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Sequence of Scenes and Cast of Characters

Opening

Musicians

Ensemble*

Cloud Flag

Wind Dragon

Young Girl**

Ribbon Dancers 1 & 2

Dumpling Vendor

Beggar

Bird Vendor

*Song: "Stories Riding on the
Wind"

**Song: "Wind Dragon"

Story One: Yu Lan's Search for Beauty

Musicians

Young Girl

Father of Yu Lan

Mother of Yu Lan

Villagers 1, 2, & 3

Lao Lao

4 Water Prop People

Tiger

Eagle

Tree

Snake

Soldiers 1, 2, & 3

Interlude 1

Musicians

Cloud Flag

Wind Dragon

Water Carrier

Peach Vendor

Beggar

Cloth Vendor†

Laundress

Magistrate

Attendants 1 & 2

(additional Villagers optional)

†Song "Come To Market To-
day!"

Story Two: The Mysterious Stranger

Musicians

Cloth Vendor

Old Man

Paw Paw

Rich Neighbor

Poultry Farmer

Laundress

Cook

Interlude 2

Musicians

Sun

Bird Vendor‡

Ribbon Dancer

Cloud Flag

Wind Dragon

Village Boys

Old Woman

‡Song: "Chasing the Sun"

Story Three: Li Chi and the Serpent

Musicians

Old Woman

Serpent (Serpent Flags)

Village Elders 1 & 2

Mother of Li Chi

Father of Li Chi
Li Chi
Sacrificial chickens, geese, and
pig
Girls 1-9
Dog
Prop Person

Interlude 3

Musicians
Kite Flyer
Cloud Flag
Wind Dragon
Bird Vendor
Ribbon Dancer
Dumpling Vendor
Old Woman
Beggar
Laundress
Young Man
Bride*
Sedan Carriers 1 & 2
Bride's Musician
Matchmaker

*Song: "My Life Is Changing"

Story Four: The Khan's Daughter

Musicians
Young Man
Fu Quey's Father
Fu Quey
Khan
Khan's Wife
Borte (and Bagatur the Mighty)

Khan's Men 1, 2, & 3
Demons 1-7
Enemies 1-7
Prop Person
(Note: 7 or more actors may depict
the Khan's Enemy.)

Finale

Musicians
Young Man
Bride
Sedan Carriers 1 & 2
Bride's Musician
Matchmaker
Cloud Flag
Wind Dragon
Ribbon Dancers
Ensemble**

**Song: "Go Off, Dear Friends"

Production Requirements

Cast: The dozens of roles can be played by a huge cast, by an ensemble of 14, or as few as 6 with the use of puppet constructions and a musician. Many roles are not gender specific, and the classical tradition of men portraying women could be reversed with women playing men as well.

Scenery: Bare stage with a few suggestive props and mime, as in Chinese theater tradition, represents all settings. Large pieces of cloth required for various effects: silk streamers for traditional Ribbon Dance, long strips for manipulation simulating water, cloud silk, flags, and optionally the Wind Dragon.

Costumes: Unit outfit of loose trousers and tops is worn by all, with single pieces added to define different characters.

Music: The five songs can be sung a cappella or accompanied by a wind or string instrument. Percussion accompaniment of the action is shared by the ensemble or a designated musician. Taped music can be included in the mix for such events as the ribbon bridal procession.

Additional production notes appear at the end of the script.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

To Emerson College for its support of the development of this script with a Faculty Research Grant and a workshop production; to Master Bow Sim Mark for her instruction in wushu (Chinese martial arts); to Chiao Bin Huang for her coaching of gesture, dance, and cultural traditions; and to Shu-Hui Chen for her advice on musical accompaniment.

Sources for the four stories dramatized in this script are available in the following books:

Sweet and Sour, translated and edited by Carol Kendall and Yao-wen Li (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1990).

Tongues of Jade, by Laurence Yep, illustrated by David Wiesner (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991).

The Khan's Daughter, A Mongolian Folktale, by Laurence Yep, illustrated by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng (New York: Scholastic Press, 1997).

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

Riding the Wind: Story Plays from Old China is based in part on stories in *Tongues of Jade* (HarperCollins) and *The Khan's Daughter* (Scholastic Books), both by Laurence Yep, and *Sweet and Sour* (Houghton Mifflin) translated by Carol Kendall and Yao-wen Li.

RIDING THE WIND

STORY PLAYS FROM OLD CHINA

text and lyrics
by Carol Korty

folk melodies for songs
arranged by Shu-Hui Chen

Opening

(An empty stage signifying an open field and country road.)

[Gong sounds. Flute or Xu plays haunting melody. Percussion begins softly and grows stronger.]

(CLOUD, a long piece of silk, manipulated by an actor, appears and swoops across stage and off. ENSEMBLE of actors enters singing, traditionally women first, followed by men.)

ENSEMBLE. *(Sings:)*

Stories from Old China

Riding on the wind,

Brought by a dragon long ago.

Brought by a dragon long ago.

Tales to make us laugh and listen,

Tales to help us grow

With lessons from the ancestors

Who lived long ago.

Now greet the mighty Wind Dragon,

Symbol of luck and good cheer.

He's bringing stories from China

That can make old and distant places near.

(ENSEMBLE moves to places.)

[Cymbal and Drum]

(CLOUD reappears followed by WIND DRAGON. Note: See appendix for suggestion for Dragon. YOUNG GIRL runs in with kite and weaves in and out around WIND DRAGON before it exits.)

YOUNG GIRL. *(Sings:)*

Wind rushing by, I dance with you.
You lift my spirit and make me happy.
Swift fly my feet, when you come to chase me,
Riding your dragon of air.
Oh, wind dragon of the rushing wind and air!

(VILLAGERS enter as though blown in by wind.)

CLOTH VENDOR. Cloth for sale! Fine silks. Sturdy cottons.

(RIBBON DANCERS run on, holding silk ribbons gathered into “flowers” on sticks. One DANCER runs to play with YOUNG GIRL. Another DANCER goes to CLOTH VENDOR to examine his wares. Additional Ribbon Dancers may be added, as desired. DUMPLING VENDOR enters with tray.)

DUMPLING VENDOR. Hot dumplings! Fresh dumplings! Sweet tasting dumplings!

(BEGGAR enters with a begging bowl.)

BEGGAR. Please—can you spare one? My stomach is empty.

DUMPLING VENDOR. Pay and it’s yours.

BEGGAR. My pocket’s as empty as my bowl. Can’t you spare one?

DUMPLING VENDOR. Move on. If I don’t sell these, then *I* will not eat. *(Approaches VILLAGE GIRLS:)* Fresh dumplings, pretty ones?

RIBBON DANCER 1. We have no money with us.

RIBBON DANCER 2. We can’t eat now.

YOUNG GIRL. We’re here to practice our dance.

DUMPLING VENDOR. *(Exits calling:)* Hot dumplings!

BEGGAR. *(Hurries after DUMPLING VENDOR, pleading:)* Just one?

YOUNG GIRL. Are we ready to practice?

(RIBBON DANCERS move into place with “flower” ribbons. BIRD VENDOR enters with a cage of birds and shyly stands to one side watching. Other VILLAGERS exit as music begins and RIBBON

DANCERS *perform a traditional ribbon dance. Note: See appendix for instruction on Ribbon Dances. YOUNG GIRL approaches young BIRD VENDOR.*)

YOUNG GIRL. Come join our dance.

BIRD VENDOR. Oh, I couldn't. I'm not beautiful like you and the others.

YOUNG GIRL. You need not be beautiful to dance or to sing.

BIRD VENDOR. I don't want people to see me.

YOUNG GIRL. We need one more dancer.

BIRD VENDOR. I can not make myself do it—or even to sell these song birds as my mother has asked.

YOUNG GIRL. You sound like Yu Lan.

BIRD VENDOR. Who is Yu Lan?

YOUNG GIRL. A girl in a story.

BIRD VENDOR. A new story?

YOUNG GIRL. A very old story. A story brought to us by the Wind Dragon.

BIRD VENDOR. Will you tell it?

YOUNG GIRL. If you promise you'll join us.

BIRD VENDOR. Let me listen first.

(Joins MUSICIAN as DANCERS clear and ACTORS enter to begin the action.)

[Gong]

YU LAN'S SEARCH FOR BEAUTY

YOUNG GIRL. In a small town lived a girl named Yu Lan. Her parents ran a noodle shop and worked long and hard. People came to buy their noodles and soup from early morning to late evening.

FATHER OF YU LAN. Yu Lan, come and help.

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Yu Lan, we need you in the front of the shop.

(VILLAGERS crowd into shop to buy soup and noodles.)

YU LAN. Honorable Father, Honorable Mother, I'm in the kitchen, cooking soup. This pot is almost ready.

MOTHER OF YU LAN. We have enough here. Come and help serve it.

YU LAN. Please allow me to stay in the kitchen.

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Always cooking and mixing. Always hiding from view.

YU LAN. My face is not pretty to look at.

FATHER OF YU LAN. What nonsense!

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Your face is just fine. Be content with yourself.

YOUNG GIRL. But Yu Lan worried and whined and complained.

YU LAN. I want to be beautiful.

(VILLAGERS exit. FATHER and MOTHER look in on YU LAN.)

YOUNG GIRL. She mixed many brews...

FATHER OF YU LAN. What is that stench!

YOUNG GIRL. ...to help her complexion...

FATHER OF YU LAN. It can not be noodles!

MOTHER OF YU LAN. What is that cream?

YU LAN. A salve to bring radiance!

YOUNG GIRL. ...she crushed herbs into water...

MOTHER OF YU LAN. What are you doing!

YU LAN. Some drops for my eyes.

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Something's wrong with your eyes?

YU LAN. I want them to shine.

FATHER OF YU LAN. If you're going to carry on like this...

(YU LAN throws a scarf over her head to hide.)

MOTHER OF YU LAN. ...and cover up like that...

FATHER OF YU LAN. ...you might as well go to old Lao Lao.

YU LAN. Lao Lao?

FATHER OF YU LAN. The old wise one who lives by the river. She has magical potions. She might help you be what you want to be.

(YU LAN quickly puts a bowl into a cloth bag for her journey, bows to her parents, and runs off. FATHER calls after her.)

Follow the path up the mountain, down the rocks to the river. Cross where it's shallow.

YOUNG GIRL. *(Narrating YU LAN's mime:)* Yu Lan ran out of the town, up the mountain path, over steep rocks, and down to the river.

(PROP PEOPLE enter with long, blue cloth and manipulate it as water.)

YU LAN. The river's very wide. No part looks shallow. I'm glad I am tall.

(YU LAN wades into the river and moves through the moving strips of blue cloth. Once she is across, the WATER disappears. LAO LAO is seen winnowing rice from chaff, tossing the grain in a wide, flat basket.)

Good day, Honorable Mother. I am seeking Lao Lao. Are you that wise woman?

LAO LAO. (*Glances briefly at YU LAN and continues to work.*) Hump. Sometimes I'm wise.

YU LAN. Do you make magical potions?

LAO LAO. Why would you need them?

YU LAN. To make me beautiful.

LAO LAO. Which part?

YU LAN. My face.

LAO LAO. Oh. Let me see. (*Picks up YU LAN's scarf to inspect her face.*) Hump. Chaff looks beautiful as it's blown away by the wind. But it is not nourishing. Rice is not beautiful, but it is nourishing and good.

YU LAN. Can you help me?

LAO LAO. I can make a potion that will make your face beautiful. Are you sure you want that?

YU LAN. Oh, yes.

LAO LAO. Being beautiful can sometimes be troublesome.

YU LAN. Oh, no.

LAO LAO. Then bring me a magic white flower from the vine wrapped round the large pine tree on the top of the mountain.

YU LAN. I'll find it and bring it to you.

LAO LAO. We'll see.

YU LAN. Thank you, Honorable Mother.

LAO LAO. Wait till it's done.

(YU LAN bows and quickly leaves.)

YOUNG GIRL. Yu Lan turned and found the river was dry. She ran across the stones and climbed the path.

(A TIGER springs out to block YU LAN's way.)

YU LAN. Oh, no. Who are you!

(TIGER makes menacing moves.)

A hungry tiger, it seems. Please do not eat me, Noble Tiger. Have this bowl of our noodles. They're tastier than I.

(Pulls bowl from her sack, mimes emptying noodles from it, and runs by TIGER, leaving it behind. As TIGER exits, a TREE appears with vine of white flowers.)

YOUNG GIRL. At the top of the mountain she found the huge pine tree with the vine of tiny white flowers wrapped round it.

(A large EAGLE swoops down, as though from TREE, and menaces YU LAN. YU LAN jumps back and then turns to face EAGLE, countering each move with a graceful move of her own.)

YU LAN. Honorable Eagle, I won't hurt you. Is your nest nearby? I just want a flower, which I'm sure you don't need. You are large and magnificent. I am plain and have nothing. Look here in my bag. You'll see.

(YU LAN tosses her bag over head of EAGLE to distract him, snatches a flower, and runs down the path.)

Thank you for letting me take the white flower.

(WATER appears in river bed.)

Now water is back in the river. Did I only imagine it gone?

(YU LAN steps into river to cross. WATER rises. A SNAKE slips through water and darts at her, trying to take the flower. YU LAN dodges the SNAKE through the waves, holding the flower high.)

Splendid Snake, you can't have this flower. Do you think its magic will make you a human? I know many snakes have this desire. But you may not have your wish until I have mine.

(Flicks her scarf at the SNAKE to distract it and jumps out of the river. WATER and SNAKE disappear. LAO LAO appears winnowing rice.)

YU LAN. I've returned with the flower.

LAO LAO. Hump. I didn't expect you. Anyone smart enough to get this flower doesn't need to be beautiful, too.

YU LAN. Please!

LAO LAO. Very well.

YOUNG GIRL. The old woman squeezed the blossom and made a potion from its juice. She gave it to Yu Lan with these instructions...

LAO LAO. Three drops: one to rub on your face, one to apply to sores and blemishes, and the third to drink.

YU LAN. Thank you, Honorable one.

YOUNG GIRL. She dashed home and applied the potion as she was told.

YU LAN. This feels very strange. What is happening to me!

(MOTHER enters and stops in amazement.)

YU LAN. Honorable Mother, I have...What is wrong?

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Honorable Husband, come quickly.

(FATHER enters and registers shock.)

YU LAN. Am I uglier than ever? Please tell me.

FATHER OF YU LAN. Is it you, daughter?

YU LAN. Oh, no.

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Such beauty, I have never seen.

(Calls to VILLAGERS:)

Come. Come. See Yu Lan.

(VILLAGERS crowd in doorway. YU LAN is delighted with their response.)

YOUNG GIRL. News traveled fast. Through the whole town.

(YU LAN'S PARENTS and VILLAGERS move into a freeze focusing on YU LAN.)

In the midst of this excitement, far from there, the Emperor fell ill and lay close to death with a raging fever. The royal physicians said his body had lost the balance of yin and yang. Yang for strength, yin for gentleness.

(VILLAGERS move into new position to observe YU LAN's beauty and freeze.)

In his desperate state, the fierce yang of his fever needed quick cooling by calm, gentle yin.

(VILLAGERS and FAMILY move to new position and freeze.)

These ancient doctors believed the highest concentration of yin lay in the heart of a girl...

(YU LAN'S MOTHER pulls her away from VILLAGERS. All freeze facing front, registering surprise at the pronouncement.)

ALL. Ahhh!

YOUNG GIRL. —the more beautiful the girl, the more potent the yin.

(VILLAGERS look at YU LAN and freeze.)

ALL. Ohhh!

YOUNG GIRL. Soldiers were dispatched to find such a beauty and to bring back her heart!

(All register horror and freeze their expressions as SOLDIERS enter marching.)

ALL. Oooh!

YOUNG GIRL. News traveled fast.

(VILLAGERS quickly return to their houses. SOLDIERS knock on door of VILLAGER 1.)

[Knocking]

EMPEROR SOLDIER 1. We seek a beautiful girl.

VILLAGER 1. Not here. You want Yu Lan.

[Knocking]

EMPEROR SOLDIER 2. Show us your most beautiful girl.

VILLAGER 2. No one here is as beautiful as Yu Lan.

(SOLDIERS knock on door of VILLAGER 3. In next house, MOTHER hurries to YU LAN.)

[Knocking]

MOTHER OF YU LAN. Yu Lan, the soldiers. Quickly hide.

FATHER OF YU LAN. We will delay them.

EMPEROR SOLDIER 3. We are looking for the girl Yu Lan.

VILLAGER 3. Oh, that beauty! She lives over there.

(VILLAGER 3 points out house as YU LAN slips out with scarf over face.)

YOUNG GIRL. She tried to escape. All paths were blocked by more soldiers.

(YU LAN runs past VILLAGERS.)

VILLAGERS. Yulan! Yulan!

YU LAN. Shhhh!

YOUNG GIRL. She ran to the Temple of Mercy.

YU LAN. Please help me!

(LAO LAO appears.)

LAO LAO. Well, well.

YU LAN. Lao Lao, you are here!

LAO LAO. What is the matter?

YU LAN. Please, I need my old face back. Quickly.

LAO LAO. Being beautiful can sometimes be troublesome.

YU LAN. I want to be as I was.

LAO LAO. Very well. I thought you might change your mind. I saved three drops of the potion. Two drops for the outside. One for the inside.

(LAO LAO disappears. YU LAN applies two drops, swallows a third, pulls scarf over face again, and runs home. SOLDIERS knock at her door.)

[Knocking]

(FATHER and MOTHER open door and bow.)

EMPEROR SOLDIER 1. We've come for your beautiful daughter Yu Lan.

FATHER OF YU LAN. She is beautiful to us...

MOTHER OF YU LAN. ...but to others most ordinary.

(YU LAN comes out with scarf over face.)

MOTHER OF YU LAN. No...

YU LAN. I am Yu Lan.

(Removes the scarf.)

EMPEROR SOLDIER 2. There is nothing special about this girl! She is no beauty.

FATHER OF YU LAN. Not the kind you're looking for.

EMPEROR SOLDIER 3. Wasting our time.

(SOLDIERS exit. YU LAN, FATHER, and MOTHER bow to each other, smiling.)

BIRD VENDOR. Whom did they take instead?

YOUNG GIRL. Good luck for all—the Emperor in contemplating beauty and tranquility quieted his fever. He ordered a halt to the search.

BIRD VENDOR. No one needed to be sacrificed?

YOUNG GIRL. No one.

BIRD VENDOR. Yu Lan could have kept the beautiful face.

YOUNG GIRL. She had no more desire for it. She was finally happy to be herself.

BIRD VENDOR. And I should be, too. Thank you for the story. It has a good lesson...

[Flute sounds a bird call.]

...and has made my birds sing!

YOUNG GIRL. Will you join our dance?

BIRD VENDOR. Oh! Let me practice singing first...with my birds.

YOUNG GIRL. Very well. We'll look for you later.

(Runs off.)

[Gong]

Interlude 1

[*Cymbal and Drums*]

(CLOUD and WIND DRAGON *run on*. BIRD VENDOR *watches cautiously*. YOUNG GIRL *runs off after* CLOUD and WIND DRAGON *as they exit*. VILLAGERS *are blown in*: a PEACH VENDOR, a WATER CARRIER *with two buckets hanging from shoulder pole*, and a BEGGAR.)

BIRD VENDOR. (*Calls out hesitantly:*) Song birds for sale!

(*Startled by her own voice, she exits.*)

BEGGAR. A bowl of rice, please.

WATER CARRIER. I'm delivering water. Out of my way.

BEGGAR. A drink of clean water?

(DUMPLING VENDOR *enters with tray.*)

WATER CARRIER. You are more trouble than ducks under foot. Keep away.

DUMPLING VENDOR. Dumplings! Hot dumplings.

PEACH VENDOR. Peaches! Delicious fresh peaches!

CLOTH VENDOR. Cloth for sale. Sturdy cottons. Fine silks.

BEGGAR. (*To PEACH VENDOR:*) A handful of rice, please?

CLOTH VENDOR. Cloth for every occasion.

PEACH VENDOR. I'm selling peaches. I have no rice.

BEGGAR. A peach would be heaven.

PEACH VENDOR. Pay and you'll have one. I am not wealthy. I can't give things away.

CLOTH VENDOR. (*sings.*)

Come to market today, ay!

Buy your wares from us all, all.

I have silks and sturdy cotton

Cloth for you.

Come to market today, ay!

Something here for you all, all.

Finest silks and cotton cloth.
Come buy.
Something here for everyone.

(LAUNDRESS walks up to look at CLOTH VENDOR's stack of fabrics.)

CLOTH VENDOR. No washing today?

LAUNDRESS. I've scrubbed it already and spread it out to dry. I'm here to buy cloth for new trousers.

(They mime a transaction.)

DUMPLING VENDOR. Hot dumplings! Dumplings for sale.

(MAGISTRATE enters in "a cart." Note: See appendix for description of this Chinese theater convention. ATTENDANT 1 walks in front, clearing a path. ATTENDANT 2 walks behind MAGISTRATE, holding out a stick with a cloth depicting the wheel of the cart.)

ATTENDANT 1. Clear the way!

ATTENDANT 2. Make way.

ATTENDANT 1. Make way for the Magistrate.

ATTENDANT 2. Clear the road for His Honor!

(All VILLAGERS drop to their knees with heads bowed.)

MAGISTRATE. Stop here! Let me see what happens in this market. You there. What are you doing?

LAUNDRESS. Honorable sir, I'm buying cloth for new trousers.

MAGISTRATE. And you?

BEGGAR. I've come for rice, Honorable Sir. I have nothing. A coin for a peach or a bowl of rice, Most Honorable...

MAGISTRATE. Shoo him off! I will not have beggars. He deserves a beating.

BEGGAR. Honorable One, please spare me.

(ATTENDANT 1 mimes beating BEGGAR with stick.)

MAGISTRATE. Enough. Let us leave. But wait! Get me a peach from that woman there.

(ATTENDANT 1 takes peach from PEACH VENDOR's basket without paying. She allows it to happen without protest.)

Carry on with your business. I've seen enough of this market. We're off.

(MAGISTRATE and ATTENDANTS exit. DUMPLING VENDOR exits in different direction. CLOTH VENDOR signals to BEGGAR.)

CLOTH VENDOR. Wait, you look hungry. I have a rice cake.

(BEGGAR takes offered rice cake and exits.)

WATER CARRIER. Don't feed a beggar! He'll come back to bother.

CLOTH VENDOR. The poor man was hungry. Can't we be kind?

PEACH VENDOR. Let the Magistrate feed him. He's wealthy. I have nothing to spare.

CLOTH VENDOR. No one is too poor to be kind and to share.

PEACH VENDOR. What do you have to share?

CLOTH VENDOR. A story, if you'll listen.

PEACH VENDOR. A story? Is it yours?

CLOTH VENDOR. It's a gift from our ancestors—carried here on the wind.

LAUNDRESS. Like many old tales. Which one is this?

CLOTH VENDOR. A story of gold called the Mysterious Stranger.

LAUNDRESS. Ah, yes, I remember it.

WATER CARRIER. I have no time for stories. I'm on my way.

(Exits.)

CLOTH VENDOR. There's a laundress in it. You say her lines.

PEACH VENDOR. Now tell me of gold.

[*Gong*]

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

CLOTH VENDOR. There was a village filled with people who had no time for each other.

(A RICH VILLAGER enters to establish her house, by stepping over threshold. Note: See appendix for description of this Chinese theater convention. POULTRY FARMER enters and mimes herding ducks with a willow stick.)

POULTRY FARMER. Move along, silly ducks.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Get them out of my garden.

POULTRY FARMER. They aren't in your garden. We're off to the river for good grass and grubs.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Oh, please stop a minute to help tie up my peach tree. It's heavy with fruit. I can't do it alone.

POULTRY FARMER. I can not help you. I'm very busy.

(Exits as LAUNDRESS enters with basket.)

LAUNDRESS. I've washed all these clothes and need a good place to spread them to dry in the sun. The field by the river is too muddy right now. May I use your large patch of grass here?

RICH NEIGHBOR. Certainly not. People will think it's a laundry. You forget my position.

LAUNDRESS. I remember it well. You're the wealthiest in town.

(RICH NEIGHBOR turns away as COOK enters.)

COOK. Oh, wait.

LAUNDRESS. She won't help you.

COOK. I ran short of flour and must finish my dumplings. Could you...

LAUNDRESS. I have a load of wet laundry. I can't help you.

(Exits. COOK starts to leave.)

CLOTH VENDOR. All were too busy.

PEACH VENDOR. It sounds like our village.

CLOTH VENDOR. No one was helpful. Except for old Paw Paw who was kind to them all.

(PAW PAW enters and calls after the COOK.)

PAW PAW. Did I hear you need flour? I have a bit left in my house. Wait a minute; I'll bring it to you.

(Mimes stepping over threshold and getting jar. Steps back outside.)

Here is some flour. I hope it's enough. It's all that I have.

COOK. It will do. There just won't be leftovers.

(Hurries off.)

RICH NEIGHBOR. *(Eaves-dropping:)* Paw Paw, why give away your last bit of flour?

PAW PAW. She has children to feed. She needs food more than I.

RICH NEIGHBOR. You're a fool. Oh, Paw Paw, if you have the time, could you help me tie up this peach tree? It's laden with fruit and hangs low to the ground.

PAW PAW. Of course, I will help.

(PAW PAW and RICH NEIGHBOR mime tying up peach tree branches. POULTRY FARMER returns driving ducks.)

POULTRY FARMER. The good grass is gone from the bank of the river. My ducks need...

PAW PAW. Why not take them to my field behind my house?

POULTRY FARMER. It's not as good as the river, but it will do.

CLOTH VENDOR. The more that she helped, the more people asked.

(A BODISATTVA, a holy man, quietly enters and walks through village unnoticed, observing.)

A stranger, walking through town, noticed all this...but said nothing.

(VILLAGERS push by BODISATTVA as they rush on and off.)

LAUNDRESS. I am so hot. I think I will faint. No breeze. Paw Paw, please...

PAW PAW. Here, take my fan.

COOK. Paw Paw, it is cold. Do you have a shawl?

PAW PAW. Yes, of course.

(Mimes removing her shawl and giving it.)

POULTRY FARMER. Paw Paw, my rice field's gone dry. Could I use yours?

PAW PAW. Yes, I'm too old to work it. You might as well have it.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Paw Paw, you're a fool.

PAW PAW. I give where I can, but now I have nothing. And I need food.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Don't ask me for peaches. I'm using all these.

PAW PAW. Of course. But my house. Could you buy it? Then I'll have money for rice.

RICH NEIGHBOR. I'll make you a bargain. Here is the money...

PAW PAW. It's not very much.

RICH NEIGHBOR. ...just like the house. You can rent it from me and not have to move.

PAW PAW. Very well.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Just pay on time.

(Turns away and steps over threshold.)

(PAW PAW sits on stool outside her house, tending her patch of garden.)

CLOTH VENDOR. Then one day the stranger spoke up and asked for...

(The BODISATTVA assumes the manner of an OLD MAN as POULTRY FARMER enters.)

OLD MAN. A little water, please. Just a small bowl of water to wash my feet. I do not ask for much.

POULTRY FARMER. Water? I'm tending my ducks. I have no water.

(Exits.)

OLD MAN. A bowl of water?

COOK. *(Rushing through:)* This is soup for my family. They want it hot. I'm in a hurry.

OLD MAN. Might you spare a bowl of clean water?

LAUNDRESS. *(Rushing through:)* Watch out for my laundry! It's clean and you're dirty.

OLD MAN. This looks like a rich house. They'll have water here.

(Mimes knocking on door.)

[Knocking]

RICH NEIGHBOR. *(Comes to door.)* You are so dirty!

OLD MAN. Could you give me some water? Just a small bowl to wash my feet...

RICH NEIGHBOR. You'd need an ocean to clean your filth. Go away.

(Turns away but continues to eaves-drop.)

PAW PAW. *(To OLD MAN:)* A bowl of water? Of course.

OLD MAN. To clean my dusty feet.

PAW PAW. A bowl is so small. I'll bring a bucket. Sit here and rest.

(OLD MAN sits and mimes washing his feet.)

OLD MAN. Thank you, kind lady.

PAW PAW. I'm no lady. Just an old woman with little to share, but I'll share that gladly. Certainly water. And a little soup?

OLD MAN. Thank you, no. I'll continue my travels.

PAW PAW. Why not rest first?

OLD MAN. I must go, but thank you for asking. You are the first to do so. Many thanks for the water.

(Carefully gives PAW PAW the bucket.)

Do not throw it out yet. Place it by your bed tonight. Do not look inside until the morning.

PAW PAW. I will do as you say.

OLD MAN. You have been kind.

(Exits slowly.)

PAW PAW. Good journey to you. I'll take this inside and cover it to make sure I don't look. It's very dirty! I'll not be tempted.

RICH NEIGHBOR. *(Poking out head:)* Paw Paw, are you going to keep that filthy water?

PAW PAW. Yes. He gave it to me as though it were a gift.

RICH NEIGHBOR. You are foolish.

(PAW PAW bows politely and steps over the threshold into her house. RICH NEIGHBOR exits. PAW PAW stands with back to audience a minute or mimes placing bucket by bed, covering it, and lying down.)

[Cock crows.]

(PAW PAW rises, steps over threshold and greets the sun.)

PAW PAW. My melon plants look dry. They're asking for water—like the old man yesterday. I'll use the dirty water from the bucket. My, this has grown heavy!

(Removes cover and mimes pouring out gold coins.)

What? This looks like gold!

(Bites a coin to test it. POULTRY FARMER passes. PAW PAW stops him.)

Could this be gold?

(PAW PAW hands him a coin; POULTRY FARMER bites it and nods with surprise.)

It is gold!

(RICH NEIGHBOR pops out to investigate. PAW PAW hands her a coin.)

Is this enough to buy back my house?

RICH NEIGHBOR. What is it? *(Bites the coin:)* Gold! Where did you get it!

PAW PAW. From the old man who asked for water.

CLOTH VENDOR. Paw Paw bought back her house and some good farm land. And who should appear the very next day but the same poor old man.

OLD MAN. A bowl of water, please?

CLOTH VENDOR. This time all rushed to help him.

POULTRY FARMER. Here, I have water.

COOK. Let me give you a washing.

LAUNDRESS. No, I'm a laundress and know how to clean.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Come with me. Let me help you. Have water and soup. Anything you could want.

(Shoos away VILLAGERS, who exit.)

OLD MAN. That's very kind. Just a bowl of water. To clean my feet.

CLOTH VENDOR. She gave him some water. He washed, gave it back, and told her...

OLD MAN. Keep this water without looking at it till dawn.

RICH NEIGHBOR. Many thanks.

(Mimes covering bucket.)

OLD MAN. You might be surprised.

(Exits slowly.)

PEACH VENDOR. Did she get gold?

[Cock crows]

RICH NEIGHBOR. It's morning. Now my reward!

(Mimes removing cover.)

Ahhh! Snakes! Ahhh! Lizards!

PEACH VENDOR. Oh, dear!

(RICH NEIGHBOR falls to ground.)

CLOTH VENDOR. She collapsed in shame. But after that...she changed!

PEACH VENDOR. How did she change?

CLOTH VENDOR. She and Paw Paw both shared their riches and kindness till the end of their days. And shouldn't we?

PEACH VENDOR. Share and be kind?

CLOTH VENDOR. Yes. Share and be kind.

PEACH VENDOR. Well, it wouldn't hurt...

CLOTH VENDOR. It could bring surprising riches.

PEACH VENDOR. And a peach for you.

(Mimes giving him one.)

Thanks for your story.

(CLOTH VENDOR and PEACH VENDOR nod to each other and exit.)

Peaches for sale. Juicy peaches!

[Gong]

Interlude 2

[Flute music]

(BIRD VENDOR enters with bird cage, makes sure no one is present, and tries hawking.)

BIRD VENDOR. Song birds for sale! Song birds to wake you at dawn. Song birds to welcome the sun.

(RIBBON DANCER enters unnoticed and stops to listen. BIRD VENDOR gathers courage and sings as PROP PERSON moves SUN on high pole slowly across.)

Rising sun in the early morn
Reaches high in the sky.
Moving slowly overhead,
Smiling, thinking
He's beyond my grasp.
But I will ride a dragon.
Ride the wind, a rushing dragon.

RIBBON DANCER. I like your song.

BIRD VENDOR. Oh! Thank you. You're one of the Ribbon Dancers.

RIBBON DANCER. Yes. I'll buy your birds. *(Laughing:)* I'd like your song, too.

BIRD VENDOR. I'll teach it to you.

RIBBON DANCER. Good! Now, let me teach you our ribbon dance. Come!

[Cymbals and Drums]

(BIRD VENDOR and RIBBON DANCER start to leave but are interrupted by CLOUD and WIND DRAGON rushing on, chased by VILLAGE BOYS banging sticks and drums, running in circles.)

RIBBON DANCER. Don't frighten my birds!

(OLD WOMAN enters.)

BIRD VENDOR. Go away. Go away!

RIBBON DANCER. Too much noise. Too much confusion!

BIRD VENDOR. Excuse me, Honorable One. I did not mean you.

RIBBON DANCER. Can't things be calm?

OLD WOMAN. Not with that wind. It's like a dragon today.

(Laughs as CLOUD and WIND DRAGON circle off, chased by the BOYS.)

RIBBON DANCER. I hate the Wind Dragon. I want only soft breeze.

OLD WOMAN. Don't say that.

BIRD VENDOR. The wind feels too fierce.

OLD WOMAN. Today it brings strong yang energy.

RIBBON DANCER. I want only the gentleness of yin.

OLD WOMAN. Gentleness of yin is good. But so is the strength of yang.

RIBBON DANCER. I am a girl and need only yin.

OLD WOMAN. You are wrong! Women need strong yang just as men need gentle yin. We all need both.

BIRD VENDOR. I am frightened by yang.

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi would have no patience with either of you.

BIRD VENDOR. Who is Li Chi?

OLD WOMAN. A warrior woman.

BIRD VENDOR. She lives nearby?

OLD WOMAN. She lives in a story...

RIBBON DANCER. Oh, she isn't real.

OLD WOMAN. She's very real. She comes alive each time her story is told.

BIRD VENDOR. The story must be from the ancestors.

OLD WOMAN. Of course. Brought to us by this wind. It tells us that women must be strong.

RIBBON DANCER. Very well. We will listen.

[*Gong*]

LI CHI AND THE SERPENT

OLD WOMAN. A mountain village lived in fear of a monstrous, vicious serpent.

(SERPENT enters, thrashing with fierce moves.)

Its fiery breath burned their crops. It seized their animals.

(VILLAGERS and ELDERS enter and mime in quick succession the following narration, actors enacting the animals. NOTE: Perform the action of this tale in a snappy, comic fashion to keep it from being gruesome.)

The people gave the serpent gifts of fresh fruit, of live chickens, prize geese, even a plump pig. Nothing stopped its thrashing.

(MOTHER OF LI CHI and FATHER OF LI CHI enter.)

One day Li Chi was born to a poor family in this unfortunate village.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Honorable husband, our new child has arrived.

FATHER OF LI CHI. Number six. Do you bring me good news?

MOTHER OF LI CHI. She is healthy and well.

FATHER OF LI CHI. She?

MOTHER OF LI CHI. The child is a girl. We will call her Li Chi.

FATHER OF LI CHI. We are unlucky. Five girls already. And now there are six. I need boys to help me farm.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. We all help farm.

FATHER OF LI CHI. But who will earn dowries for my daughters?

MOTHER OF LI CHI. I do not know. We won't think of that now.

(LI CHI's family comment from one corner of the stage while ELDERS, GIRLS, and SERPENT carry on the following action.)

OLD WOMAN. One night the serpent made it known to someone in a dream...

VILLAGE ELDER 1. The serpent wants a young girl of marriageable age to devour!

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Then each year we will select a girl, twelve years of age, to sacrifice.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Oh, no!

VILLAGE ELDER 1. This sacrifice will appease the serpent...

VILLAGE ELDER 2. ...and save our village.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. I fear for my daughters. What if one is picked?

FATHER OF LI CHI. We'll try not to think it. Perhaps we'll be lucky.

OLD WOMAN. Although Li Chi's parents wished they had sons, they loved all their daughters and Li Chi especially for her sweet, gentle ways. Li Chi was also curious and asked many questions.

(VILLAGE GIRLS enter and line up on one side of stage, ready to step out when addressed. Note: All nine girls could be played by three actors in rotation. As each VILLAGE ELDER selects a girl, he quickly delivers her to SERPENT who snatches her. LI CHI and her PARENTS observe and comment from the side.)

VILLAGE ELDER 1. It's time for the Serpent Festival!

LI CHI. What is the Serpent Festival?

FATHER OF LI CHI. Come away, dear, it's nothing for you.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Come inside quickly.

GIRL 1. A festival! Oh, lovely! Will we all see the Serpent?

VILLAGE ELDER 1. You're the only one this year.

OLD WOMAN. The next year...

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Come along, my dear. Don't be shy.

GIRL 2. I'm afraid to go out on my own.

VILLAGE ELDER 2. I'm here to guide you.

LI CHI. Why can't I watch?

FATHER OF LI CHI. It will make you unhappy.

OLD WOMAN. Year three...

VILLAGE ELDER 1. What a beauty you are! And of marriageable age!

GIRL 3. Where is my husband?

VILLAGER 1. Just come with me.

LI CHI. But where are they going? Can't I go, too?

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Don't ever wish that.

OLD WOMAN. Young Li Chi watched each year. Soon she grew anxious.

LI CHI. Honorable Father, the girls go and never return. I am afraid!

FATHER OF LI CHI. Li Chi, do not have fear. You are too young to be chosen.

LI CHI. I won't always be young!

FATHER OF LI CHI. Do not think about it.

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi tried to close her mind.

VILLAGE ELDER 2. It's that time of year once again, and you have been chosen.

GIRL 4. I know what you're doing. I don't want to go!

VILLAGE ELDER 2. You have no choice.

LI CHI. I'm trying hard.

VILLAGE ELDER 1. This is the fifth year and now it's your turn.

GIRL 5. I am too young to marry. I want to stay home.

VILLAGE ELDER 1. You won't have to marry. I will tell you our plan.

GIRL 5. Noooooo!

LI CHI. It's not working.

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Dear lady, you are wandering in circles.

GIRL 6. I've lost my way. Can you help me?

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Of course. Come over here.

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi's fear turned to sorrow.

LI CHI. Honorable Mother, I weep for the young girls.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Do not cry for them. They die swiftly and with honor.

LI CHI. No one protects them.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Someone must be sacrificed to save the village.

LI CHI. Then I weep for myself.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Only one girl is picked; it need not be you.

VILLAGE ELDER 1. You haven't yet heard of the Serpent Festival?

GIRL 7. Is that the one with lots of food?

VILLAGE ELDER 1. For the Serpent, yes.

LI CHI. How can he deceive her?

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Oh, oh, you're going the wrong direction.

GIRL 8. I don't like snakes.

VILLAGE ELDER 2. It's a serpent really.

GIRL 8. Oh!

LI CHI. Can't they see what is happening?

GIRL 9. I'm very shy. Please leave me alone.

VILLAGE ELDER 1. I will in a minute. Step this way first.

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi's fear and sorrow changed to anger and resolve.

LI CHI. Honorable Father, Honorable Mother. I have turned twelve. There is no need to pick a girl for the Serpent. I will face the monster.

FATHER OF LI CHI. No, no, Li Chi.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. We love you dearly. Do not sacrifice yourself. None of your sisters were picked. And why should it be you?

LI CHI. I might not be picked, but I do not want any more to die this way.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Try not to think about it.

LI CHI. I tried but can not stop thinking. Honorable parents, I am your youngest daughter and now of marriageable age, but without a dowry. Let me try my luck with the serpent.

FATHER OF LI CHI. This is not a matter of luck. You'll be eaten.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. We can not bear it.

LI CHI. I do not wish to cause you pain, Honorable Parents, but surely you can spare me. I will go.

OLD WOMAN. To the Elders she said...

LI CHI. This year I will face the monstrous Serpent.

VILLAGE ELDER 1. A volunteer!

LI CHI. Give me a sword and a snake hunting dog.

VILLAGE ELDER 2. Strange request but we'll grant it.

OLD WOMAN. And to her parents she said...

LI CHI. Give me a basket with your delicious sweet rice balls.

MOTHER OF LI CHI. Your last meal, my dear daughter.

LI CHI. Do not say that.

OLD WOMAN. She bid them farewell and set off up the mountain to the Serpent's cave.

(LI CHI takes sword and DOG—played by an actor—from ELDERS and rice balls from MOTHER. ELDERS and PARENTS exit.

LI CHI *mimes journey. DOG follows. They arrive at Serpent's cave.*)

LI CHI. Where are you, monstrous Serpent?

(SERPENT catches scent of something tempting and stirs in his cave.)

I'll not walk into your cave to be eaten by you. But I know you are hungry.

(She places rice balls outside the mouth of cave.)

Now smell how sweet! You can't resist these.

(SERPENT sniffs, approaches and eats.)

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi released the dog. It leapt at the Serpent's throat. Li Chi attacked from behind.

(LI CHI, DOG, and SERPENT tangle in heavy fighting. During fight, Village BOY(s) enters to listen. SERPENT is subdued and killed.)

LI CHI. What's in your cave?

(LI CHI enters cave and sees skulls.)

The skulls of nine victims! I am sorry you died here. Where was your strength? You lacked the courage to defend yourselves. I will not follow that path!

(LI CHI exits with a confident stride, followed by DOG. Actor(s) playing SERPENT rolls off unobtrusively.)

OLD WOMAN. Li Chi was gentle and kind, but also a warrior when she needed to be. If she hadn't been both, she would have been eaten.

RIBBON DANCER. She might have been lucky and not chosen for sacrifice.

OLD WOMAN. Everyone faces one kind of serpent or other in life.

BIRD VENDOR. You are right. I must learn to be strong.

BOY. A girl should never have to face a serpent! That is a man's job.

BIRD VENDOR. Grandmother, tell him that women must be strong and gentle, and men gentle and strong.

BOY. I have no need for gentleness. I want to be a warrior.

RIBBON DANCER. *(Laughing:)* That sounds like me.

BOY. What!

RIBBON DANCER. One sided.

OLD WOMAN. We all need to balance yang and yin—be strong like an ox and gentle as flowing water.

RIBBON DANCER. I will try to do as you say.

(BOY(s) shake(s) head defiantly and march(es) off. RIBBON DANCER and BIRD VENDOR bow politely to OLD WOMAN and smile. OLD WOMAN smiles and nods in reply.)

[Gong]

Interlude 3

[Cymbals and drums]

(KITE FLYER runs on playing with a kite on willowy stick. BIRD VENDOR looks on with interest. KITE FLYER gives the kite to her and runs off. BIRD VENDOR laughs and plays with it as CLOUD enters. DRAGON swoops on and off with CLOUD, followed by BIRD VENDOR and RIBBON DANCER with bird cage. LAUNDRESS enters with basket of clothes.)

LAUNDRESS. The wind is my friend today. These wet clothes will soon be dry.

(DUMPLING VENDOR enters holding a tray of dumplings.)

DUMPLING VENDOR. But it's cooling my dumplings. Hot dumplings for sale! Half price while they last.

LAUNDRESS. Very well, I will have one. My stomach is empty.

(Buys one, then notices OLD WOMAN.)

Give me two.

(Crosses to OLD WOMAN and gives her a dumpling. YOUNG SCHOLAR enters with a scroll under his arm, buys dumpling; stands to one side eating. BEGGAR enters.)

DUMPLING VENDOR. Two left at the end of the day.

(Holds out a dumpling to BEGGAR.)

We'll both eat.

(BEGGAR seizes it and nods his head in thanks. They eat.)

[Cymbal clangs]

(BEGGAR and DUMPLING VENDOR exit as BRIDE in sedan chair with two SEDAN CARRIERS enters followed by MUSICIAN clanging cymbal and MATCHMAKER hurrying to catch up.)

BRIDE. Please stop! I must look back at the home of my childhood one more time. My heart is breaking. How can I bear to leave the home of my honorable father and mother?

MATCHMAKER. I have found you a good husband. Do not doubt my skills as a matchmaker. You are going to a good house. You are joining a good family.

BRIDE. I do not know them. I am afraid. I do not want to go!

YOUNG SCHOLAR. Dear lady, today it seems is the joyful occasion of your wedding.

BRIDE. There is no joy for me. Only sorrow and dread.

YOUNG SCHOLAR. A big opportunity awaits you. Meet it with an open heart and good spirits.

BRIDE. You are a man and do not know the pain of leaving your home. Why must it be the woman who joins the house of strangers?

YOUNG SCHOLAR. It is not always so. Sometimes the man joins the family of the bride and moves into the house of her family. That is how it was for me.

MATCHMAKER. The young man is right; although he is bold to speak to you here on the street. Now dry your tears and let us continue.

BRIDE. Ohhhhhh. I can not.

(Sings:)

My life is changing.
I am afraid.
I dread to think what lies ahead.
I want things to stay
The way they were.
I fear what's new and different.
Please let me go back
To all the things I know.
I do not want my life to change.

YOUNG SCHOLAR. *(Stopping MATCHMAKER:)* Rest a moment here. Let me cheer up the bride with a story.

(LAUNDRESS and OLD WOMAN draw near to listen.)

MATCHMAKER. This is no time to stop for stories.

BRIDE. Oh, please. Give me a little more time.

MATCHMAKER. What story is it?

YOUNG SCHOLAR. The Khan's Daughter.

MATCHMAKER. I do not know it.

LAUNDRESS. It must come from the North. We have no Khan here.

YOUNG SCHOLAR. Let's say it came on the wind.

OLD WOMAN. Ah, the Wind Dragon.

LAUNDRESS. You mean from the ancestors.

OLD WOMAN. Of course.

MATCHMAKER. And the story?

YOUNG SCHOLAR. The story's of the daughter of the Khan and a young shepherd—two young people of strong heart who greeted each new change with good spirit. It brought them good fortune.

MATCHMAKER. Very well. Let us hear it.

(Signals SEDAN CARRIERS and MUSICIAN to move off stage. Village Characters exit as story characters appear. Actors playing BRIDE and YOUNG SCHOLAR may also exit, if needed to play other parts.)

[Gong]

THE KHAN'S DAUGHTER

(Story characters enter as mentioned. YOUNG SCHOLAR actor could step in and out of narrating and playing roles as needed.)

YOUNG SCHOLAR. Borte was born to the great Khan, ruler of a fierce people in vast plains of grassland in the northwest.

KHAN. Come, Borte, you will ride with me today.

BORTE. Thank you, Father!

KHAN'S WIFE. Your daughter is young girl! How can she handle a spirited horse?

KHAN. I will teach her.

KHAN'S WIFE. You forget she's not a son.

KHAN. She is my child—my only child. I will teach her everything I know.

BORTE. I am ready, Father!

(KHAN and BORTE exit in circle; KHAN'S WIFE circles in opposite direction.)

NARRATOR 4. Borte learned the skills of riding and fighting; she learned to challenge those who came before her.

(KHAN'S WIFE and BORTE circle to face each other.)

KHAN'S WIFE. Borte, come now; I'll teach you how to bake.

BORTE. But, Mother, I need to practice archery.

KHAN'S WIFE. There'll be time for that later. The fire is hot. We will make some loaves of bread.

BORTE. Baking is not as important as shooting arrows.

KHAN'S WIFE. Sometimes it's more useful. Everyone loves to eat warm bread. Don't you want to please your father?

BORTE. Of course, I do.

KHAN'S WIFE. And it's time to think about marrying. Your husband will look to you for food.

BORTE. I do not wish to marry. I wish to stay with you and Father.

KHAN'S WIFE. We will soon pick a noble husband of high rank for you to wed.

BORTE. Never, Mother.

KHAN'S WIFE. We'll see about that.

BORTE. I am a warrior!

KHAN'S WIFE. We'll see about that...

YOUNG SCHOLAR. In another place on the vast grasslands, far from the Khan, lived a young man. We'll call him Fu Quey. He was the son of a poor sheep herder. His old father told him before he died...

FATHER OF FU QUEY. I have not long to live. I do not want you to live alone on these lonely steppes tending sheep. It has been our life till now. But for you there is more. I feel you are destined to marry the daughter of our leader, the great Khan!

(FATHER exits.)

YOUNG SCHOLAR. Fu Quey patiently tended his sheep for a long, long time. Until one day he said...

FU QUEY. The Khan's daughter will never find me here in this field with sheep. If I am to marry her, I must go and present myself.

(Fills a flask with water and mimes walking sequence.)

YOUNG SCHOLAR. So he traveled to the city of the Khan.

(YOUNG SCHOLAR and BRIDE exit. KHAN'S COURT enters. KHAN'S MEN form a blockade in front of KHAN.)

KHAN'S MEN. Who are you, shabby herdsman? What do you want?

FU QUEY. I am the shepherd Fu Quey. I wish to see the Khan. I am destined to marry his daughter.

(KHAN, KHAN'S WIFE and BORTE listen in the background. BORTE is suddenly curious. Optional ATTENDANTS talk among themselves with general hubbub.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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