

**FROM HERE TO ETERNITY**

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

SURF crashes in the distance. KAREN sits fidgeting on a bench on the strand, waiting for MILT to come. They are beginning an affair. Her philandering husband, CAPTAIN DANA HOLMES, is Milt's commanding officer. He is the first sergeant of Holmes' battalion, in charge of the day-to-day operations of the unit. He holds things together while Holmes is off having liaisons with local girls.

Confident of his ability to take Karen away from her cowardly, pompous husband, Milt has already been to her house and convinced her to meet him here. Though she has acquired a reputation as a girl who gets around, there is more to her than meets the eye - a secret to her that Milt senses.

He enters.

KAREN

I didn't think you were coming.

MILT

Why not? I ain't late.

KAREN

No, I guess you're not. And I got here a little early. I must have been over-anxious. You weren't though, were you?

MILT

I stopped along the way for a coupla drinks.

KAREN

You certainly chose a lovely spot for our meeting. I've had three chances to be picked up in the last five minutes.

MILT

Well, that's par for the course around here.

KAREN

Well, I don't care for it.  
I never went in much for  
back-alley loving.

MILT  
Take it easy...

KAREN  
You probably think I'm  
a tramp.

MILT  
Now, what makes you think  
I'd think a thing like that?

KAREN  
Don't try to be gallant,  
Sergeant. If you think  
this is a mistake, come  
right out and say so.

There is a brief standoff.

KAREN  
Well, I guess it's about  
time for me to be getting  
home, isn't it? Well,  
isn't it?

MILT  
Whatsa matter? What  
started all this, anyway?  
You think I'd be here if  
I thought it was a mistake?  
I'm takin' a chance on twenty  
years in Leavenworth for  
makin' dates with the company  
commander's wife? And her  
actin' like...Lady Astor's  
horse, and all because I got  
here on time!

KAREN  
And on the other hand, I  
brought a blanket with me.

MILT  
Wanta take a walk?

They stroll down to the deserted beach. Milt arranges the blanket

on the sand while Karen gazes out at the surf.

He comes up behind her and turns her around. They kiss passionately. She runs back to the blanket and falls back on it. He sinks to his knees beside her, then falls on top of her. He kisses her again, but stops abruptly.

KAREN

I never knew it could be like this. Nobody ever kissed me the way you do.

MILT

Nobody?

KAREN

No...nobody.

MILT

Not even once? Out of all the men you've been kissed by?

KAREN

Now that'd take some figuring. How many men do you think there've been?

MILT

I wouldn't know. Can't you give me a rough estimate?

KAREN

No, not without an adding machine. You have your adding machine with you?

MILT

I forgot to bring it.

KAREN

Then I guess you won't find out, will you?

MILT

Maybe I already know.

KAREN

What's the matter? What are you hinting at?

MILT

Why? Is there something to hint at? Maybe there's been a long line of beach parties.

KAREN

You must be crazy.

MILT

Am I? What about when you and Holmes were back at Ft. Bliss? D'ja ever hear of a soldier named Stark? Nealon Stark?

KAREN

Why, yes.

MILT

Why, yes! You knew him to, didn't ya? Didn't ya?

KAREN

I had to go and forget you were like all the rest of them.

MILT

It's true, ain't it? Well, ain't it? Whyn't ya tell me about it? Tell me the story. There's always a story!

KAREN

You don't leave a person anything, do you?

He picks up his clothes and begins to leave.

KAREN

Come back here, Sergeant! I'll tell you the story. You can take it back to the barracks with you.

He comes back.

KAREN

I'd only been married to Dana two years, when I found out he'd been cheating. And by that time I was pregnant. I thought I had something to hope for. I was almost happy the night the pains began. I remember Dana was going to an officer's conference. I told him to get home early, to bring the doctor with him, and maybe he would have, if his conference hadn't been with a hat check girl! He was drunk when he came in at five AM. I was lying on the floor. I begged him to go for the doctor, but he fell on the couch and passed out. The baby was born about an hour later. Of course it was dead. It was a boy. But they worked over me at the hospital. They fixed me up fine. They even took my appendix out - they threw that in free! Oh - and one more thing - no more children! Sure, I went out with men after that! And if I ever found one that...

MILT

Karen, Karen listen to me...

KAREN

I know. Until I met you,  
I didn't think it was  
possible, either.

He embraces her tenderly for a moment. He picks up the blanket, takes her hand, and leads her away.