

ICE RIVER

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Second draft

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FADE IN:

EXT. GYEONGGI - DAY (JEOSON DYNASTY, KOREA)

Note: All dialogue is in Korean.

Text: Ten Years Ago (Gyeonggi province, 1565)

RYU JEONG SR. tall, scar across right eye, and sharp, dark features, struts in front of a group of men lined up on their knees with soldier behind them, holding swords up to their necks.

His heels click against the cobble stone ground. A crowd of people yelling in protest surrounds the lined up men being held back by soldiers.

RYU JEONG SR.

(to the crowd)

All these men have committed crimes against the council. Don't plead for them. They have chosen the path of the rebellion.

MAN #1

No, please, you have it all wrong, I'm not in the rebellion!

MAN #2

I was just trying to feed my family, sir.

RYU JEONG SR.

Quiet! You all stole from your superiors. For some of you it was food, some of you it was weapons, even confidential state documents were stolen. No matter the crime, and even if you acted alone, you still acted as a rebel would. The way I see it, you are the rebellion.

The men look down in despair.

RYU JEONG SR. (cont'd)

Blades up! Strike!

The soldiers raise their swords and strike the necks of each man lined up, beheading them.

INT. COUNCIL - DAY

There is an uproar of emotions in a large auditorium full of men in tradition Joseon Dynasty uniforms. In the front and center of the room is one man seated at an elevated podium with documents in front of him.

There continues commotion among the councilmen. Ryu Jeong Sr. sits silently in his chair.

INT. OUTSIDE OF THE COUNCIL ROOM DOORS - CONTINUOUS

Two soldiers with two different uniforms stand outside the large doors to council room that reach up to the ceiling. They can hear the commotion inside.

Soldier #1 pulls out a pipe, take out a tiny sack of tobacco and puts it into the hole of the pipe.

PALACE GUARD

The council is fed up. They are going to ostracize him in there.

SOLDIER #1

They are jealous of him because they don't have the guts that he has to go against the king's laws of military conduct.

PALACE GUARD

He's a delusional man. The word is that he made up this whole thing about a rebellion.

Palace guard strikes a match and lights soldier #1's pipe. He takes a hit of his pipe.

PALACE GUARD (cont'd)

You work in that province, have you seen the rebellion for yourself?

SOLDIER #1

No.

He gives the pipe to the palace guard and he takes a hit of the pipe.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)

Whether he's making it up or not, I'd rather work under him than another other councilmen in that room. We're stationed in a poor city where the nobi outnumber soldiers.

(MORE)

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)
They're everywhere, and if we don't
learn how to control them, they'll
want to run the town themselves.
General Jeong understands that more
than anyone.

INT. COUNCIL - CONTINUOUS

HEAD COUNCILMAN
Silence!

A hush falls over the room.

HEAD COUNCILMAN (cont'd)
Ryu Jeong, rise!

Ryu Jeong Sr. stands up, the entire council stares at him.

HEAD COUNCILMAN (cont'd)
You have publicly executed innocent
civilians without evidence or trial.
The maximum punishment for these
crimes should have been time in
prison. What is your reasoning behind
these extreme actions?

RYU JEONG SR.
Sir, my province is rampant with
these criminals. I have expressed to
the council many times there have
been groupings of rebellions.

HEAD COUNCILMAN
And you have yet to come forth with
any evidence of these claims.

RYU JEONG SR.
I have shown you the stolen state
documents, is that not enough for
you?

HEAD COUNCILMAN
That was the act of one man and is
not proof of a rebellion. The council
demands to see these conspirators and
we need to hear confessions before
execution.

RYU JEONG SR.
It is frustrating that my own council
does not believe me.

Head councilmen turns to the next page of the documents.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

And how do you explain the murder of those who committed petty crimes?

RYU JEONG SR.

You must understand what position I am in here. I oversee the am in charge of the province with the largest nobi population, I cannot overlook these actions, even if they are petty crimes. They must be guided towards the proper way of conduct.

(beat)

Or does the council forget I am a high ranking member of this council?

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Oh we remember, and let us not forget your past incidents which have not proven trustworthy. Conspiracies of an insurrection, connections to an assassination of a high ranking military officer... You're track record has not proven to be the most trustworthy.

RYU JEONG SR.

We've discussed this before, there is no evidence connecting me to those crimes!

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Ah, so you do understand the how grave an accusation without evidence is.

(beat)

No more public executions without evidence and a trial or you WILL be demoted.

(beat)

Show me some evidence, and the council can help you take action.

Ryu slams his body back in his chair, defeated. In the chair next to him is a young man.

RYU JEONG SR.

Cheol, don't be afraid, do you remember the plan I talked to you about?

Cheol nods his head.

RYU JEONG SR. (cont'd)
It's time to put it into action.

CHEOL
I'm ready.

INT. JEONG ESTATE SHRINE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Jeong estate (outskirts of Hanseong, 1575)

Aram running

CHEOL (33), father of Aram, short black hair, muscular, tall, wearing a royal blue jeogori, is praying on his knees in front of a picture of his father. HANA, (31) mother of Aram, long black hair, petite, pale, sad eyes, wearing a navy blue hanbok knocks on the wall to get Cheol's attention.

CHEOL
What is it? Can't you see I'm in the middle of a prayer.

HANA
It's Aram, she isn't in her room.

He blows out candles that surround the picture and he stands up, adjusting the front of his jeogori and exits, brushing past Hana.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

YURI (20), Aram's personal maid, short hair, skinny, and two other maids are playing with Aram's makeup and pretending to try on her dress.

Cheol bursts into Aram's room and they immediately stop what they are doing, trying to hide that they were slacking off.

CHEOL
What is this? Go find Aram, now!

They all bow.

YURI AND THE MAIDS
Yes, sir.

INT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Deep snow covers the maze of bushes in the estate garden, birds attempt to pluck frozen berries from a snow covered tree. Snow covers the sculpture of a woman in a fountain, the water that once flowed out of the fountain frozen as well.

A water deer approaches the frozen fountain water, attempting to lick the water. ARAM (15) long black hair, petite, pale, wearing a green hanbok, crouches behind an opening in the wall of bushes that surround the fountain.

She hides from the water deer and studies it. She notices a cut on the deer's side and blood dripping into the writes in her journal. She takes out an ointment from her side bag underneath her hanbok.

She creeps towards the water deer bending over and walking, he feet sinking into the snow. Yuri suddenly comes out from behind the bush and startles both Aram and the water deer.

YURI

Miss Aram, please, we need to start getting you dressed!

The deer runs away. Aram turns, surprised by Yuri. Aram turns back to see that the deer had run away. She sighs heavy and closes her notebook.

ARAM

(annoyed)

Okay!

INT. RYU'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RYU (18), brother of Aram, short black hair, muscular, tall, wearing a dark green jeogori, is fully dressed and sitting outside of his room on the porch. Cheol walks out onto the porch.

CHEOL

Ryu, let me see you, boy.

Ryu stands up and Cheol observes him.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Stand up straight.

Ryu stands up a little straighter.

CHEOL (cont'd)
This night marks the beginning of
restoring our family's legacy, and
you stand at the forefront of this
endeavor.

Ryu smirks.

RYU
I won't let you down, father.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yuri pulls tightly on Aram's corset.

ARAM
Ow!

YURI
Sorry, ma'am.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Yuri and the other maids help her get into a deep purple hanbok with intricate white flowers on it. Aram studies the painting of a Geommu dance performance hung up in her room. Hana applies traditional korean makeup to Aram's face.

ARAM
I never noticed the man in this
painting is sitting so far from his
family.

Hana momentarily looks back at the painting and then turns back to apply makeup again.

HANA
I rarely went out to events when I
was your age. My family hosted them
in our home. That man is my father.

ARAM
This is your family?

Aram points to a little girl in the painting.

ARAM (cont'd)
Is that you, next to the woman?

HANA

Yes. That is my mother and the performer you see there in the middle was my father's courtesan, Lady Kang-ah. She was the most beloved Geommu dancer in my town. My father adored her. He loved her even more than my mother. That very night he expressed to my mother that he wished Lady Kang-ah was his wife instead of her.

ARAM

That's terrible. She must have been heartbroken.

HANA

In a jealous rage, my mother attempted to kill Lady Kang-ah Ah. My father divorced her, leaving her homeless and shamed by the people of my town.

ARAM

Could you still see your mother?

HANA

I never saw her again after that night and my life at home was never the same. My father resented all of her children, including me. This painting is my reminder to not allow petty emotions control me. Let this be a lesson to you as well.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Cheol enters the room and all the women bow to him. Hana, Yuri, and the other maids back away from Aram. He walks up to Aram and analyzes her outfit.

CHEOL

You have blossomed into a woman. Your Hanbok fits you like a glove now. Tonight everyone will be saying that my daughter is the most beautiful noblewoman in the nation.

ARAM

Tonight is more about Ryu, he is the scholar genius that everyone wants to meet.

CHEOL

This night is just as about you as it is about Ryu...because tonight you are meeting your suitor.

Aram's face drops.

ARAM

No, please, I cannot marry a stranger.

CHEOL

You will marry this suitor. You cannot postpone your marriage any longer, you are of age!

ARAM

I can't!

CHEOL

He is the only son of noble birth that will take your hand, no other councilman wants to marry their son into this family!

ARAM

That isn't *my* fault! Why must *I* be the one to suffer when it was *your* father that gave our family a bad reputation with the council!

CHEOL

Enough!

Hana's body twitches from the piercing sound of Cheol's yell and spills face makeup on the floor, Cheol looks at the spilled makeup and then back at Aram.

Aram grabs the front pieces of his jeogori and pulls her head against his chest, crying. Cheol pushes her forward to look at her face and straightens his clothes. He wipes the tear streaming down her face with his thumb, messing up her makeup.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Those eyes, they are a reflection of mine. You glare at me just as I did my father. I did not want the path he laid for me, but I had no choice, just as you have no choice. We all have a burden to bare because of family's past. This is yours.

Cheol turns to Yuri.

CHEOL (cont'd)
Fix her makeup and clean the floor.

He exits the room, Hana follows. Yuri fixes Aram's makeup.

INTERCUT CHARIOT #1/ CHARIOT #2 - NIGHT

Cheol and Ryu are in one chariot in front of Aram and Hana's charriot. Cheol is sitting across from Ryu.

INT. CHARIOT #2 - CONTINUOUS

Aram is sitting across from Hana, who is reading a book.

INT. CHARIOT #1 - CONTINUOUS

RYU
Hello, General Kim. I am Ryu Jeong,
son of General Jeong Cheol. I plan to
take the King's exam within a few
weeks time. I hope to pass-

CHEOL
Be more confident. Say it as if
you're going to pass the exam.
Because you will. Go on.

The chariots pass nobi that are rioting in the streets.
Soldiers are beating up nobi and the nobi are resisting.

RYU
What are they rioting for?

CHEOL
They are demanding freedom.

RYU
That's pathetic. What's the point? Do
they really think they will be
anything more than nobi?

INT. CHARIOT #2 - CONTINUOUS

Aram pulls the curtain back and peeks out of the window on her side.

CHEOL
Don't underestimate them. These are
exactly the problems you will learn
to deal with.

(MORE)

CHEOL (cont'd)

They are a threat to our system, its
up to yanban to maintain it.

RYU

If they want to make any change they
need to learn the ways of yanban, but
all they do is whine in the streets.

CHEOL

Whine enough for long enough and
someone will listen, with their
numbers increasing, their demands are
becoming impossible to ignore.

A group of nobi migrate towards Cheol and Ryu's carriage.

INT. CHARIOT #2 - CONTINUOUS

A man with rotten teeth and shredded clothes runs up to the
carriage that Aram and Hana are in and he puts his hands
against the glass.

NOBI

Even the blade tilts towards the
evil!

Aram jumps.

INT. CHARIOT #1 - CONTINUOUS

Ryu laughs at all the nobi approaching with desperation. A
soldier that surveying the riot pulls the nobi off of Aram
and Hana's carriage and throws a punch at him. Aram watches
with concern.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Aram, Cheol, Hana, and Ryu approach GENERAL KIM (42), short
stature, buff, mustache. They all bow to each other.

CHEOL

General Kim, it's nice to see you
again.

GENERAL KIM

It's nice to see you again as well,
sir. It has been a while since I've
seen you at an event.

General Kim leans to the left to look at Aram.

RYU
General Kim, I am-

GENERAL KIM
Is this Aram?

Cheol steps out of the way.

CHEOL
Yes, sir.

Aram hesitates, Cheol gently shoves her towards him. General Kim lifts her chin with his hand and analyzes her whole face.

GENERAL KIM
It is a pleasure to finally meet you.
I've heard you are interested in
medicine and studying under Lady Ok.

ARAM
Yes.

GENERAL KIM
She is certainly a master of her
field. I, too, studied medicine when
my wife was sick. I don't remember
much since then.

CHEOL
I heard of your wife's sickness, how
is she?

GENERAL KIM
She passed.

Awkward silence.

CHEOL
My condolences.

GENERAL KIM
Thank you.
(leaning in closer to
Aram)
Maybe you tutor me on your physician
work.

ARAM
Of course.

CHEOL
Where is your son?

GENERAL KIM
He is already at his seat.

General Kim faces Aram.

GENERAL KIM (cont'd)
Waiting for you. My son is a shy boy,
he couldn't be any different from his
father.

General Kim laughs.

GENERAL KIM (cont'd)
He preferred to meet you alone, a
crowd would make him anxious.

CHEOL
How odd.

GENERAL KIM
Yes... He does require a lot of
patience.

ARAM
I will be patient with him, I assure
you.

OPERA HOUSE WORKER
General Jeong and General Kim, the
owner wants you and your families to
have a backstage tour before the
performance. You are our honorary
guests tonight.

INT. BACKSTAGE OF OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Opera house worker, Cheol, Aram, Hana, Ryu, and General Kim
walk up to the backstage area.

HANA
Your son didn't want to join, General
Kim?

GENERAL KIM
It's best to leave him where he is
comfortable.

Opera house worker opens the curtain to the many stations
practicing and preparing backstage.

OPERA HOUSE WORKER

We're honored you all could come tonight. We've preparing an excellent show, you won't be disappointed.

Aram's face lights up as she looks at all the stations.

OPERA HOUSE WORKER (cont'd)

What would you all like to see first, the dancers perhaps?

They continue walking past the set designers, props, and lighting.

RYU

Do you prefer the life of a nobi, sister? I bet you feel at home back here.

ARAM

What are you talking about?

RYU

I heard a rumor you like to befriend the kisaeng in Yongsan district. Is it true?

ARAM

(loud whisper)

Quiet! Don't say stupid things!

Aram sees the back of a younger man's head, sharpening a sword. She slows down her footsteps. Her family and General Kim goes ahead of her. Ryu jogs up to General Kim.

RYU

(in the distance,
voice trails off)

Hello, General Kim. I am Ryu Jeong. I plan to pass the King's exam this upcoming season...

The sound of the sharpening crescendos as Aram walks closer. She goes up behind him and leans in over his shoulder.

MASTER (30s), skinny, scruffy, dirty clothes, is sitting across from the unknown man.

WONSIK (16), short and scruffy black hair, tan skin, lean, handsome, dirty clothes, sees her reflection in the sword. He gets startled and looks at her with wide eyes. She leans in further and traces her finger along the sword. He gently grabs her hand and moves it away.

WONSIK

Don't touch it.

She slowly stands up straight, putting her hand by her side.

MASTER

Wonsik, this is a noble lady, what are you thinking? Let her touch the sword if she wants.

WONSIK

She could have cut herself.

MASTER

Shut up, boy!

Master bows his head in her direction shamefully.

MASTER (cont'd)

I apologize ma'am, he is misbehaved, I'll punish him later.

She waves her hands in reluctance.

ARAM

I shouldn't have touched it before the performance anyways. I just thought it was a beautiful sword.

Wonsik continues sharpening the sword.

HANA

Aram, there you are. Why didn't you follow us?

ARAM

I was just-

RYU

Oh, the blade smiths!

Ryu picks up the sword from Wonsik's hands. He looks at Ryu, unamused.

RYU (cont'd)

Look at that.

He tosses the sword from one hand to another

RYU (cont'd)

Light weight. Perfect length. A shame this is only going to be in a stupid performance. This should be in battle!

ARAM

Put it down, that is not a weapon!

Ryu puts the sword up to Aram's throat.

RYU

Do you volunteer to test the blade's sharpness?

Cheol puts his hand on the blade and lowers it away from Aram's neck.

CHEOL

Ryu, return the blade to the boy.

General Kim walks forward to Wonsik.

GENERAL KIM

You look very familiar young man.

General Kim examines him. He leans in closer to him with his hands behind his back. The opera house worker approaches the group.

OPERA HOUSE WORKER

I can take you all to your seats now, the show is starting soon.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE PALACE - NIGHT

General Kim and Cheol walk side by side, Ryu and Aram walk side by side behind them, and Hana walks by herself behind them.

RYU

(to Aram)

Haven't you been the center of attention today? I barely got a word in with General Kim of your sneaking around.

ARAM

I didn't mean to draw attention to myself. What does it matter to you anyways, *I'm* the one that's marrying into his family?

RYU

And how am I supposed to make an impression on the council if you're in my way?

GENERAL KIM
(to Cheol)
That's right! The boy is *his* son.

General Kim turns to Cheol.

CHEOL
Who?

GENERAL KIM
The young blade smith is the son of
the former state blade smith, Sun
Park. The western council calls him
the book thief.

CHEOL
I've never heard of him.

GENERAL KIM
Sun Park was one of the men your
father ordered to be killed in the
Gyeonggi massacre.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. SWORD SMITH SHOP - DAY

Soldiers break into the sword smith shop where SUN PARK
(25), young, unkempt, lean and young Master are sharpening
swords. Sun Park stands up and a soldier holds him back from
moving any further.

SUN PARK
What's going on here?

The soldiers rummage through a hidden pile of books, a few
of them hold up some books and a few scrolls.

SOLDIER #1
We found the stolen documents.

SOLDIER #2
Those are from the palace archives.
You're going to pay a heavy price for
those.

Two of the soldiers drag Sun Park out of the sword smith
shop, he is fighting back. Young Master continues sharpening
the sword with a slight smirk.

EXT. GYEONGGI - DAY

Sun Park is on his knees lined up next to the other nobi in the center of a crowd of nobi. Ryu Jeong Sr. stands behind the executioner looking out into the yelling crowd.

Seven year old Wonsik and Sun Park's wife squeeze each other tight. Ryu Jeong Sr. gives the signal to execute, and the sound of the sword slices through their necks, blood splatters on the stone ground.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE OF OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

General Kim and Cheol continue walking side by side.

GENERAL KIM

Park was phenomenal with a blade. The council was devastated over his death. It's certainly a shame he was executed, but he was wrong for stealing from the palace.

CHEOL

I worked under my father's command during my first years on the council before he was excommunicated. Not a single man in on the council trusted him.

(beat)

If you want me to admit that my father was an extreme general, I know better than anyone that he was.

GENERAL KIM

I don't hold judgment over your family's past. Your father was right about rebellious groups in Gyeonggi. It's been corrupted them. So in many ways I understand why your father did what he did.

(beat)

But this marriage means our families will unite and we will work closer together as councilmen.

(MORE)

GENERAL KIM (cont'd)

(beat)

Our provinces will have close ties,
but I must have your word that you
will not repeat the same methods your
father once did.

INT. OPERA HOUSE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Aram, Ryu, Cheol, Hana, and General Kim walk to the seating area of the theater. General Kim lays his hand on Aram's shoulder and points to a man sitting by himself.

GENERAL KIM

There is Eungin. I am sure he is
ready to see you now.

She slowly walks towards EUNGIN (23) short black hair, maroon jeogori, neat, innocent face. Aram stops in front of him, he looks up at her and stands up to greet her.

Aram awkwardly bows, Eungin bows as well. Eungin sits, then Aram sits to the left of him, next to the center aisle. There are a few moments of awkward silence.

EUNGIN

Do you enjoy performances?

ARAM

This is my first time seeing a show.

EUNGIN

I try to see a show any time there is one. I like to immerse myself into the story and forget about what's going on around me. Seeing an adventure is exciting.

ARAM

That doesn't sound too appealing to me. I'd rather experience the adventure than watch it.

EUNGIN

Hm. Maybe I'll be there for you adventures in the future.

He smiles. Aram looks at him, studying his face. Suddenly the crowd silences.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, King Seonjo.

A traditional song plays while KING SEONJO (50s) short, traditional royal clothing, long beard, walks down the isle, each row of noble folk bowing as he walks past them.

He passes Aram and Eungin, they bow along with their row. He slowly makes it down the isle and sits at his designated seat.

The lights dim and the show begins.

The dancers shuffle on stage and begin their performance. She directs her attention to the dancers. The sword on stage glistens in the light. She looks around, observing everyone in the audience, paying close attention to the show.

She gets up and leaves the seating area. Eungin watches her leave. Cheol, who is sitting a row behind them and across the aisle, looks at where Aram was sitting, and notices she isn't there.

INT. OPERA HOUSE BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

She pulls the curtains open. She sees both Wonsik and Master aren't at the sword smith station. KISAENG #1 and KISAENG #2 pop out in front of Aram's face. Aram gets startled.

KISAENG #1

Aram! We saw you earlier!

KISAENG #2

We can't believe you're here! Where have you been? We've missed you!

ARAM

What are you guys doing here?

KISAENG #2

We were hired to be the physicians backstage.

KISAENG #1

Our Gyobang has been getting lots of recognition lately. Isn't it great?

ARAM

Did you come here with Lady Ok?

KISAENG #1

She isn't here, but she wants to see you. She says it's important.

She spots Opera House Worker talking to two drummers.

ARAM

I have to go, but tell Lady Ok I'll be there tonight.

She strides past them, she turns.

ARAM (cont'd)

Don't let the old hag fall asleep before I get there!

She approaches Opera House Worker.

ARAM (cont'd)

Have you seen Wonsik?

OPERA HOUSE WORKER

Who? Do you need someone to go with you back to your seat ma'am?

ARAM

No, thank you. I'm looking for one of the blade smith's. The boy.

Master approaches, he creeps up close to Aram.

Maybe she sees Lady Ok backstage, maybe she isn't at the front.

MASTER

You're looking for Wonsik, ma'am?

ARAM

Yes. I wish to speak with him.

MASTER

I sincerely apologize again for the way he behaved but you needn't worry ma'am, I gave him a well deserved punishment. He'll never speak to another yangban like that.

ARAM

Your apology is unnecessary. I'm not upset. I just want to talk.

MASTER

I believe he is outside by the pond. Best to be cautious. Remember he is a troubled boy.

ARAM

Thank you.

He bows.

MASTER

Oh, and, if I may. I understand that you and your brother took interest in my swords.

He lifts her hand.

MASTER (cont'd)

Could you remind my name to your father? That would be much appreciated.

He kisses her hand and smiles with his rotting teeth.

ARAM

Of course...

She awkwardly removes her hand from his and leaves. He stares at her with greedy eyes.

EXT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

Aram walks down a dimly lit walkway. She spots two figures moving against a wall. She hears a woman giggling and a man kissing the woman's neck. Aram walks by with her head down.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Aram notices a light in the woods and goes towards it. She sees Wonsik sitting against a tree, reading a book. The moonlight shining down on him. A lantern next to him.

She tiptoes behind him and steps on a stick. He stands up quickly and backs up.

ARAM

What's that? A book?

He stands up and puts the book behind his back. She throws her hands up.

ARAM (cont'd)

I'm not here to scold you, I swear.

WONSIK

Why are you here? What do you want from me?

ARAM

Your neck. It's cut.

He covers it.

WONSIK

It's none of your concern.

ARAM

You should be nicer to me. You're head might be on a stick right now if I had told my father about the way you acted towards me.

WONSIK

(sarcastically)

Well aren't you guys a light-hearted bunch? Much appreciated miss, I owe you my life.

She scoffs.

ARAM

What is your problem? I didn't do anything to you.

He ignores her. She walks away.

WONSIK

Wait! You won't tell anyone about the book, right?

She turns. She puts her hand over her heart.

ARAM

I swear I won't tell.

WONSIK

You- you can stay. Unless you need to go back of course, to your lovely family.

She walks towards him.

ARAM

Don't push your luck with me. And no. Even though this is my first time watching a show, I've decided I hate them.

She motions toward his cut.

ARAM (cont'd)

Can I see?

She reaches under her dress. He takes a step back.

WONSIK

What are you doing?

ARAM

Relax, I have a remedy to help.

She pulls out a jar of paste and puts it on the cut. Wonsik gives a face of disgust.

WONSIK

Eugh, what is that?

ARAM

Stop being a baby. Do you want it to heal?

Wonsik rolls his eyes and stops squirming.

ARAM (cont'd)

The man who did this to you, is he your master?

He looks away.

WONSIK

That guy is just an asshole who claims to be my master. My father is the one that taught me everything I know.

(beat)

My father was a great man, but his legacy was destroyed by yangban.

(beat)

Despite what you've probably been told about nobi of my town, we are good people. And my father was the best of us.

She looks at him through the corner of her eye.

ARAM

Well despite what you might think, I hold no resentment towards your people.

She looks back down at the cut.

ARAM (cont'd)

And I believe you if you say your father was an admirable man. I have no reason to think otherwise.

(beat)

I think your unwavering spirit is admirable as well.

She chuckles.

EXT. OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Master hides behind a tree further away from Aram and Wonsik, he can see them, but can't hear them clearly.

ARAM
All done. It should heal in a few days.

WONSIK
Thank you.

They look into each others eyes. She coughs to break the tension.

ARAM
I should head back. It was nice meeting you, Wonsik. I will keep my promise to you.

WONSIK
It was nice meeting you...

ARAM
Aram.

She walks away.

WONSIK
(softly)
Aram.

EXT. OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Master's silhouette is in the shadows of the forest, but his face illuminates in the moonlight. He hides his face back in the shadows when Aram passes by him unknowingly.

INT. OPERA HOUSE AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Aram scurries to her seat. She smiles warmly while looking at the performance. Eungin looks at her, then he directs his attention back to the performance.

There are loud rhythmic beats coming from the drummers, and there is a dramatic melody coming from a flute player. On stage the dancers are picking up the pace in their movements as the performance nears the end.

The main performer is killed tragically. Aram's face sinks. The music stops and the audience claps.

ARAM

Eungin, I apologize for missing most of the show. I went to go see my kisaeng friends backstage.

EUNGIN

So you went on an adventure.

(beat)

I'm not upset. I want to understand what kind of person you are. We will be spending our lives together after all.

She looks down.

ARAM

Right.

General Kim puts his hand on her shoulder. General Kim assists her up.

GENERAL KIM

Did you enjoy the show, Aram?

ARAM

Yes, sir.

GENERAL KIM

I hope you two are now well aquatinted.

EUNGIN

Yes, I'm looking forward to the next time we meet.

Eungin turns to Aram and kisses her hand. Aram bows to General Kim, he bows back. Aram watches them leave. She notices Cheol giving her a disappointing look from across the aisle.

INT. JEONG ESTATE - NIGHT

Aram, Cheol, Hana, and Ryu walk inside the estate. Ryu is drunk and giggly. He has his arm around one of the kisaeng from the performance. Cheol is eerily silent.

RYU

I discussed my state exam results with General Kim. It seems if I pass the king's exam he will offer me an apprenticeship under him.

(MORE)

RYU (cont'd)

He even wants to take me on a day on the job trip tomorrow. What do you think father?

The front doors shut.

CHEOL

An embarrassment!

Cheol slaps Aram.

HANA

No!

Cheol shoves Hana to the ground, she hits her head against the wall. Ryu reaches down to help Hana, holding her shoulders.

CHEOL

Don't help her.

Ryu throws his hands up and exits slowly. The kisaeng following behind him.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Where did you go for the entire show?!

ARAM

I was backstage.

CHEOL

Your duty was to be with Eungin! What were you thinking wandering off like that?! You're ruining your chances of ever finding a husband!

He covers his eyes with his hand and sighs.

ARAM

Why does it matter anyways? Eungin prefers me to live my life how I want. He says he wants to understand me!

CHEOL

That is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

He drops his hand.

ARAM

It's the truth, father, I promise-

CHEOL

Your first impression was dreadful.
You will do better next time you see
him. You will be with him the whole
time, you will make him laugh, you
will entertain him, you will do
whatever he tells you. You will make
him want to ask for your hand in
marriage that day if that's what it
takes, but do not screw this up again
or...

He walks closer to Aram.

CHEOL (cont'd)

...I will send you to Jinju province
to live with Aunt Jiwoo.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. AUNT JIWOO'S HOUSE - DAY

Aram is holding a dirty rabbit in the hallway on a nice
floral carpet. Loud footsteps approach.

AUNT JIWOO

You brought that filthy animal into
my home?! Look at my carpet?!

AUNT JIWOO(30s) tall, petite, sharp facial features, dark
purple hanbok, picks up the rabbit and gives it to a maid.
She grabs Aram by her arm.

EXT. OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Aunt slaps Aram's hand with a stick and Aram bursts into
tears.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. JEONG ESTATE - DAY

Aram cries and puts her face in her hands. Cheol turns to
Hana, who is still on the floor.

CHEOL

Get up woman! Lock her in the basement. Get the maids to prepare the door.

ARAM

No! Not the basement, please!

CHEOL

Two days in the basement! That's how long your punishment is for!

Hana gets up and holds her arm.

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Aram watches the maids open the basement doors located on the floor. They open to a staircase that leads to a dark abyss. Hana, holding a lantern, waits for Aram to walk down the stairs.

HANA

You did this to yourself, Aram. Go.

ARAM

Please. I can't. I hate the basement-

HANA

You know he is capable of worse punishments. Surely this will help you remember to control those petty emotions and perform your duties.

Hana motions to the stairs and hands her the lantern. Aram hesitantly walks down them. The maids seal door shut with a bolt and chain. Yuri hides the key in her pocket.

The maids follow Hana out of the room where the basement door is. Yuri looks back at the basement doors.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Aram is lying on the floor, playing with her hair pin with plum flowers and bamboo designs. She hears a noise and clutches the pin close to her, closing her eyes. Aram hears the lock being picked. The doors open and turns to see Yuri.

YURI

Mrs. Aram?

ARAM
(in a loud whisper)
Yuri!

Aram runs up the stairs.

YURI
Shh.

Aram hugs Yuri.

ARAM
(whispering)
Thank you.

YURI
You're shivering ma'am. Do you need a blanket?

ARAM
No. I was just scared.

Aram lets go Yuri.

ARAM (cont'd)
I must go see Lady Ok. The kisaeng say she has something important to tell me.

Yuri shakes her head.

YURI
I advise against this. You're already in serious trouble and what if your family finds out I helped you escape?

ARAM
I'll only be there for a little. I will make it back before anyone sees that I'm gone.

YURI
I hate how stubborn you are. Not even a wild boar could stop you when your mind is set on something.
(beat)
Be careful, please.

ARAM
I will. I won't get either of us in trouble. I promise.

Aram exits.

INT. LADY OK'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Aram enters Lady Ok's house. There are kisaeng running all over the house, some treating patients in rooms, some sitting in the tea room with Lady Ok, and some sitting in kitchen. Kisaeng #1 approaches Aram.

KISAENG #1

Aram is here!

The other kisaeng peek their heads out from the kitchen to see Aram.

ALL KISAENGs

(in unison)

Aram!

Aram smiles. Kisaeng #1 takes the lantern from Aram's hand.

ARAM

Lady Ok wanted to see me?

KISAENG #1

This way.

Kisaeng #1 leads Aram to the tea room. Lady Ok is sitting on the floor in front of a table, sipping tea. Kisaeng are scattered around the room, playing games and studying. The kisaeng in the tea room greet Aram.

They clear the way so Lady Ok and Aram are in the room alone. There is a cup of hot tea sitting on the other side of the table waiting to be drank. Aram bows to Lady Ok.

LADY OK

I hoped to see you tonight. I'm glad you came. Come sit here.

Aram sits.

LADY OK (cont'd)

This tea relaxes the mind. It is rare too. Only meant for special occasions.

ARAM

What's the occasion?

Aram takes the tea and blows on it and then sips it. Lady Ok also blows on her tea and takes a sip.

LADY OK

I'm dying.

Aram chokes on the tea and sets the cup down on the table.
Aram looks at Lady Ok, stunned.

ARAM

Well how do you know? Have any of the
kisaeng examined you? Is there any
way to cure you?

LADY OK

I'm surrounded by an endless supply
of medicine and skilled physicians,
but nothing can cure the passage of
time.

She touches her heart.

LADY OK (cont'd)

I feel it. In here. I'm fading.

Aram sets the tea on the table.

ARAM

This isn't much of a celebration.

LADY OK

Oh yes it is. This is a celebration
of you. You're special, Aram. You
have a good heart and your curiosity
has no limits. When I was younger, I
too wondered about all the joys life
could offer and all the people
waiting to be met. That's why I made
my estate a Gyobang. That's why I
chose to never bare children and
treated the kisaeng as my own,
dedicating my life to teaching them
about medicine. Although my name
holds a lot of power, the other noble
families of Hanseong thought I was
odd for it, so they kept their
distance from me.

Lady Ok takes a sip of her tea.

LADY OK (cont'd)

Only you truly understood me and the
purpose to which I've devoted my
life. Therefore, I want you to be the
one to take over the Gyobang when I
pass.

ARAM

I... I can't. I wouldn't know the
first thing about running this place.
(MORE)

ARAM (cont'd)
Besides, how would it even be
possible when I am set to marry-

LADY OK
I will arrange it. Even after your
married, I can make it so my estate
belongs to you, and you only. It may
be a complicated process, but you're
the only person who I can entrust to
take care of the kisaeng.

Aram looks down at her lap. She clutches her hanbok in her
hands.

LADY OK (cont'd)
Just think about it. Please. I
promise I won't pass on until I hear
an answer from you.

Lady Ok laughs.

ARAM
I will think about it.

Aram bows and gets up. She slides the door open, closes it,
and then leans on it, resting her head up against it. She
lets out a long sigh and then starts walking towards the
porch.

EXT. LADY OK'S PORCH/WOODS/RIVER - NIGHT

Aram dangles her feet off the side of the porch. The snow on
the ground illuminates the garden and the woods in front of
her.

She spots a water deer walk in the garden, she notices a cut
on it's side, she realizes it's the same deer as before. The
deer stares at her, she stares back.

The deer trots into the woods and she follows it. She
follows the deer into the woods and then to the riverside.
The deer continues down the riverside and Aram gets further
and further away from Lady Ok's estate.

The deer stops and stares at Aram again. She reaches
under her dress, revealing her medicine kit, but the deer
continues walking and crosses the frozen river to reunite
with its child.

She sits with her back up against a tree, she adjusts her
coat to feel warmer as she watches the deer and it's child.
Her brain begins to feel a little hazy from the tea, and she
falls asleep.

EXT. RIVER - MORNING

She wakes up and yawns. She puts her hand over her eyes to shield from the sun. She suddenly gasps and begins running down the side of the river. She spots someone sitting near a tree, reading a book. She slows down. The person notices her.

ARAM

Wonsik!

She waves.

ARAM (cont'd)

(to herself)

Am I dreaming?

He closes the book when he hears her voice, and looks around confused. He looks at her and is relieved. Then he looks back down at his book.

WONSIK

(annoyed)

Oh. It's you. What are you doing here?

She points behind her.

ARAM

My physician mentor lives just past the trees. I visited her last night but I fell asleep in the woods. I was headed back, but I saw you. Isn't that strange? How is it possible?

Aram laughs. Her laugh trails off into awkward silence.

ARAM (cont'd)

Do you live in Gyeonggi? That's what is on the other side of the river, right?

He ignores her.

ARAM (cont'd)

I see you're reading that book again!

He ignores her again.

ARAM (cont'd)

What is it? You don't like me anymore? I thought we've been through this phase already.

He looks up from his book and stares at her with sharp eyes.

ARAM (cont'd)
Did something happen?

WONSIK
You need to leave. You and I can't be
around each other.

ARAM
Oh, and why's that?

Aram crosses her arms in defiance.

WONSIK
Isn't it obvious?

ARAM
Well, I'm not leaving.

Pause.

ARAM (cont'd)
You know what? I've never been to
Gyeonggi. I feel like exploring it.

She carefully steps onto the frozen river and walks further
across it.

WONSIK
Hold on, I wouldn't do that. The ice
is not strong enough to hold you.
Please turn back!

ARAM
Oh I see, now you want to talk. I'll
turn back if you tell me why you
changed your mind about me.

The ice cracks beneath her feet, she backs up in fear.

WONSIK
Aram, don't move!

She stops.

WONSIK (cont'd)
Just go back to land, slowly!

ARAM
No! Why do you think you can tell me
what to do? I'm coming over there!

She continues to walk slowly. The ice doesn't break.

WONSIK

If you fall through you will die,
it's too cold and the current is too
strong. I won't be able to save you!

ARAM

(to herself)

Why do you think I want you to save
me?

The ice breaks more and she falls through being swept by the river's current. Wonsik drops his book and sprints beside the river, getting ahead of Aram. He finds a rock, picks it up, and carefully walks across the ice.

He kneels down, carefully, and breaks the ice with the rock. She continues to float down the river, fighting, squirming. Her body passes Wonsik, he grabs onto her arms and pulls her out. Holding her in his arms, he inches back to land.

She coughs and spits out the water in her lungs. He sighs out of relief.

INT. WONSIK'S HOME - DAY

BORA (11) Wonsik's sister, small, dirty, malnourished, cute, ragged clothes, is sitting on the floor, playing with a ratty doll. SOO, (40s) Wonsik's mother, malnourished, tan, dirty, ragged clothes, is stirring a soup.

The fire is crackling in the fire place. Wonsik opens the door abruptly with Aram in his arms which startles Soo and Bora.

WONSIK

Please help, mom. She's hypothermic.

SOO

Who is she? How did this happen?

WONSIK

I'll explain later. Just please help.

Soo is frantically looking around.

SOO

Uh- okay. Lay her next to the
fireplace. Bora make some tea for
her. Remember to put honey in it.

Wonsik shuffles over to the fireplace with Aram in his arms. Soo walks over to the fireplace.

Bora moves the boiling pot of soup out of the way and pours water in the kettle and puts it over the fire. Wonsik lays Aram next to the fireplace. Wonsik and Soo kneel, looking at Aram.

SOO (cont'd)

I would like an explanation now to why there is a dying stranger in my home.

Soo takes the long cardigan off of her shoulders and puts it under Aram's head.

WONSIK

She fell through the ice of the Guwon river. I told her not to cross it but she's insufferably stubborn.

Soo begins undoing Aram's hanbok, studying it's patterns.

SOO

This girl is of noble birth.
(she studies the patterns)
What was she even doing crossing the river?

WONSIK

She wanted to confront me because I was ignoring her. Then she said she was curious about Gyeonggi. I don't understand her.

SOO

Reckless girl.
(looking up at Wonsik)
Get her dry clothes and blankets.
I'll get the fire going.

Soo slides the hanbok off of Aram's shoulders. Wonsik's eyes widen. He turns away, runs to Bora's room, and rummages through her closet. Bora sits next to Aram and Soo.

BORA

Wow. These clothes are beautiful.

SOO

Help me take this off of her. Careful though, the silk is fragile.

Soo moves the cardigan out of the way and sits Aram up straight, using her body to hold her up. Soo and Bora take the rest of Aram's hanbok off.

SOO (cont'd)
Take her shoes off.

Bora takes her shoes off. Soo motions for her to move closer. Soo lays Aram's head on Bora's legs. She gets up and lays the cardigan over Aram. Wonsik comes back with the blankets and clothes.

Soo takes them from him and he backs away. The kettle goes off. Bora runs to the kettle. Wonsik awkwardly stands in the middle of the chaos. Bora pours the water into a cup, then adds the tea and honey while Soo begins to dress Aram in new clothes.

Wonsik crouches down facing away from Aram, giving her privacy.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Wonsik and Soo are sitting at the dinner table, eating the soup. Aram is fully dressed in Bora's clothes and laying in front of the fire. Bora sits with her legs under her. She has Aram's head in her lap and is blowing on the tea and helping Aram sit up slightly to drink it.

WONSIK
Thank you for helping me. I know I just sprung this on you.

SOO
I understand you felt obligated to save her but do you realize how dangerous it is that she is here? Do you know what this would look like if the town's soldiers had seen her with you?

Wonsik lowers his head.

SOO (cont'd)
Our family is already under suspicion because of what happened with your father.

Soo sighs.

WONSIK
I know the risks but what did you expect me to do? There was no way I was just going to leave her there to die.

Soo looks at Aram and Bora.

SOO

Do you have a plan to get her back home?

Soo waits for a response, but Wonsik has nothing to offer.

SOO (cont'd)

I'm not saying it wasn't the right thing to do. It was very noble of you to save her life, but now we are stuck looking after a yangban girl when we're already under a lot of stress.

WONSIK

What do we do?

SOO

I don't know.

(pause)

What I can say for sure is that soldiers will come looking for her. Eventually.

(pause)

But we should let her rest for now.

Soo and Wonsik look at Aram.

INT. JEONG ESTATE - DAY

Cheol slams Yuri against the wall in Aram's room. He holds up a the key to the basement chamber and dangles it in front of her face.

CHEOL

Have you no loyalty to the family you serve?! Where is she?!

YURI

I swear I do not know!

CHEOL

Don't lie to me whore!

His eyes widen and he slaps her, leaving a red mark on her face. He squeezes her face with his hand and turns her head to face him.

CHEOL (cont'd)

I always thought it was odd how close you two are. You have always taken advantage of her nativity and sent her down the wrong path.

(MORE)

CHEOL (cont'd)
(he gets closer to
her face)
Well, let me tell you. Aram is not
your friend. Tell me where she is!

YURI
(crying)
Lady Ok's house!

Cheol drags her by her arm and throws her out of the estate.
Yuri stumbles to the ground.

CHEOL
You are banished from this estate!
Find a different family to sabotage.

INT. GYEONGGI - DAY

Ryu and General Kim walk down an alley of beggars and impoverished people. Someone is bandaging up an infected wound with flies on it. A beggar shakes his cup of coins at Ryu. He backs away from him, disgusted.

GENERAL KIM
Feel at home yet?

RYU
I've never seen such... despair.

GENERAL KIM
I'm aware this is a rough area to
bring you to on your first visit, but
this is exactly what you need to see.
(beat)
It's where the conflict happens.
(laughs and puts his
hand of Ryu's
shoulder)
But don't worry, I have a special job
for you later at Gyeonghug palace.

Two soldiers are leaned against a brick wall, one of them is holding his side and his arm, which are bleeding profusely. A man is severely beat up on the ground, hardly breathing.

SOLDIER #1
We were doing our daily inspections
of the alley and this man came at us
with a sword. He sliced my arm and my
side pretty bad.

SOLDIER #2

He's a persistent little bastard, but we got it straightened out.

GENERAL KIM

Straightened out? He's nearly a dead man. Next time you pin him wall or something, not debilitate him.

SOLDIER #2

Sir, these outbursts from the nobi are too frequent and unpredictable. We're just trying to survive.

SOLDIER #1

(points to his arm)

Do you see what they do to us? We can't take it easy on these monsters.

GENERAL KIM

Did you find anything out at least?

SOLDIER #2

(holds up a key)

Yes, he had a palace key on him. They're planning something.

GENERAL KIM

I suspected. The Lantern Festival is the perfect disguise.

General Kim looks at Ryu observing the man. Ryu checks the man's pulse.

RYU

He's dead.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Wonsik and Bora are eating soup on the floor near Aram. Soo is feeding Aram soup. Aram is much more awake now. Soo puts another spoon full up to Aram's mouth.

SOO

Is it too hot?

Aram shakes her head. Soo tilts the spoon and Aram eats the soup.

SOO (cont'd)

I know this soup isn't like your fancy food at home, but it will help you get better.

Aram swallows. There's a knock on the door. The room falls silent. Everyone looks at the door. Soo puts down the bowl of soup. Wonsik gets up and walks towards the door. He slowly opens it and peeks through a small crack. He opens the door all the way, revealing two teenage boys.

WONSIK

Its just Jun and Hwan.

Jun peeks past Wonsik's head and waves.

JUN

Hello, Mrs. Park and Bora!

Hwan peeks past Wonsik's head, they both see Aram at the same time.

JUN (cont'd)

Wonsik, who is that beautiful lady?

HWAN

Woah...

Wonsik shoves Jun and Hwan further away from the door and shuts it behind him.

EXT. WONSIK'S HOME - AFTERNOON

WONSIK

What do you guys want?

JUN

Why so hostile, Wonsik? We're just stopping by to say hello.

HWAN

Actually, we're here to see if you're ready to head to the festival.

Wonsik rubs his forehead.

WONSIK

Shit.

JUN

Did you seriously forget already? You took the sword swallower job last week.

WONSIK

I was busy with the opera house performance, okay?

HWAN

You're still doing it, right?

WONSIK

I don't have much of a choice. We need the money.

(pause)

And you know how master would react if I didn't show up.

JUN

So um... Who is that girl?

Wonsik opens the door.

WONSIK

This is Aram. She's... my friend. From Hanseong.

I'm your friend?

Jun and Hwan walk in the door.

WONSIK (cont'd)

Aram, these are my best friends, Jun and Hwan. We can trust them.

HWAN

She's from Hanseong? How did she get here?

WONSIK

It doesn't matter. Listen, right now we need to figure out how we can get her back. Soldiers will probably come looking for her soon so we need a plan.

The group ponders.

JUN

Well... I know this rice merchant, Mr. Jeon, who comes from the mountains to sell rice at the festival every year. He always goes to Hanseong after the festival for a few weeks to sell his remaining supply. I could try to negotiate with him for a ride. There's just one problem...

WONSIK

What is it?

JUN

Him and I aren't on the best of terms. I kind of stole from him last year.

WONSIK

Great.

JUN

Also... The guy isn't the best negotiator... He's a greedy man and he'll want something in return.

WONSIK

Like what?

JUN

Money... something valuable...

WONSIK

So things we don't have. Got it.

ARAM

I have something we can give him.

Wonsik and the friends look at Aram.

SOO

You can't give your clothes away. You'll need them when you return.

ARAM

Not my clothes. My hair pin.

Aram feels her hair and stands up weakly. Soo helps her up.

ARAM (cont'd)

Where is it?

BORA

I took it so your hair could dry. I was going to give it back I promise.

Bora holds up the hair pin and has a shameful look on her face. Aram smiles warmly at her.

ARAM

I didn't think you would steal it.

(taking the pin from

Bora)

Thank you. If I didn't need it right now, I would've loved for you to have it.

Aram walks to Wonsik.

ARAM (cont'd)

I want to go meet this merchant and give him the hair pin myself.

WONSIK

Absolutely not. It's extremely risky to let you leave here. Not only that, you're not strong enough.

ARAM

Please. I need to know that I can trust this man, and I want to explore Gyeonggi. After all, I crossed the river so I could.

WONSIK

No. It's too dangerous. The soldiers could recognize you.

Hwan coughs to break the tension.

HWAN

If I may.

Wonsik shoots him a sharp look.

HWAN (cont'd)

The guards will likely be searching in homes as well as at the festival. Wouldn't it be better for her to be at the festival? She'd be hidden in the crowd.

JUN

Oh you can count on the soldiers searching your house. They hate your family more than they hate the rebellion.

WONSIK

I got that, thank you.

Aram takes his hand. Wonsik looks into her eyes.

ARAM

Please, Wonsik. I'll be careful. You and your friends will be there to protect me.

He sighs.

WONSIK

Fine but do not speak to anyone other than us. Promise?

Aram nods.

ARAM

I promise.

JUN

Woohoo!! Finally we're going to the festival! I've been looking forward to this all year.

He puts his hand on Aram's shoulder as they begin to exit.

JUN (cont'd)

You came on the perfect day! Today is when Gyeonggi is the liveliest all year. You'll love it. There's music, performers, good food!

He gets closer to her face.

JUN (cont'd)

Maybe even a good fight between two drunk guys if we're lucky.

HWAN

Okay, Jun don't freak her out.

Wonsik swats his hand away from Aram's shoulder and walks in between them.

WONSIK

Don't get in her face like that you just met her.

JUN

Woah... a little protective, are we?

Wonsik scoffs.

WONSIK

Okay, lets go.

Soo scuffles to Aram with a head covering in her hand.

SOO

Wait! Before you go.

She hands the covering to Aram.

SOO (cont'd)
Use this to cover your hair. It's
longer and more well groomed than any
nobi woman's hair.

ARAM
(slight bow)
Thank you, Mrs. Park.

Soo hands Wonsik a sack full of swords and tools.

WONSIK
Mom, remember to hide her clothes.

Soo nods.

SOO
Be careful.

Wonsik nods.

JUN
Let's go people! I've been waiting
all day for this shit!

HWAN
Quit your yelling, that's the kind of
behavior that will draw attention.

They exit.

EXT. LADY OK'S ESTATE - AFTERNOON

Cheol walks around the back and slides open a door. He looks
through the room and sees a sick man is there, asleep. He
walks into the hallway and then into a bigger room, Lady
Ok's. He sees documents spread on a study.

He looks through them and sees the will of Lady Ok's estate
and that Aram is set to inherit the estate.

KISAENG #1
Excuse me, this is Lady Ok's room.

Cheol turns to see Kisaeng #1.

KISAENG #1 (cont'd)
(bows)
Oh, hello General Jeong.

CHEOL
Is Aram here?

KISAENG #1

No, sir.

CHEOL

And Lady Ok?

KISAENG #1

At the Lantern Festival. I'm looking after the estate while she is gone.

CHEOL

That's right, she does goes every year.

KISAENG #1

I'm sorry, sir. You cannot be in here. I'm under strict orders.

CHEOL

I was just leaving.

He leaves the room and Kisaeng #1 looks at his with suspicion.

EXT. LANTERN FESTIVAL - AFTERNOON

Aram looks around stunned to see a crowd indulging in the street food, merchant booths, jewelry vendors. Two jewelry vendors with hand fulls of accessories grab her shoulder, which frightens her.

JEWELRY VENDOR #1

Well aren't you just a beautiful little creature?

JEWELRY VENDOR #2

Yeah, where did you come from?

JEWELRY VENDOR #1

I bet you'd look great with this scarf. The patterns are sharp like those eyes.

JEWELRY VENDOR #2

Oh, that scarf matches your skin tone perfectly. And what about this necklace?

JEWELRY VENDOR #1

Yes. I think it just brightens your face-

JEWELRY VENDOR #2
Yessss. It does! Oh!

Jewelry vendor #2 walks up to Wonsik.

JEWELRY VENDOR #2 (cont'd)
You're a handsome young man. Would
you like to try a-

JUN
Ladies, ladies! Please do not
overwhelm my friends here. I promise
you they have absolutely nothing to
offer you. No money at all. Some of
the poorest nobi's in Gyeonggi, so
sad. Let's go.

Jun pulls them away from the jewelry vendors. Aram spots a
medicine booth.

ARAM
Oh look! A medicine booth!

She walks over to the medicine booth. She lifts up a jar
with tiny purple leaves.

ARAM (cont'd)
This is grown near the coast, right?

HERB VENDOR
Sure is! They're to help sooth fresh
burns. Extremely rare.

ARAM
Woah... I've never seen these in
person.

HERB VENDOR
You can take a small vessel if you'd
like.

ARAM
I'm sorry. I don't have any money.

Wonsik walks up behind Aram.

HERB VENDOR
It's free! Not many people end up
buying that herb since it's not
commonly used among physicians. I'm
sure you'll put it to good use!

ARAM

Really? That's very kind of you,
ma'am. Thank you!

Wonsik takes her wrist and pulls her away from the vendor.

WONSIK

You shouldn't be talking to anyone.

ARAM

I know, but she was very nice-

Master approaches out of thin air.

MASTER

Wonsik. There you are.

Aram and Wonsik turn around to see master. Aram keeps her head down.

WONSIK

(bows)

Master.

MASTER

I know this is a festival but you
still have a job to do. I need you to
meet me behind the stage in an hour.

WONSIK

Yes. The stage... sorry, where is the
stage?

MASTER

My god do you ever listen to me, boy?
In the Gyeonghug palace, of course.

Master squints at Aram. Studies her face for a moment. Then looks back at Wonsik.

MASTER (cont'd)

I hate working for these lowlife, so
called performers. They make you work
to the bone with hardly any pay in
return. A sword swallower? Who could
be stupid enough to swallow a sword
for fun? If we're lucky enough maybe
he'll sneeze with the sword still in
his throat.

Master laughs. He stops and looks at Wonsik, straight faced.

MASTER (cont'd)

Ah, you're too serious. See you in an hour.

Hwan and Jun walk up to Wonsik and Aram. Hwan has an arm full of cabbages. Wonsik looks at him, dumbfounded.

HWAN

Was that master?

WONSIK

Yes. I'm on a time crunch we have to meet with the merchant soon.

Wonsik looks at Hwan with a hand full of skewers.

HWAN

Really? Right now?

JUN

(mouth full)

What? We were hungry. Do you want us to starve during our expedition?

HWAN

Exactly. If things get dicey, at least we'll have a full belly.

Jun offers a skewer to Aram.

JUN

(mouth full)

You want some?

Aram giggles and takes the skewer. She wiggles the skewer in front of Wonsik's face.

ARAM

Come on. Take a bite.

Wonsik rolls his eyes, but reluctantly takes a bite. Aram takes a bite after him.

JUN

Oh I see him! Mr. Jeon!

Jun points to a vendor with boxes of rice on the table, Mr. Jeon is standing there, assorting his supply. They begin to walk to the booth, but a group of street performers dancing to the beat of a drum in shamanic costumes block them from moving forward.

Aram looks in between the dancers at Mr. Jeon, who is still at his booth.

The dancers pass but Mr. Jeon isn't at his booth. The group runs to the booth to see a child watching over the booth.

JUN (cont'd)

Who are you? Where's Mr. Jeon?

WOO (9) short, youthful, scrawny, crosses his arms and puts his chin up.

WOO

I'm his nephew. He said I'm in charge now so you're going to have to consult with me.

JUN

We're not here to buy anything. We just want to talk with your uncle.

WOO

Well he's busy right now. You really don't want to disturb him. I suggest you come back later.

Aram approaches.

ARAM

Hey. What's your name?

Woo blushes. His eyes light up.

WOO

(shy)

Woo.

ARAM

Well, Woo, I really need your uncle's help. He's my only option at getting home and I really miss my home. I just need to speak with him. Could you tell me where he is so I can do that, please?

Woo's face is full of empathy. He sighs then points to a bar across the street.

WOO

He's at the bar.

Jun laughs and turns to the group.

JUN

Of course. He loves his alcohol.

INT. GYEONGHUG PALACE - AFTERNOON

Ryu gets stationed in the palace. They approach the door to a balcony facing the stage and enter. COUNCILMAN SUNWOO (40s) mustache, petite facial features, small stature, is facing the stage with binoculars in his hand.

GENERAL KIM

Councilman Sunwoo, this is Ryu. He will stand guard for you today.

Councilman Sunwoo turns around.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO

It's nice to meet you, Ryu. I like your stature, very tall and buff much like your father.

(to General Kim)

You are too kind, General Kim, my view is spectacular.

GENERAL KIM

I'm glad.

(to Ryu)

I'll be patrolling around the palace if you need me.

General Kim leaves. Councilman Sunwoo sits in his chair looking through his binoculars again.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO

(holding the
binoculars out)

Hold my binoculars. And could you hand me that glass of wine over there?

RYU

I'm here to guard, not be your servant.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO

General Kim may be treating you like you are a high official, but I certainly won't. Especially not someone from your lineage.

RYU

How dare you talk about my family in that manner?

(beat)

You must take me more seriously. I will be your superior one day.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO

Young man, you haven't even passed your exam yet.

(laughs)

You certainly have your fathers... confidence. You could be twins.

Anyway, leave me be, you're crowding my area.

Ryu, steaming, backs away from Councilman Sunwoo.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Jun, Hwan, Aram, and Wonsik walk hesitantly into the bar. Jun gets closer to Aram.

JUN

That's him.

The group approaches MR. JEON (35) tall, skinny, wearing decently clean clothes, droopy eyes, who is chugging a beer. Jun sits in the seat right next to him while the rest of the group stands behind.

JUN (cont'd)

You ought to slow down old man. Wouldn't want you to keel over just yet.

MR. JEON

You... you're that hoodlum that stole from me last year. Jun... is that right?

JUN

Yeah, how about we skip the reunion chat? I need a favor from you.

MR. JEON

Oh? You need a favor? I seem to remember that you own me.

JUN

Don't you feel bad for a poor boy like me? I was hungry and desperate. I didn't have a choice.

MR. JEON

You offered to help me at the stand and then stole six bags of rice...

(MORE)

MR. JEON (cont'd)
Were you feeding an orphanage kid?!
You cost me a third of my sales that
year. I basically went home empty
handed!

JUN
Well I think you're being a bit
dramatic there but-

Mr. Jeon looks at him with coldness.

ARAM
I'm the one that needs your help,
sir.

Mr. Jeon turns around.

ARAM (cont'd)
I need to get to Hanseong. I was
informed that you go every year after
the festival.

MR. JEON
Why would a peasant girl need to get
to Hanseong?
(looks her up and
down)
Ah, you must be some nobleman's
concubine.

Wonsik steps forward. Hwan holds him back.

ARAM
No, sir. I'm from there.

MR. JEON
Hm.

He chugs the rest of his drink.

MR. JEON (cont'd)
Look. Even if I wanted to help you. I
can't get you to Hanseong.

WONSIK
And why's that?

MR. JEON
Not just anyone can cross the
Hanseong border from Gyeonggi these
days. Hanseong doesn't trust Gyeonggi
citizens because of the rebellions.
(MORE)

MR. JEON (cont'd)

You need a good reason to cross over to Hanseong, and mines not good enough you have to find someone else.

ARAM

Please, sir. We don't know of anyone else.

MR. JEON

I know of someone who could.

ARAM

Who?

MR. JEON

You don't think I'd tell you for free?

WONSIK

Just for a name?

MR. JEON

I never offer my services up for free and this one over here owes me big time.

Mr. Jeon points to Jun. Aram pulls out a hair pin.

ARAM

Here. It's an authentic silver hair pin. Extremely valuable.

Mr. Jeon admires the pin.

MR. JEON

The woman who can get you to Hanseong goes by the name of Jiho. She's the hojang here in Gyeonggi. She's worked as a kisaeng of the king. Very well respected woman. She could probably get you there somehow.

ARAM

Where can we find Jiho?

MR. JEON

Gyeongugug palace. I heard she's hosting a big Go tournament there tonight.

(MORE)

MR. JEON (cont'd)
(he burps and points
to the back of his
head)

She likes to wear this obnoxiously
big maroon pin in her hair. She says
it's good luck or some shit.

Mr. Jeon falls asleep on the counter.

EXT. LANTERN FESTIVAL - AFTERNOON

They look up the hill, past the low rise, run down buildings
and see the palace at the top of the hill, looking
magnificent.

EXT. DRUM PERFORMANCE - AFTERNOON

Cheol spots Lady Ok and Kisaeng #2 watching a drum
performance outside. As they approach they see Lady Ok is
watching the performance very intently.

CHEOL
Where is Aram?

KISAENG #2
This is Lady Ok's favorite
performance, we shouldn't disturb
her.

CHEOL
I need to know if Aram is with you-

KISAENG #2
Sir, this must wait until after the
show.

Cheol grunts.

CHEOL
Seriously? You would make *me* wait-

KISAENG #2
Shhhh.

Cheol reaches Kisaeng #2's collar and pulls her face towards
him.

CHEOL
(hard whisper)
You dare to silence me?

Lady Ok looks over to Cheol with a death stare. She looks behind her, Cheol looks behind him to see the rows of people behind them are watching him.

CHEOL (cont'd)
I need a drink.

Cheol storms off.

EXT. GYEONGUHUG PALACE - NIGHT

Wonsik, Hwan, Aram, and Jun walk into the palace. They stand in the middle of a sea of wealthy class people. Some people begin to stare at them, clearly confused by their appearance. The group is standing out like a sore thumb.

HWAN
We have to find a way to blend in here.

Jun is bumped into by a random man and woman who are drunk.

DRUNK MAN
Sorry.

The drunk man and woman continue into a dark room opened by a curtain. Jun follows him. A soldier approaches Hwan, Wonsik, and Aram.

SOLDIER #1
Let's go. You are not allowed in this establishment.

The soldier pushes them out of the palace, while Jun remains inside. The drunk man and woman make out against the wall. Jun stealthily hides where they cannot see. They begin to strip each others' clothes off one piece at a time.

Jun collects each piece as it falls, including a fan. Once all the pieces of clothes are collected, he sneaks out of the room. Jun looks around for the rest of the group. The soldier approaches Jun.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)
You! Get out. What is it with you young nobi thinking you can walk in here. Shoo.

Jun leaves and sees the rest of the group.

JUN
You guys, look what I got. A man and a woman's clothes. A couple.

HWAN

Only two people can go in. Aram
and...

JUN

Who can play Go?

ARAM

I can't.

WONSIK

My hour is almost up, I have to go
backstage soon.

Jun shakes his head.

HWAN

I can play.

INT. GYEONGHUG PALACE - NIGHT

Aram and Hwan walk inside the palace with Wonsik, Aram and Hwan are trying to blend in. Aram puts the fan over her face. The soldier by the door walks up to them. Aram and Hwan continue.

SOLDIER #1

(to Wonsik)

Seriously? I thought I told you to
get out peasant.

Wonsik holds up his sword bag.

WONSIK

I'm the sword smith.

SOLDIER #1

Hm.

Aram butts in.

ARAM

(putting the fan in
front of her face)

Hi, I'm Heejoon, the stage manager.
Sorry about him. He's always so
confused. I probably should've
brought my other sword smith. Much
better listener.

SOLDIER #1

It's alright. You can go ahead.

They leave. Wonsik side eyes Aram.

INT. BACKSTAGE OF PERFORMANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Aram, Hwan, and Wonsik walk backstage, passing the performers. She sees the dancers putting on makeup. Aram walks up to them. Aram points to the makeup.

ARAM

Can I... borrow some?

INT. GO TOURNAMENT - NIGHT

Aram and Hwan both walk into a room of people playing Go, it's quiet in the room, all you can hear is the slight shuffling of the game pieces. Aram is wearing heavy makeup disguising her appearance.

Aram approaches a woman wearing a red bow around her waist. JIHO (40s) elegant, beautiful, is playing Go with a man. She places a Go piece down gently.

JIHO

You came at a perfect time. The game has just begun. Here is when it is most crucial.

ARAM

Ma'am... I need to talk to you-

JIHO

I'm concentrating right now. I only have four more pieces to capture. Watch carefully at my strategy. Back in my prime, I was undefeated at Go. Every year at the festival there was a long line out the door just for people to see if they could beat me. Now my mind isn't as sharp, but I still remember my best tactics. You could learn a thing or two.

Aram sighs. Jiho beats her opponent rather quick. They bow to each other. The man leaves and she begins setting up the next game.

JIHO (cont'd)

What was that you needed to talk to me about?

ARAM

I need your help getting to Hanseong.

JIHO

That's a risky task. It requires a perfect strategy.

She begins setting up the board.

JIHO (cont'd)

I'll give you a proposition. If you can beat me in Go, then I'll take you.

ARAM

I don't know how-

WONSIK

I'll play you.

He turns to Aram.

WONSIK (cont'd)

I used to play with my dad a lot. I can do it.

Wonsik sits in front of the woman. She finishes setting up the board.

JIHO

Let's begin.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Wonsik is sharpening a sword backstage.

MASTER

The sword swallower is very particular about how he wants his swords sharpened, so I suggest you stay focused.

Wonsik's smile drops and he goes back to sharpening his sword. Then he looks back at Aram.

INT. BAR - DAY

Cheol sits next to Mr. Jeon who is so drunk his head is face down on the table.

CHEOL

(To the bartender)

I'll have a beer.

Cheol pulls the Mr. Jeon's face up and then lets it hit the table. He wakes up shocked. Mr. Jeon looks down and points at Cheol's badge.

MR. JEON
(slurring)
Woah... A general. This is an eastern council badge.

Cheol slaps his hand away.

MR. JEON (cont'd)
What are you doing out here?

CHEOL
I'm looking for someone. My daughter.

He spots a hair pin.

MR. JEON
Your daughter... Maybe I can help. I know a lot of people around here-

CHEOL
That pin. Where did you get it?

MR. JEON
It was just given to me by a couple of kids. You know it's funny they were looking to get to Hanseong-

CHEOL
How about I trade you for that pin? I have money. Heaps of it.
(beat)
I've made a fool of myself tonight at the palace. Could you do something for me?

INT. GO TOURNAMENT - DAY

Aram is watching Hwan play Go. Hwan looks concerned while Jiho looks calmly focused.

EXT. GYEONGHUG PALACE - DAY

Ryu looks over the balcony and sees the entirety of the palace. He sees a suspicious looking group. He leaves his post.

SOLDIER #1
Can you cover for me?

The soldier nods.

EXT. DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

He follows the group down the hallway.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OF THE PALACE - NIGHT

Ryu overhears the group talking about a plan and overseeing a map. He gets closer to the voices. He hides behind a corner as the group comes into view. The group is standing around a table pointing at a map.

GROUP MEMBER #1

We have intel on when the King is arriving at the palace for our attack.

GROUP MEMBER #2

Let's focus on our mission tonight. The rest of the men are grabbing the senator now. We meet them by the back entrance and take off.

GROUP MEMBERS

Yes, sir!

Ryu leaves.

INT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Ryu sees the soldier has been knocked out and the senator has been taken.

RYU

Shit!

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE OF PALACE - NIGHT

Ryu runs out of the back entrance, he sees

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Ryu goes up to General Kim, who is speaking with other high officers and watching the sword swallower.

RYU

Sir, the senator has been taken!

GENERAL KIM

How did this happen?

RYU

A group of rebels kidnapped him and left through the back entrance. They escaped in a carriage.

GENERAL KIM

Search the alley ways! I'll inform the guards at the border to keep an eye out.

INT. GO TOURNAMENT - NIGHT

Hwan stares at the board. He makes a move. Jiho looks nervous. She goes to pick up a piece and hesitates. Her fingers hover over the piece. She moves a different piece. Wonsik looks disappointed.

JIHO

You're the first opponent in a long time to make me question my own strategy. I'm impressed.

Hwan makes his last move. Jiho makes her last move.

JIHO (cont'd)

A tie.

Hwan disappointingly sighs. Aram gives a disappointed look.

JIHO (cont'd)

You did not beat me, but for your impressive strategy, I'll make you an offer.

Aram and Hwan look hopeful.

JIHO (cont'd)

I have someone who can get you across the border. He goes by the name of Juwon. He can meet you at the eastern gate at midnight. I will let him know.

ARAM

Thank you so much, ma'am.

Aram and Hwan bow.

ARAM (cont'd)
Yes! You did it, Hwan! You we're
amazing.

HWAN
Ah, don't mention it. Now we have
until midnight to have some fun!

Mr. Jeon, hiding behind a column, spots Aram and Hwan. He
has a determined look on his face.

EXT. COURTYARD OF GYEONGHUG PALACE - NIGHT

Aram and Hwan approach Jun sitting by himself against a
column watching the people dance.

HWAN
We have the ride secured.

JUN
This is cause for a celebration.

They approach a traditional dance that is happening in the
large dance area of the palace. There is a live band along
the sides of the courtyard. Strings of lanterns along each
sides of the columns, lighting up the dance floor. Hwan
turns around to see a group of soldiers.

HWAN
Soldiers.

Aram turns around. Jun grabs their hands and pulls them into
the crowd of dancers. Aram is thrown off balance.

ARAM
I don't know how to dance!

JUN
This one's easy, just follow my
footsteps!

She trips a few times before attempting to follow Jun's
footsteps. She follows a few steps, then more, and
eventually gets the hang of it.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Wonsik hands his sword to the SWORD SWALLOWER (30s)
patterned vibrant clothes, lean, wide mouth. Sword Swallower
admires it.

SWORD SWALLOWER

You're very talented. I would like to offer you a job. Come travel with me. The pay isn't perfect but it's much better than being sold off to an estate.

WONSIK

That sounds like a great offer, but I have family here-

SWORD SWALLOWER

I travel here quite often for swords. You'd be able to see your family.

Wonsik looks down.

SWORD SWALLOWER (cont'd)

Think about it. I'm staying at the Inn for a few days. You can come by and discuss it more.

He pulls out a bag of coins and puts it in Wonsik's hand.

SWORD SWALLOWER (cont'd)

Here's your pay. Good work.

WONSIK

Thank you.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Wonsik comes out from backstage and into the courtyard. He sees Aram dancing. He smiles and walks towards them. Aram, Jun, and Hwan continue to dance. The music picks up at a fast pace, the dancing gets faster.

As Aram whips her head as she spins in her dance, she sees a man that appears to be coming towards her. She sees it's Mr Jeon. Mr. Jeon covers her mouth with his hand and rips her from the crowd of dancers and into a dark alley.

Jun and Hwan realize Aram isn't there. They exit the crowd.

HWAN

Did you see where she went?

They see Mr. Jeon holding Aram and pulling her into the dark alley.

JUN

There she is!

They start sprinting towards them. Wonsik sprints after them, but loses them in the crowd.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Hwan and Jun see Aram being held hostage by Mr. Jeon. He looks around, like he's waiting for someone.

MR. JEON

Stop squirming so much you brat!

Hwan and Jun approach. Aram tries to speak but her mouth is covered by Mr. Jeon's hand.

JUN

Let go of her!

HWAN

What the are you doing? What do you want with her?

Mr. Jeon pulls out a knife and puts it up to Aram's throat.

MR. JEON

Stay out of this!

Mr. Jeon backs up into Cheol, who is emerging from the shadows. Cheol towers over him.

CHEOL

Hands off.

Mr. Jeon backs away into the abyss with his hands up. Aram looks at Cheol with tears in her eyes and hugs him. He puts his hands up, surprised, and uncomfortably hugs her back. Ryu approaches behind Jun and Hwan. He draws his sword.

RYU

What's going on here?

CHEOL

Your sister was kidnapped. The man ran away, but she is safe now.

RYU

Who are you two? We're you working with the kidnapper?

JUN

No, we just got here-

Ryu pushes Jun against the wall.

RYU

Then what business do you have here?
Explain yourselves!

Ryu presses his sword into Jun's shoulder.

ARAM

No! Don't!

She starts to run towards Jun. Cheol grabs her arm. Jun groans in pain. Hwan is frozen, knees weak.

RYU

Do you care for this nobi, Aram?

Ryu presses the sword in further.

ARAM

Stop! They didn't do anything wrong.
They were just trying to save me!

RYU

You know you should stop befriending
nobi Aram. It's a bad look.

CHEOL

Ryu! That's enough. We have Aram,
don't give them anymore of your time.
Let's get out of this hell hole.

Ryu takes the sword out of Jun's shoulder. Ryu walks away.
Cheol begins to drag Aram into the shadows.

ARAM

Let me heal him! Please!

Cheol drags her completely into the abyss, ignoring her. Ryu follows behind. Hwan runs to Jun and presses his hand against the wound.

WONSIK

(in the distance)

Hwan! Jun! Are you here?

Hwan peeks around the corner and sees Wonsik.

HWAN

Wonsik! Over here!

Wonsik runs towards them.

HWAN (cont'd)

He was stabbed. Mr. Jeon took Aram-

WONSIK
Where is she now?

HWAN
With her father... and her brother.
They found her...

Wonsik drops his head.

WONSIK
Let's go back to my house. We'll heal
Jun up there. Hold his wound.

Wonsik and Hwan help Jun up and Hwan holds his wound.

EXT. CHARIOT - NIGHT

Cheol throws her in the chariot.

CHEOL
The lengths you will go to just to
not get married. It's completely
psychotic.

Ryu gets in the chariot.

CHEOL (cont'd)
One week. That's how long you have
until you are to be married to
Eungin... or I will send you to your
Aunt's house. I'll inform General Kim
that this is what you want.

Cheol shuts the chariot door. Aram begins to tear up.

RYU
You've done it this time, sister. Do
you think father will ever let you
hear the end of it?

Mr. Jeon approaches from the shadows. Cheol walks up to him
and hands him a bag of coins.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik, Hwan, and Jun burst through the door. Wonsik sees
the house in shambles. Soo is bandaging up Bora. He runs Soo
and Bora. Hwan puts Jun in a chair.

WONSIK
What happened? Is she okay?

SOO

The soldiers came. They were searching everywhere for any trace of Aram. Bora talked back to them when they ripped apart her room... so they burned her.

WONSIK

As far as we knew the soldiers were unaware of Aram's disappearance. It was normal surveillance at the festival.

SOO

They weren't western soldiers. They were eastern.

Jun groans loud as Hwan pours a cup of water on his wound.

WONSIK

Jun is hurt badly too. We'll need to make some more bandages.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik, Jun, Hwan, Soo, and Bora are gathered around the fire.

HWAN

What do we do? About Aram.

JUN

She's gotten us in enough trouble as it is, you would really go after her?

HWAN

It's not like it's her fault or anything.

JUN

Not her fault? Her people did this to us?! She was careless putting all of us at risk just so she could have fun.

WONSIK

What is there to even do? Her father has her now. We don't have a chance in hell of crossing the river or finding a ride to Hanseong. She's out of our hands now.

Wonsik lays back and stares at the ceiling.

WONSIK (cont'd)
As much as I'd like to see her
again... There's no changing it.

INT. JEONG ESTATE - DAY

Aram is playing jegichagi next to Cheol, who writing on a desk.

CHEOL
Can you please stop?

She stops and turns to Cheol.

ARAM
Where is Yuri?

CHEOL
She's gone. She was incapable of
keeping you under control.

ARAM
What?! But she was-

CHEOL
Your friend? That's precisely the
problem. No more friends. No more
seeing Lady Ok and those kisaeng
friends of yours. From now on you
remain here, you are not to leave
until you're married.

Aram continues tossing the jegi around.

CHEOL (cont'd)
Isn't there something better for you
to be doing? Don't you have hobbies?

Aram stops and catches the Jegi.

ARAM
I don't have any hobbies anymore,
father. You took them away and
imprisoned me here.

CHEOL
I didn't imprison you here, you did
this to yourself. You must learn the
consequences of your actions.

Aram sighs and continues playing Jegi.

CHEOL (cont'd)

I can't concentrate with you doing
that right in my ear. Leave me be,
Aram!

Aram huffs and goes to her room. She sits against her wall
and fiddles with the Jegi. She looks up and stares at the
painting, her face lights up. She goes back to the main
room.

ARAM

Geommu dancing.

CHEOL

What?

ARAM

That's the new hobby I want to do.
Geommu dancing.

CHEOL

What is with you and these low class
hobbies? First physician work and now
Geommu dancing. People would think
you were a kisaeng.

ARAM

That's what I want to do. I've
chosen.

CHEOL

Fine. As long as it gets you out of
my hair I don't care what you do.

(beat)

You'll need swords for your practice
then.

(getting up)

I'll need to hire a sword smith on
the estate. I'll go find one tomorrow
in Gyeonggi.

Aram stops.

ARAM

A sword smith?

CHEOL

Yes. They would live here
temporarily.

(beat)

Is that a problem?

ARAM

No. Not at all.

(MORE)

ARAM (cont'd)
(beat)
Can I go with you?

CHEOL
Absolutely not. Do you not listen to me? You are banned from leaving this estate.

ARAM
I would like to meet the person who will be living here and making my swords.

CHEOL
You don't deserve anything after the trouble you caused me.

Cheol gets up and sighs.

CHEOL (cont'd)
Go inside and help your mother sew your new garments. You lost your other ones after all.

EXT./INT. GYEONGGI/SWORD SMITH SHOP - DAY

Cheol gets out of the chariot. A sign reads along a building that says "Sword Smith Shop". Cheol knocks on the door. Master opens the door.

MASTER
General Jeong, what an honor. Please, come on in.

Cheol enters. Wonsik, sharpening a sword, looks up and studies Cheol, slightly surprised to see him there. Cheol continues walking in and notices Wonsik and MINJIN (16) continuing to sharpen a sword.

MASTER (cont'd)
What brings you here? Are you putting in an order for a sword? For you we would be honored to make any kind you'd like free of charge.

CHEOL
I need to purchase one of your sword smiths for my estate.

Cheol scans a collection of swords on the wall.

MASTER

Uh... I apologize, but we need both apprentices here, sir. The military asks for large shipments of swords and as you can see we are low on staff-

CHEOL

That shouldn't be a problem. I will see to it whichever apprentice I choose will also make swords for the state.

MASTER

Sure thing, sir. In the back is Minjun. He is still learning, but he's quite the natural. Wonsik here is almost sixteen. Actually, he was arranged to be sold off to a sword swallower, but for you, we can make a change to that plan.

Wonsik gives Master a sharp look.

CHEOL

Perhaps I should test them both to see which one is worthy.

MASTER

Ah, good idea. It may be difficult to test them in sword making. They are both equally skilled.

Cheol walks up closer to the boys.

CHEOL

Then how about on intelligence?

He approaches Minjun.

CHEOL (cont'd)

What tactical measures could the military have taken in advance to prevent the 1510 Japanese raid on the three ports?

MINJIN

Uh...

Cheol grins. Wonsik furrows his brows.

CHEOL

I'm teasing. I wouldn't expect you to know-

WONSIK

The military's response to the raids was effective in the short term, but it lacked sufficient preventive measures. There should have been a focus on increasing surveillance and strengthening the navy knowing that there we're growing tensions between us and Japan.

Cheol pays close attention to Wonsik's facial expressions as he walks closer to him.

CHEOL

I remember you from the performance. You've got a... boldness about you. Maybe the same boldness your father once possessed.

(beat)

You seem to know a bit about military strategy, is he the reason?

WONSIK

No. He never taught me anything. The soldiers around here talk a lot about war.

CHEOL

So you were eaves dropping on confidential matters?

WONSIK

They should've been in a more private area if it was confidential then.

CHEOL

Hm. I suppose you're right.

Cheol turns Master.

CHEOL (cont'd)

I'll take that one.

WONSIK

My name is Wonsik...

Cheol scoffs, takes out a bag of coins from his coat pocket and hands it to Master.

CHEOL

Let's go then, Wonsik.

INT. JEONG ESTATE - DAY

Aram and mother are sewing a new dress. Aram pricks her finger with the needle and puts her finger to her lips to stop the blood.

MOTHER

Aram! Do I have to keep teaching you over and over again? Don't add so much tension when you're threading!

Aram goes back to sewing. She hears the carriage outside and goes up to the window. She sees Cheol and Wonsik get out of the carriage. Aram looks stunned.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Aram approaches the door to the shed with a lantern, she lets out a big sigh and creaks open the door. Closes it. She runs to Wonsik's side. He gets startled to hear someone is in the room.

He looks around.

ARAM

I'm so sorry I took so long to see you. I just had to wait until the right moment. My father is very suspicious of me right now-

Wonsik rolls over on his side, reading one of the books.

ARAM (cont'd)

I know you must have been scared, but I'm here now.

She puts her hand on his shoulder and he shoves her hand off of his shoulder.

ARAM (cont'd)

I understand why you're upset, but I figured you'd be happy here.

Wonsik ignores.

ARAM (cont'd)

...or at least grateful.

Wonsik sits up.

WONSIK

Grateful?! For what?! I didn't want this! I'm not supposed to be here!

ARAM

What are you talking about? I was just trying to help-

WONSIK

A man approached me at the festival. He offered me a job that would allow me to see my family and provide for them. Now I don't get to do either of those things!

(beat)

I didn't even get to say goodbye to them!

Aram begins to cry.

ARAM

I'm so sorry.

Wonsik turns over and begins to read the book again. Aram gets up and leaves, wiping her tears. Wonsik turns to face the ceiling and sighs. Aram closes the door softly, she leans her head against the door and cries.

INT. KIM ESTATE - DAY

Aram arrives at the Kim estate. Eungin kisses Aram's hand.

INT. COUNCIL MEETING - CONTINUOUS

Councilman Sunwoo sits center of the councilman room near the head councilman. The councilmen are listen in to his intel. Two councilman

COUNCILMAN

We gave up control of the ports for this idiot.

COUNCILMAN #1

He better have good intel or this exchange would have been for nothing.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO

(to the council)

Every moment I was with those rebels I was terrified! I really thought I was going to die!

The head councilman hands him a handkerchief and Sunwoo blows his nose in it.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO (cont'd)
I'm so grateful to the council. You saved my life!

HEAD COUNCILMAN
We are glad you're safe, Councilor, but please tell us what you've learned.

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO
Yes.
(blows his nose)
Of course.

(beat)
The leader of the rebellion goes by the name of Min-ki. He keeps a tight circle, but the entire rebellion moves as one.
(beat)
They run a tight ship, not much information gets out. The nobi respect him like a god. They wouldn't dare cross him.

HEAD COUNCILMAN
Is that it?

COUNCILMAN SUNWOO
No, sir. I got the location of their headquarters. They had me blind folded almost the whole time I was kidnapped, but just for a moment, I heard a sound that gave up the location right away.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Aram and Eungin are walking in the garden together. Eungin's maid follows behind at a distance. Aram turns back to the maid and then turns to Eungin.

ARAM
Does your maid really need to be following us?

EUNGIN
Oh, she always walks with me. If she is disturbing you, I can tell her to move farther away.

Aram turns to look back again. The maid looks down.

ARAM
I guess it's fine.

EUNGIN
How have your studies been going?

ARAM
I haven't been able to see Lady Ok in
a few weeks... because she is... not
feeling well.

EUNGIN
Oh. Sorry to hear that.

ARAM
But look! I got this rare herb that-

Aram pulls out a jar from under her dress, exposing her leg
slightly.

EUNGIN
Oh! Aram please do not show your skin
to me before the marriage. It is
improper!

Aram puts it away and fixes her dress.

ARAM
Oh... uh... I'm sorry. I didn't mean
to offend you.

EUNGIN
Thank you. Of course, your leg is
very... nice, but um, I am a man and
we tend to get... excited sometimes.
I just think it's best if-

ARAM
Yes, I understand.

Eungin stops and looks at Aram. The maid stops, maintaining
her distance, but still watching the interaction unfold.

EUNGIN
What are your feelings?

Aram looks at Eungin and he moves in closer to her.

EUNGIN (cont'd)
Has this been a sufficient adventure
for you?
(Aram looks down)
I know I am no legendary man, but I
promise to make our lives peaceful.
(MORE)

EUNGIN (cont'd)
You can continue your studies and I
will continue to work.
(beat)
We will do as married couples do, and
our love will grow after we wed.

CHEOL
(V.O.)
One week. That's how long you have
until you are to be married to
Eungin... or I will send you to your
Aunt's house.

Aram looks up.

ARAM
Yes.

EUNGIN
Yes? We will marry?

Aram nods her head. Eungin hugs her, she flinches.

EUNGIN (cont'd)
That's great to hear!

He kisses her cheek. She has an uncomfortable look on her
face.

INT. SHED - DAY

Cheol enters the shed. Wonsik is sharpening a sword.
Wonsik's back is to him, he is continuing to sharpen the
sword, Cheol slowly approaches and touches the blade,
purposefully cutting himself on it. Wonsik's eyes widen,
expecting a reaction out of Cheol.

WONSIK
Sir-

CHEOL
You've crafted the sword with
precision.

WONSIK
Thank you, sir.

Cheol wipes the blood from his finger onto his sleeve.

CHEOL
When we spoke yesterday. I was
intrigued by your knowledge of war.
Eaves dropping on the guards, was it?

Wonsik nods his head and continues sharpening the sword.

CHEOL (cont'd)
It seems you're a fast learner with a sharp memory.

Wonsik continues sharpening the sword.

CHEOL (cont'd)
You will be here for some time. It would be a shame for that knowledge you possess to not be put to use.

Cheol tosses two books in front of Wonsik. Wonsik stops sharpening the sword and looks at the books, and then Cheol.

CHEOL (cont'd)
Read these books in one week and take lots of notes.

WONSIK
What are they?

CHEOL
One will teach you the history of battle strategy and the other will teach you the rules of the council. You'll be tested on them for the King's exam.

WONSIK
But I didn't even take the first exam nor do I have the money for the entrance fee.

CHEOL
You don't need to worry about that. Just study the texts. If you pass it, then I'll let you work for me on the council.

(beat)
If that's not something you want, leave the books there and continue making swords.

(beat)
This is a once in a lifetime opportunity so I would suggest you make your decision carefully.

Cheol leaves the room, the door shuts. Wonsik stares at the books. He opens it and begins reading.

MONTAGE:

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik up late at night reading and taking notes.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik in his bed reading the book.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Wonsik sharpening a sword while reading a book. He looks up at Aram who is outside practicing her dances by herself. He simply observes her with no expression on his face.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik's notes that fill the pages as he continues to read the last few pages of the second book.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. SHED - DAY

Wonsik is asleep at his desk with his head in a book. Cheol bursts through the door, the heel of his boot clicks against the floor as he gets closer to Wonsik. Cheol pounds his fist against the desk, which wakes Wonsik.

CHEOL

Wake up.

Wonsik slowly opens his eyes.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Looks like you've been studying. So, does this mean you're taking the exam?

Wonsik gets up from his desk and bows.

WONSIK

Yes, sir.

CHEOL

Good. We'll review on the way.

INT. ESTATE - DAY

Cheol walks down the hallway while Wonsik follows. Ryu slides open his door and steps out into the hallway, fully dressed and ready. Ryu looks at Wonsik and laughs.

RYU
Is he coming too?

CHEOL
He is.

RYU
(sarcastically)
Why? Is he taking the exam?

CHEOL
Yes.

RYU
You can't be serious.

CHEOL
Let's go.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Ryu and Wonsik sit next to each other in the carriage while Cheol sits across from them. Wonsik has his head buried in a book.

RYU
How is he even allowed to take this exam? He never took the state exam.

Cheol takes out a letter from his pocket.

CHEOL
I'm his referral, he can pass to the King's exam with my permission.

RYU
Why would you do that for him?! He's probably never picked up a book in his life!

CHEOL
He showed potential.

RYU
Potential...

Ryu turns to Wonsik.

RYU (cont'd)
And what do you have to say about
this? Huh? Do you even want to take
it?

Wonsik up from looks at Cheol and then Ryu.

WONSIK
Yes.

RYU
And then what. Do you suppose you'll
get a position in the council if you
pass?

Wonsik stares at him. Ryu looks at his father who has a
serious look on his face.

RYU (cont'd)
Ha! I'm in a carriage full of crazy
people!

INT. KING'S PALACE - DAY

Cheol, Ryu, and Wonsik walk up to the front gates and they
are let in by two guards. Wonsik looks around the palace in
awe. Ryu walks up to the exam proctor and shows him a
certificate.

The exam proctor hands him a knife with the number "17" on
the handle of the blade. Cheol hands the exam proctor the
letter of referral. The exam proctor examines Wonsik with a
judgemental stare and opens the letter.

He reads it, puts it away, and then hands Cheol a blade.

EXAM PROCTOR
He could've at least dressed up a
little.

Cheol hands Wonsik the blade.

CHEOL
Take a look at the handle. That's
your seat number.

Wonsik looks at the blade handle, he sees the number "14" on
it.

INT. KING'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Wonsik walks up to the exam room. There are floor desks and seat pillows lined up in rows. Boys are in groups talking to one another. One group stares at Wonsik and whispers about him. More groups begin to notice him. Ryu walks up to him.

RYU

My father really is cruel for embarrassing you like this. There's no way you'll pass, you know that, right?

WONSIK

I don't like your family, but I'm grateful to your father. For whatever reason, he has given me a rare opportunity.

RYU

You're more of a fool than I thought.

The exam proctor walks in.

EXAM PROCTOR

Get to your seats!

Wonsik walks over to his seat and sits down, he looks down to see a quill and ink and a rolled up scroll with a seal on it. Everyone sits in silence.

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)

You are among the few who qualified for the King's exam. Although you have proven your intelligence, this exam is much harder than the last. Good luck. You may now open your test and begin.

Wonsik looks around to see everyone using their blade to cut open the seal. He does the same.

EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

The boys are lined up outside on the wall of the palace in silence. Wonsik is sitting against the wall, admiring the blade. Ryu is leaned against a column, he looks over at Wonsik.

Next to Wonsik is Young Man #2. Young Man #1 is pacing in front of them.

YOUNG MAN #1

What are you pacing around for? It's annoying.

YOUNG MAN #2

How much longer are they going to make us wait?

YOUNG MAN #1

We could be here until the morning, just sit, you're stressing me out.

Young Man #2 sits on the other side of Young Man #1 and puts his head in his hands. The exam proctor approaches with a lantern and the young men all stand up.

EXAM PROCTOR

Follow me.

Young man #1 and Young man #2 look at each other.

EXT. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

The boys follow the exam proctor to a giant board in the middle of the courtyard. It's difficult for Wonsik to see the numbers because it is dark.

EXAM PROCTOR

You needed to score at least an 88% on each subject to pass. Let's start from the top score.

The exam proctor holds the lantern up to the board and pans down, revealing each number with the light. The number revealed is "17".

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)

17.

The two boys next to Ryu cheer for him. He smiles arrogantly and then looks around to look at Wonsik. The lantern continues down and the exam proctor reads the numbers out loud.

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)

2, 5, 10, 12, 7.

Cheers and sighs of relief continue. The scores were getting lower and lower, almost reaching the threshold of not passing. Finally the lantern scans over "14".

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)

14.

There were no cheers, but Wonsik smiles. He had the last passing score. The score just below the threshold was "3". Young Man #1 crouches down in frustration.

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)
If you're number hasn't been read...
you didn't pass the exam. Better luck
next year.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

In the courtyard of the garden, Aram is learning from an instructor on how to do the Geommu dance with wooden swords. Aram does a move too aggressively.

INSTRUCTOR
You're not nearly ready for the real
swords. You're lucky these are just
wooden, you would have cut yourself.

Aram drops the wooden swords and breaths heavy.

ARAM
But it's just that one part I can't
get.

INSTRUCTOR
The whole dance is messy. Clean up
your movements. We're done with
lesson for today. Practice on your
own.

EXT. PORCH OF THE ESTATE - DAY

Aram walks along the porch, she approaches the corner, and suddenly runs into Wonsik, who is holding a pile of swords in his arms. The swords drop on the ground after they collide and Aram goes to help pick up the swords.

ARAM
I'm so sorry.

Wonsik gathers the swords, not saying a word.

ARAM (cont'd)
Hasn't this silent treatment gone on
for long enough?

They both stand up, looking into each others eyes. A door slides open next to them, it's Ryu. He lunges and tackles Wonsik.

RYU

Has our new council member taken a
stumble? That's a bad look, Wonsik.
You're supposed to be strong for the
council!

(beat)

Come on! Show me how strong you are.

Ryu holds Wonsik's arms down and Wonsik squirms.

WONSIK

I won't fight you. But know this.

(beat)

You will never know peace as long as
I am in the council.

Ryu grins widely and pushes Wonsik's face into the ground.
Wonsik squeezes Ryu's face. Wonsik sees Aram holding a sword
from it's blade, the heavy handle becoming her weapon.

Ryu notices Wonsik looking behind him. Ryu looks back. Aram
is seething at the mouth, blood dripping down her arm and
onto the wooden porch.

ARAM

Get your hands off him!

Ryu lets go of Wonsik.

ARAM (cont'd)

You have no honor in your blood, Ryu!
And you are no different than a
disturbed child!

RYU

Look at you sister, who really is the
disturbed one?

(beat)

You are bleeding for a nobi. Now
where is the honor in that?

Ryu goes back into his room, sliding the door behind him.
Aram drops the sword and runs to Wonsik.

ARAM

Are you okay?

WONSIK

Why would you do that?

(lifting up her hands
so he can see)

Your hands.

ARAM

Don't worry. I can bandage them myself.

Wonsik sighs.

WONSIK

Aram.

ARAM

Did I hear that you are a council member? How is that possible?

Maid #1 opens the front door and yells for Aram.

MAID #1

Aram! Bath time!

Aram walks away, her hands slide out of Wonsik's.

ARAM

I don't know what's been going on with you. But if you've gotten yourself entangled with my father, I would be cautious.

Aram walks away.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - DAY

Aram is soaking in the bath. There's a knock at the door.

ARAM

Come in.

Maid #1 comes in.

MAID #1

There is a letter for you. It's from the Gobang.

Aram reads the letter over the side of the bathtub, she has a concerned look on her face.

INT. BAR - DAY (GYEONGGI)

Text: Gyeonggi

Two guys in a bar are arguing over a spilled drink. The two guards sitting in the corner of the bar ignore it at first. Then, one of the guys shoves the other. One of them throws a punch and a fight breaks out.

The guards rush over and break up the fight, each guard holding back one of the guys. One of the guys uses his head to break the guard's nose.

The guard drops to the ground and holds his nose while the other guard struggles to end the fight. The guard gets up from the ground and finds a glass bottle. He breaks it over the guy's head.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OF THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

A group of intense looking men laughing, smoking pipes, and drinking alcohol look up when they hear the glass shatter.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

The guy shakes off the injury and lunges at the guard. With the broken piece of glass still in his hand, the guard stabs the guy in the throat. The guards stand there for a moment, looking at the man bleeding out.

The guard loosens his grip and the other man escapes the guards grasp. The group of men walk up the stairs, one of them has a bat resting on his shoulder.

MAN

Min-ki.

The guards start slowly backing away.

EXT. BAR - DAY

The two guards are being dragged by the collar of their uniform, blood smears on the ground behind them.

EXT. GYEONGGI - DAY

Two soldiers are hanging from a building in the center of the city. Blood dripping down their faces. Something written in blood.

HWAN

This is awful.

JUN

They killed one of us. An innocent man. It's time to start resisting or they will continue to kill us.

HWAN

There's too much violence in this town. Now from both sides.

JUN

Well, submitting to them doesn't work.

(beat)

I want to fight.

Hwan puts his hand on Jun's forehead, pretending to check his temperature.

HWAN

What? Are you feeling well?

Jun swats his hand away

JUN

I'm serious.

HWAN

You shouldn't get in the middle of this mess.

JUN

This mess won't end until we do something.

HWAN

(teasing)

Look who's trying to be all heroic now.

Jun rolls his eyes. Hwan sighs.

HWAN (cont'd)

You're right. But can't we wait a few years? I'm still young

JUN

No more waiting.

He puts his arm around Hwan.

JUN (cont'd)

Are you ready to fight a war with me and die young?

HWAN

Don't say that.

Jun laughs.

INT. LADY OK - AFTERNOON

She walks through the door of Lady Ok's kisaeng house.
Kisaeng #1 greets her.

ARAM
Where is Lady Ok?

Kisaeng #1 looks down.

ARAM (cont'd)
Has something happened?

Kisaeng #1 turns her attention towards a room. Aram rushes to the room.

INT. ROOM - AFTERNOON

Aram enters the room, standing over Lady Ok's sleeping body. One of the kisaeng gently wake Lady Ok. She slowly awakens.

LADY OK
Aram, my beautiful doe.

Aram kneels on her bed side. Lady Ok reaches her hand out to her. Aram tears up.

ARAM
If I had known I would have tried to see you earlier. Are you hurting?

LADY OK
Your presence has made my suffering more tolerable.

Aram nuzzles her face into Lady Ok's hand and closes her eyes, letting tears stream down her face.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aram takes one last glance at Lady Ok and closes the door behind her and entering the hallway. She turns to kisaeng #1.

KISAENG #1
She keeps mentioning the offer she made to you. Will you take it?

ARAM

I'm getting married soon. Even if I thought I was the right person to lead the gobang house, I'm not sure I could. My father would never approve.

Kisaeng nods her head.

KISAENG #1

I see.

ARAM

I must tell you everything that has been going on.

INT. COUNCIL - NIGHT

The council is in session. The councilmen sit in a large room with hundreds of seats. The head councilman sits at the front of the room.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Quiet!

(the room gets quiet)

General Kim explain the recent developments.

GENERAL KIM

The rebellion has responded poorly to the increase in security.

(beat)

Rebellion leader, Min-ki, and a few others, killed two guards last night after one of their own was killed.

(beat)

We managed to keep them from seizing the trade routes to Hanseong, but they have successfully blocked off their ports to other regions.

COUNCILMAN

They won't control the ports for long, this is merely a protest for their fallen comrades.

CHEOL

This is no protest.

(beat)

They are certainly declaring war.

There is murmuring among the councilman.

RYU

I say we invade them first! Right on their own turf! Eventually they will be outnumbered.

Wonsik scoffs.

RYU (cont'd)

You have a better idea, nobi?

The councilmen stare at Wonsik.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Thank you for your incite, Ryu. I think we act a bit more cautiously than that-

CHEOL

Maybe we should let Wonsik speak. After all, he is from Gyeonggi.

Cheol motions for him to speak. Wonsik stands and coughs.

WONSIK

(long pause)

You can't just invade them, that would be a death sentence. The rebellion knows the layout of Gyeonggi better than any soldier.

CHEOL

So what do you propose we do?

WONSIK

It is exactly like the Battle of Sejong. The rebellion plan to use the port's imported weaponry to launch some sort of attack. It could be to drive soldiers out of Gyeonggi or they could be planning a coup de tat. We need to go on the inside to get intel and take their maps.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Very well. This should be your mission then. These are your people, you will get the intel we need.

WONSIK

I don't Sir, I'm not qualified to go undercover.

GENERAL KIM

This is a dangerous task-

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Cheol, he is your apprentice. What are your thoughts?

Cheol looks at Wonsik and then at Ryu, then at the head councilman.

CHEOL

He is our best option. It's true, he is one of them. He will blend in.

(beat)

Besides, he has yet to prove his loyalty to the council.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aram looks up at her ceiling, contemplating. She sighs.

ARAM

(V.O.)

He still hasn't forgiven me. I'm not sure if he will.

CUT TO:

EXT. LADY OK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Kisaeng #1, Kisaeng #2, and Aram are in a row, laying on the floor.

ARAM

I'm worried about him though. I feel like my father doesn't have good intentions, putting him on the council.

KISAENG

Maybe your father really *does* see potential in him.

Aram laughs.

KISAENG (cont'd)

I'm serious. What if he becomes someone your father respects? Then you two could marry instead.

ARAM

Oh no. That's impossible.

KISAENG #2

Oh to be in love and to be married.

KISAENG #1

She tells me all about her
reoccurring dreams of marriage.

KISAENG #2

In my dreams I am married to a
handsome soldier. He'll take me out
to see the world. We dance all night
long in every ballroom imaginable.

ARAM

Do not dream about these falsities of
marriage. It's not as it seems.

(beat)

I dream of being a kisaeng.

KISAENG #1

There is no way that is true.

KISAENG #2

That is so lame...

ARAM

It is not! I dream of living here for
the rest of my life, safe from any
man that bares his burden upon me.

KISAENG #2

I know there is someone you love,
Aram. From your stories, it seems he
has shown you a world beyond your
own. Beyond the burdens you speak of.

ARAM

Nothing will come of this love.

Aram turns on her side.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - NIGHT (MATCH CUT)

Aram turns on her side. The carriage pulls up to the estate,
Ryu, Wonsik, and Cheol come out. Aram Sees Wonsik.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik carves Aram's name into the side of the sword.

INT. ARAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Aram is mixing together an elixir, she has a book open next
to her where she is reading the ingredients.

The recipe calls for a specific flower. She looks in her collection of herbs but doesn't find any.

EXT. OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

She walks out to the garden, passing Wonsik's house with a lantern guiding her.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik, laying in his bed, sees a light shining into his window. He checks it out. It's Aram, she goes into the garden. He tries to go back to sleep, but he can't. He gets up and follows her.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

She spots the flower on the side of the pond and gently digs it from the ground.

WONSIK
What are you doing out here so late?

She gets startled and screams. He covers her mouth and shushes her.

WONSIK (cont'd)
Was that necessary?

She calms down.

ARAM
You scared me.
(beat)
I'm working on a remedy for Lady Ok
and I'm missing an ingredient.
(beat)
She's dying.

She continues to dig the flower. He kneels next to her.

WONSIK
You think an elixir will save her
life.

ARAM
No, but it'll ease the pain.

He sighs. She struggles to pull the flower out. He gently pushes her hands back and pulls it out for her with ease.

He places the flower in the palm of her hand and gets up to leave. She grabs a hold of his pant leg, stopping him mid step.

ARAM (cont'd)

Don't go.

He crouches down beside her. They stare into the slightly melted frozen pond. Wonsik looks up and watches his breath in the cold air. He looks at Aram, who is shivering.

WONSIK

You're shivering, why don't you go inside?

ARAM

I don't care if its cold. If you're out here, I'm staying.

WONSIK

Okay, then.

Wonsik grabs her hand and pulls her to her feet. Aram looks confused. He walks her behind him.

ARAM

What are you doing?

Aram's mother walks onto the porch with a lantern. Wonsik spots mother and hides behind a bush, pulling Aram next to him. Aram's mother walks back inside and Wonsik continues walking Aram to his shed.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aram looks at his swords.

ARAM

Are these the swords you made for me?

WONSIK

Yes.

ARAM

They're beautiful.

She picks them up. Does a dance move.

ARAM (cont'd)

I haven't gotten to use them yet. It feels so much different than the practice swords.

WONSIK

I watch you practice everyday from here.

He points out of the window.

WONSIK (cont'd)

Even though you're terrible, it's entertaining.

Aram points her playfully charges at Wonsik with the sword. He steps back and throws his hands up.

ARAM

Watch what you say.

He moves the sword away from his face and takes the sword from her hand, resting it on the table next to them. He gets close to her face.

ARAM (cont'd)

Can you ever forgive me? Or will you be angry with me forever?

WONSIK

Forever is a long time to be angry with someone.

Wonsik tucks her hair behind her ear, caresses her face and kisses her softly.

INT. WONSIK'S BED - DAY

Aram and Wonsik lay facing each other.

WONSIK

The council is sending me on a mission

INT. PRIVATE MEETING - DAY

A private meeting at a small round table with only the head councilmen of each region.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Tomorrow you are to go with General Kim to Gyeonggi. You will return to your home and assimilate back into your normal life to avoid suspicion.

(MORE)

HEAD COUNCILMAN (cont'd)

(beat)

General Kim will guide you to the rebellion headquarters and you will show interest in joining.

(beat)

Your objective is to gather as much intel as you can about their plan and memorize their maps.

Wonsik nods his head.

EXT. COUNCIL MEETING - CONTINUOUS

The council meeting is dismissed. Wonsik walks along the side of the building, reading a book. Suddenly, Ryu and his friend group walk out of the shadows and confront Wonsik.

INT. PRIVATE MEETING - CONTINUOUS

The small group chats, but suddenly hears screaming. At a bird's eye view, a few of the councilmen look out the window of the private meeting to see Ryu and his friends beating up Wonsik. Cheol looks angered.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Is that your son, Cheol?

(beat)

Someone go break up that fight!

General Kim leaves the room.

COUNCILMAN #1

This behavior is not tolerated at the council.

(beat)

I wasn't on board with the slave boy joining the council either, but this is not how a future leader should be acting.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

He is correct, this demands punishment.

(beat)

He must be demoted.

Cheol rubs his forehead and leaves the meeting.

EXT. COUNCIL BUILDING - DAY

The boys are lined up along a wall. Cheol paces in front of them. He grabs Ryu by the ear and pushes him against the wall.

CHEOL

You and your friends are demoted to soldier rank.

RYU

What? No this can't be! Can't you convince them to give me a second chance?

CHEOL

You overestimated the council's tolerance. The council favored Wonsik over you from the beginning because of his insight to the Gyeonggi province.

(beat)

All you had to do was shut your mouth, but you couldn't. Now a nobi surpasses you in rank.

RYU

He owes no loyalty to the council. He will show who's side he's really on, and they'll be sorry they ever demoted me.

Ryu leaves and Cheol punches the wall.

EXT. GYEONGGI BORDER - DAY

General Kim and Wonsik exit the carriage.

GENERAL KIM

This is as far as I take you. Here you won't be seen by anyone.

(beat)

Meet me at the palace in two weeks time with the intel.

Wonsik starts to walk across the bridge.

WONSIK

What am I supposed to do if my mission fails? What if the rebellion doesn't trust me.

GENERAL KIM

That's not an option. The council
isn't so forgiving to those who fail
them.

(beat)

Good luck.

Wonsik continues walking down the bridge and the carriage
moves beside him, passing him.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Wonsik knocks on the door. Bora opens it and immediately
hugs him. Soo slowly walks forward and hugs him as well.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Aram lands her final dance move. She bows and pants from
exhaustion.

INSTRUCTOR

You've improved a lot, Aram. It seems
there is a new energy over you. I
think you're ready for the real
swords.

(revealing the
swords, holding them
on top of a blanket)

You still need practice, but at least
now you won't accidentally stab
someone in the crowd.

Aram holds the swords in both her hands and hits her opening
move.

INSTRUCTOR (cont'd)

We only have a limited supply of
swords now because the sword smith is
gone so-

ARAM

What do you mean he's gone?

INT. ESTATE - DAY

Mother is sitting on the floor directing the maids where to
place flowers in the homes center pond.

MOTHER

A little more to the right next to
the lily pad.

(MORE)

MOTHER (cont'd)
(the maid places it
correctly)
Perfect

Aram bulldozes her way into the house, startling the Mother and the maids.

ARAM
Where is father? I need to speak with him.

MOTHER
He's not here. He's training his men today.

ARAM
Where is the sword smith?

MOTHER
I don't know. What does it matter anyways? His position here was temporary.

ARAM
He was here for me! He is my sword smith! Shouldn't I get a say if he leaves or not!?

MOTHER
Do not speak to me in that tone! Stop worrying about this random nobi! Your focus should be on your wedding and future husband!

Mother sticks her face in Aram's face.

MOTHER (cont'd)
Speak of this nobi again and I will lock you in the basement until the wedding.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Wonsik and Soo sit in front of the fire.

SOO
How did you come back so soon?

WONSIK
My service is done at the Jeong estate.

SOO

I'm just glad you're back. Everyone is glad. Jun and Hwan didn't take it lightly when you suddenly left.

(beat)

I'm worried about them.

WONSIK

Why?

SOO

They've joined the rebellion.

WONSIK

What? Since when?

SOO

I don't know, why don't you ask them yourself? I'm sure they'd love to see you. Invite them for dinner. Oh, we should do a celebration for your arrival! I'll make Pajeon!

INT. HWAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Wonsik arrives at the door. He knocks. Hwan answers the door.

HWAN

Oh my god!

Hwan hugs Wonsik.

HWAN (cont'd)

Jun get over here.

Jun walks up.

JUN

What is it?

(he sees Wonsik)

Oh. It's you.

Jun walks away. Hwan pulls him back.

WONSIK

Don't pretend like you don't miss me.

Jun smiles and hugs Wonsik.

JUN

We thought we'd never see you again.

WONSIK

Want to come over for dinner? My mom
is making Pajeon.

HWAN

Say less.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Soo serves the Pajeon to Wonsik, Jun, Hwan, and Bora.

JUN

Ooo! My favorite.

Hwan rubs his hands. Wonsik pulls the plates from them.

WONSIK

First, explain to me why the hell you
are in the rebellion.

Hwan and Jun are silent.

WONSIK (cont'd)

You realize what you're doing is
dangerous. This could turn into a
war.

JUN

You haven't been here, Wonsik. They
have been killing our people daily!

WONSIK

The rebellion killed soldiers too.
They are equally as guilty.

JUN

Has working for the noble class
altered your brain?!

(beat)

Equally as guilty? Do you forget they
killed your father, Wonsik?

WONSIK

Hwan. Even you? You agree to all
this? Out of all people I didn't
think you would join.

HWAN

He's right. You haven't been here.

(beat)

We can't just sit by and let this
happen.

WONSIK

So what do you plan to do, get killed
with everyone else in the rebellion?

JUN

If I die at least it's for a good
cause!

There is awkward silence.

HWAN

We have our first training tomorrow.
Go with us. You'll see what the
rebellion has built. We've gotten
strong.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The rebellion is training. Jun, Hwan, and Wonsik walk
together to the training. Min-ki is there leading the
training.

REBELS

Hyah!

The move as one unit striking their swords. Jun and Hwan
introduce Wonsik to Min-Ki.

JUN

This is Wonsik Park. Son of Sun Park.

MIN-KI

(to the rebels)

Stop!

Min-ki leans in close to Wonsik's face.

MIN-KI (cont'd)

Aha! You look just like him! Gosh
that face takes me back!

WONSIK

You knew my father?

MIN-KI

Of course! He founded the rebellion
with me. Back then it wasn't to the
level we're at now, but he inspired
many people to join.

(beat)

Are you here to join?

WONSIK

I-

JUN

He thinks the rebellion is too dangerous.

WONSIK

I'm considering, but I to understand what you're plan is.

MIN-KI

You're not wrong about this being dangerous. The soldiers have far more resources than us.

(beat)

But they don't know the area like we do. We know the alley ways and the buildings like the back of our hands. We move with stealth. They don't know the first thing about stealth!

WONSIK

I'm sure you all have trained hard, but your confidence is concerning. They've seen war up close. We don't have that experience.

MIN-KI

Your father would say the same. He was a master in war strategy.

(beat)

But we don't have a choice. Regardless of experience we need to defend ourselves.

WONSIK

I suppose you're right.

MIN-KI

Join us. At least for a little bit. If you can't handle it, you can leave.

(beat)

I know your father taught you about war strategy. We could use your knowledge.

EXT. ALLEY WAY - NIGHT

Text: A few weeks later

Wonsik, Jun, and Hwan walks down a dark and rundown alley way.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Wonsik walks into a basement and there is a group of scruffy looking men playing Go and smoking pipes. Wonsik opens up a curtain and inside is Min-ki and another group of men, including Jun and Hwan.

On the table is a map. he leans over, the map illuminates his face, he studies it.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A lantern hang over the desk illuminating a piece of paper as Wonsik copies the maps on a page with a brush and ink.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Wonsik walks around with the hood of a cape over his head. Under his cape are the maps.

EXT. GYEONGHUG PALACE - NIGHT

Wonsik approaches the gates of the palace, he reveals his face and the guards let him in.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

General Kim sits behind a grandiose desk, studying the maps, and Wonsik sits across from him.

GENERAL KIM

So they plan to drive the soldiers out of Gyeonggi.

WONSIK

Yes, sir.

GENERAL KIM

It looks like they succeed they plan to stage a coup de tat of the palace-

WONSIK

You will talk with them, right. Make them see that these tensions can be resolved.

GENERAL KIM

Once the council sees these maps,
they will declare war on the
rebellion.

WONSIK

No, you promised there would be
negotiations.

GENERAL KIM

We cannot negotiate with them. If
they were just to stick to driving
out soldiers, that would be one
thing, but this is too extreme for
just me to handle. I need the
council's advisement.

WONSIK

No. No. No. I won't be a part of
this, you promised me!

GENERAL KIM

Do you think I want war in my
province!? I cannot do this on my
own, once the council decides it is
out of my hand!

WONSIK

I cannot bare to see my friends and
family suffer because of the
council's decisions. I want no part
in that.

GENERAL KIM

If you choose to leave the council,
you are choosing the rebellion.

(beat)

I will allow you to make that choice.
Other councilman would probably
sentence you to a life in prison for
this, but this is not something
either of us want.

Wonsik stands up.

WONSIK

The choice is clear. The council will
never see me as one of them. I'm just
going to protect my people.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wonsik crying to mom

INT. ESTATE - DAY

Aram and Mother walk up the entrance stairs to Eungin and General Kim's estate. Aram trips over her dress and takes a slight tumble. Mother straightens her up.

MOTHER
(loud whisper)
Stop walking like a toddler!

Aram gives her a sharp look. The maids open the doors and greet Mother and Aram.

INT. ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Aram and Eungin are getting fitted for the wedding. The stand on two separate platforms at both ends of the room. The maids are fitting Aram into her wedding gown.

Aram sees the maid and Eungin are laughing. The maid hands Aram a green hair pin which breaks her concentration on the conversation.

MAID #2
Is this hair pin to your liking,
ma'am?

Aram studies the matcha green hair pin with a white floral pattern.

CUT TO:

EXT. GYEONHUG PALACE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Aram changes into a green dress behind a bush. She steps out from behind the bush. Wonsik looks at Aram's dress.

WONSIK
Green suits you.

INT. ESTATE - DAY

Aram looks back at Eungin and the maid having a friendly conversation.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Aram is looking at a portrait of Eungin. The maid comes up.

ARAM

It's a beautiful portrait.

EUNGIN'S MAID

Oh, Eungin tells me all the time he hates it because the artist put his eye too low.

(beat)

Whenever he walks past it, he always sneers.

(whispers)

But I still think he looks quite handsome.

ARAM

You get along very well with Eungin. I can't seem to understand him very well.

EUNGIN'S MAID

That's just how he is. He needs time to warm up to people.

ARAM

Right.

(beat)

I suppose I have my whole life to understand him.

Aram looks down in sadness.

INT. COUNCIL MEETING - AFTERNOON

General Kim sits at the center of the council, he is being questioned on recent events.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

You let him go?!

GENERAL KIM

What difference does it make? We don't need the boy anymore, we got all the intel we need.

COUNCILMAN

He should've been put in prison!

The other councilmen yells in agreement. Cheol sits with his arms crossed, angry. The councilman hits his gavel.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

What is your plan now, General Kim?

GENERAL KIM

I have no plan. I feel like I have no control over my own province.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

It is your responsibility as a general to engage in this war. It is your province, you must defend it.

GENERAL KIM

For years I have been trying to maintain peace. I understand they are impossible to negotiate with, but I'm not risking the lives of my men for this pointless war. Even if we outnumber them, high casualties are inevitable.

CHEOL

I will help you fight this war. We'll combine our forces so they cannot get past the border.

HEAD COUNCILMAN

Is that a sound plan for you General Kim?

GENERAL KIM

I suppose I don't have much of a choice.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cheol and Hana sit by a crackling fire at the front of their room. Cheol has fluffy shaving cream on his face. She is shaving his beard with a sharp blade.

HANA

Hold still.

Hana scraps Cheol's facial hair with the blade and dips it into the bucket of water next to her.

HANA (cont'd)

How did it go with the council?

CHEOL

The council was surprised of Wonsik's betrayal, but I knew he would join the rebellion. It's in his blood.

(MORE)

CHEOL (cont'd)

(beat)

I only wish General Kim had brought him to the council instead of letting him go.

(beat)

He's always been too soft.

(beat)

I'm more concerned about Ryu's demotion. He was essential to rebuilding our family's image. He set us back. I don't know if I can rely on him anymore.

HANA

Ryu is just young. You remember how you were when you were younger?

CHEOL

I never got myself demoted!

He sits up from the chair. She rests her free hand on his shoulders to calm down, he sinks back in the chair. She shaves his beard more, dips the blade in the water.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Both of our children defy me. I have everything planned out for them and they manage to ruin that plan completely.

(beat)

I'll have to pick up the pieces and figure out a new plan like I do time and time again.

She continues shaving his beard.

INT. WONSIK'S HOUSE

He tells his mom about the mission, he cries to her, she consoles him. She tells him he should tell the rebellion, that is what his father would do.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Wonsik bursts through the curtains.

MIN-KI

Wonsik.

Wonsik is sweaty and panting.

MIN-KI (cont'd)
Is everything okay?

WONSIK
The soldiers, they plan to attack us
in a few days! We need to prepare!

MIN-KI
Wonsik, hold on. How do you know
this?

Wonsik pauses.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Min-ki slams Wonsik against the wall with his face pushed
into it.

MIN-KI
You we're a member of the council?! I
should smash your head into this
wall! How dare you betray your
people!?

WONSIK
They promised not to declare war on
the rebellion! They said they were
willing to negotiate with them first!

MIN-KI
You really believed they would
negotiate with us?! They've proved
time and time again they want us all
dead! Don't you see that already!

WONSIK
I know I know, I see it now! I'm
sorry I didn't see it before. I admit
I was being ignorant. They used me to
get intel and lied about what they
were truly planning to do with it.
(Wonsik sighs)
They blind sided me.

Min-ki lets go of him and Wonsik turns around, holding the
side of his face.

WONSIK (cont'd)
Let me fight.

MIN-KI
Stay out of this. You clearly can't
be trusted.

WONSIK

I betrayed the rebellion, I betrayed
my friends, and I betrayed my
father's legacy.

(beat)

I was corrupted by the chance to live
like one of them, but I'm not. I
realize now that hope was impossible.

(beat)

All I want to do now is restore my
honor.

Wonsik gets down on his knees.

WONSIK (cont'd)

I devote my life to the cause and to
the protection of my people. Just
like my father had done.

Min-ki turns around and sits in a chair, pondering. Hwan
approaches him.

HWAN

If he was still loyal to the council,
he wouldn't have told us about the
attack.

(beat)

We don't know what the council put
into his head.

(beat)

Besides, his knowledge on battle
strategy will be extremely useful.

MIN-KI

Fine, you will not leave this
basement until the battle.

(to the group)

And if any of you are suspicious of
Wonsik's motivations, I give you
permission to kill him immediately.

The group starts murmuring. Wonsik goes up to Hwan and
whispers into his ear.

WONSIK

Thank you.

HWAN

I hope you are telling us the whole
truth.

WONSIK

Every word. I saw who the council
truly is. I'm not going back.

Jun hits Wonsik over the back of the head.

WONSIK (cont'd)

Ow!

JUN

Surprised it took you this long to realize the council doesn't have your best interest.

(beat)

But then again, you've always been quite slow up here.

He taps Wonsik's forehead with his finger. Wonsik rolls his eyes.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE RIVER

Text: Three weeks later

The river flows underneath the bridge, no ice covering it. Flowers are just beginning to blossom, the grass is beginning to grow, and the river is flows. A deer drinks water from the river.

The march of a thousand men is heard in the distance. The deer lifts it's head and turns its ears towards the sound. The footsteps get closer, the deer runs away.

EXT. BRIDGE OF THE RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Cheol's soldiers march over the bridge that crosses over to Hanseong.

EXT. GYEONGHUG PALACE - DAY

General Kim's troops march from the palace.

EXT. STREET - DAY

On top of buildings are members of the rebellion preparing to shoot arrows down at the soldiers.

EXT. ALLEY WAY - DAY

Wonsik, Jun, and Hwan have hoods on in the alley way, pretending to be beggars, and hiding their faces from soldiers walking through the alleyways. A soldier walks up to Jun, and kicks his leg.

SOLDIER #1
Get out of the alley way.

Jun lifts his hand and shakes a cup, pretending to beg for coins.

SOLDIER #1 (cont'd)
I'm not giving you any damn money.
Now move. Do you want to die?

He kicks Jun again, but harder. Jun throws his hands up and cowers his head.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cheol and General Kim's soldiers march down a cobble stone pathway in between low rise buildings. Cheol marches in front of his soldiers. Cheol marches in front of his soldiers.

Both groups march until they come face to face. Cheol walks over to Ryu who is a few rows of soldiers behind him. He grabs onto his shoulder and leans in close.

CHEOL
You remember your mission?

RYU
Find Wonsik, knock him out, bring him to you alive.

Cheol taps on his shoulder and returns to the front. Min-ki emerges from an alley way in between Cheol and General Kim, he glances at both of them.

CHEOL
Oh? Have you come to surrender already?

Min-ki scoffs.

GENERAL KIM
We can negotiate terms, we don't have to kill each other anymore.

MIN-KI
No. I've come to finally see the faces of the men who slaughter my people like animals.

CHEOL
Is it prettier than you expected?

The soldiers behind him laugh.

MIN-KI

You will see, Cheol, son of Ryu
Jeong, that you underestimate us.

CHEOL

Is that right?

EXT. ALLEY WAY - DAY

The soldier puts his sword up to Jun's neck.

SOLDIER #1

Maybe I'll just kill you myself.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cheol slowly pulls a dagger out of his back pocket. He suddenly throws a knife at Min-ki, but Min-ki catches it right before it stabs his face.

MIN-KI

Attack!

EXT. ALLEY WAY - DAY

Jun removes his hood, revealing his face. He stabs the soldier in the stomach, the soldier falls to the ground. Wonsik reveals his hood and begins to stab soldiers that are attacking with Jun.

Hwan is approached by a soldier who points his sword at him. The soldier lunges at him, teasing him. Hwan moves back slowly, he draws his sword with his hands shaking, his body won't let kill the soldier.

The soldier knocks Hwan's sword out of his hand with his own. Jun stabs the soldier in the back. The soldier looks down at his stomach to see a sword through it and falls forward.

JUN

Come on.

Hwan walks around the body of the soldier and the three of them run down the alley way. A rebel approaches Jun, Hwan, and Wonsik.

REBEL

We need you guys out there! We're getting swarmed!

(looks at Hwan)

You! You've got no weapon. What's wrong with you, are you alright?

Hwan shakes his head.

REBEL (cont'd)

Head to the rooftops. Can you shoot an arrow?

Hwan nods.

REBEL (cont'd)

Alright, go. You two, out there.

WONSIK

(to Hwan)

Stay safe, Hwan.

JUN

We'll all enjoy a nice big stew after this is over, okay?

Hwan nods.

HWAN

Okay.

Jun and Wonsik head into battle. Hwan goes into the alley and up a set of stairs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jun and Wonsik head into a blood bath. Fire arrows are being fired into the battle and men are slaughtering each other left and right. Jun and Wonsik hold their own against skilled soldiers.

EXT. TOP OF BUILDING - DAY

Hwan grabs a spare bow and arrow from a dead archer on the top of the roof. The archers fire into both the battle and the other rooftops filled with soldiers. Hwan quickly seeks cover behind the rooftop wall and clutches the bow and arrow.

REBEL

What are you doing? Do your job!

Hwan turns himself around and looks onto the battle below. An arrow shoots right past his head. He ducks back down and then slowly lift his head above the rooftop wall again. He shoots his arrow without aiming, the arrow hits the cobblestone. He ducks back down.

REBEL (cont'd)
Don't just shoot! Aim!

EXT. ALLEY WAY - DAY

Ryu kills off rebels effortlessly. Wonsik and Jun stand back to back, covering for each other and killing soldiers. Ryu sees Wonsik and Jun. He cuts through the rebels like tall grass to reach Wonsik. Wonsik sees Ryu approaching.

WONSIK
Ryu! He's coming this way!

Jun sees Ryu getting closer.

JUN
He's definitely coming to kill you.

WONSIK
I realize that.

JUN
Let's kill him, together.

Ryu runs after them and strikes his sword. Jun and Wonsik hold their swords up, blocking his sword. They continue to fight, Wonsik and Jun taking turns fighting soldiers surrounding them as well.

Ryu goes in to strike Wonsik, but Jun blocks his sword. Ryu exerts his strength onto Jun's defense and lowers him to his knees.

EXT. TOP OF BUILDING - DAY

Hwan takes a deep breath and aims his bow and arrow at the battle below, he closes one eye and scans everyone. His hands are shaky, but he remains focused. He spots Ryu lowering Jun to his knees. Hwan's eyes widen.

He takes another deep breath, and aims his arrow at Ryu. He takes his shot, but misses completely. His shaky hands reach for another arrow by his feet. He draws back his bow again.

Ryu continues to lower Jun, and Wonsik continues to fight the soldiers surrounding them. Ryu presses his sword into the surface of Jun's chest.

Hwan takes another shot, but as soon as he shoots, Ryu has pierced Jun's heart with the sword, the arrow grazing just above his head. Hwan watches in horror. Hwan falls to his butt and begins to cry.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Wonsik turns his anger to Ryu. He fights him with pure rage, gaining the upper hand in the fight. Ryu defends himself, not being able to keep up with Wonsik's movements. Soon Wonsik's adrenaline gives out.

Him and Ryu are now evenly matched in sword fighting. Ryu gains on Wonsik and knocks him to the ground. Wonsik crawls back on his hands away from the tip of Ryu's blade.

RYU

I almost forgot I'm not supposed to
kill you.

(beat)

I sure do want to.

Ryu kicks his face with such force that Wonsik knocks out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The battle is over. The air is smokey and the streets are flooded with the blood of soldiers and rebels. Min-Ki lays dead with Cheol standing over him, wiping blood off of his sword.

Ryu emerges from the smoke walking with Wonsik over his shoulders towards Cheol. Cheol looks up from his task and puts his hand on Ryu's face.

CHEOL

You did well.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Wonsik sits against the wall in a cell with his eyes closed, the sunlight from the cell window directly hitting his face. He listens to the water dripping from the ceiling onto the center of the cell. Cheol sits on a bench outside of the cell.

CHEOL

Do you know why you're in this cell
and not dead on the streets of
Gyeonggi?

Wonsik remains silent.

CHEOL (cont'd)

You should have known your place and
not tried to meddle in a world that
wasn't yours.

(beat)

I'm glad you did though. Nobi will
know not to repeat your mistakes.

(to guards)

Grab him.

Guards grab him from his cell.

CHEOL (cont'd)

Your death will mark a new era—one
that secures my family's dominion.
This nation will finally see that
they shouldn't have doubted my
father. They will see my father's
vision was right all along.

EXT. STREETS OF HANSEONG - DAY

A parade is thrown as a celebration for the victory over the
rebellion. The royal court is there, including King Seonjo
Dancers performing, large food vendors, games, etc. Aram
walks with Eungin along the strip with the food vendors.

He extends his arm out to her, she takes it, looking away
from him.

EUNGIN

What is wrong?

ARAM

Oh, nothing. Just a lot has been on
my mind.

EUNGIN

Well, maybe to cheer you up we should
look into some last minute food
preparations for the wedding.

ARAM

Thanks, Eungin, but I really don't
care what food is there. Whatever my
mother has prepared is fine.

EUNGIN

Oh, okay.

A wealthy looking woman approaches them.

LADY

What an adorable couple! Can you believe your wedding is tomorrow? It is all anyone can talk about.

(beat)

I mean with the victory in Gyeonggi, too. We have been blessed with good fortune lately!

EUNGIN

Indeed.

Aram awkwardly smiles.

Drums echo through the parade. The crowd goes silent. Soldiers march through the center of the parade General Kim and Cheol following them, and behind them is a cage being carried by a dozen chained rebels on their shoulders. In the cage is Wonsik chained to the floor of the cage looking defeated and exhausted. The cage passes Aram. She sees it's Wonsik. She gasps.

ARAM

No.

LADY

Who is that boy? Is that the infamous Min-ki? No, he's too young.

Aram follows the cage, pushing past the crowd.

EUNGIN

Aram! Where are you going?

Aram keeps following the cage.

ARAM

Wonsik!

She picks up her pace.

ARAM (cont'd)

Wonsik! It's Aram!

Wonsik hears Aram. He sees her and grips the bars of the cage. Aram gets stuck in the crowd and can't walk any further.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - DAY

The crowd migrates to witness the public execution. The king sits in his throne on the top of the stairs to the palace. Ryu and General Kim stand with Cheol next to the king.

The cage is placed on the ground next to a raised platform and the soldiers unlock it and free Wonsik from his chains. Soldiers walk Wonsik to the platform and Cheol walks towards the platform.

Hana finds Eungin in the crowd and stands next to him.

HANA

Where is Aram?

EUNGIN

She's at the front.

Hana pushes past the crowd and heads to the front. Wonsik and the rebels kneels on the ground of the courtyard platform as people gather around to witness the execution. Cheol stands proud behind Wonsik with a sword propped against his shoulder.

CHEOL

You all may be wondering who this is. He probably doesn't look like much of a threat. He is clearly only a boy.

(beat)

But he is dangerous indeed.

(beat)

You see, he was my apprentice on the council. The councilmen trusted this boy to aid us in defeating a rebellion, but he betrayed us and joined them! He is a traitor!

(beat)

The battle took many of our men. If you are a mother, a father, this boy is the reason many of your sons will not be coming home today.

The crowd screams classist comments to Wonsik and throws food. Aram walks up to the front of the chaotic crowd, getting a clear view of the platform and sees Wonsik there. She tries runs up to him, but the guards stop her. Cheol sees her and smirks.

CHEOL (cont'd)

(looking at Aram)

That is why he must die.

Cheol lifts his sword and slices Wonsik's head off. It rolls off the platform. Aram escapes the guards grip and runs to Wonsik's head. She holds Wonsik's head, sobbing.

Hana emerges to the front of the crowd, seeing The crowd goes silent and Aram's screams echo against the walls of the palace. Ryu, Eungin, Hana, and the crowd are watching in horror.

General Kim has an empathetic look. Hana runs to her and tries to pull her away from the crowd's eyes.

HANA
Get up Aram! Now! Enough!

ARAM
No!

Aram sobs again. Hana turns to the guards.

HANA
Don't just stand there, grab her!

The guards lift her from the ground and one of them pulls Wonsik's head from her arms. He makes a disgusted face and drops the head on the ground, it rolls on the cobblestone ground, leaving a trail of blood.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Hana tugs Aram's arm towards the basement door. Maids follow behind.

HANA
Open it!

The maids open the basement. Hana throws her to the ground. Aram falls and looks up at Hana.

HANA (cont'd)
After this marriage, I don't want to see you ever again! You are no longer my daughter! I will not be the mother of a whore who gives herself to a nobi!

ARAM
Fuck you! I don't give a shit about this family! You all are monsters!

Hana grabs her by her hair and drags her into the basement. She leaves the basement and the maids lock the door. Aram hits the door and screams.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Hana opens the basement doors, the sunlight hits Aram, but she is already awake, staring forward, blankly.

ARAM
(whispers)
Minjin

Aram looks at the figure in the basement doorway. It's Hana.

HANA
Get up.

EXT. WEDDING DAY - DAY

At the estate, the maids begin to dress Aram who looks like a corpse.

INT. KIM ESTATE - DAY

Eungin is getting dressed by his maids and looks disappointed. His maid deals with his traditional head wear, her face close to his. Eungin forces a smile.

EUNGIN
You have always been good to me.

They lock eyes.

Eungin's maid coughs to break the tension. She continues to put on his traditional head wear.

EUNGIN'S MAID
All done.

She finishes putting on the final touches and walks away. Eungin grabs her hand gently. She tears up.

EUNGIN'S MAID (cont'd)
Aram is certainly a lucky woman.

Eungin's maid walks away, her hand sliding out of Eungin's.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Aram sits across Hana in the carriage. Aram looks distraught.

INT. CARRIAGE - DAY

Eungin sits across from General Kim in the carriage. He looks distraught.

EXT. WEDDING DAY - DAY

At the palace, the wedding begins. Ceremonial drums and songs play, performers entertain the guests. The council members and their families continue to arrive and the king comes out of his palace in a dramatic entrance.

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY

Maids are straightening out Aram's maid outfit and touching up her makeup. Aram faces a mirror. Cheol walks through the door. Aram sees Cheol in the mirror and turns around. She sprints to Cheol and starts throwing her fists at his chest.

ARAM

I will not marry him!

(beat)

Lady Ok has promised I will get her estate when she passes! I don't need to go through with this marriage! I will make my own way!

Cheol grabs her fists.

CHEOL

That king is overseeing the ceremony, that will be worthless.

(beat)

You cannot escape this marriage.

EXT. WEDDING DAY - CONTINUOUS

Aram walks down the aisle with Eungin. Cheol, Hana, and Ryu sit at the front. Her eyes frantically scan the audience, people look at her in disgust and pity. Her and Eungin sit on their knees when reach the officiant.

The officiant lays a cloth over their hands. Eungin and Aram say their vows inaudibly.

EXT. WEDDING DAY - NIGHT

After the ceremony, the guest indulge in dinner.

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Aram walks down the dimly lit hallway in her performance outfit with her swords in each hand. Her maids follow behind her. The light from the lanterns in the courtyard of the palace illuminates her face.

She walks down the isle and people look at her with both disgust and pity. She approaches the performance stage, her family still at the front. Her and Cheol make eye contact. The music begins. She starts her dance.

Her movements are aggressive and sharp. She turns, and with every turn, she sees the ghost of Wonsik. She stumbles over a turn, she breathes heavy and starts to panic. She looks around, there is no ghost. She continues her dance.

She spots Wonsik again. This time he is sitting where Cheol is sitting. The audience has frozen in time, except her family. She sees her brother laughing and her mother giving her a death stare.

She hallucinates Wonsik in the place of where her father was sitting, suddenly, she is her father and she wields the sword recreating Wonsik's execution. She cuts off Wonsik's head in the hallucination.

As reality sets in she realizes that she has actually sliced her fathers throat. Cheol holds his throat, he bleeds out. Ryu rushes to his father's aid and holds his hand over his fathers.

RYU

Father! You're okay, you're okay.

There is uproar in the audience. The soldiers grab the king and pull him inside the palace for safety. Aram runs away, not looking back, the wedding breaks out into chaos, people rushing to Cheol's now dead body and running for their safety. Hana sits in her chair, stunned, not moving an inch.

EXT. STREET OF GYEONGGI - DAY

There is a massive vigil of soldiers lost in battle. Hwan, Bora, and Soo stand together, hugging. Tears stream down their faces. A man gives an inaudible speech.

INT. SHRINE - DAY

Hana and Ryu are dressed in black praying at the family shrine. No Aram.

INT. ESTATE - DAY

General Kim sits across Hana and Ryu.

GENERAL KIM

We are still trying to find her.
Unfortunately, rumors of her
whereabouts have hindered the
investigation. There are speculations
she may have killed herself after her
manic episode.

(beat)

Drowned herself in the river between
the Gyeonggi and Hanseong.

Insert: River.

RYU

My sister did not kill herself. I
know she's alive, so look harder.
Then, I'll kill her myself.

INT. LADY OK - DAY

The kisaeng are treating injured and sick people.

INT. SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

A girl lights a candle and prays at Lady Ok's shrine. There
is noise at the front door, the girl turns around, it's
Aram.

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

General Kim is speaking with kisaeng #1.

GENERAL KIM

We need to do a search of the home.

KISAENG #1

What for?

GENERAL KIM

Haven't you heard? A friend of yours
has gone missing... Aram. Ring a
bell?

KISAENG #1

Of course. Go ahead and search.

The soldiers go in and search every room. The soldiers clear every room, the kisaeng shuffle to the main room.

INT. LADY OK - CONTINUOUS

The kisaeng are lined up side by side. General Kim walks and studies each of them.

GENERAL KIM

Have any of you seen or heard of
Aram's whereabouts?

The kisaeng shake their head.

ALL

No.

General Kim stops in front of Aram, who looks him in the face. He spots the mole on her face. They stare at each other intensely.

GENERAL KIM

Let's go. She's not here.

The soldiers leave. The kisaeng disperse. A few kisaeng hug Aram, and she relaxes into their hold.

INT. SHRINE - DAY

Aram goes back to Lady Ok's shrine and continues praying.

FADE OUT