SCENE 8 INT. FEDERAL HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM, 8PM. MAY 1944.

MUSIC: PEPPY DANCE MUSIC FROM THE ANDREWS SISTERS.

FX: CHATTER, DANCING, LAUGHING, CHEERING.

PHYLLIS: Umeko! Nice dress! Make it yourself?

UMEKO: (LAUGHS) Phyllis, you look amazing. I mean, look at how gorgeous your dress is! I don't think I've ever seen you in anything like...well, like...

PHYLLIS: Let me guess: you thought I was going to come to prom looking like somebody's mom?

UMEKO: Well...

PHYLLIS: Umeko, this is the Crystal City Federal School Prom of '44. The first prom the camp's ever had, and it could be our last. I'm not coming to one of the most important events in high school dressed like somebody's mom. So, how's your night?

UMEKO: Pretty good. I like the band you got. I didn't even know my older brother could play the guitar.

PHYLLIS: Best you can get when you can't leave the camp. Seen Hisa around?

UMEKO: She's boycotting it. She said she didn't want to go to an event we had to beg the camp supervisors to host.

PHYLLIS: I was hoping she changed her mind.

UMEKO: I don't think her parents would’ve let her.

PHYLLIS: Or anyone else's. Hope yours aren't too mad.

UMEKO: Actually, my dad encouraged me to go. He said it'd show the Yankees how American we really were.

PHYLLIS: I couldn't agree more.

UMEKO: You were the one who planned this prom. How can you not agree more?

PHYLLIS: You know what I mean. The best way to get the guards and supervisors to accept our ways is to do the same with theirs. The sooner they do, the quicker we can get out of here. Which reminds me...dance with anyone special?

UMEKO: Not really.

PHYLLIS: Dance with anyone at all?

UMEKO: Not really.

PHYLLIS: You can't just sit by the punch bowl waiting for prom to finish.

UMEKO: Someone has to keep an eye on it. Besides, it gives me something to do while Tony finishes his last set.

PHYLLIS: He's playing bass, right? I don't think he's going to finish until the prom is over. Ask him now.

UMEKO: I can't just pull him offstage in the middle of a song.

PHYLLIS: This could be the only prom we ever have, Umeko. Go for it.

UMEKO: I'm not even a senior, or a junior. It's not really a big deal if a sophomore doesn't get to dance at senior prom.

PHYLLIS: You’re my guest, Umeko. You helped set this up. You earned a dance. Ask him now. You have nothing to lose.

UMEKO WALKS OFF. MUSIC STOPS. TEENAGE BOY AND GIRL TALKING. WOLF WHISTLES AND WHOOPING. SHUFFLE INSTRUMENTS. UMEKO RUNS BACK.

UMEKO: (GIGGLING) He said yes!

PHYLLIS: What'd I tell you?

UMEKO: He just needs someone else to take over the bass and he's ready to go. (BEAT) Why is he giving it to the drummer?

PHYLLIS: Why is the drummer sitting behind the kit with the bass?

MUSIC STARTS BACK UP. SLOW DANCE, PERHAPS A BING CROSBY SONG, WITH UNCOORDINATED BASS AND DRUMS.

UMEKO: ...This'll make a funny story for my future kids.

PHYLLIS: It'll be a dance to remember. Now go out there and actually dance.

EXIT UMEKO. DOORS OPEN.

DR. ABE: (OFF) Stop the music!

MUSIC STOPS.

PHYLLIS: Oh no.

GUARD: Ma'am, is there a problem?

DR. ABE: This prom is over. Everybody needs to go home now.

GUARD: Take a look at this flier, sweetheart. It says Crystal City Prom from 7-10, and it's only 8.

DR. ABE: It doesn't matter. I'm closing it down. Everybody out.

DISAPPOINTED COMPLAINING TEENAGERS.

DR. ABE: You should be ashamed of yourselves! Wearing those ridiculous outfits, dancing to mindless music, shamelessly fondling each other, guzzling that disgusting pink punch! Do you know how angry the Japanese council is with this?

GUARD: Lady, calm down. It's just a harmless dance.

DR. ABE: There's no such thing, Officer.

GUARD: Even so, I'm the one in charge and if I say there's gonna be a prom, then there's going to be a prom.

DR. ABE: Wonderful! You're in charge, so you get to brainwash our children. It's not enough you lock us up. It's not enough you make them work your fields and clean your houses. It's not enough to drag them into your army and make them fight against their homeland. Now you have to make them your whores with this dance!

GUARD: I understand you're upset, lady and I know kids are more repressed where you come from. But that doesn't give you the right to drag these kids away from where they belong when they're just trying to have a good time.

DR. ABE: You hypocrite! Do you even hear what you're saying? Do you even know what's going on?

PHYLLIS: Dr. Abe, please. He's just a chaperone. I'm the one who set this up, not him.

DR. ABE: You think I don't remember that, Phyllis? I told you this dance was a bad idea from the start.

PHYLLIS: What’s so bad about it? This is America. They do dances like this all the time. There’s nothing wrong with it.

DR. ABE: You may have been born in America, but you are all Japanese first and foremost. You can’t abandon your country’s traditions just because the guards don’t like it.

PHYLLIS: Maybe we don’t like some of these traditions either. I mean, what kind of people say it’s wrong to dance with other people just for fun.

DR. ABE: Your leaders. Your parents. Your people.

PHYLLIS: Japan’s your country, Dr. Abe, not ours. We’re Americans. We’re Nisei. We were born and raised here. We have American citizenship. And I’m starting to think the reason we’re still stuck in here is because you won’t let us practice our country’s traditions. America’s traditions!

DR. ABE: Fine. There’s nothing I can do.

PHYLLIS: What?

DR. ABE: I have done everything I could to keep you from losing your culture. But how can I teach if you aren’t willing to learn?

PHYLLIS: I could say the same about you.

DR. ABE: But that’s not why I came. I was hoping I could convince you to close down the dance early. Tell them you had a change of heart and saw the errors of your ways.

PHYLLIS: Tell who?

DR. ABE: The Japanese Council. And your parents.

PHYLLIS: Oh no.

DOORS SLAM OPEN. RIOTING JAPANESE MEN. COMPLAINING TEENAGERS. SCREAMING. COMPLAINING AMERICAN GUARDS. BODIES DRAGGED. CLATTERING DRUMS, BASS, MICROPHONES, AMPS. A SLAP OR TWO.

UMEKO: (OFF) Morimoto-sensei? No, it’s okay! My parents said I could come! My parents told you I could come!

(FADING) Let go of me, Morimoto-sensei! You’re not my dad. Let me go! He said I could be here!

CLEARING THROAT.

PHYLLIS: Hi Papa. Hi Mama. Fancy seeing you here.

(END SCENE.)