

XI - 79 - 3. A Play About China

G. Act I - Different Version - 32 pages.

ACT I.

(A small Chinese village in the mountains on the Central China front in very early spring, 1940. A range of mountains stretch across the distance far in the back and off stage, right, and from them comes the intermittent roar of artillery and the occasional droning of planes. Directly across the back of the stage are a few houses of the village, of mud and stone, with gray tiled roofs. The central building is more substantial; a low, one-storey building with big wooden doors that are swung open. This building is General Wang's field headquarters. An indication of the content of the exposed big room is given, with the end of a crude table and benches or chairs, and a huge military map on the wall. Books and papers on end of table. At the front of the stage, left, is an overhanging evergreen tree and beneath it a long wooden table with crude benches and tables about it. The table is a general work-~~xxxxxxx~~ table for field headquarters, covered with piles of paper-bound books, some half open; piles of papers, an ink slab and brushes in an enamel drinking cup; ~~xxxxxxx~~ other articles. As the scene opens there is a ringing of a telephone inside the building. Two headquarters guards, Lao Tso and Shih-fu, patrol slowly back and forth before the building, going on and off stage right and left. Kuo Hwa, a little boy orderly about 10 years of age, dressed in a small shabby soldier's uniform, ~~xxxxx~~ unbuttoned, is sitting with his back against the tree, studying from a small crude pocket manual, his finger moving up and down the page as he pronounces the words he is learning.

As the guard Lao Tso moves across the stage, he is often eating a piece of raw garlic, taking some from his pocket and chewing at it. The two headquarters guards often stop and listen and watch the distant range of mountains from which the roar of artillery comes.)

*Lao Tso
Lumpo.*
*Old Story Teller
Little Pearl:*
Kuo Hwa: (reading laboriously) Man!--Human being. I am a human being. You (pointing ^{vaguely} ~~generally~~ toward Shih-fu) are a human being. He (pointing into the air) is a human being. . .

Lao Tso: (laughing gruffly) ~~to Kuo Hwa~~ Who's a human being? Him? (pointing to Shih-fu.)

Little Pearl:
Kuo Hwa: (complacently) You are a human being too.

Lao Tso: (laughing at Shih-fu a little) Shih-fu, didn't I tell you we're progressing? We're all human beings!

Kuo Hwa: They. . . are human beings.

Lao Tso: Who?

Kuo Hwa: It don't say, but it means my father and General Wang . . . and Col. Wu of course.

Shih-fu: But not the old ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{maggot,} General Li, ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Not him!

Kuo Hwa: Not him. But my father. . .

Shih-fu: ~~His~~ ^{Your} father again! (To Kuo Hwa) He ain't your father! ~~You~~ only adopted him.

Kuo Hwa: (shrilly) He adopted me! He did too. . . that time the Japanese devils killed my father and my mother.

~~Shih-fu~~

Shih-fu: Lissen, little devil, if Major-General Chou had really adopted you, you wouldn't be an orderly in this Army. You'd be sent away to some rich ~~XXXXXX~~ boy's school!

Kuo Hwa: (complacently) ~~But~~ ^{no} I don't want to be sent to ~~a~~ rich boy's school! I want to grow up and get a captured Japanese pistol and join the cavalry and fight the devils. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
An' I- - -

Shih-fu: (laughing ironically) That's just what this front needs--a whole Army of ten-year old ~~XXXXXX~~ kids!

Kuo Hwa: You're just jealous! (Turning to his book and studying it, puzzled) Now I forgot what them words means. . . and our political teacher said they develop ^{my} ~~the~~ mind.

Lao Tso: (halting, watching him) What develops ^{your} ~~the~~ mind?

Kuo Hwa: (Standing up and going to him; showing him the book) Them words down here at the bottom of the page. You can read--you tell me.

Lao Tso: (taking the book) Why are there distinctions. . . between human beings on the earth? (To Kuo Hwa, paternalistically) All right, now let's see you develop your mind! ~~It's up to you.~~

Kuo Hwa: You're older'n me, ~~and~~ You've been in the Army a long time. You tell me.

Lao Tso: (chewing garlic) All right, I'll do your thinkin' for just ~~this~~ ^{time}. . . Now, if you ask me, I'd say there are distinctions between human beings because some are rich and some ~~are~~ poor. But-- if the Japs win this war, there won't be no rich or poor. We'd all

slaves. That's why we have to be kind even to rich men.

Shih-fu: Anyway, it's no use for a soldier to learn to read and write. A soldier can shoot, so why. . . .

Lao Tso: ~~Max~~ Shih-fu, have you seen General Wang's big black mule?

Shih-fu: Of course. . . everybody's seen him.

Lao Tso: Well, it's a good mule. He can carry heavy loads and march.

He's been in the Army longer'n you have, but he's still a mule.

Kuo-hwa: (laughing shrilly) You're just like him--you can't read and write ~~terr'n~~n him!

Shih-fu: (runs at Kuo-Hwa, who~~xxx~~ takes shelter behind Lao Tso): I'm a man--not a mule.

Lao Tso: Sure. . . but there ain't much difference if you're as dumb as a mule.

Shih-fu: It's all right for officers to learn. . . but a soldier ain't got as much chance as a mule.

Lao Tso: How did officers get to be officers^{if} they didn't study?

Shih-fu: They're officers because they're rich men's sons. They're. . .

Lao Tso: Commander Wang used to be a soldier like us--and so did the Little Devil's "father". An' who has to take orders from General Wang?

Shih-fu: Poor men like us, . . . ~~that's~~ all -

Lao Tso: And rich men like old landl~~o~~r d General Li, ^{too} Old rich-man Li's got to take orders from poor-man Wang.

Shih-fu: Even if Commander Wang ~~was~~ studied books, he was a traitor. . .

Kuo Hwa: That's a lie! You're tellin'. . .

Lao Tso: You take that back, Shih-fu!

~~xxx~~ Shih-fu: I won't, ~~take it back!~~ Ev erybody says Commander Wang used to work with the Japanese, ~~and~~ ^{they} made him a puppet!

Kuo Hwa: ~~That's~~ Everybody lies! ^{General Wang} ~~He fights the devils. . .~~ goes right up to the front and fights the devils. He can kill more enemies than anyone. . . He can throw a horse across a river

traitor.

Shih-fu: His officers and soldier didn't wait for orders. . .

Lao Tso: His officers had studied ~~mere~~ . . when the Japs opened fire, they fought. I fought. (Kuo Hwa gazes at Lao Tso adoringly) Then ~~the~~ the Old Man escaped from the Japanese and ~~began to~~ fight. . . he's fought the devils ever since. ~~xxxxHwa'sxxxxxxxx~~
You got to forgive Old Men who don't know. . . ~~he fights the~~ . . .

~~Kuo Hwa'sxxxxGeneral Wang'sxxxxxxxxxxxhe'sxxxxmy father's fatherxxxxxx~~

Shih-fu: All right, ~~xxxxxxxx~~ I take it back.

(Lao Tso takes the rifle from Kuo Hwa and ~~xxxxxxx~~ gives it to Shih-fu)

Kuo Hwa: When I grow up I'm goin' to be an officer too. . . my father says. . .

Shih-fu: (shouldering his rifle, patrolling sullenly) Aw, rape your father! His father's rich or he wouldn't be an officer. . .

Kuo Hwa: He's not! He's not! He used to be a poor man like us.

~~Lao Tso~~: He told me so! And ~~xxxx~~ Lao Tso's goin' to be an officer too, even if he's got a crippled leg. (secretly) I know something.

Lao Tso: (turning to ~~him~~ him) You ~~xxxxxxx~~ always know something!

Kuo Hwa: But I know a real military secret about you!

Lao Tso: (suddenly interested) / ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{what military secret do you know?} ~~xxxxxxx~~ (putting his hand in his pocket) What about something to eat?

Kuo Hwa: (mysteriously confident) I don't want none of your old garlic!

Lao Tso: (bringing out a handful of peanuts but holding onto them.) It's not garlic. . . it's peanuts! Now, what about your military secret?

Kuo Hwa: (hesitating, watching the peanuts) Well-1-1, I ~~xxxx~~ heard 'em talking. . . the political director and Col. Wu. . . (He hesitates and Lao Tso holds out his hand temptingly, waiting) An' they said that you and some other men will be sent to the Army Training Camp, and when you come back you'll be on the political staff and teach the soldiers. Next week maybe.

Lao Tso: (dropping the peanuts in Kuo Hwa's outstretched hands, then standing over him) Now look at what you've done. You took a bribe! Suppose I was a Japanese spy!

Kuo Hwa: (complacently eating the peanuts) But I know you ain't no spy.

(A burst of shouting, followed by strains of the Volunteer Marching Song, breaks out from a distance in the rear, followed by applause. The boys all turn and move toward the right of stage, listening)

Kuo Hwa: Lissen! They're at the mass meetin'. The / ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{foreign woman's} ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{xxxx} goin' to speak! I'm goin'!

Shih-fu: (shouting at him) No you don't! Halt! ~~xx~~ little devil!

Lao Tso: You' ~~xxxxxxx~~ stay here, / Maybe General Wang will want maybe you'll have to some tea or / ~~xxxxxxx~~ carry a message or something.

Shih-fu: If you're not here, ~~xxxxxx~~ he'll put you out of the Army!

Kuo Hwa: (coming back) I ain't never heard a foreigner speak! Her and that Chinese woman doctor too.

Lao Tso: Aw, she's going to stay here. / You'll hear her talk--you'll see to that!

(A burst of artillery fighting sounds from the mountains, with the dull roar of planes. The boys turn and solemnly listen)

Shih-fu: (watching the mountains) We fight and fight--but ~~xxxxxxx~~ the devils always win. I don't see what the ~~xxxxx~~ war's about.

would have to beg. And everyone could get an education instead of just rich men's sons.

Shih-fu: You both got wind blowin' through your hegds. (To Lao Tso) You've already got a crippled leg, an' before the war is. . .

Lao Tso: The Jap that give me this bum leg got sent home--in a little square box filled with ashes. ~~xxxxxx~~ (Kuo-Hwa watches him adoringly) Sure--I can't fight at the front no more--but I can do other things.

Kuo Hwa: (To Shih-fu) An' he's going to ~~learn to~~ be an officer--because he's learned to read and write, ~~just like you.~~

Lao Tso: (To Shih-fu) ~~I could fight again, too?~~ I can teach men to fight. ~~xxxxxx~~

Kuo Hwa: (To Shihfu) An' you can't! My father said each soldier must be an example to others. ~~xxxxxx~~ You're not. You're ~~just~~ no better than old General Li's soldiers.

~~Shih-fu: xxxxxxxx~~

Lao Tso: ~~xxxxxx~~ General Li's soldiers fight bad because nobody ~~xxxx~~ teaches them what ~~xxxxxx~~ we're fightin' for. ~~xxxxxx~~ Old General Li's afraid to teach 'em. The soldiers are all right--it's the ^abad officers. ~~xxxxxx~~

(A renewed burst of fighting and the drone of planes come from the mountain range in back. The boys turn and watch and listen)

Shih-fu: Rape their mothers!. The planes are comin' again. We ain't got even one plane. An' after the war we'll have to go back and work or some rapin' landlord like General Li!

(The boys are watching the mountain range, their backs to audience. General Li and Col. Chen comes on stage, front, left, under the tree, unobserved, as Shih-fu speaks, They stop and listen)

Lao Tso: Not me! Everythings goin' to be different after the war.

If they ain't, I'll join the guerrillas. I hear the guerrillas
have got schools for soldiers--and clubs and ~~XXXXX~~ theatres
and everything. The officers and soldiers dress and eat alike, and the officers can't
cuss and beat the soldiers like ~~some of 'em~~ ^{they} do in General Li's
Army.

Shih-fu: They say the guerrillas are right over there behind the Jap
~~lines~~ ^{lines} --blowing out bridges and tearin' up the roads.

Lao Tso: Sure they are! Some of 'em come in here today.

~~Shih-fu~~ Shih-fu: I heard some of 'em talking. They ~~are~~ ^{told us a} good story. Have you
heard it?

Lao Tso: ~~No, what is it?~~ ^{What story?}

Shih-fu: It's about two of General Li's officers. One officer said to
the other: "Would you rather be in the infantry or in the cavalry?"
The other one said: "In the infantry, of course." That surprised
the other guy and he asked him why, and the ~~other~~ officer said:
"Because, when I start runnin', I don't want no horse interferin'
with me!"

(The boys whoop with laughter. General Li stiffens in fury and
makes a step forward. The boys hear and ~~run~~ swing around ~~swiftly~~
swiftly and stand petrified as they see General Li.)

The two guards: (together) Salute, General Li!

(Kuo Hwa runs behind Lao Tso, holds onto his jacket and watches
fearfully around Lao Tso's side. General Li walks menacingly
toward the guards, turning to Shih-fu)

General Li: (barking) Who's teaching you disrespect for officers?

Lao Tso: Nobody, Sir.

General Li: (To Shih-fu, barking) Is the Commander-in-chief here?

Shih-fu: (jumping as if shot) Yes Sir, . . . no sir. . . I'll go see,
Sir! (He turns and flees inside building in back.)

General Li: (walking menacingly toward Lao Tso) And you! You. . .

(As he comes up to Lao Tso, he stops suddenly and steps back, covering his nose with his hand) You've been eating garlic!

You stink!

Lao Tso: (stiffly at attention) Yes, Sir!

Kuo Hwa: (breaking from Lao Tso and running to back right of stage, picking up a stone and hurling it at General Li) Fascist!

(He flees from stage)

Lao Tso: (turning swiftly to Kuo Hwa) You little ~~devil~~ devil! (He runs off stage after Kuo Hwa).

(General Li stands as if petrified from amazed fury, then turns slowly to Col. Chen who has been coldly watching the scene. General Li waves his arms vaguely)

General Li: ~~Col. Chen~~ (with angry irony) My dear Col. Chen! Allow me

to introduce you to the field headquarters of the most "advanced" Army on the Central China front! The headquarters of our commander-in-~~chief~~ chief, General Wang ~~Shih-pu~~ Shih-pu!

(In fury) This, my dear Sir, is an Army! It's guards curse and throw stones at their officers--and their officers are at a mass meeting with the soldiers--to hear a bunch of females speak!

(Walks dazedly to the table and sits down on a bench)

Col. Chen: And I presume that General Wang is also at the meeting?

General Li: Exactly! The wife of his chief-of-staff has come. The war stops while she and a foreign^{woman} ~~delivery~~ speeches to the soldiers!

Col. Chen: (coldly instigating him) While the enemy is throwing reinforcements against one of your divisions on that Yangchow ~~xxx~~ sector over there? (nodding at the mountains)

General Li: Exactly! And while Chou's division loiters somewhere in the rear--holding mass meetings no doubt! (furiously) While my division over there is ordered to hold out another twenty-four hours!

Col. Chen: (instigating him) Does General Wang really believe that three companies can ~~make any~~ make any impression on ~~the enemy~~ ^{that sector?}

General Li: The Old Man is senile!

Col. Chen: But this General Chou isn't! Just when will ^{he and} his Division ~~appear~~ come up!

General Li: (airily) Oh, Chou's already here! At the mass meeting undoubtedly! His division? (waves his arms vaguely) He finds plenty of excuses. . . say his division has not yet been replenished ~~or~~ trained ^{since} ~~sufficiently~~ ~~after~~ ~~the~~ ~~enemy~~ finished it off four months ago. It could have moved up here a month ago if it ~~had~~ did not have dozens of ~~radicals~~ ^{Student radicals!} ~~fighters~~ ^{Teaching soldiers to} ~~if they can read and write~~ ^{and we taught} "political" knowledge! Now ~~these~~ women doctors are coming! It won't be long before all the armies will be demanding women!

Col. Chen: ^{But,} In the rear, we heard Chou's division consisted of crack storm troops. . . ~~Chou~~ ^{has been} decorated ^{for valor!}

General Li: ^(angrily) We who served the State in the rear for years, received no decorations! ^{But} at the front, men whose mouths are still wet with their mother's milk are made Major-Generals! ~~Just between you and me,~~ Half the reports General Wang sends ^{from this front} ~~are~~ are lies! What else can we expect of a man who worked with the Japs? ~~before the war~~ ~~and even after the war began?~~ (nastily) A puppet! Ex-puppet! ^{Traitor!}

Col. Chen: ^(calculatingly) ~~He's a puppet~~ A man who has been a puppet once would be ~~one~~ one again--if he had a chance. (instigating Li) But ^{Old Man Wang} ~~he~~ has a big face--and influence--in certain ~~quarters~~ quarters.

General Li: (as if instructing a child) Sit down, Col. Chen. . . China is big and the Capital ~~is~~ far away. Some men in the rear ^{even} think the Old Man has lived down his past, ^{-- because} ~~he's~~ he's never left the battlefield since the war began! ^{But} ~~have you thought~~ have you thought why he has never left the battlefield? (significantly) Not from patriotism--but because

of a guilty conscience. (contemptuously) And why was Chou's Division wiped out half a dozen times?

Col. Chen: We heard it was a Storm Division.

General Li: It was wiped out because it was demoralized by student agitators who teach soldiers what they call "political knowledge" Why, Chou even has a professor of political science in his headquarters--helping him study.

Col. Chen: (contemptuously laughing) Is he so ~~xxxxxx~~ simple-minded?

General Li: Not from what I've heard! He's dangerous. Even talks with his soldiers. . .

Col. Chen: (springing up) Is he a Communist?

General Li: Disguised. . . perhaps. What kind of man would call his father a Communist?

General Li: Called his father a traitor!

General Li: (condescendingly) Sit down, Col. Chen! I mean he called the Old Man a traitor--when the Old Man surrendered Peiping. . .

Col. Chen: I didn't know ~~Major-General~~ the Old Man was his father!

General Li: He's not! The Old Man had no sons of his own--he's impotent, they say! (laughs nastily) So the Old Man "adopted" two sons--in a way, and one was this Major-General Chou when Chou was a soldier. Even had him sent to a Military Academy. . then made him an officer. Now look at him--a Major-General!

Col. Chen: And the other "son".

General Li: Oh, of course it his chief-of-staff, that sickly Col. Wu ~~xxxxxx~~ who came over to my headquarters to welcome you last night. ~~xxxxxx~~ Wu is the Old Man's "high adviser", and his servant and everything else, if you ask me. Didn't you know it was Col. Wu who smuggled the Old Man out through the Japanese lines out of Peiping? You remember? Chou was fighting outside the city--and when ~~xxxx~~ the Old Man came out, Chou turned the Army over to him to command. But the Old Man never got over

being called a traitor by his "son".

Col. Chen: A touching story--almost filial piety.

General Li: Hardly that! ~~It's not the two sons who tell the Old Man what to do and think~~ Chou sometimes quarrels with him, but not about the past. . . . Col. Wu never quarrels. . . . he's a boot-licker; supports the Old Man in everything.

Col. Chen: A family affair!

General Li: (smartly) Yes, like the Holy Trinity of the Christians-- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (They laugh heartily) Except that it's the sons who give the Old Man orders! Even tell him what to think!

Col. Chen: (laughing) Can he think?

General Li: In a way. . . in ~~any~~ a way!

Col. Chen: ~~Just how and what?~~ (laughs) In a way?

General Li: They call it "the democratic way"! ~~True~~ He's trying to be democratic--at his age!

Col. Chen: (startled) ~~Democracy?~~ Democracy? We know what that means-- democracy is only the outer defence works of Communism.

General Li: Exactly!

(Lao Tso appears on stage, right, back, watching, listening. Col. Chen sees him, makes a cautious motion)

General Li: (turning) What are you doing here?

Lao Tso: I'm on duty, Sir.

General Li: Get out--perform your duty elsewhere!

(Lao Tso stands, unmoved. The drone of planes sound, he turns slowly and listens. The two officers listen, go quickly to right of stage and watch skies. Lao Tso watches the planes and them)

Col. Chen: Nine!

General Li: (nervously) They're coming this way!

Col. Chen: (anxiously) What do we do not. . . are there dugouts around here for officers?

Lao Tso: (cooly) There's some holes out there, (pointing off stage, left)

You'd better hurry. . . they can get here in a few seconds.

(The two officers run off stage left, just as Kuo Hwa runs on from the right)

Kuo Hwa: Are they goin' to bomb us again, Lao Tso?

Lao Tso: (watching the skies) No. . . they're flying too far south.

Come. . . get under this tree so they can see nothing.

(The two boys go under the branches of the tree and watch the skies.)

Kuo Hwa: Why don't you shoot 'em down! If I had a gun I'd shoot. . .

Lao Tso: Why don't you throw rocks at 'em? (Kuo Hwa looks guiltily at Lao Tso) Now lissen, Little Devil, a soldier's not supposed to throw rocks at Generals! If you. . .

Kuo Hwa: We've got to be vigilant against Fascists!

Lao Tso: That's not the way.

(General Li and Col. Chen come on stage from left, brushing the dirt off their clothing) The boys ~~turn~~ turn. Kuo Hwa x trots to far right of stage, turns back, sticks his tongue ~~out~~ out at the two officers and flees) ~~turns back~~

General Li: Not even dugouts around here! You have to jump in a hole in the ground! Ma-ma-hu-hu. . . ~~everything's~~ everything's so-so around here. Or chapado ma-ma-hu-hu...about so-so! (Seeing Lao Tso) ~~speaking angrily~~ Guard! We've e been waiting an hour for the Commander!

Lao Tso: I'll see if he's here, Sir. (He saunters inside building in back, says something to someone inside, and ~~returns~~ returns at once) They say ~~he's~~ he's busy. ~~off~~ ~~stage~~ ~~right~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~right~~

General Li: Shabby, slouchy soldiers. . . / don't even keep/ ~~the~~ ^{you} ^{your} buttons sewed on!

Lao Tso: We ain't got no buttons, Sir. . . ~~the~~

General Li: Get out of my sight! (Lao Tso ~~leisurely~~ leisurely moves off stage right, glancing back over his shoulder suspiciously)

General Li: Ma-ma-hu-hu! What we need around here is discipline. Less talk about "political knowledge", more discipline. To open

politics to soldiers is like opening your house to a burglar--to destroy yourself with your own hands!

Col. Chen: If the right men were in command, there'd be discipline.

General Li: You'll never get it!

Col. Chen: We'll get it! That's why I'm here. (He takes a small round metal badge from his right breast pocket, hands it to General Li, who studies it)

General Li: Ah!

Col. Chen: You'll respect my confidence, of course!

General Li: (handing back the badge) Absolutely! That badge opens all doors--goes everywhere. I am at your service, Col. Chen! You've come to ~~exactly~~ the right place. ~~xxxxxxxinvestigationx~~ A clever man can clean up this front in a few weeks.

Col. Chen: We'll do more than clean up this front! We're cleaning up everything. . . schools, universities, newspapers, books, even foreign correspondents. That's one good thing we learned from the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Germans. (laughing, going to Li, confidentially) You ought to see our dossiers about men ~~xxxxxxx~~ who write under pen-names. . . try to smuggle dangerous thoughts into the country!

General Li: Ha! Ha! At last something is being done!

Col. Chen: We caught a fellow a month ago writing under a foreign name. . . ~~Robert Burns~~ Robert Burns is the name he used. Said he was merely translating poems by a foreign poet by that name.

~~xxxxxxx~~ (laughing) Thought we were too stupid to know there was no such foreign poet by that name!

General Li: (laughing) What did you do with him?

Col. Chen: In a forced labor camp. His poems are ~~fixed~~ in his dossier --they'll ~~xxxxx~~ be useful in the future against the publisher in league with him. We caught dozens such. . . .

General Li: Why don't you begin right now. (Turning to table) Lao Tso's head appears off stage right, then he steps forward, watching as

Li and Chen begin examining the books and papers on the table. Chen takes a notebook from his pocket and makes notes of the titles and authors.)

Chen: Most of this stuff seems to be military. . . . just a front, perhaps.

General Li: Look at this one. . . History of Democratic Thought!

Chen: (Taking the book, turning through it, reading. Lao Tso strains to hear as Chen reads a passage) Listen to this: "The masses of men were not born with saddles on their backs and the chosen few booted and spurred to ride them legitimately by the grace of God." (He ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ makes notes in his book) We'll catch the author of that before the month is finished!

General Li: (examining a book with a red paper cover) This one is even bound in red. Is there a foreign writer by the name of Sin-clair Lew-is?

Chen: I'll find out. (Makes notes, takes up a small, thin notebook) This one. . . seems to be a. . . diary of some kind.

General Li: (glancing over his shoulder) The handwriting belongs to the Old Man himself! You can always tell. . . chicken-scratches. He has no real education!

Chen: He's writing down all he reads and thinks!

General Li: (eagerly taking the ~~book~~ book, reading) "Sleepless nights. ~~xxx~~ I think of the fate of my country. . . my own guilt haunts my dreams. I must not tarry lest regrets come too late. Lest my name become a leer on the pages of history." (to Chen) His guilt! He knows he's guilty!

Chen: Give that to me. (He takes the book and ~~clips it into one of his pockets, then folds the flap down neatly. Lao Tso watches, then steps back out of sight.~~) begins reading, listening only ~~General Li,~~ (absent-mindedly to General Li's talk. Lao Tso steps back and ~~disappears~~) disappears as General Li turns happily and begins pacing the stage)

General Li: Col. Chen, have you ever thought about the reasons
our native Hangchow. . .

Chen: Hangchow. . . are you a. . .

General Li: Oh, my family has lived in the southwest for only
five centuries! Hangchow is our native home. Now, Hangchow
. . . have you thought just why it produced the best brains
of our country for. . .

Chen: (absent-mindedly) Yes. . . yes. . .

General Li: Consider its mild climate, the gentle

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hills, the placid lake, the great wealthy families and--ah!--the
wines! No one had to work for a living. So all ~~the~~ energy could flow
to the brain!

Col. Chen: (reading) You are a true scholar, General Li.

General Li: (hypocritically waving the remark aside) A humble one! ~~perhaps~~
Now, consider the harsh northern climate. Men had to labor so hard
to keep alive that they have had nothing left for the brain... Take
General Wang--a ~~big~~ giant ^{northerner} ~~with~~--with the mind of a child! ~~He~~
Says just what he thinks--and he thinks out loud! Why, anyone can
outwit him!

Col. Chen: (turning suddenly, ~~listening~~, listening) You think that? ~~That~~
Anyone can outwit him?

General Li: Exactly! And his whole Army's ^{is} the same. Good fighters--
but no brains. Takes a century for them to get an idea into their
heads--then they never get over it. (laughing at his own thought)
Now they've got the idea of fighting the Japs in their skulls, and
they'll go right on fighting them for another century!

Col. Chen: These northerners get fixations. (he slips General Wang's
diary carefully in his jacket pocket and ^{pats} ~~flaps~~ the flap down) This
Army would surely not go on fighting ~~thus~~ if the Government accepted
Japanese peace terms--favorable ones, I mean. After all the Army
is half-starved and wants peace.

General Li: It's half starved--but it won't make peace--not for a hundred
years!

Col. Chen: Suppose the Government ordered ^{the armies} ~~General Wang~~ to lay down ^{their} ~~his~~
arms--and ^{General Wang} ~~he~~ ordered his troops to obey?

General Li: He's ask the advice of the Son and the Holy Ghost--and they
would refuse!

Col. Chen: ^{Oh! Refuse, would they? What} ~~if~~ if they were transferred elsewhere?

General Li: ^{You'll never} Split up the Holy Trinity! ~~Yes, you will.~~ The Old Man has
influence!

Col. Chen: (tapping his breast pocket) So have I!

General Li: (cautiously) You might get enough evidence here to have them transferred. . . but the Old Man. . .

Col. Chen: (carefully) Should he. . . also. . . be transferred, so to speak. . . you would be the next in line as Commander on this front. Wouldn't you?

General Li: (piously shocked) I would never suggest such. . .

Col. Chen: Leave that to others to decide, General Li! Now for another matter: What does ~~Commander~~ the Old Man think about Wang Ching-wei? . . I mean Wang's collaboration with the Japanese in Nanking.

General Li: He's straight there. . .

Col. Chen: Despite his own past collaboration with the Japs?

General Li: Yes. . . despite that. He calls Wang Ching-wei a traitor . . . to be shot if captured. Which he is.

Col. Chen: (carefully) Some men in authority think otherside. . . I reserve judgment. But some men believe that Wang ~~Ching-wei~~ Ching-wei's not so bad. . . He's conscripting ~~xxxxxxx~~ troops, . . . but the Japanese are giving them arms. When they are strong enough--so some men think--Wang's new army would turn on the Japs and drive them out.

General Li: But he's using his ~~xxxxxxx~~ puppet troops to fight us!

Col. Chen: Not exactly. He only fights the guerrillas. Because they've got Communist leaders. His new flag. . .

General Li: Has he got a new flag?

Col. Chen: Not exactly. It's the same as the national flag. But he's printed a slogan across it: "The Chinese People's Anti-Communist Government!"

General Li: Ah! Might be something in that. If he really fights the guerrillas. . . use fire to fight fire. . .

Col. Chen: (carefully) I'm not ~~xxxxxxx~~ speaking for myself. . . but some influential men ~~xxxxxxx~~ are afraid of the future. The longer the war lasts, the deeper our impoverishment. Poverty is the seed-bed

of ~~Communism~~ Communism. . . of bloody anarchy.

General Li: True!

Col. Chen: True. If there were peace. . . the country might be saved.

General Li: What does the Generalissimo think?

Col. Chen: (carefully) As a scholar, you know what he thinks.

He thinks ~~Shih~~ that he and China are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. What's good for him is good for China. . . . and whoever is against him is against China.

~~Generalissimo~~

(Shih-fu appears in the doorway of building in back with two cups of tea in rice bowls. Glances about cautiously, nods vigorously to someone off stage right. Lao Tso goes to him. Shih-fu gives him the tea and steps back in the building. Lao Tso takes the tea to the table and places the ~~two~~ bowls before General Li and Col. Chen)

Lao Tso: Some tea, Sir. (Goes off stage, right, back. Just before he leaves he stops, watching them, and spits in disgust.)

General Li: (watching him go, going to far right and staring after him)

What's this guard hanging around here for? (returning to Chen, speaking cautiously) Perhaps you know ~~him~~ a friend of mine ~~who~~ brought the last Japanese peace proposals to the Generalissimo.

From Hongkong. ~~He~~ (Chen listens carefully) The Generalissimo said to him: (General Li takes up the tea cup and drinks)

"Thirteen years ago I took over China. I had 2,000 Whangpoo cadets. The British were against me, the Americans were against me, the French were against me. The Japanese were against me. The Communists were ~~not~~ stronger than they are now. With my 2,000 cadets I marched northward and conquered all China. Now the foreigners are all my friends. ~~All except the Japanese.~~

I now have 3,000,000 troops and the Communists are not as strong as they were. Only the Japanese are against me. Let the Japanese try to conquer me. Even if they drive me to Sikong, I will be back five years from now and rule all China again."

So, my dear Col. Chen, the Generalissimo will not make peace

with the Japanese.

Col. Chen: Ah! The Generalissimo did not say that this is the fourth year of the war, but the ~~thirteenth~~ thirteenth year of the career of Generalissimo Chiang.

(General Li takes a big drink of the tea, and squirts it out on the earth)

General Li: His career is not ended. He will not make peace.

Col. Chen: That depends on ~~what the armies~~ what others do. . . He gets reports. . . groups. . . cliques . . . pressure. He juggles them. But if ~~the~~ the armies sent reports. . . demanding peace to save the country from impoverishment and bloody anarchy? He's have to listen. Without the armies. . .

General Li: ~~The~~ The Armies don't want peace. They're hungry and tired. . . but they won't make peace with the Japs.

Col. Chen: The armies are ignorant. They'll obey their officers. ~~This~~ This Army would obey the Old Man. ~~if he~~ ~~ordered~~ ~~it~~ ~~to~~ ~~do~~ ~~so~~.

General Li: The Old Man would not give the order. Even if he did the soldiers would not obey. They'd join the guerrillas. The guerrillas would not make peace. . . not while the Japs are in the country.

Col. Chen: The guerrillas a traitors.

General Li: Yes. . . the guerrillas are traitors. They wouldn't obey.

Col. Chen: Anyway, the Armies have a few Generals ~~who~~ who are mean of learning. . . scholars. (General Li ~~lifts~~ ~~his~~ ~~hand~~ ~~and~~ ~~strikes~~ a heroic pose). They know the danger facing the nation. Men like yourself, General Li. (General Li makes a gesture of ~~his~~ pious gesture) The country needs men of learning. . . ~~with~~ young. . . elastic minds. . . such men are loyal to the nation. . . have no fixations about war and peace.

General Li: If the Generalissimo commands, I obey. When I was Governor, I had one slogan paints on the walls of towns and ~~buildings~~

buildings to guide the people: It was "one party, one principle,
one leader."

Col. Chen: Yes, your fame reaches the 21~~xxxxxxx~~ provinces.

(He takes a drink of tea, washes his mouth with it and squirts it out. Then drinks. The sound of voices and a woman's laugh is heard off stage, back, right. The two men start. Col. Chen reaches to his pocket hiding General Wang's diary, pats it down carefully)

General Li: The mass meeting is ended. Now we can get on with the war.

(Col. Wu and Dr. Lin come on stage back, right, holding hands and deeply engrossed in each other.)

Col. Wu: My darling, I still can't realize that you have come. It's been .

(Dr. Lin sees the two officers, drops his hand suddenly. Col. Wu turns and sees the officers.)

Col. Wu: General Li! Col. Chen! (goes toward them) We looked for me at the meeting. ~~xxxxxxx~~ Let me introduce you. . . my wife, Dr. Lin Yung. . . General Li (to Dr. Lin) General Li commands one of the armies on this front. Col. Chen. . . my wife. (To Dr. Lin) Col. Chen is General Li's new Political director. (The two officers and Dr. Lin bow politely from a distance)

General Li: (politely) Sorry I could not come to the meeting . . . to welcome you, Dr. Lin. . . The war keeps me ~~xxxxxx~~ too busy.

Col. Wu: Have you been talking with Commander Wang?

Chou: (To Frances) Now try it yourself. (They bend over the pistol)

Col. Wu: (Giving cigarettes to Li and Chen and his wife, then lighting them)

I'm proud of our women, General Li. They are brave and. . .

General Li: (To Dr. Lin) Bravery is admirable in men. . . hardly

in women. ~~All these foreign ideas~~ We

Chinese have our own ancient virtues. Young people scorn them, but submit to foreign ideas.

(Chou looks up and turns about sharply)

Dr. Lin: Who submits to the foreigners? We? (angrily) Who signed the unequal treaties with the foreigners? Old officials and Generals! Who refused to fight for Manchuria in 1931? ~~Who?~~ Who signed ~~secret~~ secret treaties with the enemy after 1931? We? Not one young. . .

Chou: Yes! And who brought in the German Military advisers. . . and Nazi ideas and institutions? The older generation, General Li!

General Li: (laughing coolly) The Nazis have not done so badly by their country! They've revived their nation and the armies of all Europe are tumbling before them!

Chou: The Japs are trying the same with us! We will have nothing to do. . .

Dr. Lin: We young people, General Li, will fight for the liberty and equality of the modern world. . . never for Fascism.

Col. Wu: (trying to prevent further clash) My wife has decided opinions, General ~~xxxxxx~~ Li.

General Li: (cooly) I never argue with a woman!

Dr. Lin: (swiftly turning and taking a step toward him.) Why not?

General Li: (stepping back) I am a realist--a military man!

Col. Wu: (going to his wife's side protestingly) ~~Lin Yung, don't~~ lose your temper. . . .

Dr. Lin: (turning on him. He also takes a step backward as she steps toward him angrily) You men all stand together! You expect ~~women to~~ ^{tremble} and obey!

Col. Wu: (gently laughing) My ~~Lin Yung,~~ ^{Lin Yung,} you have never obeyed me in your life! Nor would I expect it.

Dr. Lin: (losing her anger suddenly, going to his side) I know, Yeh-tze. I'm sorry!

General Li: (cooly polite, but keeping out of Dr. Lin's way) Col. Wu, we came here, not to ~~chatter,~~ but to see ~~the~~ Commander ~~Wang.~~ He has not yet met Col. Chen.

Col. Wu: He ~~ought to be finished by~~ ^{ought to be finished by} now. ~~I will see.~~ Come! (Wu goes toward building in back, Li and Chen following, ~~then~~. He turns ~~and motions~~ to them) ~~Please wait!~~ ^{(Wu goes inside. Li and Chen} ~~remain~~ remain at the door, light cigarettes, and talk in undertones. Chou has returned to Frances and they bend over the pistol again, laughing a little)

Dr. Lin: (glancing at General Li and Col. Chen resentfully, then going up to Chou and Frances) What are you doing with that pistol, Frances?

Chou: (smiling at her) I'm going to give you both pistols--and teach you how to use them.

Dr. Lin: ~~We're Red Cross workers--we're not supposed to carry weapons.~~ ^{Medical workers are}

Chou: (smiling) ~~I'll admit you might get along without them. But if~~ ^{..... because} if you are thinking of international law, I'm surprised ^{the Japs} don't. Now Frances. . . may I call you ~~that~~ Frances?

Frances: (Hesitatingly) If you wish.

Chou: My name's Tien-ying. Now try it again. Take out the clip, ~~then~~

(The three of them bend over the pistol) Now Lin Yung, you try.

(Dr. Lin takes the pistol and begins working over it.)

Dr. Lin: It's a ~~very~~ nice pistol!

Chou: Captured from the enemy. We've got all sorts of things here--

including Japanese captives. . . brought in today. (To Dr. Lin)

the Japanese tell their troops that we will torture ^{captives} ~~them~~ to death,

~~if they are captured.~~ (laughing) You might do that--by lecturing

them ^{on women's rights.} ~~about modern values.~~ It would serve them damn well right!

(General Wang appears in the door of the main building, followed by Col. Wu, and behind Wu the guard, Shih-fu, who steps back when he sees General ~~Li~~ Li and Col. Chen. As the officers walk away, Lao Tso appears on stage from right and beckons to Shih-fu, who quickly slips out and joins him. They disappear.)

General Wang: (morose and weary) Sorry to have kept you waiting,

General Li. (To Col. Chen) You're Col. Chen, I understand.

I ~~had~~ heard you had come--you're more than welcome here. (They walk toward the table) Sit down, gentlemen! ^(All except Col. Wu) ~~They sit~~ sit down

and an orderly comes from building in back with a stack of rice bowls and a big black kettel of boiling water. He places a bowl before each man, takes a small paper sack of tea from his pocket, drops some in each bowl, then pours water over it, and withdraws.)

Chou: (To Frances and Dr. Lin: Now come and I'll give you your first shooting lesson!

(General Wang turns to them, raises a finger of greeting, which Chou returns, as they ~~xxxxxxx~~ start to go off stage right.)

Dr. Lin: (To Chou) General Wang says we can't go up with your Division tonight.

Chou: (To Frances) Do you also want to come?

Frances: Of course!

Chou: What I don't understand is why you didn't come up here long ago!

(They exit, talking)

*2 in a
emphasis
of general
keep focus
of table
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*A) - 2 - 1
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Wang & Chou*

General Li: (To General Wang) You look tired, General Wang. The war tells on a man of your age.

General Wang: It's only the lack of sleep. As I told you, ~~three~~ ^{companies} ~~no reinforcements~~ will ~~begin~~ to move up to re-enforce your division when it grows dark.

General Li: The enemy ~~seems to be~~ ^{is} massing groups against my Division over there.

General Wang: ^I know. But Chou's Division will take over from ~~you~~ ^{until then} ~~as soon as it comes up perhaps~~ tomorrow night. ~~we~~ ^{we} have to manage with ~~the troops~~ ^{the troops} we have. There's not enough of anything on this front. Now the guerrillas ~~have sent men for~~ ^{want} demolition--and we have none.

Col. Chen: (quickly) ^{guerrillas?} Which guerrillas?

General Wang: ~~the~~ ^A Storm Guerrilla Detachment over there in the rear of the enemy--they're civilians who captured ~~their weapons~~ ^{guns} from the ~~enemy. They~~ ^{enemy. men} can't take out concrete or steel bridges with their ~~xxx~~ teeth. *and steel and concrete don't burn.*

Col. Chen: But those guerrillas are illegal! The Government has forbidden them to operate in this War Zone.

~~General Wang~~
General Wang: (uncomprehending) Illegal? I'm a military man, not a lawyer. How can it be illegal for Chinese to fight Japanese.

Col. Chen: It is my information that they don't fight--they just move about and stir up the people. ~~Some of them are~~

General Wang: ~~What is it?~~ You would hardly say that there is such a thing as a peaceful war, would you?

Col. Chen: But ~~some of them~~ their leaders are Communists!

General Wang: What ~~is it?~~ ^{of it?}

Col. Chen: ^{What is it!} ~~But~~ they are inciting the people to elect their own officials!

Col. Wu: ~~But~~ There have been no ^{Government} officials over there since the Japanese occupation! The Japs ^{organized} puppet governments ~~until~~ -until the guerrillas ~~drove~~ ^{Japs now hold only} drove them out. The ~~country~~ ^{is now driven back to} a few big walled towns. The countryside is in the hands of the people, ~~and~~ they have to have some kind of administration, - so they elect it.

General Li: ~~But hardly you would hardly contend that the people~~ Illiterate fishermen and peasants ^{are in} ~~are~~ capable of electing their own officials!

General Wang: ~~That is a foreign idea of "democracy".~~ ^{Men learn best by practicing.}

Col. Wu: What kind of democracy would you ~~advocate~~

General Li: Our own ~~traditional~~ -government for ~~the people~~, but not by the ^{people}. That has always given our social system stability and security.

Col. Wu: Sounds like feudal absolutism to me! That's bankrupt!

General Li: ~~This bankrupt~~ Only because ~~men of low degree~~ ignorant men of low degree have ^{risen} ~~risen~~ to positions of power. (General Wang slowly stands ~~up~~ as Li speaks, and Li and Chen also arise.) It is my conviction that we have had so many puppets in the country because men have not studied the Classics, and have contempt for our own system ^{our own} and virtues.

General Wang: I also used to believe ^{that.} ~~in our ancient system and virtues.~~ I lived by ~~it~~ for half a century. ^{Then I learned that}

General Li: Pardon me, but perhaps you did ^{not} study deeply enough!

~~General~~ Col. Wu: ^{(Impulsively} stepping to General Wang's side) Many ~~of~~ traitors working with the Japs today are Classical scholars! ~~that is it~~ . . .

General Wang: (interrupting him) I will admit that I am not a man of great leaning. Perhaps it's ^{my} ~~my~~ ignorance that ^{leads} ~~leads~~ me to believe that our ancient ^{administrative} system ~~and thought~~ suited only the ^{past} ~~times in which it~~ ~~took root~~. For over a century now, that system ~~has~~ failed to protect our country and people. ^{Now} I listen when younger men speak. It is they, not I, who must ^{live in the future.} ~~live on~~. They have a right to a civilization which ~~suits their needs~~ protects them.

General Li: Our Classics taught eternal truths!

General Wang: (slowly) ^{Some . . . but} ~~You are both men of education. Thus you cannot~~
~~but see that~~ the Japanese are also teaching ^{the} Classics to our people
 in enemy-occupied territory! They have burned modern histories and
~~written~~ ^{new} text-books for our children. They ~~xxxx~~ teach Confucian
 ethics of filial piety, benevolence, loyalty and obedience to the
 Government that rules them. Is that because they ~~xxxx~~
~~xxxx~~ love ~~xxx~~ us? (decisively) There are times when obedience
 can lead to crimes against the country!

Col. Chen: (involuntarily) ~~was~~ ^{The guerrillas think the same!}

General Wang: (staring at ~~xxxx~~ him, then slowly slumping down in his chair)
 I can only say that it is within the power of the Government to remove
 me from command, should it find me lacking either by virtue of my
 knowledge or my deeds. Until then, it is my conviction that the
 guerrillas are a military necessity. (To Li) I shall report this
 to ^{War Zone headquarters} ~~xxxx~~ and suggest you do the same. Our radio is at your
 disposal, and nothing you wish to report will be omitted.

Col. Wu: (trying to convince Li and Chen) We have a cavalry battalion
 in the enemy rear, cooperating with the guerrillas. You may read
 their reports. The guerrillas fight, ~~as best they can, though~~ ^(Col. Chen listens intently) ~~but~~ they
 have only four thousand rifles, ~~and ten rounds or less of~~ ^{they capture.} ~~ammunition~~
~~each~~ ~~and~~ they have captured Japanese prisoners--it is not easy to
~~capture~~ ^{capture Japanese.}

General Li: (proudly) My troops have also captured prisoners--not Japanese
 I'll admit. ^{but} ~~they are~~ Chinese puppet traitors operating with the enemy.
^(insimulatingly) ~~They are~~ ^{northerners} I believe. They are being sent here.

General Wang: ~~That is~~ Excellent! We may be able to learn more about enemy
 re-enforcements.

General Li: ~~But~~ I would not believe that the guerrillas captured Japanese

unless I saw them myself.

General Wang: (rising wearily) So you shall. The guerrillas brought them in today. (To Col. Wu) Take them to question the prisoners. (To General Li and Col. Wu) Perhaps you can get something out of them. I couldn't.

General Li: (suavely insinuatingly) If you could get nothing out of them, we can't. (General Wang turns on him slowly) I mean. . . you speak Japanese. (proudly) I do not speak Japanese.

General Wang) Yes. . . I speak Japanese. (To Col. Chen) Do you, Col. Chen?

Col. Chen: (shocked) I? I? No--no, of course not!

General Wang: (watching him in amazement) Then Col. Wu will have to interpret for you--he speaks the language. When you have finished, come back here.

Col. Wu: (To Li and Chen) Come this way. . . .

~~General Wang~~ (Col. Wu leads the two men off stage, left, back. General Wang watches them go, walks over and watches them, puzzled, morose. Then removes his hand and rubs his head and face, staring at the earth)

General Wang: ~~Yes~~ Yes. . . I speak Japanese. They forget nothing. . . people forget nothing. Traitor. . . puppet. . . they ~~think~~ think. . . I can hear them think. . .

(Kuo Hwa comes on stage from right, looks cautiously around, starts to cross.) General Wang walks to the table and slumps down wearily in a chair, rubbing his face and head. Kuo Hwa stops and looks at him ~~General Wang~~ sadly, with pity. Goes toward him)

Kuo Hwa: Do you want me to bring you some tea, Sir?

General Wang: (staring at the boy) Come here, little soldier. I'm a sad sight. (Kuo Hwa looks at him uncomprehendingly) A sad sight.

Kuo Hwa: (going up to him, ~~placing~~ placing one hand on his knee) You're awful old. ~~Some days you don't look so old~~ Are you very tired?

General Wang: (leaning back, sinking his head) I'm old. . . my head is gray. . . my work not yet completed. (Kuo Hwa looks into his face sadly) ~~But you're~~

Kuo Hwa: ~~But~~ you're very strong, Sir. When I grow up I'm going to be as strong as you. . . and read and write like you do. . . I'll be an officer and fight the devils like you do.

General Wang: Be a better officer than I am, little soldier. ~~Be a better~~ ~~man~~ Study ev erything. . . ~~avoid my mistakes~~ take what is good from our past. . . but do not fear new ideas . . . (rub bing his face ~~wearily~~ wearily, forgetting Kuo Hwa. (Kuo Hwa stands back and watches him, uncomprehendingly) If I could sleep. . . without dark dreams. (standing up, staring before him) If I could only awake, to find this all a dream! ~~My ignorance~~ My mistakes. . . my guilt come at me like a tiger out of the night of my ignorance. We. . . we all. . . reap the harvest of my ignorance and indecision. (walking to right, staring at ~~mountains~~ ~~They would not be there~~ mountains. The distant drone of planes is heard) They would not be there if I. . . if we. . . ~~we~~ had b een wise. (The planes drone nearer) They shall come no further! I will not move from this place. . . not give up one more inch of our land. . . .

(The high staccato call of a bugle, warning of an air'raid, sounds. Kuo Hwa runs to General Wang.)

Kuo Hwa: Air'raid, Sir. . . ~~the planes~~ the devils are coming!

(Guards tumble from building in back and soldiers race across stage, watching the skies.)

General Wang: Go to the shelters, Kuo Hwa.

(Kuo Wang grips General Wang's hand and pulls him)

Kuo Hwa: You come too! I won't go without you.

General Wang: No. . . I will not move from this place.

(The planes drone heavily. General Wang stands perfectly still, waiting. Kuo Hwa presses his body close to him, grasping his arm. The planes drone over and the sound grows gradually fainter as the Curtain falls.)

End of Act I.