

HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON

FADE IN:

The South Pacific atoll of San Miguel, during the war in the Pacific. Marine Corporal ALLISON and Roman Catholic nun SISTER ANGELA are on the beach under a full moon. The bombed-out remains of thatched huts and Japanese fortifications are inland, between them and the tropical rainforest that covers the island.

Allison is cooking a meal over a small GI stove, utilizing provisions from the camp's ample stores. Sister Angela is sewing.

ALLISON

Some moon, eh Ma'am? Things are just
as bright as day, almost. Seems brighter'n
that Stateside moon, huh?

SISTER ANGELA

It's a lovely moon...to sew by.

Allison hums the tune to the old Andrews Sisters song, "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (with anyone else but me)."

SISTER ANGELA

What a gay little song! Do you know the
words, Mr. Allison?

ALLISON

"Don't sit under the apple tree
with anyone else but me,
anyone else but me,
anyone else but me.
Don't sit under the apple tree
with anyone else but me
'till I come marching home."

SISTER ANGELA

Ah, this terrible war, taking young men
away from their sweethearts. Isn't there
someone back home, waiting for you, Mr.
Allison?

ALLISON

No, Ma'am.

SISTER ANGELA

Oh, that's hard to believe. Big, handsome fella like you, he should have a wife and family.

ALLISON

Ah, yes Ma'am. Ma'am, there's somethin' I'd like to say to ya.

SISTER ANGELA

Yes, Mr. Allison?

ALLISON

Well, ah...it's like this, Ma'am...

SISTER ANGELA

Yes, Mr. Allison?

ALLISON

Ya know them big, red flowers?

SISTER ANGELA

Hibiscus?

ALLISON

Yeah. Well, uh, if ya like, I'll pick some for ya.

SISTER ANGELA

Thank you. Mr. Allison, would it be alright if I didn't sleep in the cave, but out in the open? It's such a lovely night.

ALLISON

Oh, sure, Ma'am. I'll fix a lean-to for ya on the hill, so ya can duck into the cave quick-like, if ya have to.

SISTER ANGELA

What do you think is going to happen next, Mr. Allison?

ALLISON

Oh, I dunno. That long sea battle, maybe we won it. That's why the Japanese pulled out. In which case it's our guy's turn to clobber the island.

SISTER ANGELA

Would they make a landing afterward?

ALLISON

Figgers.

SISTER ANGELA

Do you think they'll come soon?

ALLISON

Oughta be right away.

SISTER ANGELA

Oh! Oh, I hope! I hope.

ALLISON

Ma'am, I just got to tell ya.

SISTER ANGELA

What?

ALLISON

When you go back home again, Ma'am, don't do it, Ma'am. Please. Please don't, Ma'am.

SISTER ANGELA

Don't do what?

ALLISON

Don't take those vows. Those final ones. Don't do it, huh Ma'am? I, uh...I never loved anything, or anybody, before. I never even lived before, not really lived... inside. So, uh, that's why I wanta ask ya to marry me. I wanna look after ya. Not only while we're here, but for the rest of our lives. I couldn't keep from sayin' it, Ma'am. So, uh, tell me...if there's a chance, huh? I don't mean to give offense, Ma'am, but, is there?

SISTER ANGELA

No, Mr. Allison. You see, I've already given my heart to Christ, our Lord.

ALLISON

Ya mean, like ya was engaged or somethin’?

SISTER ANGELA

Yes. This is the ring. And when I make my final vows, I’ll wear a gold one. A marriage ring.

ALLISON

Why, I didn’t know. I didn’t know it was set up like that, I...guess I didn’t have no right to speak. Well, guess I’ll go fix that lean-to for ya.

He hurries away up the hill.

FADE OUT