

Bon Voyage (eng.)

See also Bon Voyage (fr.)

Summary

[to be written]

C A S T

COSWELL A vigorous business man, about 40

BLIND MAN Old and classically ragged

GENT A young woman of 30 or so, wife of Dr. Barnes

FARGO A mechanic, about 40

FLORA His common law wife, 35

AGENT 1) Two FBI investigators, in their thirties

AGENT 2)

DR. BARNES A protestant clergyman, stuffy, 40. Bent's
husband

SPENCER An efficient, stiff-lipped nurse, about 40

BACCARAT An adventurer. About 40.

ACT i - COSWELL'S office

ACT II - On board the GOLDEN EYE

ACT III - Another part of the deck

The action takes place in the 1950's

Bon Voyage A C T I (eng.) text Act I only/

ACT I SCENE 1

The well-appointed office of a Los Angeles business firm with desk and intercom. At the phone, COSWELL, a vigorous and efficient businessman is speaking vociferously. He is upset.

COSWELL

Oh, come on! What do you mean you're in danger! Don't be silly! . . . The State Department ! Well, we're all in the same fix as far as the State Department is concerned! . . . , What? . . . What could they possibly hold you for? All they can do is try to intercept us when we get near the test zone. And I've hired you especially to **manoeuvre** around them as long as possible. We've gone all over that before.

(He ceases trying to reason and becomes stern)

Now look here. We sail a week from today at 0200. You're going to need all the time you can find to get everything set . . . Hey ! . . . What the' . . . Hey ! What? Not sailing ! Who the hell are you, Anyway? . . . hey !

(He clicks the receiver violently. Then he realizes that he has been but off)

What kind of nonsense is this? My key man! How can I sail without a skipper? . . . Who would be after him?

(He turns to the intercom, flicking the switch impatiently)

Bent! Bent! What the hell is wrong with this thing now?

(flicks)

Bent

(He stops suddenly, alert to an unfamiliar sound)

What's that?

(It is the tapping of a BLIND MANS stick. COSWELL attacks the intercom with renewed vigor and fury)

Bent! Bent!

(He stops-and-listens to the tapping. It approaches and stops, the door opens and a BLIND MAN enters, dirty and in almost classically ragged clothes)

COSWELL

The devil ! I gave Bent explicit instructions to keep everyone out of here!

(He turns to the box again and starts to click)

BLIND MAN (interrupting)

Mr. Coswell ?

COSWELL

I told you to see my secretary . . . How did you get by her, anyway?

BLIND MAN (simply)

She didn't see me.

COSWELL (exploding)

Didn't see you ! What's the matter with her? Is she blind?

(Unconscious of his lack of tact, he turns again to the machine)

Bent! Bent!

BLIND MAN (approaching the desk, speaking quietly)

She can't hear you, either.

(He anticipates COSWELL'S nascent explosion, interrupts it by a raised finger)

But that doesn't mean she's deaf, does it? It's just that the machine doesn't work.

COSWELL

Look here! I've got work to do ! I can't be wasting time . . .

BLIND MAN

I know, I know. But since there already seems to have been an interruption, perhaps I could . .
. exploit it for a brief moment. . .

COSWELL

I'm lorry, but I just dont have the time . . . Don't you know that I....

BLIND MAN (interrupting)

That you're setting sail for the hydrogen bomb blast ares next week?

COSWELL (fatuously)

_I see you keep informed.

BLIND MAN (waving his band airily)

All I know is what I read in the newspapers.

COSWELL

Then you must realize that I havent the time . . .

BLIND MAN

You sail . . or let us say, "you were sailing" . . . or, no, let us say, "You want to sail" at 0-2-0-0 . . .

COSWELL (aghast)

How do you know that? Only two of us knew the exact hour _ _ _ Say, there's something fishy about you !

(He rises and goes around his desk. He seizes the BLIND MAN by the front of his clothes and shakes him. The BLIND MAN'S stick falls to the floor)

What do you know about all this? Did you have something to do with . . .

(He stops, realizing he'll spill more information)

BLIND MAN

With the disappearance of your skipper?

COSWELL (snatching him again)

Then you do know something about it ! You're in on it, aren't you?

BLIND MAN (pleading)

Please let me go, will you? I can explain.

(COSWELL releases him, but remains vigilant. The BLIND MAN drops to the floor and feels for his stick)

Where is my stick?

(Feels some more. COSWELL makes no move to help)

I am "in on it" as you say, but probably not in exactly the way you think.

(He finally manages to find his stick. He gets up)

I'm an ant and this is my antenna.

COSWELL (menacing)

Come on! What do you know about it?

BLIND MAN

May I sit down, please?

(He feels vaguely for a chair that isn't there)

COSWELL (gruffly)

All right.

(Puts a chair behind the BLIND MAN, eases him into it. He sits on the edge of his desk)

Now what do you know?

BLIND MAN

I admire you, Mr. Coswell, and this thing you're doing. You're a good man. You're a brave man . . . trying to get a whole nation to stop its rushing, gigantic machinery on a dime.

COSWELL (not failing to be flattered, but still on the track)

Someone has to do it, that's all. If you can stop a nation, maybe you can stop a whole world.

BLIND MAN (enthusiastic)

I agree! I agree! The principle is good, but . . . the State Department is embarrassed by your activities, you know.

COSWELL' (incredulous)

Are you some kind of undercover man for the State Department . . . no . . . no, that's ridiculous! . . . And yet . . .

(He suddenly reaches over and snatches the BLIND MAN'S glasses off. He is stunned. Turns his head away, holding the glasses out to the BLIND MAN, who has to grope for them before finding them and putting them back on)

COSWELL (contrite)

I'm sorry.

BLIND MAN

That's all right. I don't blame you for being suspicious. The world is full of vagrants and beggars who capitalize on false blindness . . . It's not a pretty sight, is it? Two burned out sockets with the light bulbs gone . . . But then, the ceremonies weren't exactly pretty either.

COSWELL

What in God's name did they do . . .

BLIND MAN (interrupting with philosophic calm)

That is the past. You and I are dealing with the future. But in order for us to get there . . . in order for there to be a future . . . we must get across this non-existent land they call the present.

COSWELL (After too brief a meditation)

This still doesn't tell me what you know about the disappearance of the only man both willing and able to take the helm of my ship. He was snatched away from me just now, while I was talking to him on the phone. Just now ! Just before you came in !

BLIND MAN (having been dreaming since his last speech, absently)

Hm?

COSWELL (angry)

Who kidnapped the captain of this expedition . . . Do you know, or not?

BLIND MAN (naive)

Oh, don't you?

COSWELL (spluttering rage)

Why you . . .

BLIND MAN (still naive)

Why, it was the State Department ! I thought you knew . . .

COSWELL (cutting in)

The State Department ! On what grounds? They have no right . . .

BLIND MAN

They have seized him, nonetheless. They will accuse him of Communist activities---oh, he may have had some dubious connections in his youth, many of us did, God knows---and they

will hold him for investigation. Formalities will take long enough to keep you from sailing next week at 0200 hours, and thus will render it impossible for you to reach the target area before the count-down.

COSWELL

Why those ! . . .

BLIND MAN

You can't blame them. They have their job to do. They have done it well. They have been thorough . . . I suppose now you'll have to give up your plan.

(He waits for a reaction, but there is none)

Perhaps it's just as well. You can't possibly know the horrors that could arrive if you miscalculated, or if there were some accident.

COSWELL (decided)

No! I'll do it anyway We'll go if I have to steer the ship myself! As for possible consequences, we're all prepared for the worst, even to die if the bomb blows up in spite of us.

BLIND MAN

You are prepared to die. Are you prepared for nothing worse?

(COSWELL appears not to hear)

Mr. Coswell, I want to sail with you.

COSWELL (recalled, in a jolt, to reality)

What? You want to sail with us? Are you crazy? I suppose you want to be first mate . . . oh, no ! You don't want to be the skipper! Good God ! Do you realize what could happen to you? You'd slip on the deck with the first roll! You'd be washed overboard ! We'd have to rescue you, care for you, feed you . . .

(trying clumsily to be kind)

I'm sorry fella, but you'd just be too much of a burden. You might even be killed. And think what hay the press would make of that!

BLIND MAN

Please, Mr. Coswell. Won't you let me come aboard? I assure you I can handle myself. I could even bring you luck of some kind.

COSWELL

You'd bring us luck, all right--bad luck ! Now come on, get out of here. .

(He pushes the BLIND MAN out the door under the transparent guise of guiding him)

I've got to get something done!

BLIND MAN

Very well, Mr. Coswell. I'll try you two times more. But I can see they were probably right . . .they probably were.

COSWELL

I'm sure they were. Thank you for coming here, and I appreciate your guess work about my skipper . . . but please go now. OK?

BLIND MAN

Good-bye, Mr. Coswell.

(He leaves. We hear his tapping recede. COSWELL goes back to his desk as the tapping fades)

COSWELL

If they'd only give me a chance! Just a chance! If I could just show them that a handful of earnest men from different segments of society could actually put a stop to this pointless atomic insanity! . . .

(He turns to the intercom impatiently)

Bent! Bent! . . . Oh, hell, it doesn't work anyway!

(He gets up and goes briskly to the door, but it opens before he gets there. BENT appears. COSWELL hugs her affectionately)

BENT

Well! What was that for? You act as if you hadn't seen me for a thousand years!

COSWELL

A thousand . . . Why did you come in just now?

BENT

You just howled at me through the intercom . . . Didn't you want me?

COSWELL

Sure I wanted you. But that thing wasn't working . . . Have you been out there all the time?

BENT

Why, of course! I'm always glued to my desk unless I tell you I'm going away for something.

COSWELL

Why in hell did you let that blind man in, then? He disrupted my whole morning . . . And where were you when I called you before? I've lost my skipper!

BENT (leading him to his desk)

You've lost your marbles, that's for sure! Now just sit down and take it easy. I've heard nothing from the "squawk box," as you so rightly call it, and I've seen no one . . .

(She stops oddly)

COSWELL (not noticing)

Well, we've got to get on the ball and get another skipper. I just got a call from him and he was cut off in the middle of things. Either we have to find him or send out feelers for a new one. Can you do both of those things?

BENT (stroking his head affectionately)

I'll do what I can, Coz . . . You shouldn't get so excited and upset. Everything will work out. I love you, you know that. All that incoherent talk about blind men sort of frightens me.

COSWELL

The blind man. Why did you let him in, Bent?

BENT

I tell you I didn't see any blind man come in and I didn't see any blind man go out. All I saw was . . .

(She stops herself)

COSWELL

What were you going to say?

BENT

Well, I didn't really see him, I guess. I must have been sort of daydreaming or something . . . anyway, it was no blind man.

COSWELL

Maybe he was fooling me! He . . . he was dressed in a brown, torn jacket, wasn't he? And pants torn at the knees? And toes out of his shoes?

BENT

No, no .

COSWELL

And a stick! He carried one of those white sticks!

BENT

No ! No ! This---oh I'm sure I just had an hallucination---this guy was dressed in . . . in bandages--real white bandages fromhis feet to his head. His head was all taped up, too, ---and the stuff seemed so white it almost shinedl . . . Well, you see, I must have been out of it for a few seconds . . .

(Buzzer sounds through the open office door)

Oh! That must be my own dearly beloved! Quick, Coz, one last kiss before he comes in! We probably won't see each other alone for the rest of the day !

(COSWELL kisses her briefly, but ardently)

COSWELL

I feel sort of guilty about double-crossing him, Bent.

BENT

Oh, he's such a simple fool.

COSWELL

I sometimes think what the world needs is more simplicity. But is he a fool? He's pious, that's certain, but he's dedicated to our mission and he's sincere.

BENT

Sorry, but sincerity isn't enough for me.

COSWELL

Thank -God for that, Bent,

(He kisses her again, more briefly. The buzzer sounds, interrupting the lovers)

BENT (with a sigh)

I'll go and let him in. He'll start to get suspicious.

(She leaves reluctantly. COSWELL goes to his desk. There is a knock and the door opens. BENT appears)

BENT

It wasn't my better half after all. Look!

(She introduces a man dressed in a jacket and shirt, but no tie. He is FARGO)

COSWELL

Fargo!

(He gets up and goes to shake FARGO'S hand enthusiastically)

FARGO

Hi, Sir! Good to see you again.

COSWELL

And stop the "Sir" business This is a far cry from the Navy.

FARGO (serious)

I know that, Sir. But it's even more dangerous . . . and anyway, it's just a habit. I was just a machinist's mate and you were a captain during the war. You didn't push it down my throat, then. So what's the difference. You're still in command . . . are you going to skipper the craft yourself?

COSWELL

As a matter of fact, I may have to, Fargo. I just got news that my skipper has gotten into trouble.

FARGO

Oh, God What kind of trouble?

COSWELL

Don't know right yet. Bent is out there trying to get some others lined up. But it's a little late.

FARGO

Bent hasn't changed much, has she? Sure wouldn't know she was a minister's wife! Gee, I thought she was crazy about you, sir. What ever happened?

COSWELL

I could ask you why you didn't marry Flora . . . By the way, didn't you bring her with you?

FARGO

Flora? Oh . . . yeah. I guess you're right. OK, so we don't ask questions. That's just the funny way life is, I guess, huh ? . . . Oh, yeah, she's out here. I wouldn't go anywhere without her ! For a couple of reasons ! But you know how it is !

(He is embarrassed),

I'll go get her.

(He starts for the door)

COSWELL (going to the intercom)

Just a second, Fargo. Might as well . . . Bent, tell Flora to come in, will you, please?

BENT'S voice

Sure, boss

COSWELL (jovially)

Might as well use this convenience of civilization. After all, it's getting near the end---for us maybe a little sooner than the rest,

FARGO (admiringly)

You've got guts, sir!

COSWELL

And you, Fargo? I remember quite a few things.

(The door opens and FLORA enters. She is about thirty, but still very attractive and coquettish)

COSWELL (rising and going to meet her)

Flora

(He gives her a friendly hug)

FLORA

It's been a long time, Captain Coswell.

COSWELL

And lots of things have happened and lots of things haven't happened, Flora. You're sure you still want to go?

FLORA

Think I'd back out now? No, Captain. This is something I believe in--just like Fargo. And then, anyway...

(She takes FARGO'S arm)

I'd go to heaven or hell with Fargo.

COSWELL

Maybe we're all going to both.

FLORA

Then I'll be needed with the rest.

FARGO

Tell ya *one* thing, sir: if we go, we'll go with good chow Flora's the best hasher in the world.

(Intercom buzzes)

COSWELL (leaning toward it)

If you say so, Fargo, then I know it's true. Excuse me a moment.

(Into intercom)

Yes?

BENT'S voice

Two men to see you, Mr. Coswell. From the FBI.

COSWELL

Oh, Lord! Now_what? All right. Send them in.

(To FARGO and FLORA)

I don't know what this is all about, but I guess I should ask you to step outside-or better yet, why not get over and look over the boat. It's not exactly a destroyer, Fargo, and I'll need you to know the engine inside out. Af ter all, you and I may have to do all the running *of* the tub ! Here's where she is.

(He writes)

Name's the "Golden Eye."

FARGO

Good idea, sir. We'll get over right away.

(The door opens and two men are shown in. They move to center rear as FARGO and FLORA hastily leave)

FARGO (leaving and giving a significant look at the two men from behind them)

Good luck, sirs

(COSWELL waves a gesture of thanks)

COSWELL

Gentlemen. What can I do for you?

AGENT 1

Sorry about this, Mr. Coswell, but it's about one of your crew . . . We had orders to arrest him this morning.

COSWELL

While he was phoning me. You could have been more polite !

AGENT 1

We've found the less chat is done by phone the better. I'm sorry if I was too abrupt.

COSWELL (resigned)

Well, what was the charge?

AGENT 2

Suspicion of Communist affiliations. There are reasons to believe he may still be a spy for the Russians. He was a member of the Communist Party once, and even though he doesn't still carry a card, the State Department wanted to be sure nobody like that got near this test explosion!

COSWELL

And they waited until just now . . .

AGENT 1

We'll have to hold him for investigation. Formalities will take time. Too long for him to be ready by the time you sail at 0200 hours.

COSWELL

So everyone knows my sailing time !

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AGENT 2

Remember the telephone, sir? That's why we prefer personal communication.

COSWELL

Oh! I see. I didn't realize that my fight for peace was going to require such war-time tactics.

AGENT 1 (earnestly)

Listen, Mr. Coswell. Maybe you feel we are to blame. We are, I suppose. But we have our job to do and we have to do it well. We've been thorough, anyway. That's required of us. Do you think you'll give up because of this?

AGENT 2

We're with you, Mr. Coswell. And we're not the only ones. I hope to hell you dont quit. I hope the mission is a success.

COSWELL

Thanks. Thanks, both of you. I know how you feel, and it's too bad so many feel that way. As for success, I hope so, too. Because if it doesn't succeed, I'm afraid all hope for the world will be gone.

AGENT 1

I'd like to shake your hand, Sir.

COSWELL (shaking his hand)

Thank you.

(He shakes the other man's hand)

And you.

AGENT 2

Sorry about this, Mr. **Coswell** .

COSWELL

Good-day, gentlemen.

(AGENTS 1 and 2 leave. COSWELL goes to his desk. BENT buzzes him)
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COSWELL

Yes?

BENT'S voice

My husband is here with the nurse he told you about.

COSWELL

Send them right in!

(Snaps off the intercom. Then, in an afterthought. . .)

I wonder if she remembered that reference someone gave me yesterday . . .

(He goes to the door just as the two new arrivals make their appearance)

Oh! Sorry. Dr. Barnes and . . .

DR.-,BARNES (.in clerical collar)

Miss Spencer. Miss Spencer, Mr. Coswell.

SPENCER (a plain woman)

How do you do?

COSWELL (distracted)

How do you do? Uh . . . excuse me a moment, will you please? . . . Go in! Go in! Go on in and sit down ! I just have to see Bent a moment.

(Leaves))

DR. BARNES (seating SPENCER)

You'll like him, Miss Spencer. He's a fine man, a fine man.

SPENCER

He seemed preoccupied somehow . . .

DR. BARNES

Well, it's a complex and worrisome affair. But such a noble man! I'm proud to be associated with such an idealistic mission. Idealistic, mind you, not in the sense of impractical, but idealistic rather in its truer, purer sense; that of yearning toward the lofty pinnacles of goodness, truth and beauty. And although Mr. Coswell would not admit it in so many words, a yearning for God.

SPENCER

I believe in God, Dr. Barnes, but I'd say it's even more than not being impractical. The most practical thing we can do is to abolish war. And this, it seems to me, is the most hard-headedly practical step anyone has taken yet.

DR. BARNES

Well it is certainly something that God in his mercy cannot fail to notice, *cannot fail* to acknowledge.

--

SPENCER

I don't believe in miracles, Dr. Barnes. The acts of men are the things that count. I myself would rather die voluntarily, if it came to that in this case.

DR. BARNES (disturbed)

Oh, why I hardly think it will come to That, Miss Spencer. who would want to kill us?

SPENCER

I saw too many die for obscure and dubious questions of national honor in the Pacific.

DR. BARNES

After all, we're only trying to show that we don't approve of the atom bomb or the hydrogen bomb--whichever it is. They will either turn us back or delay the explosion. Surely they wouldn't explode the bomb with us in the area!

SPENCER (sternly)

Dr. Barnes, surely you have heard the questions of the dying?

DR. BARNES (af ter a pause)

Yes. They all want to know the answer to the riddle.

SPENCER

Someone has called it the Great Joke.

DR. BARNES

Please don't be blasphemous, Miss Spencer. I tolerate many ideas that don't coincide with mine. But I suspect blasphemy of being espoused for its effect---its shock value.

SPENCER (shrugging)

All right, Dr. Barnes. Nevertheless, for me, what all the dying wanted to know was, "What is the question?" That is what I'll want to know when the tune comes. Will you be able to tell me?

DR. BARNES

The question? Why . . . I don't see what you mean,
(They are interrupted by the entrance of COSWELL)

COSWELL

Excuse me for leaving you all this time, but I think we've finally gotten somewhere.

SPENCER

Your secretary-uh, Mrs. Barnes--told us you were looking for a new skipper.

DR. BARNES

It's obviously only the first of a series of attempts by the government to thwart us, But it will take more than this. And this will cause a stir in the press. Publicity is what we need. You know, I sort of feel as though we are the press agents of the Lord .

SPENCER (to COSWELL)

I think Dr. Barnes is expecting a miracle . . .

COSWELL

Oh, I've known Dr. Barnes for some time--uh, Spencer? We don't agree on everything, but I'm sure that he doesn't believe in miracles.

DR. BARNES

No, Spencer, not the way you mean it. You spoke of the acts of men

SPENCER

I did.

DR. BARNES

What is more miraculous than an act--a human act even of the most apparently insignificant kind? No, the kind of miracle I'm looking for is the human reaction to our human effort.

SPENCER

There is also the miracle of human error . . .

COSWELL

Oh, come on, now. Both of you. Discussion we should have plenty of time for on the cruise. Wrangling, no. Dr. Barnes, Spencer, is to be our spiritual guide on the boat, our chaplain.

SPENCER

Yes,. he's already told me. And about the general agreement to attend a daily prayer regardless of our religious deviations.

COSWELL

That's right. Prayers on deck. Even if it's only lip service.

SPENCER

I understand.

COSWELL

We need all the outward expression of unity we can muster. Question of discipline and morale. The appearance of unity creates an atmosphere favorable to the creation of its real existence.

SPENCER

All right, Mr. Coswell. Actually I'm sure Dr. Barnes enjoys our differences as much as I do.

DR. BARNES

It is very stimulating . . . Do you know yet who the replacement will be? The new skipper?

COSWELL

Oh, he seems to be a very promising young fellow . . .

(The intercom buzzes)

Yes, Bent? Did he agree?

BENT'S voice

He had all kinds of excuses. I had the feeling he had been frightened.

COSWELL

Threatened?

BENT'S voice

No, just uneasy because of all the government interest in the cruise.

COSWELL (dejected)

I see. . well, that was our last possibility, wasn't it?

BENT'S voice

I'm afraid so, Mr. Coswell.

COSWELL

Well, get busy cleaning out the files, Bent. I've got to wind up my business before we go. We'll meet as planned.

BENT'S voice (heartened)

Yes, SIR!

(Click off)

SPENCER (eager)

We're going anyway?

COSWELL

If you're willing to put up with my running the whole show. It's been some time since L've managed a cruise.

DR. BARNES

Don't let him mislead you, Spencer. Mr. Coswell is an excellent mariner. And with the Great Captain of us all at the helm of life, we shall certainly be assured a safe voyage!

(Curtain on SCENE 1, ACT I)

ACT I

SCENE 2

A week later. COSWELL'S office. Everyone is assembled, seated informally facing his desk.

COSWELL

All right. There you are. Now you have a11 met. You can see we make a sturdy crew. We all have one thing in common: our ideal, our mission, We sail into the eye of the problem. We pope that the government will abandon its practice. At best, this is what will happen. The others will take heart and it will become almost a routine manner to achieve the suspension of the poisonous explosions. At the very least, we shah be intercepted by an armed vessel and forced to go back. This, too, will have favorable consequences. We risk, of course, being treated as Russian Communists. This we certainly are not, our hope being that perhaps a Russian bout like our "Golden Eye" could stop the blasting of a Russian bomb. But there is more. There is a certain hazard due to human error. We may be killed by the bomb explosion-or by a gun from some Navy ship. I've been all over this before, I know, I just orant to give you your last chance to withdraw from the mission. The danger of accident is heightened by my having to take over the helm as well as handling many of the administrative details.

(A tapping is heard drawing near the door)

We've tried everything to get someone experienced enough and dedicated enough to handle the strictly navigational aspects of the trip, but . . .

(He is interrupted by becoming conscious of the tapping now all too audible)

Bent, didn't you lock the outer doors? I didn't want to be disturbed at all during this meeting!

BENT

But I did All the doors are locked and bolted.

(There is a confident knock at the door)

COSWELL

Well, get rid of the blind man, then.

DR. BARNES

Blind man? What blind man?

COSWELL

Oh, a well-meaning old fellow who came to see me last week. He wants to sail with us.

FARGO

Lord! That would be all we'd need

(BENT has gone to the door. She opens it, stepping back in surprise.. A man enters. He is not blind. Although not too neat, his dress is adequate. Jacket, etc.)

MAN

Howdy! Sorry to interrupt. But I was told you might have a job for me.

COSWELL

The blind man! He said he'd find someone!

MAN

Yes ! . . . He was blind. How did you know? He didn't seem to think mentioning him would do any good.

COSWELL

He's with you, isn't he? I heard him tapping.

MAN

Tapping? No. I came alone.

FLORA (who has shown some interest in the new arrival)

But what was the tapping?

MAN

I didn't hear anything.

FLORA

Well, we all did . . . didn't you, Fargo?

FARGO

I thought I did, Flora, but now I don't really . . .

COSWELL

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Are you a sailor? Is that it? What's your name?

MAN

Name's Baccarat. I've had plenty of sailing experience, sure. In the war and out. Here are my papers.

COSWELL (studying the papers)

Hm-m-m!

DR. BARNES (to FARGO)

Baccarat! What kind of a name is that, Fargo? Certainly doesn't sound very American !

COSWELL

Looks like you've got a pretty good record, Baccarat. We could use you, I'm sure. That is, if you understand what we are trying to do.

BACCARAT

You're sailing in protest into the bomb test area, right?

COSWELL

Yes. And we are all dedicated to this mission.

BACCARAT (off-hand)

That's OK by me. I could care less. I've got no axe to grind.

COSWELL

You mean . . . that you have no particular feelings about the atomic bomb? You dont care whether the whole world dies of the effects of radioactive fall-out?

BACCARAT

I have about as many feelings about the atomic bomb as it has about me.

DR. BARNES

Don't you feel that our Lord God is interested in ridding the world of this terrible scourge?

BACCARAT

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Hell nô! . . . Oh, I've got no objections to your thinking so, sir. But it's also possible that the "good Lord" as you call it has decided to rid itself of the world by means of this thing that has no shape or size or weight.

FARGO

Whaddya mean? Dont you think there is an atom bomb?

BACCARAT

Sure! I believe. But I've always wondered about the atom bomb or the hydrogen bomb or the cobalt bomb. What does it look like? Can one man pick it up? Is it painted soue red; red, white and blue---or just black and white?

SPENCER

Dont you think that we should try sonie way to stop all this nonsense of war and threat of war and make it possible to live in peace? I'm sickened by the thought of mangled bodies and killing.

BACCARAT

Who knows? A gond war now and then keeps the population down. Maybe. I dunno Look, Mr. . . . Coswell, is it? I came here because I thought you needed somebody ta steer your skip. I can do it. I can do it good. But do I have to take the pledge?

COSWELL (af ter a pause

No, I guess not, Baccarat. You would have to suffer through some of our formalities, though. Would you agree at least to that?

BACCARAT

I guess I could do it. I've been a hypocrite with the best of them. A little longer won't hurt.

COSWELL

There are dangers.

BACCARAT

I knew a guy who saw heavy action in the Pacific during the war. The day he came home---he hadn't been scratched in four years of action---the day he came home, he slipped on a rug and killed himself falling downstairs.

COSWELL

We could be killed . . .

BACCARAT

Hah! If that was all!

COSWELL (to the others)

Well? What do the rest of you say? I for one say yes. Things will be that much surer.

(tapping starts again)

BENT

If you say "OK," boss . . .

FARGO

That's what I say.

(DR. BARNES and SPENCER exchange a querying look, then nod their assent)

COSWELL

Well, all right, then . . . That tapping again Bent

(She goes to the door)

BENT

It's him!

COSWELL

Tell him that . . .

(But the BLIND MAN has forced his persistent way past her)

BLIND MAN

Baccarat?

BACCARAT

Yes? I'm over here.

BLIND MAN

Just wanted to be sure you got here. A gond man, Mr. Coswell. I recommend him highly.

COSWELL

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We're taking him. Thank you very much for helping us out. Now if you would be so kind . . .

BLIND MAN

Just a moment. Just a moment. Is that all I get? "Thanks"? I thought you'd at least let me go with you. . . Please?

COSWELL

I'm sorry. But I've already told you no. And that's it.

BLIND MAN

Maybe the others would take me?

COSWELL

I'm afraid not.

(Turning to the others)

You all agree with me, do you not? It would be far too difficult to have a handicapped person aboard.

(ALL shake their heads: "Impossible" "Out of the question" "Crazy" "Couldn't accept it.")

BACCARAT

And Baccarat? . . . What do you say?

(They all look at BACCARAT with interest)

BACCARAT

Are you nuts? You're not only blind, but old, and a little batty besides

BLIND MAN (simply)

You don't want me.

BACCARAT

Nope. You'd jinx the ship.

COSWELL (repentant, to The Blind Man)

I'm sorry. I do appreciate what you've done. But all of us feel the same way, you see.

BLIND MAN (nodding his head)

Too bad! Too bad! I guess I'll have to try once more.

(He goes tapping to the door as the others follow him with their gaze. He turns just before exiting)

Yes, yes. They probably were right, they probably were right. But I'll give you one more try.

(Turns and leaves)

(Curtain falls on ACT I)