo tubes shine! My magazines are full!

MIKUMA

A hull of steel and I'm armored against attack, bulging outward below the waterline to foil torpedoes.

MOGAMI

A hull of steel and Mogami combines firepower with grace and speed!

*The carriers sprout flight decks and elevators. Their aircraft are represented by quivers of arrows, their catapults by asymmetrical Japanese longbows. If needed, black-robed stage assistants enter with additional costume pieces, kabuki style.*

AKAGI

A flight deck and my planes have a home on the sea.

KAGA

A flight deck! I launch and recover from an avenue above the water.

*Finally, all acquire turrets and guns.*

NAGATO

A forest of great guns grows fore and aft. Nagato is armed to serve the emperor.

YAMATO

A hull of steel like a bundle of freight trains! My deck armor is as thick as curbstones. My belt armor is thick as a man is wide. My turret armor is thicker than that! My guns are the largest ever mounted on a ship. Yamato is a floating Gibraltar!

*When the transformation is complete, the ships have acquired the mystique of powerful, purpose-built weapons. They are instruments of war yet remain intensely feminine. The capital ships are poised and professional. The destroyers flaunt their 5-inch guns; their ferocity is cute.*

THE VOICE

BEGIN LIVE FIRE EXERCISES!

*As live-fire exercises begin, Nagato gestures the ships into place and signals for each salvo. The destroyers practice torpedo runs using the carriers as dummy targets.*

NAGATO

Advance in line abreast! Now line ahead! No, Mutsuki! Go around again. Mogami, stay in line!

MOGAMI

I followed Mikuma!

NAGATO

Destroyers to screening positions! Make smoke!

*(The destroyers lay down intricate, interweaving smoke screens.)*

NAGATO

Very good! Carriers! Prepare to launch!

*(The carriers turn into the wind and draw their bows.)*

AKAGI

Fighters, launch!

KAGA

Torpedo planes and bombers, launch!

AKAGI

Second wave, launch!

KAGA

Second wave, launch!

*(The air is filled with spots of moving light, the sun glinting off the wings of aircraft.)*

NAGATO

Line abreast by squadrons!

MUTSUKI

Yea! It's time!

*(The klaxon sounds again, longer this time.)*

NAGATO

Gunnery practice! Destroyers!

*(The destroyers let loose with their guns. Kabuki-style hyōshigi clappers stand in for anti-aircraft fire.)*

NAGATO

Cruisers!

*(The cruisers' eight-inch guns are louder and deeper.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

My turn!

*(Nagato's sixteen-inch guns cleave the air.)*

YAMATO

Ready for me?

NAGATO

Only one salvo, please.

*(Yamato's 18-inch guns are a crescendo of great taiko drums. A buzzer sounds.)*

THE VOICE

FUEL LIMIT REACHED! CEASE EXERCISES. ALL UNITS RETURN TO PORT.  
REPEAT: ALL UNITS RETURN TO PORT.

*(In a reversal of the previous sequence, the ships resume their human characteristics. Kaga pulls out a compact. Mogami inspects her left shoe.)*

FUBUKI

That was fun! My torpedo would have hit you, Senpai.

AKAGI

You did well, little one.

MIKUMA

Now you can have a kiss.

*(The cruisers kiss.)*

It's time for a snack!

YAMATO

You just had breakfast!

NAGATO

I'm having A SNACK.

YAMATO

Okay, you're having a snack. What was your fuel consumption?

NAGATO

Give me a second, will you?

YAMATO

Just tell me, was it more than seven tons?

NAGATO

*(Yamato makes a mental calculation.)*

Nine and a half with all boilers lit.

YAMATO

Next time only light half.

NAGATO

As you wish. *After* my snack, I'm going to the baths for a hot soak. Would you like to come?

YAMATO

Thank you for the invitation; I've got my report to write.

NAGATO

Cruisers?

YAMATO

We're going later.

MOGAMI

Well, *sayonara*, then.

YAMATO

I'll come with you, Yamato-san.

FUBUKI

Me, too!

HIBIKI



YAMATO

Okay, kids, but try to talk about grown-up subjects, okay?

HIBIKI

No problem! Kaga says we're the most grown-up destroyers she's ever seen.

FUBUKI

How about you, Mutsuki?

MUTSUKI

Nah, I've got my ballistics homework to do over.

NAGATO

Please do it properly, Mutsuki-chan. What you turned in last time was not acceptable.

MUTSUKI

Yes, Nagato-san.

*(The ships exit in several directions. Nagato is the last to go.)*

## 2. TWENTY WEEKS EARLIER...

*Hibiki appears shaking a bottle of nail polish. She speaks out front.*

HIBIKI

Forgive me; that was also not the proper start to story. The story starts earlier, in the first week of school—when we met Fubuki.

*(Lights change and a bit of furniture appears, the destroyer dorm, evening. Mutsuki is studying. Hibiki pulls off her sock and paints her toenails.)*

MUTSUKI

Do you understand turbine propulsion?

HIBIKI

What do you want to know?

MUTSUKI

What happens to the steam after it goes through the turbine? Does it go outside?

HIBIKI

No, it goes to the condenser and turns back into water.

*(Fubuki enters in civilian clothes. She's carrying a suitcase.)*

FUBUKI

Excuse me. *Konnichiwa!* Is this room four?

MUTSUKI

Hey, we got a new one! And she's smart—she could read the number on the door!

FUBUKI

I've been assigned to room four. Is there an extra futon here?

MUTSUKI

Report properly! What's your name and displacement?

FUBUKI

My name is Fubuki. What's "displacement"?

MUTSUKI

How much do you weigh?

FUBUKI

Um... 43 kilos.

MUTSUKI

Ha, ha Your displacement is the weight of the water that's pushed aside by your hull. It's not what you weigh, stupid.

FUBUKI

Well, you asked how much I weigh.

MUTSUKI

But before that I asked what your *displacement* was.

FUBUKI

Two thousand, sixty imperial tons. What's yours?

MUTSUKI

You're heavy, girl! Are you a *Nokasi* Class, or what?

FUBUKI

I'm the name ship of a new class.

MUTSUKI

What class is that? The *I-just-came-from-the-rice-paddy* class?

FUBUKI

I told you; my name is Fubuki.

MUTSUKI

I never heard of a Fubuki class.

HIBIKI (*intervening*)

Hi, Fubuki.

FUBUKI

Hi.

MUTSUKI (*still interrogating*)

Have you got guns?

FUBUKI

Six, five-inch guns in twin turrets. I've got torpedoes, too. Type 90.

MUTSUKI

How many depth charges?

FUBUKI

Fourteen.

MUTSUKI

Only fourteen?

HIBIKI

Stop it, Mutsu, she's a destroyer! Welcome to the Destroyer Dorm.

FUBUKI

Thank you. Is this my sleeping space?

HIBIKI

And that's your shelf. My name is Hibiki and that's Mutsuki.

FUBUKI

Hi.

MUTSUKI

Hi.

FUBUKI (*RE: Hibiki's toenails*)

That's a pretty color. Have you got any others?

*(Hibiki pulls out a large box of nail polish.)*

HIBIKI

Help yourself.

FUBUKI

Ooo! Thank you! So many colors!

*(Fubuki pulls off her socks.)*

MUTSUKI

If you don't mind, I've got studying to do. We've got placement exams coming up.

HIBIKI

I'm ready for them.

FUBUKI

Me too. I studied on the train.

HIBIKI

Don't mind us, Mutsu. Study away!

MUTSUKI

Turbine power is complicated. *(a beat)* What's a surface condenser?

FUBUKI *(quoting)*

It's a closed vessel cooled by sea water in which steam undergoes a phase change.

MUTSUKI

Dr. Fubuki! Say it so I can understand it!

FUBUKI

The sea water cools the steam, so it turns back into fresh water, but the sea water and the fresh water never touch, there's always a metal surface between them—a copper tube or something.

MUTSUKI

Like a radiator?

FUBUKI

Yeah, like a radiator.

MUTSUKI

Got it.

FUBUKI

You're welcome. Oooo! Jade Green! Can I?

HIBIKI

Be my guest!

*(Lights fade.)*

### 3. MIKUMA AND MOGAMI AT THE BATH HOUSE

Oooo, the floor is cold!

MOGAMI

Didn't you bring your zori?

MIKUMA

No. I forgot. Ouch!

MOGAMI

What?

MIKUMA

There was a pebble on the tile. The destroyers never rinse their feet properly.

MOGAMI

Here, I'll carry you.

MIKUMA

Are you sure? I'm heavy.

MOGAMI

I know how much you weigh—within half a ton. *(Picking her up)* I could carry you all the way to Hokkaido. Oh, what are you doing?

MIKUMA

*(Mogami has climbed onto Mikuma's back.)*

Carry me to Hokkaido! I love it when you carry me.

MOGAMI

Then I'll carry you always. It would make me happy.

MIKUMA

Always?

MOGAMI

Until we sink!

MIKUMA

Such sweet words!

MOGAMI

I love my Mogami—my Mo-Ga-Mi!

MIKUMA

*(She savors the syllables.)*

Mi-Ku-Ma! After the bath, you can carry me home and put me to bed.

MOGAMI

I'm not your mother.

MIKUMA

No, you're my sister—my sweet sister ship!

MOGAMI

I like the cut of your jib, kid.

MIKUMA

*(This is a game between them.)*

Really? Why?

MOGAMI

It's just like mine!

MIKUMA

*(They kiss. Lights fade.)*

#### 4. DESTROYERS IN TRAINING

*Etajima Bay. A slalom course with practice targets. Fubuki, Hibiki and Mutsuki work out, supervised by Kaga. Yamato strikes a drum to set the pace. It's a bit like a dance class.*

KAGA

Okay, starting slow. Port rudder, first target: turrets traverse starboard and BOOM! Starboard rudder, second target: turrets traverse port, and... BOOM! Hard to port, starboard tubes out, aim and *sim-u-late-launch*! Hard to starboard—PAY ATTENTION! *Sim-u-late* launch. FROM THE TOP! First target, turrets traverse starboard, BOOM! Turn-and- now, turrets traverse port—PICK IT UP, MUTSUKI! Port rudder, starboard tubes, AIM, FIRE! Hard to starboard and port tubes, *sim-u-late launch*! Do it faster! Call it out!

THE DESTROYERS (*not all together*)

First target, turrets port, Boom! Change and second target, turrets starboard, Boom! Hard to port—WATCH OUT—SORRY! YOU ALMOST HIT ME! Change course, port tubes, launch...

*(Kaga blows her whistle.)*

KAGA

There's only one starboard, Mutsuki, please learn where it is. FROM THE TOP and one-two...

THE DESTROYERS (*working it out individually*)

First target one, turrets port, second target, turrets starboard, change course, starboard tubes, launch! Change course: port tubes, launch! And back to start....

KAGA

NOW REVERSE!

THE DESTROYERS (*together now*)

First target one, STARBOARD, second target, turrets PORT! Change course, PORT tubes launch, change and STARBOARD TUBES launch!

KAGA

TWICE AS FAST!

*(Yamato beats double time.)*

KAGA

Mutsuki, close the gap! Stay on station!

*(The destroyers do the drill, improving steadily, but finally collapse in disorder. Kaga blows her whistle.)*

THE DESTROYERS (*severally*)

I'll never get it! Argg! NEVER! Mutsuki! Watch where you're going! Etc.

KAGA

Better... but still not good. It's not enough to do what you do; you've got to LOVE what you do. You've got to love the rhythm! When you find the rhythm, it all comes together. Do you agree, Yamato-san?

YAMATO

I do.

HIBIKI

It was a mess, sensei!

KAGA

*Battle* is a mess. Every contact with the enemy is messy and every contact is different. You can't dictate the enemy's movements; you can't prepare your response in advance. You will only succeed if you're fully present, moment to moment. And fully aware of each other. Okay?

THE DESTROYERS

Okay.

KAGA

I said "okay"?

THE DESTROYERS

OKAY, KAGA-SAN!

KAGA

FROM THE TOP!

*(Kaga blows her whistle. They start the drill again.)*

## 5. THE EMPEROR IS WATCHING

*The Destroyer Dorm. Fubuki enters, dead tired from the practice. Her coat and school bag fall off her. She contemplates a chair but curls up on the floor instead. After a moment Hibiki enters with a small carton from the PX.*



HIBIKI

Hello? Anybody home?

FUBUKI

I'm here.

HIBIKI

What are you doing on the floor?

FUBUKI

Practice was hard.

HIBIKI

Yeah, really. I stopped by the PX on the way home.

*(Hibiki exits to the kitchen.)*

FUBUKI

My head is like a clump of seaweed. Get one thing wrong and she makes us start over! The last time we did it I got the whole sequence right, but I don't know how. I couldn't do it again for all the rice in Manchuria.

*(Hibiki returns with two bowls of ice cream. She sets one down in front of Fubuki.)*

HIBIKI

Here!

FUBUKI

Ice cream!

HIBIKI

Yuzu. Your favorite flavor.

FUBUKI

You are the Bodhisattva of Compassion!

*(They eat.)*

HIBIKI

Do you think the emperor was watching us today?

FUBUKI

The emperor is in Tokyo.

HIBIKI

But he might be watching. He's descended from Amaterasu, the sun goddess.

FUBUKI

That doesn't mean he sees what's happening in Etajima.

HIBIKI

But there could be local spirits at Etajima, you know, *kami*, who help him. They say all the *kami* work together.

FUBUKI

Why would his majesty watch us?

HIBIKI

Because he cares about us. He wants to make sure we have pure minds and a sincere spirit. He wants to know if we're doing our best.

FUBUKI

Are we doing our best?

HIBIKI

I am. Aren't you?

FUBUKI

How do I know how good "my best" is? Maybe this is my best. Or maybe I'll do better tomorrow. If don't know, how could the emperor know?

HIBIKI

He'd just know.

FUBUKI

How?

HIBIKI

Because he's the emperor. He'd know.

*(Mutsuki enters. She's been drinking.)*

MUTSUKI

What are you idiots gabbing about?

FUBUKI

Welcome home, Mutsuki.

HIBIKI

I say the emperor is watching us and Fubuki says he isn't.

I didn't say that!

FUBUKI

Who gives a shit?

MUTSUKI

We saved you some ice cream.

HIBIKI

What flavor?

MUTSUKI

Yuzu.

HIBIKI

You idiots aren't so bad.

MUTSUKI

You can finish the carton. It's all for you.

HIBIKI

*(Mutsuki exits to the kitchen.)*

I didn't say the emperor isn't watching; I said I don't know if I'm doing my best.

FUBUKI

People say 'I'm doing my best' when they don't want to be criticized. Are you doing your best, Mutsuki?

HIBIKI

If today was my best, my best is pure shit.

MUTSUKI *(re-entering)*

I think you've gotten a lot better...

FUBUKI

What does it matter? What if doing your best still isn't good enough? Is the emperor doing his best?

MUTSUKI

Of course, he is!

HIBIKI

Well, he should do better than his best! The emperor should do the whole drill from the top and not leave gaps. While he's at it, he can do gunnery practice. He'd better wipe his glasses first!

MUTSUKI

FUBUKI

You shouldn't say such things.

HIBIKI

Would you like the emperor to hear you say that? I bet not!

MUTSUKI

I don't care! I don't give a rat's ass!

HIBIKI

The emperor is watching you right now!

MUTSUKI

The emperor watches little bugs that live in a drop of water. I bet Dr. Fubuki even knows what they're called.

FUBUKI

"Hydrozoa"

HIBIKI

What's that?

FUBUKI

Little bugs that live in a drop of water.

MUTSUKI

That's us, isn't it? We're little bugs that live in a drop of water. You think he gives a shit about us?

HIBIKI

I won't listen to this anymore! You don't respect the emperor! I'm sorry I got you ice cream.

FUBUKI

Hibiki!

HIBIKI

You're a traitor! I hope you sink!

*(Hibiki leaves and slams the door.)*

6. "HELP ME WITH THIS CHAIN"

*Daylight. Outside somewhere.*

Ahoy! Fubuki-chan!

YAMATO

Yes, Yamato-san?

FUBUKI

Can you help me with something?

YAMATO

Of course, Yamato-san.

FUBUKI

You have such small fingers; can you untangle these chains? I should never have worn them at the same time.

YAMATO

*(Fubuki sets about untangling Yamato's chains.)*

I saw you exercising in the outer harbor yesterday. Your gunnery at speed was very good.

YAMATO (CONT)

Thank you, but I'm not skilled yet.

FUBUKI

But you're getting better all the time.

YAMATO

Why don't you drill with us? I never see you out there.

FUBUKI

They don't let me go out.

YAMATO

Why not? We could practice screening maneuvers with you! I could be on your screening force!

FUBUKI

It's a bit embarrassing.

YAMATO

You don't have to tell me if you don't want to.

FUBUKI

YAMATO

If I go from the dock to the breakwater—just to the breakwater—I end up eating too much: three or four entrees, salads, appetizers, desserts—I can't stop! Last time I went out the commissary ran out of food. The seaplane tenders came late and got short rations.

FUBUKI

But you've got to eat! Everybody's got to eat!

YAMATO

They begged me not to drill after that. It puts too much strain on Logistics and Supply. They have me mark time instead.

FUBUKI

I'm sorry.

YAMATO

I offered to do gunnery practice, but they said they don't have enough 46-centimeter shells to waste on practice.

FUBUKI

Forty-six centimeters! I didn't know they were that big! Mine are 10!

YAMATO

Your shells would roll down my barrels like marbles in a drainpipe.

FUBUKI

I didn't know that size even existed.

YAMATO

They're just for me and my sister. One of our shells weighs as much as the barrel of your largest gun, but they won't let me use any. They fuss over me and take photographs. They want me to look perfect all the time, but I'm not *doing* anything.

FUBUKI

You're our idol—the world's greatest warship!

YAMATO

I'm a hotel!

FUBUKI

Everybody looks up to you.

YAMATO

But they don't love me. People love little things, squirrels and kittens. Nobody loves enormous.

FUBUKI

Squirrels and kittens are cute, but I don't think I love them, exactly.

YAMATO

But you don't love elephants or whales, do you?

FUBUKI

Baby whales are cute...

YAMATO

I think destroyers are cute. You guys protect me from submarines, and I protect you from surface ships. Maybe that's as far as love goes; we protect each other as best we can.

*(Fubuki has finished with the chains.)*

FUBUKI

I'm done. Here.

YAMATO

Thank you, Fubuki-chan.

FUBUKI

Submarines aren't cute. I hate submarines!

YAMATO

Me, too. They're like sea slugs. Slimy all over!

FUBUKI

Let me know if I can do anything else, okay?

YAMATO

I will. That's a promise!

FUBUKI

I want to be useful.

YAMATO

So do I.

## 7. A DISPLINARY HEARING

*Nagato, Akagi and Kaga are seated on one side of a long table. An empty chair faces them.*

NAGATO

To speak ill of the emperor is not treason, I grant you. But it's irreligious and contrary to discipline. I'm not certain she wasn't provoked.

AKAGI

Isn't provocation a separate topic? Like the drunkenness, it's not something we should wink at. There's no question that Mutsuki's conduct was unbecoming a fleet girl. We have to do something about it, but *this*?

*(She holds up a sheet of paper.)*

KAGA

Agreed. Provoked or not, she had no business doing what she did. It's not right.

NAGATO

Yet I'm sure she felt she was doing the right thing—that it was somehow justified.

AKAGI

We need to make it clear that it *wasn't* justified, it can *never* be justified. It did real damage to the fleet.

*(Nagato picks up the carriers' report.)*

NAGATO

The punishment you recommend is severe. Do you feel it's warranted?

AKAGI

Yes.

KAGA

We do.

NAGATO

And a public apology?

AKAGI

Considering the nature of the offense, I don't think that's appropriate. I wouldn't trust her to use the right words.

NAGATO

Isn't that because she still hasn't grasped the seriousness of what she's done?



AKAGI

We'll try and make that clear to her today.

NAGATO

Very well, then. Let's bring her in.

*(Kaga exits and returns a moment later with Hibiki, who salutes.)*

HIBIKI

Akatsuki-class destroyer oh-six reporting.

KAGA

Stand behind the chair. Don't sit.

NAGATO

Hibiki, it grieves us to see you come before us today. Hitherto, you've been a good fleet girl.

HIBIKI

Yes, ma'am.

NAGATO

Do you remember the fleet motto?

HIBIKI

"Fleet girls depend on one another."

NAGATO

*Exactly:* fleet girls depend on one another. Moreover, they know they CAN depend on one another—at all times and in all circumstances.

HIBIKI

Yes, ma'am.

AKAGI

You know that when you're in the dorm you're not on duty. Yet you reported a classmate for infractions...

NAGATO

...not negligible infractions, admittedly.

AKAGI

...but infractions committed *in the dorm*. How can you ask your classmate to depend on you now?

HIBIKI

But she said the emperor...

KAGA  
YOU BETRAYED THE TRUST OF ANOTHER DESTROYER! DO YOU REALIZE  
WHAT THAT MEANS?

HIBIKI  
Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry, ma'am.

KAGA  
YOUR ACTION COMPROMISED THE COHESION OF THE FLEET.

HIBIKI  
Yes, ma'am.

AKAGI  
If you failed to support your sister fleet girl in combat—or she failed to support you—can  
you imagine what might happen?

HIBIKI  
It would be bad, ma'am.

AKAGI  
Is that all you have to say, “it would be bad”?

HIBIKI  
It would be very bad, ma'am.

*(Pause)*

NAGATO  
Have you got anything else to say, Hibiki?

HIBIKI  
No, ma'am. *(a beat)* Please, Ma'am...

*(But a look from Kaga silences her. Slight pause.)*

NAGATO  
What did we decide on? Extra duty and loss of privileges, was that it?

AKAGI  
For the remainder of the term and all of next term.

NAGATO  
If there's another offense of this nature, the punishment will be more severe.

HIBIKI  
Yes, ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

NAGATO

Dismissed, oh-six.

*(Hibiki salutes, turns and exits.)*

KAGA

Do you think she understands?

NAGATO

I hope she does. I truly hope she does.

*(Nagato exits.)*

KAGA

She's part of your screening force, isn't she?

AKAGI

Yes. I'm afraid she is.

KAGA

You better keep an eye on her.

## 8. "WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?"

*Nagato is on the phone in her office. A cigarette burns slowly in the ashtray.*

NAGATO

Mutsu, dearest, you know I can't leave here. They need me every day... I swear, each new class is younger and stupider than the last. I don't know where they went to school. I don't know *if* they went to school... I'm NOT exaggerating. They need help with the simplest things! And the cruisers don't want to give it; they think it's beneath them... No, Yamato's no help either... No. I don't know how to connect with her. She's lost in the mist... a giant, steel cloud floating on the water. She's not really *there*... I know! Our super-battleship and symbol-of-the-nation! It's crazy, isn't it?... That's sweet... Me, too! I wish we were in dry dock together with welders tickling all our seams!

*(There's a knock at the door.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Mutsu, darling, I have to leave you. There's someone here... Me, too. Kiss-kiss! *(She hangs up reluctantly.)* Come in!

MUTSUKI

Can we talk, Nagato-san?

NAGATO

What's on your mind?

MUTSUKI

I want to quit. I don't want to be a fleet girl anymore.

NAGATO

Close the door.

*(Mutsuki closes the door.)*

MUTSUKI

I mean, nobody asked me if I *wanted* to do this. I'm no good at it. Kaga-san yells at me when we practice and Akagi-san didn't like my report on evasive maneuvers, I'm no good at anti-aircraft; I can't hit anything! And... I've tried, I've really tried, Nagato-san, I just can't do it anymore.

NAGATO

I see.

MUTSUKI

The other girls are all better than me. They make it look easy—like fun, almost. It's not fun for me; it's just work, work, work. I'm tired. I can't do it anymore.

*(Nagato gestures to a chair.)*

NAGATO

Would you like a rice ball?

MUTSUKI

No, thank you.

NAGATO

Mutsuki-chan, I'm glad you came to talk to me. I've noted that you're struggling in all your classes. The difficulty you're having is unusual, but it's not without precedent.

*(Mutsuki breaks down and sobs.)*

MUTSUKI

I'm sorry. An emotional reaction. Forgive me, Nagato-san!

NAGATO

It's normal that you should be disappointed with yourself. Your tears show that you care. They do you credit.

MUTSUKI

But I don't want to cry! And I cry every day! Sometimes twice a day! And don't tell me it's because I'm young! I'm the same age as the others and they never cry!

NAGATO

Are you sure of that?

MUTSUKI

What do you mean?

NAGATO

Maybe they're struggling, too. They only conceal it better.

MUTSUKI

I don't want to argue about it. Just send me home.

NAGATO

If I had another Mutsuki waiting to take your place, I could do that. But I don't. I'm afraid you're irreplaceable.

MUTSUKI

No, I'm not! You've got dozens of destroyers!

NAGATO

But only one Mutsuki. (*a beat*) How old were you when you first suspected you might be a fleet girl?

MUTSUKI

Six.

NAGATO

And when it became clear that you were *Mutsuki*—the one and only *Mutsuki*, destroyer three-zero?

MUTSUKI

I was ten.

NAGATO

What did they call you before that?

MUTSUKI

Yuko.

NAGATO

That's a pretty name. When they discovered you had the soul of a warship, they stopped calling you "Yuko," didn't they?

MUTSUKI

You know they did.

NAGATO

It was a mark of respect. A fleet girl is chosen to be part of an elite force. At the age of six, the soul of a glorious warship was already curled up inside you like a sleeping kitten. *Mutsuki* picked you out, picked you from among thousands of little girls.

MUTSUKI

Well, *Mutsuki* fucked up. That's obvious, isn't it?

NAGATO

I know you're struggling, but we have to assume the warship picked wisely because warships only pick once. A warship's trust cannot be withdrawn or transferred, so it shouldn't be questioned. You are *Mutsuki*. If you quit, there will be no *Mutsuki*. The fleet will be missing a destroyer.

MUTSUKI

I didn't ask for it! I didn't want it!

NAGATO

I can't allow the fleet to be weakened by a single ship. The enemy is too strong. Do you hear what I'm saying?

MUTSUKI

Yes, ma'am.

*(a beat)*

NAGATO

When I discovered I was *Nagato*, a battleship and the name ship of my class, I felt unworthy. I felt overwhelmed... When's your next practice?

MUTSUKI

Tomorrow.

NAGATO

Tomorrow at 10:00?

MUTSUKI

Yes.

NAGATO

Meet me at English Wharf tomorrow at 0800. We'll practice together.

MUTSUKI

You want to practice just with me?

NAGATO

I'll bring you your breakfast. Is that alright?

MUTSUKI

Yes ma'am. Thank you, ma'am.

NAGATO

That's settled, then. Is there anything else?

MUTSUKI

Permission to ask a question?

NAGATO

Granted.

MUTSUKI

When you found out who you were... When you found out you were *Nagato*... Did you have a child-name too?

NAGATO

Yes.

MUTSUKI

What was it?

NAGATO

I haven't heard that name in years—not even from my own mouth.

MUTSUKI

You won't tell me?

NAGATO

No. (*a beat*) Tomorrow at 0800. Be on time.

*(Mutsuki salutes, turns and exits.)*

## 9. CLEANING UP

*Hibiki and Fubuki are using push brooms to clean their dorm.*

HIBIKI

Woosh! And I sweep the enemy ships from the Southern Ocean! Woosh and they retreat from Australia!

FUBUKI

That's great, but you're not getting into the corners.

HIBIKI

There are no enemy ships in the corners!

FUBUKI

No, there's dust in the corners. If Akagi finds dust in the corners, we'll have to clean the whole dorm again.

HIBIKI

What's gotten into you? Don't you like me?

FUBUKI

I like you.

HIBIKI

You never want to play at anything. Not with me. You only hang out with big ships.

FUBUKI

I'll play with you. I just think we should play honestly. What if there's an enemy ship in the corner you can't see? What happens then?

HIBIKI

I can see in the corners—there's nothing there.

FUBUKI

What if it's a submarine?

*(With a sigh, Hibiki goes back and does the corners. Fubuki gets the dustpan.)*

HIBIKI

If I get a refit, I'll have radar and improved sonar. I'll be able to see over the horizon *and* underwater.



FUBUKI

None of us are due for a refit until we graduate.

HIBIKI

But don't you want one? You'd probably get a pom-pom gun!

FUBUKI

I'd rather have two machine guns. I think they look better.

*(Mutsuki enters.)*

MUTSUKI

Hello, idiots.

FUBUKI

Welcome home, Mutsuki. We saved you the corners and the hall stairs.

MUTSUKI

So kind of you.

HIBIKI

Mutsuki, would you rather have a pom-pom gun or two machine guns? I mean, which do you think would look better?

MUTSUKI

I think they both look stupid.

FUBUKI

I want the machine guns!

HIBIKI

I want the pom-pom!

MUTSUKI

I want to go home and they won't let me.

FUBUKI

They'll let you go home when you graduate.

MUTSUKI

I want to graduate now!

HIBIKI

We can arrange that.

FUBUKI

By the emperor's command, I hereby declare you a graduate of Fleet Girl Academy. Congratulations!

*(Fubuki presents arms with a broom. Hibiki salutes with the dustpan.)*

HIBIKI

The emperor and all his subjects salute you!

*(Mutsuki returns the salute ironically.)*

HIBIKI (CONT)

Look out there—a sea of smiling faces. Everybody dressed up; they're all applauding you—applauding us!

FUBUKI

The band is playing. Here's your diploma. Now march!

*(Fubuki hands out Kleenex and they march in a circle.)*

HIBIKI

CADETS.... SALUTE—EXECUTE!

*(Hibiki and Fubuki stagger into each other's arms, giggling, but Mutsuki is transfixed.)*

MUTSUKI

You've got it all wrong! It's not a graduation ceremony; it's a sinking ceremony. It's not a sea of smiling faces; it's just a sea—a sea of crackling flames!

FUBUKI

She's right!

HIBIKI

A sinking ceremony!

FUBUKI

CADETS.... SINK—EXECUTE!

*(They put their Kleenexes over their faces and sink to the floor.)*

ALL

GLUG! GLUG! GLUG!

10. "WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SINK?"

*Outdoors. Sunlight.*

FUBUKI

Senpai, what happens when we sink?

AKAGI

What puts this question into your head, little one?

FUBUKI

Sometimes in the bath I put my head underwater and try to think what it would be like to stay under. I try to think, "what if I were like a fish and never come up." Just to be... *under*. Is sinking like that?

AKAGI

How would I know?

FUBUKI

You know a lot of things.

AKAGI

I don't know *that!* (*a beat*) At Yokosuka there was a trash barge that sank because she tried to carry too much. She was old and bent and stupid. They put cables under her hull and raised her with a crane. It took a long while to pump her out because her scuppers were clogged with trash, She didn't seem very happy to be floating again. Maybe she was ashamed of sinking and thought it was improper to look happy. I never talked to her before so I couldn't tell if she was different afterwards. I don't think sinking made much difference one way or the other.

FUBUKI

I'm not asking about a trash barge. I'm asking about warships. And that's different anyway because it was in the harbor and they pulled her back up.

AKAGI

What's your question, exactly?

FUBUKI

One of the destroyers in the last class sank. Nobody talks about it. I don't even know her name.

AKAGI

Her name was Miyuki. She wasn't paying attention. She went off course and hit a reef. That's why Nagato-san drills you so hard on navigation. You must always know where you are *right now*, not where you were an hour ago.

FUBUKI

But what happened to her? Where is she now?

AKAGI

When ships sink, they go down. That's all we know.

FUBUKI

Is it part of the Bushido spirit to sink?

AKAGI

It's part of the Bushido spirit to not worry about sinking. Now, have you finished your report on the type 93 torpedo yet?

FUBUKI

Senpai, you're changing the subject!

AKAGI

Sometimes it's best to change the subject. Finish your report before you ask any more questions. Okay?

FUBUKI

Okay.

*(Fubuki exits. Lights change. Evening. Kaga and Akagi are preparing supper.)*

KAGA *(entering with bowls)*

Here. You can set the table.

AKAGI

I had a conversation with Fubuki today. She asked what happens when we sink.

KAGA

What did you tell her?

AKAGI

I didn't know what to tell her. She heard about Miyuki. I guess all the destroyers know.

KAGA

Miyuki was off course. She failed to correct for compass deviation.

AKAGI

But that doesn't answer the question—and Fubuki's smart enough to know it. Miyuki could have been *on* course and hit a reef, a reef that wasn't on the chart. She could have sunk in a storm. Fubuki wants to know where she is now.

KAGA

The great deep where the bottom-feeders feed. The great no-return!

AKAGI

And let's say Fubuki senses what that is. Let's say she has the same blurry knowledge of sinking that we do—and we're not experts, are we? The next thing she'll want to know is *why* she takes that risk, because there *is* a risk—and she knows it.

KAGA

Everyone swears to defend the emperor until death. She took the oath when she came here.

AKAGI

But did she know what it meant? Did she have any idea?

KAGA

Probably not.

AKAGI

Did we?

KAGA

My love, what you're saying isn't madness, but it doesn't lead anywhere worth going. What would you like to drink?

AKAGI

We all swore to endure something for the emperor that even the emperor knows nothing about!

KAGA

SHUSH. Just shush. If they hear...

AKAGI

I don't care if they hear!

KAGA

I do! It will make our job much harder. The destroyers look up to us. They expect us to lead. How can we do that if we get cold rudders?

AKAGI

Lead them *where*? I can help with her homework; I can read her torpedo report—technical stuff...

KAGA

It's enough that you do your duty and Fubuki does hers. That's the discipline of the service.

AKAGI

You think discipline will get us through?

KAGA

She shouldn't think about this stuff. If she's asking what happens when you sink, she's not concentrating on NOT SINKING. Oh, God, now you've got ME thinking about it. Why did you even start on this!

*(Akagi embraces Kaga.)*

AKAGI

Sweetheart, you're trembling. I'm sorry. You're right about discipline, of course. And leadership. We need both.

KAGA

No. You're right about Fubuki. Good god, we're *surface* ships; we have a thousand fathoms of darkness beneath our keels that we try not to think about. We're like bugs that walk on water and never get wet. We have no idea.

AKAGI

I'm sorry I brought it up.

*(Pause)*

KAGA

You know what I want to know?

AKAGI

What?

KAGA

All the other carriers have their command island on the starboard side. Only you and *Hiryū* have it on the port side. What's the point?

AKAGI

Haven't you ever wished your island was further from your funnels?

KAGA

Is that it?

AKAGI

That's it.

KAGA

But engine torque makes planes turn left when they rev. If they apply too much power on take-off, they go straight into your island!

AKAGI

Would you rather have them go straight into the sea? At least my island will stop them!

KAGA

Lucky pilot—smack into steel plate!

AKAGI

It's better than drowning! Not that you even see them drowning—you're blinded by smoke from your own funnels!

KAGA

You always said you liked my funnels.

AKAGI

I do. I think they're very attractive.

KAGA

You do?

AKAGI

I do.

KAGA (*teasing*)

Well, I think your island is attractive—it's just on the wrong side.

AKAGI

Un-huh. And I think the curry's burning.

KAGA

Oh, crap!

*(She runs to the kitchen to save their supper.)*

## 11. FLAMMABLE MATERIALS

*Wartime. The fleet girls have been ordered to reduce flammable materials to the absolute minimum. The Destroyers have brought contested materials to Mikuma for a final decision. Mogami looks on.*

MIKUMA

Okay, destroyers, we knew there'd be exceptions. What have you got?

*(Hibiki holds out her box of nail polish.)*

MIKUMA (CONT)

My heavens, how many colors are there?

HIBIKI

I can't rightly say, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Do you change colors every week?

HIBIKI

Sometimes twice a week. Sometimes I paint every toe different, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Nail polish is mostly solvent. You know it burns like gasoline?

HIBIKI

Yes, ma'am.

MIKUMA

I'd say, "pick one color and stick to it," but it might be easier for you to stop altogether. Just leave your nails the color nature made them.

HIBIKI

Yes, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Next!

*(Fubuki has a framed photograph.)*

FUBUKI

It's a picture of my mother, ma'am.

MIKUMA

The picture's alright but get a metal frame.



FUBUKI

Yes, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Mutsuki-chan?

MUTSUKI

I have a complete set of *Cinema Secrets* magazine going back to the very first issue. It's very valuable.

MIKUMA

Much too valuable to be stored on a warship. Keep the current issue and send the rest ashore.

MUTSUKI

Yes, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Is that all?

THE DESTROYERS (*severally*)

Yes, ma'am.

MIKUMA

Off you go, then.

*(The destroyers exit with their flammable treasures.)*

MOGAMI

Now it's our turn!

NAGATO (*entering*)

Good morning cruisers. I never thought this would take so much time. No two ships understand "flammable materials" and "absolute minimum" the same way.

MIKUMA

I've adjudicated the destroyers... but I have this.

NAGATO

A shogi board!

MIKUMA

An antique. It was my grandfather's.

NAGATO

Who do you play with?

MIKUMA

No one, I'm afraid.

MOGAMI

She tried to get me to play, but strategy games are not my thing.

MIKUMA

I work the puzzles in the newspaper.

NAGATO

Keep the shogi board; throw out all but the current issue of the newspaper. If you're interested, I can give you a game sometime, but I may not be up to your level.

MIKUMA

Thank you, Nagato-san. I'd like that.

NAGATO

Mogami?

*(Mogami holds up a stack of twelve books in matching bindings.)*

MOGAMI

*The Tale of the Heike.* I've been reading it for two years.

NAGATO

So many volumes!

MOGAMI

I'm on volume six, but I like to look back over parts that I've already read.

NAGATO

Keep volumes one through six on board. Keep the rest on shore until you're ready for them. Classic literature is rarely incendiary, but it's certainly flammable.

MOGAMI

Thank you.

YAMATO (OFF)

I'm not giving them up, do you hear? It's ridiculous!

NAGATO

Ah, Yamato-san.

YAMATO (*entering*)

They tore out the paneling out of the wardrooms. They tore the cupboards out of the galley, now they want my paintbrushes! There's hardly any wood in them. Honestly, there's more wood in a pair of clogs!

NAGATO

I didn't know you painted, Yamato-san.

YAMATO

It's the only thing that helps. Please let me keep them, Nagato-san!

NAGATO

This is a very nice set—hog bristle, isn't it?

YAMATO

Yes.

NAGATO

So you paint with oils?

*(Yamato makes the connection.)*

YAMATO

Oh... I'm so stupid! It's not the brushes, is it? It's the paint.

NAGATO

And the linseed oil. And the turpentine.

MIKUMA

We had a similar problem this afternoon with nail polish.

YAMATO

But I NEED to paint!

NAGATO

Have you tried watercolors?

YAMATO

I prefer oils.

NAGATO

But if the safety of the fleet required it, you could learn to paint with watercolors?

YAMATO

Yes, Nagato-san. Of course.

NAGATO

I have a nice set of red sable brushes for you. I'll have a destroyer bring them over.

YAMATO

Thank you, Nagato-san. You don't paint anymore?

NAGATO

Alas, no. I was never very good—and the inclination left me entirely when I became a flagship.

YAMATO

I'm sorry.

NAGATO

Someday I'll take it up again—when the war is over. *(a beat)* Thank you, all. I know everyone is making sacrifices. Giving up things we love. Unfortunately, it can't be helped. These treasures will be here for us when we return.

*(The Fleet Girls bow and murmur thanks.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

At the end of the day, don't we confront the enemy first of all to protect the things we love? *(Murmurs of assent)* I hope I'll see you at supper.

## 12. YAMATO WRITES HOME / HOSTS A PARTY

*There's big-band dance music. Yamato is packing up the last of her flammable materials. Fubuki enters and bows.*

FUBUKI

*Konnichiwa, Yamato-san!*

YAMATO

Ah, Fubuki-chan.

*(Yamato stops the gramophone. Formally, using both hands, Fubuki presents a roll of watercolor brushes.)*

YAMATO (CONT)

These are very good brushes. Thank you for bringing them.

FUBUKI

She told me they're used, but they've been well cared for.

YAMATO

Yes. That's very clear.

FUBUKI

There's even calligraphy brushes and ink. Can I try to write something, Yamato-san?

YAMATO

If you like. You could write a letter for me. It's a simple letter, but I haven't been able to set my mind to it.

FUBUKI

Of course! I'll prepare the ink...

*(Fubuki prepares writing materials.)*

YAMATO

Routine letters are the hardest. There's no special event to relate, nothing to camouflage the crushing banality of my existence. In consequence, these letters become too intimate precisely because there's no real reason to write them! The "nothing new" letters! Ugh, I hate them.

FUBUKI

I'm ready, Yamato-san.

YAMATO

Okay... let's see. *Dear Mama. It's been many weeks since I wrote. ...* Have you got that?

FUBUKI

Got it. This is a nice brush!

YAMATO

*Please forgive this long silence on my part. Life at the base is still the same. I've made very few friends. One exception is Fubuki who's helping me write this letter. She's a destroyer. Isn't that funny...*

FUBUKI

Wait! You're going too fast!

YAMATO

Sorry... Tell me when you're ready.

FUBUKI

"...destroyer..." Okay. Ready.

YAMATO

*I suppose it's not surprising that I don't see eye-to-eye with anyone; the commander here—Nagato—her lookout barely comes to the level of my combat bridge. No, I can't say that. This is not going well!*

FUBUKI

Just pretend you're talking to her.

YAMATO

Where was I?

FUBUKI

"I don't see eye-to-eye with anyone."

YAMATO

*Right... I suppose it's not surprising that I don't see eye-to-eye with anyone. It's not that they're small-minded; it's just that they're small.*

FUBUKI

I'm tiny!

YAMATO

*So, life on my mooring continues. When the tide comes in, I face the sea; when it goes out, I face the land. Show me the paper.*

*(Fubuki shows the page. They're almost done.)*

YAMATO (CONT)

*I'm not allowed to talk about operations, but... No, strike that... I'm not supposed to leave port unless there's "a decisive battle." That's all they talk about, 'a decisive battle.' How can they tell which battle is decisive? No, I can't say that either.*

FUBUKI

Wait a second.... "...unless there's a decisive battle."

YAMATO

What else should I say?

FUBUKI

Ask about her health?

YAMATO

*I hope you're well, Mama. Papa, too. And little Chiyoko. And all the neighbors. I miss you. And now I absolutely must stop; I've got to... What have I got to do, Fubuki?*

FUBUKI

Host a party!

YAMATO

*I've got to host a strategy session. Love and kisses, Yamato. ... Is that alright?*

FUBUKI

It's a nice letter. She'll be happy to get it.

YAMATO

Thank you for helping me. When are your friends coming?

FUBUKI

They're here now. They like to hang out on top of your number one turret. Mutsuki says it's big enough up there to play handball.

YAMATO

Go get them. I'll get ready here.

*(Fubuki puts down the brush and exits. Yamato slips on a bright kimono and checks her appearance. She exits, humming to herself. A moment later, she re-enters with plates of party food and soft drinks. There's a knock at the door.)*

YAMATO (CONT)

Come in! Come in!

*(The Destroyers enter bringing food and small gifts or flowers. Behind them come the cruisers with saké and plum wine.)*

YAMATO

Look who's here! Welcome to my humble houseboat!

HIBIKI

Thank you for inviting us, m'am!

MUTSUKI

There's so much room here! It's like a gymnasium!

YAMATO *(RE: a small gift)*

Oh, thank you!

MIKUMA

Good evening, Yamato-san! Thank you for having us over.

YAMATO

So happy to see you! It was Fubuki's idea. Good evening Mogami! Oh, saké!

MIKUMA

From the PX...

MOGAMI

And these...

YAMATO

How lovely! I'll put them in water right away. Make yourselves comfortable!

*(Yamato exits with the flowers.)*

HIBIKI

Everything is so huge! You're lucky she's your friend, Fubuki.

FUBUKI

She's wanted to have people over for a long time.

MIKUMA *(to Mogami)*

I've never seen her so cheerful!

*(Yamato re-enters with the flowers in a vase.)*

YAMATO

Give me your caps. Please, make yourselves at home. As Admiral Togo said at the Battle of Tsushima, "*Mikasa es su casa!*"

MIKUMA

That's funny!

MUTSUKI

I don't get it.

MIKUMA

*Mikasa* was Admiral Togo's flagship.

HIBIKI

You should know that, Mutsu!

MUTSUKI

I know it, but I still don't get it.

MIKUMA *(giving her another chance)*

"*Mikasa es su casa*"?

*(Mutsuki looks blank.)*



HIBIKI

It's Italian. Or Spanish. Or something.

YAMATO

Help yourselves to soft drinks, little ones. What are you cruisers drinking?

MOGAMI

Can we open the saké?

YAMATO

Of course! I'll get cups.

MIKUMA

Fubuki-chan, you promised us entertainment. I hope you won't disappoint us.

FUBUKI

We've been rehearsing, haven't we?

*(The other destroyers agree enthusiastically. Yamato is back with the cups.)*

YAMATO

What are you going to do?

FUBUKI

It's called "karaoke."

MUTSUKI

A nightclub in Kobe gave us the idea, but we do it to American songs!

MIKUMA

Oh my! What have we gotten ourselves into?

FUBUKI

We'll show you! Are you ready, destroyers?

MUTSUKI AND HIBIKI

Ready!

FUBUKI

Here's the record. Can we change the lighting a bit?

YAMATO

Do whatever you like.

*(As Yamato winds up the gramophone, the Destroyers improvise a stage.)*

FUBUKI

Squadron ready?

MUTSUKI AND HIBIKI

Ready!

*(Fubuki cues Yamato. The Destroyers have worked out a close-harmony rendition of Cole Porter's "Let's Do It" with choreography.)*

FUBUKI

*When the little bluebird  
Who has never said a word  
Starts to sing "Spring, spring..."*

HIBIKI

*When the little bluebell  
At the bottom of the dell  
Starts to ring, ding ding...*

MUTSAKI

*When the little blue clerk  
In the middle of the day...  
Stop! I messed up. Okay...*

*(Yamato lifts the needle.)*

MUTSUKI (CONT)

*When the little blue clerk  
In the middle of his work  
Starts a tune to the moon up above...*

THE DESTROYERS

*It is nature, that's all,  
Simply telling us to fall in love!*

FUBUKI

Five... Six... Seven... Eight!

THE DESTROYERS

*And that's why birds do it, bees do it  
Even educated fleas do it  
Let's do it, let's fall in love!*

*In Spain the best upper sets do it  
Lithuanians and Letts do it  
Let's do it, let's fall in love!*

MUTSUKI

*The Dutch in old Amsterdam do it,*

FUBUKI

*Not to mention the Finns*

HIBIKI

*Folks in Siam do it—*

MUTSUKI

*Think of Siamese twins!*

THE DESTROYERS

*Some Argentines, without means, do it*

*People say in Boston even beans do it*

*Let's do it, let's fall in love!*

*Yes, let's do it, let's fall in love!*

YAMATO

Bravo! That was wonderful! It must have taken you a long time to get it right.

FUBUKI

Oh, it's not perfect yet.

MUTSUKI

We're not ready for a paying audience.

MIKUMA

I thought it was charming.

MOGAMI

Me, too. Thank you.

FUBUKI

The cruisers have a song, too! Did you bring the record?

YAMATO

Oh, I want to hear the cruisers!

MIKUMA

The Destroyers are a hard act to follow!

MOGAMI

We agreed on the song right away...

MIKUMA

It was much harder to agree on *a key!*

But we'll do our best. MOGAMI

Hand it over. YAMATO

Yea! FUBUKI

Let's hear it! MUTSUKI

Ready? MOGAMI

Ready as I'll ever be! MIKUMA

*(Mikuma and Mogami trade complements as they dance.)*

MIKUMA  
*You're the top  
You're the Colosseum  
You're the top  
You're the Louvre Museum  
You're a melody  
From a symphony by Strauss  
You're a Bendel bonnet  
A Shakespeare sonnet—  
You're Mickey Mouse!*

MOGAMI  
*You're the Nile  
You're the Tower of Pisa  
You're the smile  
On the Mona Lisa  
I'm a worthless check  
A total wreck, a flop  
But if, baby, I'm the bottom  
You're the top!*

MIKUMA  
*You're the top  
You're Mahatma Gandhi*

MOGAMI  
*You're the top*

*You're Napoleon Brandy*

MIKUMA

*You're the purple light  
Of a summer night in Spain  
You're the National Gallery  
You're Garbo's salary  
You're cellophane!*

BOTH CRUISERS

*You're sublime  
You're a turkey dinner  
You're the time  
Of the Derby winner  
I'm a toy balloon  
That's fated soon to pop  
But if, baby, I'm the bottom  
You're the top!*

MUTSUKI

Hurrah, cruisers!

FUBUKI

Bravo!

MIKUMA

Oh my! I thought I'd die! You were wonderful, *Cherie!*

MOGAMI

*Merci!*

*(They kiss.)*

FUBUKI

That was really good!

HIBIKI

Yeah, really!

MUTSUKI

“Garbo’s salary” is funny.

MOGAMI

I mixed up the lyrics at one point.

MIKUMA

Oh, you’re such a sexy beast!

*(Another kiss)*

YAMATO

What talent throughout the fleet!

MIKUMA

It's not over! Here, put this on. Everybody on your feet! Put down your drinks! We're gonna teach you a new dance!

MUTSUKI

Whoopie!

*(Mikuma cues Yamato. We hear "The Black Bottom Stomp" by Jelly Roll Morton or something like it.)*

MIKUMA

It starts like this...

MOGAMI

Then you do this... Now repeat.

*(The cruisers manage to get everybody doing a stomping tap number. It's interrupted by the entry of Nagato who moves to the machine and stops the music.)*

YAMATO

Nagato-san!

*(The fleet girls sense that Nagato's visit is official and fall in.)*

NAGATO

I'm sorry to interrupt your dancing. A gathering like this bespeaks high morale in the fleet... But where are the carriers?

YAMATO

They took on their air groups this afternoon and didn't get back in time.

NAGATO

Of course—what a pity! Unfortunately, I'm meeting with Logistics and Supply on the deck below this. The dancing makes it difficult to concentrate.

*(The fleet girls bow and murmur apologies.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

I might as well tell you now, since it will be announced later this evening, that we're getting underway tomorrow at 0600. I believe you've been expecting this?

*(The Fleet Girls murmur assent.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Fuel bunkers full? Food and water? A full load of torpedoes for the little ones?

*(Nods and "yeses" all around.)*

FUBUKI

We're ready, Nagato-san. Where are we going?

NAGATO

I'll tell you when we're underway.

YAMATO

Nagato-san, may we sing one more song before we disperse to our anchorages?

NAGATO

Permission granted. This may be your last chance for a song. But please—no dancing.

YAMATO

No dancing, Nagato-san.

NAGATO

Very well then. I'll see you all at first light!

*(Nagato salutes. The fleet girls return the salute. Nagato exits. Yamato puts one last record on the machine.)*

YAMATO

You know, my turrets and water-tight compartments are all based on English designs. In some ways I'm a bigger version of the *Katori*-class battleships built by Armstrong and Vickers after the Battle of Tsushima.

MUTSUKI

Much bigger!

YAMATO

So, I've got English blood, and I'd like to sing an English song.

MUTSUKI

We'd like to hear it, Yamato-san.

*(Yamato spies a half-dozen candles on the stack of flammable materials.)*

YAMATO

Here. Everybody take a candle. Who's got a lighter?

MIKUMA

I've got one.

*(Mikuma lights the candles. Yamato starts the gramophone and sings Vera Lynn's "We'll Meet Again." <https://youtu.be/jbf9ZYi8eac>)*

YAMATO

*We'll meet again  
Don't know where, don't know when  
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.  
Keep smiling through  
Just like you always do  
'til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.*

*So will you please say "Hello" to the folks that I know  
Tell them I won't be long.  
They'll be happy to know that as you saw me go  
I was singing this song.*

ALL

*We'll meet again  
Don't know where, don't know when  
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.*

*(The lights fade until only candlelight remains, then that, too, is gone.)*

### 13. THE BRIEFING

*At sea. The fleet girls are clustered in small groups. Hibiki is showing how to make her favorite paper airplane, the cruisers are looking at a fashion magazine, the carriers are having an earnest tête-à-tête on a subject we can only guess at. Mogami is on lookout.*

MOGAMI

Flagship coming.



*(As Nagato enters, the fleet girls come to attention.)*

NAGATO

At ease. Please close the door.

*(Fubuki closes the door and returns.)*

NAGATO

I want to start by saying I know how hard you've worked on your exercises and drills, as well as in the classroom. You've exerted yourselves and done well. You're understandably tired. In a perfect world, you'd all be sent home to rest.

MIKUMA

Hear! Hear!

NAGATO

Unfortunately, ours is not a perfect world. The enemy has also been exerting himself, attempting to recover from the mauling he received at the hands of our comrades in the south seas. He must not be allowed to succeed. Yamato, are you with me?

YAMATO

Yes, ma'am.

NAGATO

Are you alright, Yamato?

YAMATO

I have a bit of a cold.

NAGATO

As I was saying, the enemy is attempting to repair and regroup. Our strategic plan is to destroy his fleet in its weakened condition. This will be the decisive battle that we've been anticipating since the war began.

FUBUKI

Do we attack his home base?

NAGATO

The Supreme Council thinks that is impossible. Rather, we must lure him into the open sea. We can do this by attacking an asset he cannot afford to lose. The Council has chosen Midway, an island in the Hawaiian archipelago less than 1500 nautical miles from his base. When we've taken Midway, our seaplanes and bombers will have a fortified position from which to threaten him. With this accomplished, we believe he will sue for peace. Any questions so far?

*(silence)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Chart, please. This is our objective. As you can see, Midway is a small island with an airstrip. Operation M-I will require our carriers, Akagi and Kaga, to take up a position northwest of the island. Once in range, they will send their planes to destroy the airstrip. The destroyers will provide a screen. Once the airstrip is destroyed, the cruisers, Mikuma and Mogami, will move in to bombard the remaining installations with their guns.

YAMATO

Why not me? My guns are bigger!

NAGATO

You, Yamato, will have the honor of escorting the invasion force which will then land and seize the island. Because of your heavy armor, you won't need a destroyer screen. Extra duties: Mikuma will serve as my chief of staff until the shore bombardment begins. Mogami will navigate; Hibiki will be at the helm; Mutsuki at damage control. Fubuki will be in charge of communication.

MOGAMI

I want to stay with Mikuma!

NAGATO

You'll be together when the bombardment starts. The cruisers will also supply float planes to search for enemy forces that might happen to be in the area, something we consider unlikely. Any questions? No? In that case, let me give you a final piece of motherly advice: do not underestimate the enemy. Even in his weakened state, he's dangerous. Do not be lulled into overconfidence by our victories in the south. The gods of war don't play favorites for long; if you slack in your efforts, they will shift their favor to our opponents. Please don't let that happen. Do you understand?

FLEET GIRLS

Yes ma'am!

NAGATO

Good. In that case, operation M-I can begin! Thank you, ladies!

FLEET GIRLS (*severally*)

Thank you, ma'am.

*(Nagato exits.)*

HIBIKI

I get to steer the flagship!

FUBUKI

I get to wear a headset!

MUTSUKI

I get Damage Control... but I wanted Fire Control!

HIBIKI

This is gonna be fun!

MOGAMI

UNTIL we're in range—then you've all got to screen for the carriers. Got that?

HIBIKI

We've got it!

YAMATO

Come on, kids, I'll buy you a soda.

MUTSUKI AND FUBUKI

Yea!

*(Yamato and the Destroyers exit.)*

MIKUMA

Come on, Miss Navigator! I wanna look at your chart before bedtime.

*(The Cruisers exit in high spirits.)*

KAGA

I don't want you to take ANY unnecessary risks, you hear me? If they spot an enemy carrier, promise me you'll launch immediately!

AKAGI

It's unlikely they'll spot a carrier.

KAGA

If they do, launch *immediately*. Don't rearm. Don't refuel your CAP. Don't close range—just launch!

AKAGI

You know we have to wait for Nagato's order, don't you? She'll pick the moment...

KAGA

NO! *We* pick the moment. You can't expect a battleship to understand. They don't get it—they've got too much armor!

AKAGI

Kaga, dear, you get this way before every engagement. Trust me, it will be alright.

KAGA

How can you be sure?

AKAGI

The only thing I'm worried about is if you start to second-guess Nagato and launch piecemeal before all the planes are ready.

KAGA

You trust Nagato way too much—or me too little.

AKAGI

Look, the first job is to smash the airstrip...

KAGA

You think that'll be easy, do you?

AKAGI

We've got the best planes and the best pilots. The enemy carriers were sunk or severely damaged in the south sea. It'll be the two of us against one little island. What could go wrong?

KAGA

Maybe I worry too much. I want us to survive, that's all. I want us to go home with our flight decks covered in flowers. Actually, I don't care about the flowers; I want to get the destroyers back in school so they can learn everything we didn't have time to teach them before we left. I want to serve the emperor, but I serve him best as an instructor. It's what I do best.

*(Akagi assesses Kaga's state of mind.)*

AKAGI

Dear Kaga, the cruisers said it best: ... *You're the top*  
*You're the Colosseum...*

KAGA

No! No! Don't start!

*(She stops Akagi's mouth with her hand. Lights fade.)*

#### 14. FUBUKI WRITES HOME

*Except she's not writing. She's talking to her mother's photograph.*

##### FUBUKI

Dear Mama,  
I would write you a letter, but there's no mailbox here.  
I'm not allowed to tell you where we are.  
I don't actually know where we are.  
Mogami knows; she's navigating.  
In the morning we'll attack an island. I'm not allowed to tell you which one.  
Here's a hint: it's surrounded by water! Ha. Ha.  
I don't know what else to tell you. It's dark outside.  
The whole fleet is observing radio silence.  
I'm the Communications Officer.  
My job is to listen to make sure it's really silent.  
Nagato-san has gone to sleep, but I'm still up, listening to silence.  
It's night where you are, too.  
Frogs sing in the rice paddies.  
I'm scared, mama.  
Mostly I'm scared that I won't do my duty.  
The rest doesn't matter.  
Good night, mama.  
And say goodnight to Katsi, too.  
Your little fleet girl,  
Fubuki

#### 15. NAGATO'S DILEMMA

*Dawn. There's the sound of enemy planes approaching, their bombing runs cut short by anti-aircraft fire from the ships. We hear splashes. Lights up on the flagship. Positions are as announced in the briefing: Nagato in command; Mikuma beside her; Mogami at the chart table; Hibiki at the helm; Mutsuki at damage control. Fubuki juggles the radio, the microphone for public address and speaking tubes to other parts of the ship. Yamato, lost in thought, stands at the rear.*

##### MUTSUKI

The land-based bombers have been repulsed, Nagato-san. Three enemy aircraft shot down. No bomb hits reported.

NAGATO

Clearly, the enemy pilots are amateurs.

*(Akagi enters.)*

AKAGI

My fighters met them coming in. None of the bombers got past the CAP.

NAGATO

Nevertheless, the island is still a menace. Akagi, prepare your reserve squadrons for a second strike against the airstrip and the fuel depot.

AKAGI

Yes, ma'am!

MIKUMA

You'll have to re-arm your reserve planes with bombs, not torpedoes.

AKAGI *(sarcastic)*

Gee! Cruisers think of everything!

*(Akagi exits.)*

FUBUKI

Nagato-san! Scout plane four reports surface ships, apparently enemy, 240 miles from Midway, bearing 10. Course 220. Speed, 20 knots.

MIKUMA

Enemy ships! We knew there might be some.

FUBUKI

Wasn't that the idea, to bring the enemy ships out to fight?

MUTSUKI

Don't interfere, Fubuki. Your job is communications!

MOGAMI

I have their position plotted.

NAGATO

Patch scout plane four to speakers.

*(Nagato takes Fubuki's microphone.)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Scout plane four, this is Nagato. Advise number and types of ships.

*(static)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Repeat: advise types of ships.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Enemy ships are... *(static)*

MOGAMI

They're 140 miles east of us—seven hours steaming at their current speed.

MIKUMA

If we match speed and steer to intercept, we'll make contact in three and a half hours—aviation contact in one.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Enemy force... *(static)* comprises five cruisers and five destroyers.

MIKUMA

I knew it! The enemy carriers were wiped out in the south sea!

NAGATO

Scout plane four: maintain contact. Don't let them see you.

*(Static. Nagato returns the microphone to Fubuki.)*

MIKUMA

We can go after them as soon as we finish off the island. Yamato can lead a surface attack; she can hit them from 25 miles off. Can't you, Yamato?

YAMATO

What? Um... yes. Of course, but I'm supposed to accompany the invasion fleet.

NAGATO

Perhaps we should do the island later.

MIKUMA

Why? We have plenty of time...

NAGATO

Unless we don't. Notify Akagi to stop arming for land attack.

FUBUKI

Akagi, stop arming for land attack.

MIKUMA

Scout plane four said “Cruisers and destroyers.”

NAGATO

But what if there’s a carrier? A carrier we don’t know about?

MIKUMA

“Five cruisers and five destroyers!” There was no mention of a carrier.

NAGATO

Why deploy such a force unless it’s to shield a carrier?

*(Static. Kaga enters.)*

KAGA

My dive bombers are ready. I can mount an attack immediately.

NAGATO

Are your dive bombers fitted with armor-piercing bombs?

KAGA

No. Type 80 land bombs.

NAGATO

Then they *aren’t* ready.

KAGA

Impact bombs will at least scatter and confuse the enemy ships.

NAGATO

“Scatter and confuse” has value...

KAGA

But we should launch immediately!

MOGAMI

What about the island?

KAGA

The island won’t sail away. We should launch an immediate strike on the ships!

MIKUMA

Without torpedoes and armor-piercing bombs?

KAGA

We must strike first, regardless!



MIKUMA

Without fighter cover?

KAGA

Immediately!

NAGATO

The bombers that attacked us from the island this morning had no fighter cover. Look what happened to them.

MIKUMA

If we wait, we can mount a full attack with a fighter escort.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Scout plane four: (*static*) sighted (*static*) Enemy ships, changing course. New course: 150.

MIKUMA

Southeast? Mogami, *ma chérie*, what's southeast of them?

MOGAMI

Just checking...

(*Akagi re-enters*)

AKAGI

Should I arm with torpedoes?

KAGA

Both of us should launch immediately.

NAGATO

She wasn't asking you, Kaga. Planes that still have torpedoes should keep them.

AKAGI

What about the ones switched to Type 80s? Do I switch them back?

NAGATO

Yes! Yes! Arm with torpedoes! Didn't I say arm with torpedoes?

AKAGI

No, ma'am. You said, "stop arming with bombs."

NAGATO

Arm with torpedoes! You too, Kaga. Dive bombers should have armor-piercing bombs. Level bombers should have torpedoes. Announce it.

*(Akagi and Kaga exit.)*

FUBUKI

All carriers, arm for ship attack!

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Enemy ships... *(static)* I repeat, enemy ships appear to be... *(static)*

*(Kaga reenters)*

KAGA

I need to recover my fighters. They're running out of fuel.

NAGATO

The fighters you had flying cover?

KAGA

Yes, *and* the planes coming back from the island.

NAGATO

Do that first, but hurry.

KAGA

Yes, ma'am!

*(Kaga exits)*

NAGATO

Akagi, too.

FUBUKI

All carriers: recover and refuel fighters. Repeat: recover and refuel fighters.

NAGATO

Scout plane four: confirm types of ships!

*(static)*

MIKUMA

Scout plane four: confirm types of ships!

*(static)*

FUBUKI

Scout plane four: confirm types of ships!

*(static)*

AKAGI *(re-entering)*

My fighters are coming back. I need to land them right away.

NAGATO

You heard the order: recover the fighters. Do it quickly. Have them refueled on the flight deck. Pilots to stay in the cockpit.

AKAGI

They've been flying for hours.

NAGATO

Pilots to stay in cockpits! How long will it take?

AKAGI

Thirty minutes, another 15 to spot the deck for takeoff.

NAGATO

You have 30 minutes total. Don't argue. Do it.

AKAGI

Yes, ma'am!

*(Akagi exits. Brief silence.)*

MOGAMI

There's nothing southeast of them. Just ocean.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Scout plane four reports: enemy... *(static)*

KAGA *(re-entering)*

One of my fighters had to ditch. A destroyer is picking up the pilot.

NAGATO

Are you re-fueling the fighters on the flight deck?

KAGA

No, on the hanger deck.

NAGATO

Refuel on the flight deck. Spot the planes for takeoff as soon as they're refueled.

KAGA

Yes, ma'am!

*(Kaga exits.)*

NAGATO

Why did the enemy ships turn southeast? We're due west of them. The island is southwest. There's nothing southeast.

MIKUMA

If they knew we were here, they'd move towards us or away from us. No other course makes sense.

NAGATO

So why southeast?

FUBUKI

The wind is southeast.

MUTSUKI

Fubuki! Your job is only to relay orders!

FUBUKI

I'm sorry, ma'am.

NAGATO

No, Fubuki, repeat what you said.

FUBUKI

The wind is southeast.

MUTSUKI

So?

FUBUKI

They may have turned into the wind / to launch aircraft.

NAGATO

...to launch aircraft! They'll resume course once their planes are in the air!

MIKUMA

We don't even know if they have a carrier! Fubuki is raising fears needlessly!

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Scout plane Four reporting: enemy ships... (static).

NAGATO

Advise types of ships!

FUBUKI

Scout plane four: Advise types of ships!

*(Static, then sudden clarity)*

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Scout plane four: enemy force is five cruisers, five destroyers, one carrier.

NAGATO

So! Kaga was right. We should launch immediately.

*(Air raid siren)*

MIKUMA *(with binoculars)*

It's the island! They're sending more bombers! Four engines.

MUTSUKI

This is damage control: prepare for attack by high-altitude aircraft.

*(Sound of approaching aircraft.)*

NAGATO

Flank speed. Starboard rudder.

HIBIKI

Flank speed! Starboard rudder!

NAGATO

Signal the fleet to take evasive action.

FUBUKI

All units: take evasive action.

NAGATO

I told you we weren't finished with the island. Port rudder!

HIBIKI

Port rudder.

*(Kaga enters.)*

KAGA

Are we still arming with torpedoes? Make up your mind!

MIKUMA

We're being attacked.

KAGA

So, we're being attacked—is it torpedoes or bombs?

NAGATO

Torpedoes. Type 91. Hurry.

*(Kaga exits)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Announce it.

FUBUKI

All aircraft. Load type 91 torpedoes. Except dive bombers, of course. And fighters. Dive bombers should load armor-piercing bombs.

NAGATO

Stop nattering, Fubuki! Starboard full rudder.

HIBIKI

Starboard full rudder!

*(Akagi enters.)*

AKAGI

I can't load torpedoes if we're doing turns at speed. They'll roll all over the place!

MIKUMA

It can't be helped. We're under attack. Take evasive action.

AKAGI

I'll follow you.

MIKUMA

DON'T FOLLOW US! TAKE EVASIVE ACTION ON YOUR OWN!

*(Akagi exits.)*

SCOUT PLANE FOUR *(crystal-clear)*

This is Scout Plane Four, do you read me?

NAGATO

Advise position of carrier.

*(The scout plane's response is lost in prolonged bursts of machine gun fire.)*

MUTSUKI

Enemy attack defeated! All enemy planes shot down!

Our pilots are so good!

HIBIKI

Center the helm.

NAGATO

Helm centered!

HIBIKI

...220 miles from Midway. Bearing 8.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

Work out their position, Mogami.

NAGATO

Enemy course now 270. Speed, more than 20 knots.

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

They're coming right at us. Range, 115 miles.

MOGAMI

Relative bearing?

NAGATO

Relative bearing: eighty-one.

MOGAMI

Starboard rudder. Course, eighty-one.

NAGATO

Starboard rudder. Course, eighty-one!

HIBIKI

Right at them, Nagato-san?

MOGAMI

Right at them!

NAGATO

We must close with the enemy to shorten the range.

MIKUMA

But, in that case...

FUBUKI

What, Fubuki-chan?

NAGATO

FUBUKI

The enemy planes will also be closer, and their combat range is shorter than ours. We should sail *away* from them so our planes can strike and theirs can't!

MIKUMA

You don't understand, Fubuki. The way of the warrior is always to advance.

FUBUKI

But we're not ready!

NAGATO

To turn away is to blunt our fighting spirit. When our planes are ready, we'll be almost on top of them!

SCOUT PLANE FOUR (OFF)

I'm being attacked by enemy planes. Repeat, I'm being attacked...

*(The transmission suddenly breaks off.)*

NAGATO

The enemy has already launched.

*(Silence)*

MOGAMI

Mikuma, let's go. I want you beside me when they come.

MIKUMA

I'm coming.

*(The two cruisers leave hand-in-hand.)*

YAMATO

I should go, too. 'Bye everybody.

*(Yamato exits.)*

MUTSUKI

Carrier-born planes approaching from the east.

NAGATO

Prepare to repel air attack. Announce it.

FUBUKI

Prepare to repel attack from carrier-born planes.



HIBIKI

I ought to join the screen.

MUTSUKI

Me, too. Come on, Fubuki!

FUBUKI

I'm coming. Good luck, Nagato-san!

*(Nagato takes over the bridge. The destroyers exit.)*

NAGATO

Thank you. May good fortune go with you!

*Whatever scenic elements constituted the bridge of the battleship fall away to reveal a wide expanse of open ocean. The Fleet Girls assume battle formation: carriers and battleships in the center, then cruisers, then destroyers on the outside. All turn into the wind as the carriers launch their first fighters. The screening ships dart and swirl as shadowy enemy planes attack. Yamato fires enormous "beehive" shells designed to shoot down whole squadrons of planes. They explode with an ear-splitting crack but rarely score hits because her heavy guns can't track quickly enough. The destroyers lay down smoke screens in sweeping arcs. The first enemy attacks are repulsed, but the scene becomes increasingly frantic and disorganized. The fleet girls fire at progressively lower elevations as the enemy planes descend on them. The fighters defending them have also come down to wave-top level. Suddenly, a giant Ō-daiko drum sounds—then silence, then a new sound: dive bombers arrive high overhead where no defense is possible. The fleet girls look up to see the bombs already falling. Both carriers are hit, setting off secondary explosions. The destroyers and cruisers maneuver frantically. A siren wails. The stage resembles a bouquet of red and orange chrysanthemums as explosions and fires engulf the carriers.*

## 16. THE END OF AKAGI

FUBUKI

Akagi-senpai, you're burning!

AKAGI

It happened very quickly. There was aviation fuel everywhere. Ordinance too. Scattered everywhere.

FUBUKI

Does it hurt?

AKAGI

When bombs go off. It hurts a little. Torpedoes hurt more.

FUBUKI

Let me get closer. I'll pump water over you.

AKAGI

No. Stay back.

FUBUKI

I want to help.

AKAGI

It's too dangerous, little one. Where's Kaga?

FUBUKI

Kaga is on fire, too. It's horrible!

AKAGI

On fire everywhere?

FUBUKI

Yes, everywhere. I went by her. She saw me but didn't say anything.

AKAGI

There's something you must do. Sink me.

FUBUKI

Akagi-senpai. No. No. I can't sink you.

AKAGI

You must. I will be disgraced if the enemy finds me like this. You must do it now.

FUBUKI

Akagi.

AKAGI

Now. Quickly.

FUBUKI

How can I do it?

AKAGI

Don't play stupid! We taught you how: four torpedoes from two thousand meters, a 3-degree spread.

FUBUKI

I can't...

AKAGI

You can! This is the day you become a destroyer. Better make it six. Two thousand meters—don't come any closer.

FUBUKI

I can't, senpai!

AKAGI

DO IT!

FUBUKI

Maneuvering. All ahead full. Range 2900. Prepare starboard tubes one through six.

AKAGI

Good girl. Hurry.

FUBUKI

I love you Akagi.

AKAGI

I love you, too, Fubuki. Aim well. Torpedo depth 6 meters.

FUBUKI

Torpedo depth 6 meters. Range 2400. 2200... Fire one through six! I'm sorry, Akagi!

AKAGI

Good girl. You aimed well! Farewell, little one.

FUBUKI

AKAGI!

*(Lights fade. In the darkness we hear Fubuki's torpedoes explode. Then the mournful sound of a bamboo flute.)*

## 17. THE END OF MIKUMA

*Pre-dawn darkness. We see signal lamps flashing like fireflies as course headings are relayed throughout the fleet. After each signal, the ship that sends it turns sharply left.. Suddenly there's a loud crash, the sound of a dozen meters of steel bending like pasteboard. Searchlights pierce the darkness. One of them picks out Mogami, hands to her face, stomping in pain and frustration.*

MOGAMI

Ooow! Shit! SHIT! SHIT! Are you alright?

*(Another light finds Mikuma staggering in a circle, favoring her left leg.)*

MIKUMA

Ooow! Sorry, that was probably my fault.

MOGAMI

Why did you turn?

MIKUMA

The lead ship saw a submarine.

MOGAMI

So, you suddenly went hard to port? Thanks for the warning!

MIKUMA

You were following too close.

MOGAMI

It was dark!

MIKUMA

You were following too close! We were all turning to port—couldn't you see my signal?

MOGAMI

I couldn't see anything until I was practically on top of you. Are you okay?

MIKUMA

I think my port-side oil tank is crushed. Can you smell fuel oil?

*(a beat)*

MOGAMI

Yeah, lots of it.

Are you hurt? MIKUMA

My bow is broken. MOGAMI

Badly? MIKUMA

It's bent. It hurts. I probably look like a prizefighter. MOGAMI

Can I see? MIKUMA

No—Don't look. It's not safe. No! MOGAMI

*(The searchlights move from one ship to the other.)*

Ha, Ha, Ha! You look fine, *chérie*. Can you still move? MIKUMA

I don't know. Not fast. MOGAMI

How fast is "not fast"? MIKUMA

What does it matter? You're hurt. MOGAMI

It'll be daylight soon. The island isn't far. Bombers will come. MIKUMA

I won't leave you. MOGAMI

You must, dear prizefighter! There'll be an oil slick. It will lead them straight to us. MIKUMA

I'm sorry. MOGAMI

I'm sorry, too. Go with the destroyers. Get them to tow you. MIKUMA

MOGAMI

My sister... my love.

MIKUMA

You said I could carry you to Hokkaido—then you smash into me!

MOGAMI

You turned without warning!

MIKUMA

What did you expect, a telegram? Take the destroyers and go. It's almost dawn.

MOGAMI

I'll leave Fubuki. She'll protect you.

MIKUMA

No! You'd only be sacrificing a destroyer and you know it.

MOGAMI

My love...

MIKUMA

My love, my love—just go!

MOGAMI

My only love...

MIKUMA

GO. Take the destroyers.

MOGAMI

I won't go.

MIKUMA

Go, or I'll sink you. I still have torpedoes.

MOGAMI

GET RID OF THEM! You don't want torpedoes on board when the bombers come!

MIKUMA

Don't tell me what to do, Mogami! You can't even turn left when you're told to!

MOGAMI

You don't want secondary explosions! Dump the torpedoes!

MIKUMA

You clumsy, broken-nosed bitch! GO! NOW!

MOGAMI  
Alright. I'M GOING!

MIKUMA  
SO GO ALREADY!

MOGAMI  
YOU CAN GO TO HELL!

*(Searchlights out. There's sound of a bamboo flute. Then the sound of aircraft.)*

## 18. ANOTHER LETTER HOME

FUBUKI  
Dear Mama,

It's been four months since I wrote you. I'm sorry.  
There's been a problem with the mail.  
All the fleet girls are back at the base now, except Mogami who's in dry dock to get her nose fixed. I haven't seen Mikuna at all.  
We don't seem to meet girls from other units anymore. I guess everybody's too busy to socialize.

Our assault on the island was a great success.  
We scored a great victory.  
You probably read about it in the newspapers.  
And heard about it on the radio.

The Destroyer Dorm is about the same.  
I hang out with Yamato quite a bit.

Good night, mama.  
And say goodnight to Katsi, too.

Your Fubuki

## 19. SECOND MUSTER

*Etajima Bay. Mogami is caught in a puddle of light. From a place of deep sorrow, she recites from The Tale of the Heike.*

MOGAMI

*The sound of temple bells echoes the impermanence of all things—  
The color of the hyacinth tells us the flourishing, too, must decline.  
Like a dream on a spring night, the proud do not endure.  
Like foam blown from the crest of the wave, they perish ...*

*A klaxon sounds. Light floods the stage as it did in scene one. Mogami is already on her mark. Fubuki drags herself on. The klaxon sounds again. Hibiki and Mutsuki also find their marks.*

MUTSUKI

Do we leave spaces, or what?

*The klaxon sounds again. Nagato enters. Like the others, she takes her previous place, very aware of the missing ships.*

FUBUKI

Did anyone see Yamato?

NAGATO

What?

FUBUKI

Did anyone see Yamato?

NAGATO

She's coming.

*(The Klaxon sounds twice, and Yamato appears. We hear an amplified female voice.)*

THE VOICE

FLEET GIRLS! LINE ABREAST. CLOSE RANKS. EXECUTE!

*(Reluctantly, the ships space themselves evenly across the stage, obliterating the places of their sunken comrades.)*

THE VOICE

DESTROYERS!



Mutsuki, ready!

MUTSUKI

Hibiki, ready!

HIBIKI

Fubuki, ready.

FUBUKI

CRUISERS!

THE VOICE

Mogami, here—with prow repaired.

MOGAMI

It looks nice, Mogami.

FUBUKI

Thank you.

MOGAMI

BATTLESHIPS!

THE VOICE

Nagato, Command Coordination, present.

NAGATO

YAMATO?

THE VOICE

Ready to serve.

YAMATO

AT EASE.

THE VOICE

You are women of uncommon metal. We salute you.  
We will not attempt to conceal from you that operation M-I did not go exactly as planned.  
You have seen your comrades, students and instructors of the Fleet Girls Academy, fall before a cruel enemy like cherry blossoms in the wind.  
Several units became inoperative.  
We will not forget them—their sacrifice only freshens our devotion.  
In view of the considerable expansion of the enemy's airpower—an unforeseen development which you yourselves have witnessed—the Supreme Council has determined that the war can no longer be won by conventional methods.  
We must consider alternatives.  
Rather than endure the shame of defeat, our nation would prefer to see itself shattered like a precious jewel. What is true of the nation is true of its fleet.

Duty is weightier than a mountain while death is lighter than a feather.  
The fleet, even its smallest units, must be pillars, unperturbed, supporting the Imperial Nation. It goes without saying that the Supreme Council would not suggest radical measures if there were no hope of success. Your flag officer has additional details. Let me just say in closing that the Supreme Council appreciates your sacrifice.  
Long live the emperor!

*(The fleet girls come to attention.)*

FLEET GIRLS

Long live the emperor!

THE VOICE

Bow! One... two.

*(On "one," the Fleet Girls bow, straightening on "two." Lights change.)*

NAGATO

Well, what are you looking at me for? You can guess what they want.

MOGAMI

Tell us anyway.

NAGATO

Close the door.

*(Fubuki closes the door and returns.)*

MUTSUKI

There's an island in it, right? An island with an airstrip?

NAGATO

Our army is heavily engaged with the enemy on Guadalcanal, an island in the south. An island with an airstrip.

MUTSUKI

I KNEW IT!

NAGATO

The army needs supplies and food. These must be delivered during the hours of darkness, so only fast ships can make it. The preferred route crosses several reefs where deep-draft vessels can't go. That leaves the destroyers.

HIBIKI

That sounds like normal destroyer work to me. Why are they making a fuss about it?

NAGATO

Access to Guadalcanal is through a narrow channel where enemy aircraft and submarines have been active.

HIBIKI

So?

NAGATO

In order to reduce draft and load extra cargo, destroyers on this mission will be partially disarmed. Not entirely, but their armament will be reduced.

MUTSUKI

By how much?

NAGATO

Only two torpedoes to a side instead of nine. Four depth charges—to be used only to discourage pursuit. Ten rounds for each five-inch gun. A thousand anti-aircraft rounds.

MUTSUKI

For each gun or for each mount?

NAGATO

A thousand rounds for the ship.

MUTSUKI

That's nothing! It'll be gone in less than a minute!

NAGATO

Since you'll be going in under cover of darkness, it's not anticipated that that you'll be attacked by aircraft.

MUTSUKI

What about the way back?

MOGAMI

Why can't submarines do this?

MUTSUKI

WHAT ABOUT THE WAY BACK?

NAGATO

Submarines can't take enough cargo. There are 20,000 men on Guadalcanal. They need rice, ammunition and medical supplies. A destroyer will have to make this run every night. I've devised a plan to allow cargo to be unloaded very quickly at the island. Supplies will be loaded into oil drums tied to a long rope. The destroyer will carry the drums as deck cargo. You'll only need to jettison the drums someplace where a small boat—or even a swimmer— can grab the rope and haul it to shore.

YAMATO

That's really smart.

NAGATO

Thank you, Yamato-san.

MUTSUKI

Then the destroyer goes back for another load?

NAGATO

The Council believes the return trip by daylight will be too dangerous. What's more, the destroyer can carry more supplies with reduced draft if its fuel bunkers are only 1/3 full. Having re-supplied the island, the vessel will withdraw eastward and attempt to draw enemy air and naval units in pursuit, units the enemy would otherwise use to harass our troops on the island.

*(Silence)*

NAGATO (CONT)

Here is an envelope and blank slips of paper. To volunteer for the Special Supply Corps, write your name and call sign.

*(Nobody moves.)*

YAMATO

I can't believe I'm hearing this, Nagato-san. What the Council is suggesting makes no sense!

NAGATO

I was not consulted, Yamato-san.

YAMATO

What if you *had* been consulted?

NAGATO

I *wasn't* consulted.

YAMATO

Am I the only one who sees how crazy this is? A nation has soldiers to protect its children. They want to sacrifice the children to protect the soldiers. Have we all gone mad?

NAGATO

Take three hours to consider your decision carefully. There are good reasons for not volunteering.

YAMATO

Answer me! Have we all gone mad?

NAGATO

If the fleet girls set an example, other units will follow suit.

YAMATO

DAMN THE OTHER UNITS! I ASK AGAIN, HAVE WE ALL GONE MAD?

NAGATO

Yamato-san... please. I'm aware of your feelings and I know their cause. (*to the destroyers*) I request that you make independent decisions and not be influenced by your colleagues.

MOGAMI

I'll do it. I'm ready.

NAGATO

Mogami-san, it's natural for you to want revenge...

MOGAMI

I don't want revenge—I want to die. I'll seek Mikuma on the muddy bottom.

NAGATO

As I said earlier, there are reefs to cross. The channel isn't deep enough for a cruiser.

MOGAMI

Then I'll take another route. You can't let the destroyers do this.

HIBIKI

Fubuki mustn't go. I don't want Fubuki to go.

FUBUKI

Hibiki...

YAMATO

The idea is *indecent*, do you hear? The tactic is just a tactic—it might even work, but the *idea* is indecent. What do we fight for when decency is gone?

NAGATO

Thank you, Yamato-san. But this is for the destroyers to decide.

HIBIKI

Fubuki is too valuable to the fleet! She mustn't be allowed to go.

NAGATO

It's out of my hands.

HIBIKI

She's too smart! You can't throw her away like this!

NAGATO

It's out of my hands.

YAMATO

You disgust me, Nagato-san. I never thought it possible, but you disgust me! The Council disgusts me. I'm going now anyway. It's time to go. It's time for me to go. And I'm going.

*(Yamato exits.)*

NAGATO

As I was saying, this only concerns the destroyers. If you don't wish to volunteer, put a blank slip in the envelope. There's no need to decide right away. On the contrary, I would prefer you to reflect in private.

MUTSUKI

I don't need to reflect in private; I've already decided.

NAGATO

In your face, Mutsuki—in all your faces—I see your love of the emperor. But this is not something to decide lightly.

MUTSUKI

I haven't decided lightly—I'm not going.

HIBIKI

Mutsuki!

MUTSUKI

What?

HIBIKI

How can you be so selfish!

MUTSUKI

I'm not going!

HIBIKI

When you're a fleet girl, you don't weigh anchor for yourself; you weigh anchor for the fleet! For all of us!

MUTSUKI

When a fleet girl sinks, she doesn't weigh anchor for ANYBODY! When she sinks it's OVER—you go where anchors go and no chain will pull you back up.

HIBIKI

You're scared of sinking, aren't you? You're a coward!

FUBUKI

Hibiki! This is complicated...

MUTSUKI

THE WAR IS LOST! Can't you see that? A one-way trip to supply the army won't make a bit of difference. The army hasn't got a chance. You may think our sacrifice is beautiful; you may think we're smashed jewels or cherry blossoms falling in the wind, but that's not it. It's just death. It's not complicated—it's really, really simple!

HIBIKI

It's not death that's simple, it's being a coward!

NAGATO

Can we discuss this in a lady-like manner? And can we please stick to the question at hand? The Supreme Council feels that Guadalcanal will be the decisive battle we've all been waiting for...

MUTSUKI

MIDWAY WAS THE DECISIVE BATTLE! We fought the decisive battle and we LOST! You were there. You saw it happen! Do I have to draw you a picture?

MOGAMI

You're making a scene, Mutsuki! What does it matter?

MUTSUKI

It matters a lot!

MOGAMI

Find me a deep-water route and I'll carry the drums myself.

MUTSUKI

You know the war is lost, don't you? I've heard you say so!

MOGAMI

The war is lost. What does it matter if we survive or not?

HIBIKI

Our *kami* will survive!

FUBUKI

It matters that life goes on. I can't say why—but it matters. After the war—after we lose, doesn't life go on?

NAGATO

Thank you for this insight, Fubuki...

FUBUKI

And if life goes on, don't you think we might still be useful? People might still need us?

HIBIKI

Don't be stupid! Who needs a fleet girl when there's no war? We're only needed to serve the emperor! I'll go!

NAGATO

As I said, this is a decision to make privately.

MUTSUKI

No, it isn't! This is a decision we should make together, right now! None of us should go. It's useless. It will accomplish nothing.

NAGATO

The Supreme Council thinks...

MUTSUKI

Then let the Council go to Guadalcanal! I won't carry a single grain of rice to Guadalcanal!

HIBIKI

Mutsuki, you disgrace us!

MUTSUKI

No! I'm finished! I quit!

HIBIKI

A fleet girl can't quit!

FUBUKI

Where did Yamato go?

MOGAMI

She was here a moment ago.

FUBUKI

Is she coming back?

*(Everyone looks at Nagato.)*

NAGATO

The Council has selected Yamato for a Special Attack Force. Her mission is to relieve pressure on Okinawa.



FUBUKI

Okinawa? There are enemy carriers all around Okinawa! There are hundreds of planes at Okinawa!

NAGATO

I expect she's already left. She's braver than any of us.

FUBUKI

Is she coming back?

MUTSUKI

DID THEY GIVE HER FUEL TO COME BACK?

NAGATO

The Council... No.

FUBUKI (*a slow, sustained wail*)

Aiiiiieeee!

MUTSUKI

THERE'S NO FUEL LEFT, IS THERE?

NAGATO

There's no fuel left.  
She's not coming back.

*(Blackout. Taiko drums.)*

## 20. YAMATO'S END

*This is like the narrative dance at the climax of a noh play. Perhaps the text is chanted by a chorus so Yamato can concentrate on her movements.*

YAMATO

Like rain, but harder—  
The hardest rain you can imagine.  
Not like drops—like buckets of drops,  
drops of hot metal, mostly 50 caliber, but some .303, some 20 mm.  
Every sort of plane with every sort of weapon  
showers me with lead and steel.

They've dropped their bombs already—what can they do but strafe?  
I've shot down five and damaged twenty.  
But they come by hundreds.  
Only one screw turning now,  
speed down to seven knots and  
rudders locked to port,  
I seek death counter-clockwise.  
Like a target at a fairground stand  
or something pasted to a pinwheel,  
I spiral beneath these vultures.  
Where did they get so many planes!  
The torpedo bombers have got the word: attack only my port side.  
A puncture on the starboard side would help me counterflood compartments  
and correct my list.  
Forty, fifty, sixty degrees of list—  
I'm falling—an enormous cherry blossom!  
Blow after iron blow to port and still I won't roll over.  
It would be a relief to roll over.  
Admiral Togo's battle flag on my masthead almost touches the water  
and still I won't roll.  
Now the torpedo planes strike starboard, below my armored belt,  
aiming for my bare, thin bottom.  
New wounds slurp up the sea.  
My pumps have failed.  
My escorts gone...  
Fubuki-chan, where are you now?

Death is like  
we each received a mirror in the mail  
and afterwards  
we never saw each other again.

*(A taiko drum. Blackout. In the darkness, sounds of seagulls and creaking anchor chains  
gradually emerge. We're at Bikini Atoll, July 1, 1946.)*

## 22. NAGATO'S END

*Another dance, more difficult because Nagato is chained to a mooring.*

## NAGATO

What is this lagoon where I'm brought to die,  
chained like a convict?  
And so many ships!  
*Prinz Eugen*, my Teutonic ally, you made a long voyage to Bikini Atoll.  
*Nevada*, my old enemy from Pearl!  
How is it you never swallowed the black pearl of death?  
And a carrier! *Saratoga*—were they your planes that sank *Mutsuki*?  
Where are my girls now?  
The cruisers that wouldn't leave each other's side?  
The destroyers puffed away like foil?  
Now, with these others,  
I await the atomic event in silence.  
No noise. No chatter. No ship-to-ship.  
Nothing but the drone of a single B 29.  
As hundreds of cameras whirl...  
the flash of a thousand suns—  
Another Hiroshima and suddenly—  
my guns, no longer deadly as themselves,  
are contaminated for eighty generations.  
Yet I survive.  
I don't sink.  
The goats and pigs they penned in my turrets and bridge all died,  
killed by radiation.  
But I'm still here.  
The second blast will do the trick,  
the one they detonate underwater.  
The old wounds will open again...  
And if I roll and come to rest  
upside-down in twenty fathoms,  
my four great screws, slanting upwards (a disgrace to any ship)  
my imperishable bronze exposed to view,  
my grave will be famous among frogmen.  
They'll scuba my shame for sport.

## 23. HIBIKI REMEMBERS

*(Hibiki is discovered as in scene one. Her uniform is tattered. She wears a sailor cap with a red star on the front.)*

## HIBIKI

Товарищи зрители! Я подошел к концу истории<sup>1</sup>.  
Wait, did I say this in Russian? I am in Vladivostok for long time now!  
I am last fleet girl afloat!  
Thirty-one destroyers at conclusion of war, but most are scrapped pretty quick.  
The Soviets take me and call me *Verniy*—that means “faithful.”  
So I tell the fleet girl story *faithful*.  
You know what happened to Kaga and Akagi—they watched each other burn like bonfires. Then *Mogami* crash into *Mikuma* in the dark.  
Then Fubuki broke out in anti-aircraft—sprouted machine guns everywhere!  
After Midway, Fubuki hated dive bombers, but she finally sank by surface ships.  
Is ironic.  
*Mutsuki* was hero! Bravest of the brave!  
She made them give her fuel and ammo.  
She took rice to Guadalcanal eight times!  
Saved hundreds of soldiers.  
Made diversion to protect evacuation.  
Was still protecting our transport ships when the bombers came.  
They hit her five times—she sank very quick.  
Of heavy ships, only *Nagato* was left. They tow her to Bikini.  
It took TWO atom bombs to sink *Nagato*!  
We always knowed she was one tough bitch.  
So... My sisters and I were the finest navy in the world.  
My friends from Destroyer Dorm are all sank now.  
I’m sure the emperor watched them die.  
I’m sure of it now:  
the emperor was watching us all along.

(*She bows.*)

*Aligato gosymous.*

(*End of play*)

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<sup>1</sup> Comrade audience, here is the end of the story.



Hibiki, stripped of her armament, awaits surrender to the Soviets as a war prize.

**BRIEF SYNOPSIS:** *Fleet Girls* is a rebuttal to a Japanese anime series called *KanColle*. Both works cast girls and young women as incarnations of Imperial Japanese Navy warships from the Second World War. The anime series is cute but ultimately irresponsible. It celebrates female comradery but ignores the heinous regime for which the fleet girls fight. The horrific strategic and tactical blunders of the Japanese leadership doom the fleet girls to burn and sink at the hands of an implacable enemy whose face they never see. Some of them sense that the war is lost, others continue to believe—all of them continue to fight.

**SLUGLINE:** Far from the gaze of an unseeing emperor the fleet girls train for a decisive battle that will ultimately consume them.

**CASTING NOTES:**

Hibiki, 17. Capable, playful, idealistic, a bit of PTSD at the end

Mutsuki, 17. Impetuous, headstrong, fearless, with an attitude

Fubuki, 16. Sensitive, affectionate, thoughtful

Mikuma, 23. Ambitious, a take-charge sort of person, in love with Mogami

Mogami, 23. Practical, sensitive, utterly devoted to Mikuma

Kaga, 28. Competent, alert, inclined to worry before a strike

Akagi, 29. More laid-back than Kaga, but also moodier

Nagato, 34. Academy commandant. Suffers from depression and anxiety

Yamato, 30. Shy, easily distracted, can be lonely even in a crowd



*IJN Yamato* during sea trials, 1941, colorized.