BEYOND THE CLOUDS

THE TRANSLATION OF A JAPANESE SHINGEKI PLAY

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

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William G. Hall

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THESIS

ABSTRACT

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THE TRANSLATION OF A JAPANESE
SHINGEKI PLAY

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The purpose of this study is to translate Chikao Tanaka's shingeki ("new drama") play, Kumo no Hatate (Beyond the Clouds) into idiomatic English. A representative work of one of Japan's leading playwrights, it is also one of the best known plays of the modern Japanese stage. Set in post-war Japan, the play brings an existentialist theme to bear on the unique problems of a war ravaged society seeking new definitions and new directions. It is a highly topical play and an excellent example of the new vitality being expressed in contemporary Japanese drama.

Prefacing the translation is a brief discussion of the shingeki movement, the playwright and the play. This introductory material is designed to provide a reference point for the play and perhaps an indication of the vitality of the movement of which it is part.

Though the author's original intentions have been followed as closely as possible, the translation

itself has been designed to be produced on stage, and is therefore not meant to be a literal translation of the Japanese words.

Approved 

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by

William G. Hall

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to translate Chikao Tanaka's shingeki ("new drama") play, Kumo no Hatate (Beyond the Clouds)[1] into idiomatic English.

Significance of the Study

For years, the drama of Japan has been represented in the West by the three extraordinary classical theatre forms which have developed in that country over the last five centuries. The brilliant theatricalism of the kabuki; the mystical elegance of the noh; the magnificent technique of the bunraku puppeteers: these are elements which have fascinated theatre scholars and students alike in the time that Japanese theatre has been known to us. Understandably, perhaps, the birth and development of a contemporary Japanese theatre movement has been largely overlooked in this country.

There is no single book presently available in English which deals exclusively with the shingeki, although

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[1]The text used for the translation is taken from Tanaka Chikao Gikyoku Zenshu, ("Complete Plays of Chikao Tanaka") Vol. 1 (Japan: Hakushisha, 1950).

a number of short articles and chapters of books discuss it. Of these, the most important are: Theatre in Japan,[2] which contains the most comprehensive study of the shingeki movement, its history and its present status, and Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era,[3] which contains a detailed history of the shingeki movement through 1930, traced in the context of all Meiji and Taisho drama.

Most of the cause for the scant coverage of the shingeki movement and the few translations of shingeki plays available (about fifteen in number) must be traced to the nature of the movement itself. Only slightly more than half a century old, the development of the new drama has coincided with one of the most difficult periods of social upheaval in the history of Japan, including the overwhelming influx of Western artistic concepts and philosophical ideas which began in the Meiji era (1868-1912). Until recently, the shingeki movement has been primarily concerned with the production of Western plays in translation and Japanese imitations of Western dramatic techniques. It is only since the war that a group of playwrights has begun to emerge whose dramatic contributions are original and wholly Japanese. Chikao Tanaka is an important member

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[2]Japanese Commission for UNESCO, Theatre in Japan (Japan: Ministry of Education, 1963).

[3]Komiya Toyotaka, ed. Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era (Tokyo: Obunsha, 1956).

of this group and is one of the leading playwrights of today's shingeki. Kumo no Hatate is one of his best known works and is an excellent example of the new vitality of Japanese modern drama.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Prefacing this translation is a brief discussion of the shingeki movement, the playwright and the play. This introductory material is not meant to be a complete study of these subjects, for this would be beyond the scope of the thesis. It is meant to provide a reference point for the play and perhaps an indication of the dynamicism of the movement of which it is a part.

The translation itself has been designed to be produced on stage and is not meant to be a literal translation of the Japanese words, though the playwright's intentions have been observed as closely as possible. Footnotes have been introduced to clarify Japanese terms and customs whenever necessary.

Shingeki

The massive introduction of Western ideas during the Meiji period and the upheaval which accompanied it were the source of shingeki's birth and in some ways the cause of its impeded development into a truly Japanese form of theatre. Benito Ortolani helps to illuminate the period when he states:

> Only a "new" drama could reflect the "new" predicament of a Japanese society which was growing closer and closer to the occidental structure of life; and a "new" drama alone could mirror the many human problems resulting from the painful transition: the disillusion of enlightened intelligentsia, the merciless power of capitalism, the loneliness of the individual within mass society, the disintegration of the peasantry and craftsmen. A certain messianism characterized the new drama from the beginning: the promise of salvation held out to the countless victims of a social transformation which seemed to disregard basic human rights.[4]

From its beginning with the founding of the Bungei Kyokai (Literary Association) in 1906, the entire shengeki movement was marked by a desire to imitate Western plays and production techniques as closely as possible.[5] Few of the new actors and directors had any first hand experience with the techniques they were trying to emulate, however, and consequently much of what was done in the early phase of the movement smacked of amateurism; even productions given by highly competent Kabuki actors appear to have suffered from inconsistencies borne of ignorance.[6]

By 1924, however, several of the leading artists had traveled to the West and observed the workshops of

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[4]Benito Ortolani, "Shingeki, the Maturing New Drama of Japan," Studies in Japanese Culture (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1963), p. 164.

[5]Komiya Toyotaka, ed. Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era (Tokyo: Obunsha, 1956) p. 292.

[6]Ibid.

Stanislavski and Reinhardt, among others, and returned with fresh ideas and a new spirit of experimentation. The Tsukiji Little Theatre company built the first Western style theater with all the standard technical apparatus, and began producing realistic drama in earnest. They produced almost entirely translations of Western plays, concentrating on playwrights such as Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg, setting the standard of production and type of play for years to come.[7] The directors of the tsukiji company looked on their troupe as a kind of laboratory--a place where free experimentation could take place. Although it disbanded after only five years as a single company, this group performed two very important functions for the future of the shingeki movement. The excitement it generated in the theatre world insured the continued interest in productions of the new drama and provided the impetus for the formation of several new troupes dedicated to work of high quality. And perhaps the most important effect was the creation of a core of highly trained and competent actors and directors with whom the new drama began to pyramid into a full fledged movement.

While an increasing number of Japanese plays began to appear during the thirties and early fourties, a clear indication that the genre was beginning to come into its

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[7]Takeshi Kurahashi, "Western Drama in Japan--The Japanese Shingeki Movement," Japan Quarterly, Vol. 5 (1958) p. 179.

own, the movement was in a state of great flux until 1941, marked generally by a breakdown in organization and a splintering of companies. The period ended abruptly when the government, increasingly concerned with the leftist element which had entered several of the new troupes, began to close down their productions. Playwrights who were not imprisoned were forced to keep quiet as the entire shengeki movement became suspect. Only one troupe was allowed to continue to produce throughout the war years--the Bungakuza, which still operates today.[8]

At the end of the war, the shingeki enjoyed a tremendous rise in popularity. The occupation forces were distrustful of kabuki because of its "feudal spirit" and encouraged the production of Western theatre. As activity in the shingeki increased, it soon became clear that two very important elements of the pre-war years had survived intact. The first of these is the spirit of experimentation emphasized so strongly by the Tsukiji directors. An interesting phenomenon in relation to this spirit is the method of financing shingeki productions today.

Because the returns from an average three week run of a modern play do not provide enough to pay entirely

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[8]Japanese Commission for UNESCO, Theatre in Japan (Japan: Ministry of Education, 1963) p. 227.

the cost of production, a fluid situation has developed whereby shingeki directors are occasionally exchanged between noh and kabuki troupes for individual productions. This is not only a source of mutual enrichment between genres, but also provides a supplimentary income for the shingeki directors. The actors make a substantial part of their living by working in television and motion pictures.[9] In this way, the shingeki artists are able to subsidize their own troupes and gain an element of freedom for experimentation--they don't have to depend solely on boxoffice receipts for their financial solvency.

The second element, and perhaps the most significant sign of maturity in any living theatre, is the emergence of original playwrights. While it is true that much of today's shingeki still consists of the reproduction of Western themes--either in translation or through imitation by Japanese playwrights--some notable exceptions stand out. Two of these exceptions, Junji Kinoshita and Yukio Mishima, are worth mentioning briefly as examples.

Kinoshita's greatest achievement for the new drama has been to break through the all powerful realistic tradition which has bound shingeki playwrights from its

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[9]Takeshi Kurahashi, "Western Drama in Japan--The Japanese Shingeki Movement," Japan Quarterly, vol. 5 (1958) p. 184.

beginning.[10] In Yuzuru (Twilight Crane), Kinoshita borrowed from the rich sources of Japanese folklore to produce a highly original work which, while it is pure fantasy drawn from legend, manages to express a universal theme: the struggle between materialism and spiritual values.[11]

Mishima, a very prolific writer, is perhaps best known in this country for his Five Modern Noh Plays.[12] In this volume, Mishima has rewritten and updated five of the most popular of the Noh dramas. While attempting to retain some of the haunting, weird quality of the original plays, he has retold the stories within a contemporary framework, restating the universal themes in modern terms.

While both Kinoshita and Mishima have established a link with Japan's past in their attempts to make meaningful evaluations of modern Japanese society, the playwright Chikao Tanaka has prefered to deal directly with the contemporary world as he sees it.

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[10]Benito Ortolani, "Shingeki, the Maturing New Drama of Japan," Studies in Japanese Culture (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1963) p. 174.

[11]Junji Kinoshita, "Yuzuru," Donald Keene, trans. Playbook (New Directions, 1956).

[12]Yukio Mishima, Five Modern Noh Plays (New York: Knopf, 1957).

Chikao Tanaka

Born in 1906, Chikao Tanaka later attended Keio University in Tokyo where he joined the Shingeki Research Laboratory. It was here that he first began to read the psychological dramas of Paul Geraldy, and became absorbed in existentialist philosophy.[13] He was graduated in 1930 with a degree in French literature.

In 1933, his first play, Ofukuro (Mother) was published, and from that time on Tanaka has been an active member of the shingeki movement both as a leading playwright and as a director. In 1938, he became one of the founders of the Bungakuza, which continues as one of the three major troupes today. He remained there until 1954, when he joined the Haiyuza, considered today the most influential troupe in shingeki.[14] Tanaka is presently an active member of the Haiyuza.

In well over twenty plays written since Ofukuro the author has been engrossed by one basic existentialist theme and its variations:[15] man's search for personal

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[13]"Tanaka Chikao." Engeki Hyakka Daijiten ("Complete Encyclopedia of Theatre") Vol. 3 (Japan: Heibonsha, 1960) p. 517.

[14]Japanese Commission for UNESCO, Theatre in Japan (Japan: Ministry of Education, 1963) p. 233.

[15]Chikao Tanaka, Tanaka Chikao Gikyoku Zenshu, ("Complete Plays of Chikao Tanaka") Vol. 1 (Japan: Hakusuisha, 1960) p. 345.

identity. His method seems to have been to examine the problem from every possible angle, varying setting and character, making each play different by emphasizing a different aspect of the theme each time.

According to Mineo Mayazaki, the editor of Tanaka's complete plays, there are three variations of this central theme which run through all of Tanaka's plays: 1) Is there a God? What is the function of the ego in relation to the possible existence of God? 2) What is original sin: the paradox of alternating hatred and desire of women by the main character in the play. 3) How does man relate to society? What is the function of the individual ego in a changing, disintegrating society?[16]

While the playwright reexamines these questions in play after play, Mayazaki suggests that the three works which best represent the development of these variations on the existentialist theme are: Ofukuro (Mother), Maria no Kubi (Head of the Madonna) and Kumo no Hatate (Beyond the Clouds).[17] In Ofukuro the alternate attraction and refulsion between man and woman is explored. The story revolves around a family crisis in which a young man struggles to free himself from his mother's overprotectiveness and

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

thereby gain his sexual independence.[18] Maria no Kubi is set in atomic bombed Nagasaki and is evidently an attempt to explore the individual's need to establish a relationship with an entirely new society in a world which is no longer comprehensible.[19]

Kumo no Hatate deals with the existence of God, among other things, and has been called the first Japanese existentialist play.[20] It will be evident in the following discussion of the play that Tanaka has successfully applied his knowledge of Western existentialist philosophy to the expression of problems which are deeply rooted in Japanese society.

The play

The search for identity--Tanaka's existential problem--in Kumo no Hatate can be identified on two different levels: within the dialogue, and within the structure of the drama. Throughout the text of the play, the topic of conversation constantly boils down to the question: who or what am I? Shingefuji asks, "What are you?" Futaba recites a poem and asks, "Is that me?" Hideko asks, "Who am I to want more?" Junnosuke asks, "Who am I" repeatedly.

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[18]Benito Ortolani, "Shingeki, the Maturing New Drama of Japan", Studies in Japanese Culture (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1963) p. 183.

[19]"Tanaka Chikao," Engeki Hyakka Daijiten ("Complete Encyclopedia of Theatre") Vol. 3 (Japan: Heibonsha, 1960) p.517.

[20]Ibid.

The answer is never given.

The story concerns Junnosuke, a doctor who joined the army as a private during the war and became wounded in action. The wound he received in the back of the head has injured a nerve which affects sexual potency. Under the threat of possibly life-long crippling effects from this injury, he is in a state of extreme mental anxiety. The nurse who cared for him in the hospital, Futaba, has returned home with him to work as a nurse in his office and keep watch over his state of mind. She has also fallen in love with him.

In the beginning of the play we see Futaba, who has gone through two marriages unsuccessfully, flirting innocently with an X-ray machine salesman. In this scene, the first of a series of similar dramatic devices is used by the author to create an affect of unstable or unclear relationships between the characters. This device is particularly effective in a Japanese play, because of the highly structured system of social relationships in Japan, a system in which one is almost always clear as to his social position in relation to other people. From the very beginning then, these relationships are thrown into confusion. Shigefuji the salesman questions the true nature of Futaba's association with the doctor, implying that it is not what it seems to be. We also learn that the old doctor, Gijun, who is Junnosuke's father, is not

what he had seemed to Futaba: a kindly old gentleman. His relationship to his first wife and to his ex-mistress Hideko are highly suspect. Hideko is presently seen lying on the bed, suffering from morphine withdrawal and in great pain.

In the next scene we are introduced to the second dramatic device used to create confusion about the real state of things. In this case, it is the state of Junnosuke's mind. From apparent normalcy at his first entrance, the doctor goes through a series of abrupt changes of mood: extreme rage, vengeance, remorse, cynicism, relief and calm. The juxtapositioning of these scenes with little or no dramatic preparation for the changes seem to convince us of Junnosuke's imbalance due to his anxiety over the injury--until the final scene when he says that he has been acting out each of these moods: that he was not only aware of what he was doing, but was doing it deliberately! The effect is that we are no longer sure of Junnosuke's real state of mind. Has he really been deceiving Futaba--is he still doing so? Or has this entire sequence of events been part of his own self-deception? This is calculated on the part of the playwright, however, for it is precisely that uncertainty which is the topic of the play.

As the play progresses, each relationship is scrutinized and found wanting. Hideko sympathizes with

Futaba for her hard life and offers to adopt her--to give her money. It becomes clear, however, that what she really wants from Futaba is a shot of morphine to alleviate her withdrawal symptoms. We also learn that Shigefuji, in spite of his joviality and pretended concern for Futaba's way of life, was in fact intending to sell her into prostitution. Then, in a tense scene, Junnosuke switches roles with his old army sergeant, harrassing him mercilessly, trading the well-being of the sergeant's child for personal revenge. Suddenly, he turns the relationship over again, debasing himself to an extreme that embarasses everyone present.

Finally, as Junnosuke's relationships to his family and Futaba unfold in the last scene, we see the underlying cause of his struggle with identity. He explains that as a boy, conscientious and dutiful, he once gave in to a natural urge to sexual curiosity towards Hideko, then his father's nurse and mistress. Ashamed of what he had felt, he was too afraid of his father to bring his feelings out into the open. The experience was repressed but it festered in his mind, making him constantly aware of the falseness of personal relationships. This awareness carries through into his adulthood and, though he leads a normal life on the surface, he finds himself unable to establish meaningful contact with other human beings. His

feelings for Futaba he dismisses, believing he has simply used her.

Having tried to live his life according to his own values, which are the only values that he recognizes as real, Junnosuke finds that he is still unable to attain peace or find happiness. He concludes sadly that if man is basically evil and suspicious, as he seems to be, then perhaps the only way to happiness is not to search--not to stir the muddy waters of the soul.

The character of Futaba provides a contrast to Junnosuke's pessimism, for she believes in the essential goodness of all people. She prefers, however, to set her sights of happiness beyond the real world--"beyond the clouds" as it were, and away from the twisted values of society. She suggests the existence of God as an answer to the guidance that Junnosuke seeks in finding himself. He rejects that answer as too simple,[21] however. The play ends with no solution, the characters adrift in an incomprehensible world.

Though Tanaka's existentialism is conceived within the context of contemporary Japanese society, it is universal in its implications. For Junnosuke rejects the idea that the war itself is the cause of his limbo

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[21]"Tanaka Chikao." Engeki Hyakka Daijiten ("Complete Encyclopedia of Theatre") Vol. 3 (Japan: Heibonsha, 1960) p. 517.

state. It is incidental. The playwright points out that the war is simply an external pressure, under which Junnosuke "still believes that his own ego . . . is the absolute basis for freedom."[22]

By applying his understanding of existentialist philosophy to the changing conditions of Japanese society, Tanaka is able to portray the problems of his countrymen in a meaningful dramatic statement. The originality of the context in which he poses his argument does not detract from its application to people everywhere.

Production

Kumo no Hatate was first performed by the Bungakuza in 1948, and the text was published in the periodical Gekisaku the same year. A highly successful production, it did much to establish the Bungakuza as an important company after the war.[23] It was again produced in 1958, in another successful production, by the Haiyuza.

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[22]Unpublished letter, from Tanaka, February 18, 1968.

[23]Japanese Commission for UNESCO, Theatre in Japan (Japan: Ministry of Education, 1963) p. 234.

B E Y O N D T H E C L O U D S

A play

by

CHIKAO TANAKA

CHARACTERS:[1]

Junnosuke Tsuyuki, a doctor

Gijun Tsuyuki, his father, also a doctor

Futaba, a nurse

Hideko Ono, once a nurse, now a morphine addict

Sergeant Kawamoto, an ex-soldier

Mr. Shigefuji, a medical supplies salesman

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[1]The names and other Japanese words are pronounced as in Italian: The vowels are pure. (a is ah, e is eh, i is ee, o is oh, and u is oo.)

SCENE: IT IS THE OFFICE OF THE DOCTORS TSUYUKI. THE STAGE IS SEPARATED INTO TWO AREAS: THE EXAMINING ROOM AT STAGE RIGHT, AND THE DISPENSARY AT STAGE LEFT. A WHITE CURTAIN FORMS A PARTITION BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS, BUT IT IS PULLED BACK AT PRESENT.

HALF OF THE UPSTAGE WALL OF THE EXAMINING ROOM IS TAKEN UP BY A LARGE OPAQUE SLIDING DOOR, BEHIND WHICH IS THE WAITING ROOM. AGAINST THE SOLID HALF OF THIS WALL IS A BED, AND ABOVE THE BED HANGS A MEDICAL CHART SHOWING THE GERM CYCLE RESULTING FROM UNSANITARY FERTILIZATION OF CROPS.[1] DOWNSTAGE OF THE BED IS A GLASS DOOR WHICH OPENS INTO A CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE FAMILY QUARTERS. FURTHER DOWNSTAGE IS A LARGE DESK AND SOME CHAIRS.

THE UPSTAGE WALL OF THE DISPENSARY IS HALVED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT. THE UPPER SECTION IS GLASS, WITH A PHARMACIST'S WINDOW IN THE CENTER, NOW OPEN. A SMALL BLACKBOARD HANGS ABOVE THE WINDOW. THE LOWER SECTION IS WOOD, AND TWO HARD PACKED STRAW MATS, EACH 3 BY 6 FEET ARE SPREAD ON THE FLOOR WITH A SMALL DESK AND A BRIGHTLY COLORED CUSHION ON TOP OF THEM. DOWNSTAGE LEFT IS A

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[1]A series of pictures showing crops fertilized with human excrement, vegetables on the table, people eating them, the germs involved, and the effects of the diseases resulting.

LARGE MEDICINE SHELF.

THROUGH THE DISPENSARY'S GLASS SECTION, WE CAN SEE THE WAITING ROOM AND THE ENTRANCE LEADING OUTSIDE. AN OLD SOFA IS VISIBLE THROUGH THE SLIDING DOOR, WHICH IS OPEN. SHIGEFUJI IS NOW SITTING ON IT WITH THE BLACK BOX OF HIS PORTABLE X-RAY MACHINE BESIDE HIM. ON THE BED, HIDEKO LIES FACING AWAY FROM THE AUDIENCE. OCCASIONALLY SHE GIVES A LOUD GASP.

FUTABA, IN A WHITE NURSES UNIFORM, IS MIXING MEDICINE WITH MORTAR AND PESTLE.

TIME: IT IS EVENING, SHORTLY AFTER THE WAR.

SHIGEFUJI: (GIVES A LARGE YAWN).

FUTABA: Sorry to keep you waiting for this.

SHIGEFUJI: I don't care about the medicine. I'm waiting for your answer. Mrs. Tsuyuki.

FUTABA: Why do you insist on calling me Mrs. Tsuyuki?

SHIGEFUJI: Well who the devil are you then? You know what they're saying in the village.

FUTABA: Pooh.

SHIGEFUJI: You can't just pooh it. Look, now I can't just sit around here and watch a girl like you grind medicine! God, what a waste! I mean it . . . . You don't know your own value.

FUTABA: Oh? And what do you mean by that?

SHIGEFUJI: A beautiful woman like you? Come on now, you know what I'm talking about. I've been a lot of places . . . nearly every doctor's office in the country. And I haven't found another woman like you anywhere. Oh, maybe your mouth is just a wee bit big for such a pretty little face, but . . .

FUTABA: Come on, now, you're teasing me again . . . (SHE FINISHES GRINDING THE MEDICINE, AND BEGINS TO WRAP IT)[1].

SHIGEFUJI: Here you are in this dumpy little provincial clinic . . . oh, the Doctor cleaned it up a little when he got out of the army . . .

FUTABA: Was it worse before?

SHIGEFUJI: Was it! It got to look just like the <u>old</u> Doctor. Old . . . dirty . . . sure wasn't sanitary.

FUTABA: (GIGGLES) The old man is home! He's inside . . .

SHIGEFUJI: Huh? Oh, don't worry about it. He's deaf. (HE STEPS INTO THE EXAMING ROOM, SPEAKS TO HIDEKO) And how do you feel today, Madam? Comfortable? (SHE DOESN'T ANSWER) (HE CROSSES INTO THE DISPENSARY AREA) Nowhere else to go around here, I guess. The only other doctor in this area is old man Doi . . . so what can you do? Have you ever seen him? He's gotten so bad now he can't even give a shot without his hands shaking all over the

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[1]Medicine is often ground on the spot, then wrapped in small sheets of rice paper. The ends of the paper are then twisted to complete the packaging.

place. He's no good with the stethoscope, either.

FUTABA: (HANDS HIM THE WRAPPED MEDICINE) Here. It's one day's.

SHIGEFUJI: (NONCHALANTLY) Of course, this might be nothing more than socium bicarbonate . . . (TAKES IT FROM HER) Nope . . . old man Doi can't hear a damn thing. Stethoscope doesn't do him a bit of good.

WITHOUT TURNING TO HIM, FUTABA SITS ON TOP OF THE DESK AND BEGINS TO TURN THE PAGES OF A LARGE BOOK. SHIGEFUJI RUDELY SEATS HIMSELF DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HER.

SHIGEFUJI: You know, what really makes me puke is when I think of old Tsuyuki pulling in all that money the way he did.

FUTABA: Mr. Shigefuji, I'm sure men like you turn a pretty good profit. What do you get . . . after one of these machines are sold and paid for? Pretty good markup, I bet.

SHIGEFUJI: Ah, but you see I'm not treacherous the way the old doc is. In the first place, he's a real talker. I mean, it's a national crisis, the way these old geezers work! Here all the young men are going off to fight the war . . . while all these old bastards have the gall to complain that they're having to flog themselves on--as a public service! Bah! Brrr . . . (HE PRETENDS TO HAVE PALSIED HANDS, TREMBLING LIKE AN OLD MAN)

FUTABA: The old doctor is an earnest man. Perhaps somewhat affected . . . just a little.

SHIGEFUJI: Yeah . . . he makes an awful lot of noise proving how important and "earnest" he is. But off in secret . . . he used to pull some pretty dirty tricks. Well, you know what morphine is, wholesale . . . You know he used to squeeze fifteen, twenty times that out of people. Talk about mark up! That's what they used to say before the war ended. You know, it hasn't been very long since you got here, Futaba. You just haven't had time to find out how really rotten the old son of a bitch is.

FUTABA: People have weaknesses. They can't do anything about it. It's almost as if their karma were forcing them to do things . . . like it was something left over . . . something they'd done in a previous life.

SHIGEFUJI: Oh, that's hogwash. Come on, don't tell me you're sympathetic to the old man . . .

FUTABA: Sure I do. I'm . . . sympathetic with everybody.

SHIGEFUJI: (EXAGGERATEDLY) Oh, that's great! And who's supposed to depend on you?

FUTABA: What do you mean? Why not?

SHIGEFUJI: I mean if you feel that way about everybody . . . then how is anybody supposed to depend on you to feel anything . . . special? For one person, I mean?

FUTABA: (LAUGHS) I don't suppose they can.

SHIGEFUJI: Well, what about the young doc?

FUTABA: Here we go again.

SHIGEFUJI: Come on now. You're no innocent young thing . . . you can level with me. What's the deal with you . . . <u>really</u>?

FUTABA: Listen. He's my patient!

SHIGEFUJI: Patient!

FUTABA: That's right. And I'm his nurse.

SHIGEFUJI: Come on, now, you're talking to me in circles. You already told me you aren't going to marry him. But if that's true, how come . . .

FUTABA: All right. So I'm fond of him. Yes. I am.

SHIGEFUJI: Uh huh! I suppose you've kissed him then . . .

FUTABA: (PETTISHLY) Oh, you're a monster! I hate you, Shigefuji!

SHIGEFUJI: (LAUGHING) Well, who knows . . . the old man is an expert doc. So maybe the son's got the talent. Even if he does seem like such a jittery little guy.

FUTABA: He has a nervous temperament.

SHIGEFUJI: He has something! Listen, don't you think he's got a sinister look in his eyes?

FUTABA: Who? The old Doctor?

SHIGEFUJI: No, the young chief.

FUTABA: You think so?

SHIGEFUJI: Just when I think he's talking normally . . . gentle as can be, you know? . . . suddenly he starts to

shout. Like a regular dictator. I mean, he wasn't the friendliest guy in the world before the war . . . but since he got out he's funny. Nervous . . . jumpy. He just doesn't fit the doctor image.

FUTABA: Do you think there's anything else . . . different about him? Besides that?

SHIGEFUJI: Well . . . looks like he's in a state of nervous exhaustion, that's all. Got that old look, you know. But that's probably because he's got you to look after and . . . It's pretty bad, you know . . . dragging a pretty girl like you out here, into this . . .

FUTABA: (TO HERSELF) Nervous exhaustion . . .

SHIGEFUJI: You aren't listening. I mean it. Nothing good is going to come out of your being in this dump. I didn't know the dead wife, but they say he threw her out in the snow. She had to spend the whole night outdoors.

FUTABA: Who threw her out? The old doctor?

SHIGEFUJI: Yeah, she just got on his nerves a <u>little</u> bit, you see. I guess she finally went over to Ono's place . . . (INDICATING HIDEKO) and <u>she's</u> the one who went and put herself at the old man's mercy.

FUTABA: He's really terrible when he gets angry. He must be a very hard man.

SHIGEFUJI: And she was the next one. (INDICATES HIDEKO) The owner of a restaurant. You'd better be careful you

don't do a repeat performance.

FUTABA: Repeat performance?

SHIGEFUJI: Playing leading lady, like her. See it? End up just like that.

FUTABA: Well thanks anyway, but however desperate I may get, I'll never be to the point where I'm thinking of taking morphine to escape it all. I don't know though . . . Sometimes I do think I'd like to try it . . . just to see what it's like, I mean . . .

SHIGEFUJI: Well here, let me give you a shot now . . .

FUTABA: No! Heavens, no.

SHIGEFUJI: (LAUGHS) It isn't quite so easy in her case. (LOWERING HIS VOICE) God, just look at her.

HIDEKO: Aahhh. (GROANS, TURNS OVER WITH A DEEP SIGH) Nurse.

FUTABA: Yes, Mrs. Ono?

HIDEKO: Hasn't he come back yet?

FUTABA: No, not yet. Any time now.

HIDEKO: Soon? Oh . . . (GASPS)

SHIGEFUJI: Well, it's too bad about you. You'll come around some day. You'll find out the way things really are around here. But by that time, it'll be too late. You'll already be a prisoner of his house. I mean it. See her? If you're ever going to get away, the time to go is now. Why don't you listen to me . . . I'm only saying this for your own good.

FUTABA: What do you mean, "the way things really are around here?"

SHIGEFUJI: Just ask her. (GESTURES TO HIDEKO, LOOKS MEANINGFULLY) Other things too, you know . . . for instance, what kind of money are you making here? Salary?

FUTABA: Salary? No, I . . .

SHIGEFUJI: See what I mean? Don't you get anything?

FUTABA: Just spending money . . . that's all I asked for.

SHIGEFUJI: Hah! Not even enough to keep you in soap, I bet, huh? Just because you didn't ask for much doesn't mean he should use that as an excuse. That's just plain exploitation, whatever the excuse! You probably do everything around here . . . right? Laundry . . . dispensary . . . and the kitchen . ...

FUTABA: That's right. But I enjoy the cooking.

SHIGEFUJI: Then there's the extracurricular duties during the night . . . whoops, I guess I shouldn't mention that. Just generally <u>every</u>thing, right? Look, Futaba . . . what does . . . what does that make you? I mean, what kind of existence is that?

FUTABA: My, aren't we the philosopher today!

SHIGEFUJI: I'm telling you the facts! There are a million nurses who have done that . . . gave themselves completely, thinking their doctor would marry them. And they came

to nothing but misery for it. It just ruined their lives for nothing. (LOOKS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE BED) Isn't that right, Mrs. Ono?

HIDEKO: How long are you going to hang around here? If you want any of your kind of business, you're going to have to go out and get it. You're not enticing anybody here. Futaba isn't your kind of woman . . . Or do you still have some phoney promises up your sleeve?

SHIGEFUJI: (EMBARASSED) Hey . . . ah . . . Listen, you can't talk to me that way . . . watch your mouth. I'm leaving tomorrow. Tomorrow . . . (TURNS TO FUTABA) Anyway . . . I was going to say that if you're the wife of the house, then you ought to be treated with some kind of dignity. Hell, it looks to me like you're no better than a nurse around here.

FUTABA: I am a nurse! And if I . . . become his wife . . . then I'll still be the same person. I'm not going to change.

SHIGEFUJI: That's right. And look at you . . . here you are in a little mountain village, around all these people who don't even know whether they're alive or dead. How can you live around here year after year? You won't be able to stand it. There are no movies at all. And you don't have a single friend here. See? There's absolutely nothing here to stimulate you.

FUTABA: I've been stimulated. I don't need that kind of thing any more.

SHIGEFUJI: Go ahead and believe that, but don't try and test it for too long. Your face tells me what you really need.

FUTABA: What do you mean?

SHIGEFUJI: Look at your hair . . . all put up and pretty. Enough perfume to tickle a man's nose from here. (MOVES TO HER) Your whole appearance tells me what you need.

FUTABA: (PULLS AWAY FROM HIM)

SHIGEFUJI: Your whole body is crying out for something!

FUTABA: For what?

SHIGEFUJI: You want a man. (LAUGHS)

FUTABA: (SHE ALSO LAUGHS, CARELESSLY)

SHIGEFUJI: Come on, now, you're not fooling anybody.

FUTABA: Am I really so easy to see through?

SHIGEFUJI: Won't you marry me? I mean it. I just want to get you out of here, for your own good. Come away . . .

FUTABA: And what do I have to do for you?

SHIGEFUJI: Well . . . just . . . tell me something. Don't keep me in suspense. Tomorrow, I won't be here. Tomorrow.

FUTABA: You seem to have forgotten what I told you before. I explained it clearly . . .

SHIGEFUJI: About your having a kid?

FUTABA: Yes . . . and I have debts.

SHIGEFUJI: What is it . . . two thousand . . . three thousand? I have that right here in my pocket. (THRUSTS HIS HAND INTO HIS POCKET)

FUTABA: So you want to make me your second mistress? Or is it number three?

SHIGEFUJI: Come on, now . . . I'm not kidding! I just want you out of here. Someplace like . . . Osaka. To Osaka. That's what you really want. Some place like Osaka or Tokyo . . .

FUTABA: I'm a very extravagant girl.

SHIGEFUJI: Yeah . . . I know.

FUTABA: I also have a lover.

SHIGEFUJI: The doctor?

FUTABA: No.

SHIGEFUJI: No! Wow, this little need of yours takes a lot to feed it. Here you are trying to get to the altar with one hand, and taking another lover with the other. . .

FUTABA: I know. It's terrible, isn't it?

SHIGEFUJI: (LAUGHS) You talk like it was nothing at all! (PAUSE) Man, you are different. I can't figure you out. You aren't even real. You're like . . . grasping at a cloud . . .

FUTABA: (SERIOUS) Yes . . . yes, that's it! Only, it's . . . beyond the clouds.

SHIGEFUJI: Beyond?

FUTABA: Far, far beyond the clouds.

SHIGEFUJI: What do you mean?

FUTABA: Well it's . . . I'm not sure. From a poem.

SHIGEFUJI: Yeah, real poetic. Well anyway, you'd just better quit trying to be his wife. It's the only kind thing to do.

FUTABA: What do you mean?

SHIGEFUJI: It's not a game you're playing. You're going to end up killing the man.

FUTABA: But how did you . . . (TO HERSELF) No, you couldn't know . . .

SHIGEFUJI: Of course I know! If you make love to that poor, skinny guy, he won't last half a year! You're too much for him!

FUTABA: Mr. Shigefuji! You forget yourself.

SHIGEFUJI: Sorry. Sorry.

FUTABA: Tell me, what do you think is the . . . destiny of a woman . . .?

SHIGEFUJI: You mean, To Be or Not To Be . . .? I haven't thought about it.

FUTABA: That's not the kind of destiny I mean.

SHIGEFUJI: What then?

FUTABA: A woman's life is . . . well . . . not to help wear down a man's life, but instead . . . perhaps to enrich it.

SHIGEFUJI: Oh, and what does a woman do to enrich a

man's life?

FUTABA: Oh, I'm sure I don't have the answer. (LAUGHS GRACEFULLY)

SHIGEFUJI: No, come on . . . you must have some idea. What can she do? What . . .

SUDDENLY THERE IS A BANG AS THE DOOR OPENS. FUTABA STOPS LAUGHING AND GOES INTO THE WAITING ROOM. IT IS JUNNOSUKE, RETURNING FROM A HOUSE-CALL.

FUTABA: Ah, you're back. (TAKES HIS HAT AND BAG)

JUNNOSUKE: What were you laughing about?

FUTABA: Oh, Mr. Shigefuji has been very interesting, as usual.

JUNNOSUKE: (KNOTS HIS BROWS IN A FROWN)

SHIGEFUJI: Heh heh heh, well what do you say, doc? I've got to be on my way tomorrow, so this is the very last chance for you to get your hands on one of these little beauties. You've got to do it now. (POINTS TO THE MACHINE) This one right here . . . this machine has just got to be bought. Has to go. Just has to go.

JUNNOSUKE: (POINTS TO THE WOODEN SIGN OVER THE DOOR WHICH SAYS, "DO NOT ENTER WITHOUT PERMISSION.")

SHIGEFUJI: Now listen, doctor, I don't have to tell you about this little baby. You know what I mean . . . Just having the name "X-ray machine" in your office will give your patients confidence, just like it does to patients

all over the world. All doctors need one of these. So, even if it seems like a bit too much for the pocketbook to handle right this minute, just think of all those patients who . . .

JUNNOSUKE: My father never depended on machines. "The finger and the ear are the greatest tools of science." That's what he says.

SHIGEFUJI: Come now doctor . . . a young man like you, giving the "evil spirits" argument?

JUNNOSUKE: That's not what I said. To think we can solve everything with science is a mistake . . . Because human knowledge hasn't reached that point yet. I don't judge my father's behavior as a human being . . . But I respect that kind of self-confidence in his own abilities as a doctor. Besides, I don't need that thing. I've refused it from the very beginning. But for some reason you keep pestering me about it. Why is that? I suspect that you don't come here to see me after all. You have different motives, perhaps?

SHIGEFUJI: (LAUGHS) You must be in a bad mood today, doc.

JUNNOSUKE: By the way, the other day I made out a government order for some anesthetic, and there was some missing. Did you take it?

SHIGEFUJI: Huh? That's a pretty bad thing to joke about . . .

JUNNOSUKE: It was diasethelene, and two grams were missing.

I understand it's good money. (PAUSE) Well, if it wasn't you . . . (LOOKS AT HIDEKO)

SHIGEFUJI: You keep it in the dispensary? Ah, well, no wonder. That'll never do. Can't trust the nurses these days. (TO FUTABA) Excepting you, of course. Just you.

FUTABA: Oh . . . (LOOKS UP AT THE BLACKBOARD) Mr. Nagai wanted you to come over as soon as you got back.

JUNNOSUKE: Nagai . . . of Nita?

FUTABA: Yes. He can't sleep because of the pain in his hip.

SHIGEFUJI: Oh yeah . . . he has arthritis . . .

JUNNOSUKE: You shut up.

SHIGEFUJI: Oops . . . (DIPS HIS HEAD IN MOCK REPENTANCE)

JUNNOSUKE: Not again . . . Did you tell him I was coming?

FUTABA: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to, but it's not far from here, and . . .

HIDEKO: (SHE HAS LIFTED HER HEAD UP AT THE SOUND OF THE DOCTOR) Doctor . . . oh . . . doctor . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Oh, are you still here?

HIDEKO: (HAIR DISARRAYED, PANTING, SHE IS BARELY ABLE TO PROP UP THE EXPOSED UPPER HALF OF HER BODY WITH BOTH HANDS) Yes. . . I'm still here. Yesterday's shot didn't seem to have any effect at all, doctor. And that price . . . that was outrageous, doctor . . .

SHIGEFUJI: Ha ha. (LAUGHS, GIVING FUTABA AN "I TOLD YOU SO" LOOK)

JUNNOSUKE: What's funny? If you've finished your business here, then you can leave.

SHIGEFUJI: Yes sir! Well, Futaba, I leave tomorrow. But I'll be back next month. Be thinking about what I said today. All right? Until then . . . (STARTS TO LEAVE) Well, Mrs. Ono, you managed to outstay me.

HIDEKO: Oh, did you make a sale?

SHIGEFUJI: Not much of one.

HIDEKO: So you're going to make another pitch for her when you have more money, is that it?

SHIGEFUJI: This woman! Pretending to sleep, and all the while, she was listening! (LAUGHING, HE EXITS WITH THE X-RAY MACHINE)

JUNNOSUKE: What was it he said today?

FUTABA: Oh, he didn't say anything.

JUNNOSUKE: Now listen to me, Futaba . . .

HIDEKO: Doctor, this evening I want something that really works.

JUNNOSUKE: I've already stopped your shots.

HIDEKO: Oh no! It feels like I'm dying . . . since yesterday.

JUNNOSUKE: If you really want to cure this disease . . . instead of just thinking how you can get by each moment

. . . Like I told you before, I can get you into that national asylum they're going to set up, and you can get some proper treatment.

HIDEKO: Yes, of course. I will . . . but just until then . . . please give me one shot. Just for today. That much is all right, isn't it?

JUNNOSUKE: It's always "just for today." (TO FUTABA) Get me some vitamin . . . some camphor.

FUTABA: Yes, of course. (GOES TO THE DISPENSARY CABINET)

HIDEKO: No . . . I . . .

FUTABA: How many vials?

JUNNOSUKE: Two or three.

FUTABA: All right.

HIDEKO: Oh . . . Futaba . . . please . . . he'll listen to you if you ask him for me, too. Please . . .

FUTABA: There's a national law now that says we can't give any more shots of morphine, or of any narcotic . . . (HANDS THE VIALS TO JUNNOSUKE) There.

JUNNOSUKE: Let me see . . . I can't really walk to Nita without boots.

FUTABA: No, I don't think so. The road to Nita is still pretty muddy. Very.

JUNNOSUKE: Even my old army boots would be ruined on that road . . . and that's the only pair I have.

HIDEKO: Oh doctor . . . I'm so bad . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Damn it, they give farmers a boot ration. I don't know why they don't give them to doctors too. Country doctors, anyway.

FUTABA: Yes . . .

HIDEKO: If it's money you want, I'll get it. No matter how much. Just give it to me . . . please. Or fish from the restaurant . . . or beef! I can bring it. I won't tell anyone! Please, you've got to save me.

JUNNOSUKE: I said no, and that's the end of it. If you want these vitamins, you can have as much as you like. (HE CHECKS HER BLOOD PRESSURE)

HIDEKO: What right have you to be cold-hearted! Oooohhh . . . I'll do anything you want . . . I can bring you any woman you want . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Don't talk nonsense. Why don't you go home and go to bed, right now.

HIDEKO: I'll probably die.

JUNNOSUKE: Bah!

FUTABA: Really, Mrs. Ono, they've banned the use of any narcotics. You don't want the doctor to do anything criminal.

HIDEKO: Oh, that's just the story released for the public. Didn't you give me three or four vials just yesterday?

JUNNOSUKE: Yes, and it was these vitamins. Besides, even if I wanted to, we haven't got any in the house. So . . .

HIDEKO: Look, doctor, I'm not just a casual patient, in one day and never seen again, am I? I've been knocking around this office since the old doctor's time. And I didn't become a patient here because I wanted to either. Or because of some quirk of fate! If you really look back into the causes . . . I . . . you can find my own shame . . . I know . . . But all the same, you can . . . well . . . there's no point in exposing all the old things. But you have to think of your father's part, too. He's got his own shame . . . but there's no reason to bring it all up again . . .

JUNNOSUKE: What are you saying about my father? What did he do?

HIDEKO: (LAUGHS MALICIOUSLY) He didn't do anything. Nothing at all. I . . . please . . . I don't think you have any right just to kick me out in this condition.

JUNNOSUKE: No right? Why not?

HIDEKO: Heh heh heh . . . You've turned out to be a very mean young man. Acting as if you don't already know all about it!

JUNNOSUKE: I don't know what you're talking about, and that's why I asked. Now, I'm very busy, so . . .

HIDEKO: You want me to talk about it . . . in public?

JUNNOSUKE: (DOESN'T ANSWER)

HIDEKO: You know, the more you strike the rug, the more dirt comes out . . . for everybody concerned.

JUNNOSUKE: You're making all this up.

HIDEKO: I don't have to make anything up! Look . . . I only want one shot . . .

JUNNOSUKE: All right, then don't tell me. I don't care. Do whatever you want, because whatever you do, I'm not going to give you a shot.

HIDEKO: Ooohhh . . . God, what a change there is in you . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Change? Nonsense.

HIDEKO: How can you be so cruel to me in front of someone else? You never acted this way before. I'm in such pain . . . but you don't care. You don't remember. Are you really abandoning me now? Oh god . . . what am I ever going to do from now on . . . (SHE BEGINS TO CRY) Oh, how can you throw me out like this? It's too much Oh . . . it's too much!

FUTABA: Mrs. Ono, listen . . . there really isn't any of that kind of medicine. The government took it all. They bought every bit there was.

HIDEKO: All of it? Ah, there's some tucked away back up on that shelf in the corner of the dispensary. (CHUCKLES KNOWINGLY) In the upper corner. I know. It's up where you can lock it up . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Yes, yes, I know. When you used to plunk yourself down over there and stick the needles into yourself, that's where it was. You used it pretty freely in those days.

HIDEKO: What do you mean I used freely? The old doctor taught me how to do it.

JUNNOSUKE: That's not true. He never did that.

HIDEKO: He did too! It's the truth. And then one day he gave me my own key . . . gave me a key . . . But quietly . . . didn't tell anyone . . . just to me . . . quietly . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Because he trusted you.

HIDEKP: Hah! (TO HERSELF) Foolish, foolish girl. He was setting out bait . . . for a stupid, silly innocent girl. Just like saying, "Go ahead, try it yourself."

JUNNOSUKE: That's sheer nonsense.

HIDEKP: Blood is thicker than water. You have to stick by your father.

JUNNOSUKE: (TO FUTABA) Don't listen to what the old woman says. In the old days, that room was perfect for secret hiding places . . . morphine and cocaine . . . medicines of that kind . . . But it's all changed now. At least, everything is in the process of changing.

HIDEKO: It hasn't changed a bit! (SHE GOES TOWARD THE DISPENSARY) It's always been a dark, clammy room. I even tried to make it a little brighter . . . used to have a flower in a vase here . . .

JUNNOSUKE: (GENTLY, BUT WITH PRIDE.) Look at her. (GESTURING TO FUTABA) This one. That's the change around here.

FUTABA: Who me?

HIDEKO: Who? You mean Futaba has taken my place?

JUNNOSUKE: That's right! Do you understand? Do you understand what I mean?

HIDEKO: What did she do? Futaba, what happened?

JUNNOSUKE: You don't understand. She's cheered up your room, that's all. She's cheered up the whole house! She's brought a little life, a little joy. And I am going to marry her! (HE IS TRIUMPHANT).

FUTABA: Oh, but I . . .

HIDEKO: Is this true?

FUTABA: I had no such idea . . . I mean . . .

HIDEKP: Futaba, do you know what's being rumored about you in the village?

JUNNOSUKE: I won't tolerate that! I'm not going to let them spread their cheap gossip any more.

FUTABA: Their gossip doesn't matter. I've lived through it before. I've had nothing but gossip all my life. But . . .

HIDEKO: If it's only gossip, it doesn't matter. But listen to me, Futaba . . . (SHE STOPS OCCASIONALLY, IN PAIN) What happens . . . what about ten years from now? What this young fella is saying now sounds just like what I heard from the old doctor ten years ago. The same words . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Mrs. Ono . . .

HIDEKO: No, you be quiet this time, and let me finish, please. Oh, Futaba . . . what I'm saying is that it's too late to start fooling yourself. I was the same as you. I fell into the old doctor's trap while I was a nurse . . . and I served for thirteen years in this dungeon . . . this room was like a deep hole . . . without seeing any sunlight . . . because we had to be secret . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Rubbish! That's absurd!

HIDEKO: I'm saying this for her sake!

FUTABA: It's different, Mrs. Ono. In my case, it's different.

HIDEKO: What's the difference? Men only think about themselves. As long as it feels good to them, then they don't care about a woman's discomfort. They don't care. That's the way men are.

JUNNOSUKE: Crap! Mrs. Ono's little legend has no meaning for us. Now you slink off to your dark hole and shut up, you hear? And listen! Because <u>this</u> is the way it is. The reason it's so dark and damp in here is that women like you sit on the tatami for thirteen years, rotting. Like a toad rotting! You're a parasite, just sitting, right there! This place stagnates . . . it's like the bottom of an old swamp . . . and it's because

of you! That's the truth! And I'm through! I have no more patience! You don't know how much I suffered, having to face you every day . . . after you . . . It's too much! I've had enough! I've gone through too much to put up with that any more.

FUTABA: What's the matter? You mustn't get agitated this way!

JUNNOSUKE: No, no, I'm all right. Nobody knows what hell I went through in that war, but it's over now. And the army . . . which I hated so much, is gone now too. Everything is in the process of changing. Like you just said. And even I have to change. Right? Well, I'm going to climb up out of the swamp and show you. Because I'm not afraid of you now. I'm absolutely through with that. I've had enough. I'm making my own decisions.

HIDEKO: But why are you mad at me, my little one? Your face is so red . . .

JUNNOSUKE: And please stop calling me by your cute little names. I am not your "little one"! Now, I've got to go and make a house call.

HIDEKO: But I never did anything. I could only do whatever the Doctor told me to do. (SHE SITS DOWN NEAR THE ENTRANCE).

JUNNOSUKE: Exactly! That's just why I don't like you.

Now, I'm leaving, so get out of the way, please. Move.

HIDEKO: (SHE LOOKS DOWN AT THE FLOOR, GASPS) Please . . .

JUNNOSUKE: By the way, I have something to say to you, Futaba. I don't want you having people like that Shigefuji character in here from now on. If nothing else, don't let me walk in on your private little jokes. I don't want to hear you . . .

FUTABA: (SHE STARTS TO SAY SOMETHING.)

JUNNOSUKE: No, I'm not listening to any excuses! What the hell did you think you were doing? You know what kind of man he is . . .

FUTABA: But I . . .

JUNNOSUKE: I just hope you'll be a little more discreet from now on . . .

FUTABA: (WHEELS AWAY FROM HIM AND COVERS HER FACE)

JUNNOSUKE: How do you think I felt, seeing you behave that way?

FUTABA: I <u>didn't</u> think you would interpret it that way.

JUNNOSUKE: I only know what I saw! It didn't look much like business! (TO HIDEKO) And I don't want to hear from you! (MOVES AS IF HE WILL SHOVE HER)

FUTABA: Well, I'll be leaving soon anyway, won't I?

JUNNOSUKE: If you want to go, then go. Whatever you want. (TO HIDEKO) Get out of my way.

HIDEKO: (CLINGING TO HIM) You musn't go. Wait . . . If I've hurt your feelings, forgive me, please, my little

one. Listen, I have some of that whisky you like so much . . . right here. (SHE TAKES THE BOTTLE OUT OF HER KIMONO AND HER CIGARETTES FALL TO THE FLOOR SPILLING FROM THE PACKAGE.)[1]

JUNNOSUKE: I don't need it. Get out of my way.

HIDEKO: No . . . I'm begging you . . . begging, see? Like this . . . (SHE IS ON HER KNEES IN AN ATTITUDE OF PRAYER) Please . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Aaah! (HE SHAKES HER LOOSE)

FUTABA: (CRIES OUT) Oh!

THE MOMENTUM OF THE SHAKE THROWS HER TO THE FLOOR WITH A CRASH. SHE LAYS FACE DOWN IN THE SAME POSITION. WE CAN SEE HER SHOULDERS HEAVE DEEPLY AS SHE WEEPS. JUNNOSUKE PUTS ON HIS SHOES AND LEAVES QUICKLY, LOOKING AS IF HE WERE FLEEING SOMETHING.

FUTABA: Mrs. Ono, shall I see you home?

HIDEKO: (FINALLY RAISING HER HEAD) Oooh . . . I guess I made quite a ruckas, dear. Are you disgusted with me?

FUTABA: No no, of course not. Mrs. Ono . . . do you think I behaved shamefully with Shigefuji?

HIDEKO: You!

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[1]The Japanese Kimono sometimes has a pocket inside the lapel where things can be carried. Objects are also carried in the sleeve.

FUTABA: You don't have to hide it if it's true.

HIDEKO: No, no no. You're just a little too . . . friendly. These mountain people are very restrained, you see . . . and your kind of openness is a little strange here.

FUTABA: Shigefuji said that too. I guess I must like to hear about myself, because . . . But I wonder why he go so . . . mean, suddenly.

HIDEKO: You never know what people like that are thinking. I don't like him . . . because I don't know what he really thinks, beneath the surface. He just turns me cold when he stares at me with those eyes . . . just turns me to stone! Even so, he was always polite to me before. He always did what I asked. This is the first time. I don't know why he's this way now. Wait, . . . Of course. You must be the reason . . .

FUTABA: You think so? Don't you think it has something to do with his father? I mean . . . what was it that he did that . . . was so bad?

HIDEKO: No, nothing! Nothing! (VERY ASHAMED) There wasn't anything. I thought he'd give me a shot if I said that. Just to get the shot.

FUTABA: I see.

HIDEKO: Listen, honey, everybody is out to get something from you, so be careful, will you please. Like that Shigefuji character . . . I know he seems to be selling

medical supplies, but he's a different kind of salesman, too. And you're the commodity.

FUTABA: I thought there was something a little funny about him.

HIDEKO: Funny? He's a pimp. (PAUSE. SOFTLY) Honey, has the old man done anything . . . has he . . . bothered you?

FUTABA: No, he's very courteous to me.

HIDEKO: Yeah, he's real nice at first. But just remember, he tormented his first wife to death. Oh, and she was such a gentle person.

FUTABA: If anybody treated me like that, it would be just the excuse I'd need to run away.

HIDEKO: But you already know about it? And she put up with it for the sake of the child. Oh, she was so good.

FUTABA: No, no, not any more. Everyone seems so unhappy in this house. I don't think I can . . .

HIDEKO: It's facing the wrong direction! If you don't build your house to face the east, you've got to expect nothing but sorrow. It has to face the right direction, that's all . . .

FUTABA: Hmm. I wonder how long I can stand it.

HIDEKO: The young doctor is making very big talk about marriage, is that right?

FUTABA: Marriage? No, it's nothing like that.

HIDEKO: Then you shouldn't stay so long in his house.

FUTABA: I know . . . I want to go somewhere far above the sky . . . hmm? Well, anyway . . . I like him.

HIDEKO: My little one?

FUTABA: He's very sweet sometimes . . . so honest . . . almost like a child. Then he says something so rough . . . just like he did then . . . and I'm so disappointed.

HIDEKO: Hah. That's the way they are. That's men.

FUTABA: Yes. I suppose I'm the fool for expecting more . . . and being disappointed. But I'm lonely.

HIDEKO: Listen, you keep saying you're fond of him . . . but you won't get married. Have you decided what you're going to do?

FUTABA: Hmm? Oh, the whole thing is very strange. I'm just doing . . . what I'm doing. I'm his nurse, and I can't be anything more. When I'm through . . . being a nurse . . . then I might go somewhere else. Or I might stay. I can do anything I want.

HIDEKO: What do you do? I mean . . . what's your job?

FUTABA: What? See, I'm a nurse! (DISPLAYS THE UNIFORM SHE IS WEARING.)

HIDEKO: Uh huh?

FUTABA: That was the agreement from the very beginning. I'm a nurse . . . and I can't be anything more than that to a patient. I came here with him so that I

could care for his sickness . . . to calm his nerves. Hah! I haven't done that! Don't you think he's been a little . . . strange, these last few days?

HIDEKO: Well, I thought he was jealous about that Shigefuji, but now that you mention it . . . he has been pretty irritable. Do you think he's still sick?

FUTABA: I can't say he's completely well . . .

HIDEKO: What's wrong with him, anyway? His head?

FUTABA: (NODS)

HIDEKO: What's wrong with his head?

FUTABA: It's a strange case . . . They don't know if there's any brain damage or not. They can't tell.

HIDEKO: He looks healthy.

FUTABA: Yes, . . . but he's so depressed.

HIDEKO: Oh, yes, well, he's always been like that. Even in the old days, when he was a child . . . he was like that.

FUTABA: But then, that's not normal either. . .

HIDEKO: Yes. Then there must be something wrong . . .

FUTABA: Mrs. Ono, how do you feel? Are you sure you feel well enough to talk like this?

HIDEKO: Aah.

PAUSE

FUTABA: I wonder . . . is there something about men that they can't live alone?

HIDEKO: (LAUGHS) Why do you ask?

FUTABA: Because, if it's true . . . and if the man feels that way . . . But surely there are couples all over the whole world who find out that they can't have children! But to find out clearly whether or not you can, before you're married . . . it's impossible. It's just impossible.

HIDEKO: What in the world are you talking about?

FUTABA: That's his sickness . . . or what's wrong with him. Not knowing if the injury affected his . . . if he's able to have children. We don't know. And once the woman finds out for sure . . . does she continue to stay by his side . . . no, no, that's not the question! Whether or not to leave doesn't matter . . . but whether he will be happier knowing. Knowing for sure that he can't, rather than just going on . . . not knowing.

HIDEKO: I don't get it. Oh! You want his baby . . . is that right?

FUTABA: (SUDDENLY) Yes, oh yes! I do. Yes. If I had his child, he would be so happy. I would prove that he wasn't sick any more! But if it's no use . . . I wish I knew. Oh, I wish I knew for sure.

HIDEKO: Yes . . . but what do you want to find out . . . Futaba?

FUTABA: Hmm? . . . But even if he finds out . . . then what happens? What becomes of me? I'm not really . . .

involved . . . and yet . . . Why do I always get myself into these situations, I wonder. I just dive right in . . . without anybody's help. I don't know . . . (PAUSE) God, why can war do such a cruel thing! It's so unnecessary! If you can develop such a horrible problem with so tiny a wound . . . it's just chance! Wouldn't it have been better if he'd just been completely blown up to begin with? (PAUSE. SHE STANDS UP, LOST IN THOUGHT. SHE BEGINS TO HUM A SOFT TUNE, IMPROVISING THE MELODY.) "The days and the months pass . . . but they suspect you, helper, because you don't belong . . ."

HIDEKO: Hmm? What . . .

FUTABA: When I was in high school, I never fell below third in the class . . . but not because I was smart. I just had a good memory. "An autumn wind will blow in the tidings of a broken and lonely world . . ." (SHE BEGINS TO TAKE OFF HER UNIFORM. SHE HAS WESTERN-STYLE CLOTHING UNDERNEATH.)

"Can no one tell me why this is so?
For my thoughts turn on the sadness of the
evening clouds
And run
Beyond, beyond the clouds.
I want to go somewhere
Far above the sky,
And leave my wasted body behind me."

Is that me? (SHE GOES INTO THE DISPENSARY AND GAZES AT THE LITTLE MIRROR ON TOP OF THE DESK.)

HIDEKO: Futaba, . . .

FUTABA: Yes . . .

HIDEKO: Do you have any barbiturates?

FUTABA: Yes.

HIDEKO: That'll do. It'll have to. Will you?

FUTABA: Will I what?

HIDEKO: You can give me a shot.

FUTABA: Oh, please!

HIDEKO: Anything will do. Please give me something. (GASPS)

FUTABA: Are you . . . really suffering?

HIDEKO: Would I lie to you? How can you think I would? (SHE GIVES AN ANGUISHED LOOK.)

FUTABA: I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Ono, but I can't. I'm off work now. Please, go on home now, and don't ask me about shots any more. (SHE BENDS OVER HIDEKO'S SIDE.)

HIDEKO: Oh, when did you change skin . . .?

FUTABA: Just now.

HIDEKO: Oh, my, you look such a lady when you dress like that . . . not at all like an old nurse . . . Aah, it hurts . . .

FUTABA: Come on now, and I'll see you home.

HIDEKO: Honey, listen . . . I don't want to sound like I'm harping . . . but do you really trust your young doctor?

FUTABA: I trust everybody . . . right off. Just naturally. But then, my feelings change back the other way just as easily. (SHE TITTERS.) Aren't I silly? I wonder if men think of me as a . . . nice little toy, because of that.

HIDEKO: Don't you want to be happy? Why don't you come home with me?

FUTABA: I've been used by people enough, Mrs. Ono.

HIDEKO: No, no, come with me and I'll adopt you as my daughter.

FUTABA: Adopt me . . . You aren't serious . . .

HIDEKO: Listen, . . . just look at me. This old frog has saved 50,000 yen[1]. . . and that's the new currency, too. And don't worry about my husband, either . . . he does whatever I say. What do you think? Don't you really want to come with me?

FUTABA: Are you sure, Mrs. Ono?

HIDEKO: I'm sure. I'm sure. I don't think you're so silly. I think deep down, you've got a very gentle heart . . .

FUTABA: Should I go? I do need some money . . .

HIDEKO: (LAUGHS) Well, at least you're honest.

FUTABA: If I had money . . . maybe I could open a little restaurant . . . very chic. And I could have a garden

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[1]There are 360 yen to the dollar.

. . . with lots of tulips.

HIDEKO: What do you want tulips for?

FUTABA: I'd export them.

HIDEKO: Export!

FUTABA: But, it's ridiculous. Don't pay any attention to me. Whatever you plan for me, I'd probably change my mind later. I dream a lot, but when it comes down to reality, . . . it never works out.

HIDEKO: Poor Futaba, . . . such a hard life . . .

FUTABA: It's always my own fault.

HIDEKO: I understand you . . . have a child.

FUTABA: I gave it away.

HIDEKO: What? Don't you love it?

FUTABA: No, no, I don't.

HIDEKO: Oh. Of course, I don't understand, because I've never had one of my own. But, . . . why don't you love it?

FUTABA: Because it's the child of someone . . . I detest.

HIDEKO: Ah. Is that it. Yes, I see. I see.

FUTABA: I'm all alone. There is no one. How can I live with a baby? How could I? I can't!

HIDEKO: But your husband . . . Oh! (EMBARASSED, SHE SAYS QUICKLY,) Yes, of course, you told me. (SHE BEGINS TO PICK UP THE CIGARETTES WHICH HAD FALLEN OUT AT JUNNOSUKE'S EXIT. SHE LIGHTS ONE FOR HERSELF.) Would you like a drink?

FUTABA: (SHAKES HER HEAD. HIDEKO PUTS HER CIGARETTE OUT NERVOUSLY.) During the time of the air raids . . . it was so terrible . . . I stayed in the Hachiman shrine. In a great, tall, wide room, . .. I was alone. I had my child there . . . all alone. My nurse--she was very fat--she was afraid to climb the stairs. (SHE LAUGHS) That was funny. In the Shinto pavillion . . .

HIDEKO: Then you became a nurse.

FUTABA: No, . . . then I married again.

HIDEKO: Poor honey, . . . men just won't leave you alone.

FUTABA: But he . . . he's got an older woman. She was always spying on us.

HIDEKO: Oh, no! Not really!

FUTABA: Even now . . . I still don't know why I married a man like that. What kind of woman must you think I am? But, how can I tell you about myself? What is purity? To be . . . unsullied? What does it matter what outer shape you take, as long as your <u>feelings</u> are . . . pure? If your heart is good, what else is important? But then, how could <u>you</u> know that about me unless I had a glass body?

HIDEKO: Glass? Glass?

FUTABA: He used to be . . . "busy." So I would go out on maneuvers . . . carrying mud, digging holes for him, . . . and I would come home completely worn out, . ..

and there they would be, sitting over the kotatsu[1] exchanging drinks and winks with each other. All warm and clean. Then I would go into the kitchen--gloomy, horrible place, . . . and they had eaten all the food. But I had to eat, or die. I choked on their leftover rice . . . and my own tears falling into it . . . I ate it . . . (SHE IS WEEPING). While they sat drinking sake . . . in the warm . . .

HIDEKO: Oh, poor honey . . . so sad! . . .

FUTABA: Sad, . . . yes. It went beyond sadness . . . It was so damn sad, it was funny! Beyond belief.

HIDEKO: Oh, my! Oh God! Oh, oh.

FUTABA: After that, I got a job at the hospital. And then came the year the war ended. It was horrible. People were brought in, one after another, with arms and legs torn off . . .

HIDEKO: I hear it was very bad . . .

FUTABA: And there were soldiers, too.

HIDEKO: Ah . . . the soldiers . . .

FUTABA: Then one day, they brought in a soldier who had caught a bomb fragment in the back of his head. He was only a private, . . . but he knew so much. He

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[1]A Japanese fireplace. Set in the middle of the floor, it is covered by a blanket, and people sit around it with their legs under the blanket.

knew all about diseases. He was a doctor.

HIDEKO: Ah, <u>that</u> was the doctor . . .

FUTABA: The wound wasn't deep. The piece of shrapnel came out easily in surgery, . . . but just by chance, . . . it hit a nerve back there . . . or might have . . . and it's possible that he can't . . . be a whole man . . . the rest of his life. (WITH A DEEP SIGH OF RESIGNATION,) That's all there is. Who am I to ask more, anyway?

PAUSE

HIDEKO: Futaba, . . . how old are you?

FUTABA: That's the end of the story. Let's keep it here, shall we? Well, I have to study now, so . . . (SHE PICKS UP HER BOOK.)

HIDEKO: What are you studying?

FUTABA: I want to become a midwife.

HIDEKO: Oh, no, you can't. It's too much for you. (HIDEKO'S BREATHING BECOMES HARSH.) You couldn't do that kind of thing.

FUTABA: Too much? For me? There was someone once who became a midwife . . . and later she was a member of congress.

HIDEKO: You want to be a member of congress? Bah!

FUTABA: (LAUGHS)

HIDEKO: Oooh . . . it hurts! I'm choking! (SHE GETS UP, TOTTERING.) A needle . . . a needle, please! I'll do

it myself. Anything at all . . . please, . . . a needle . . . needle . . . (SHE FALLS BACK ON TO THE BED.)

FUTABA STARTS TO RUSH TO HER, AND THE STAGE LEFT GLASS DOOR OPENS QUIETLY. GIJUN, UNSHAVEN, SLOPPY, ENTERS. HIS FACE IS EXPRESSIONLESS.

GIJUN: Hideko. Hey, Hideko.

HIDEKO: Who is it?

GIJUN: Me.

HIDEKO: The Doctor . . .?

GIJUN: You don't feel so good?

HIDEKO: Can't you see for yourself?

GIJUN: (HE GOES TO HER SIDE AND WHISPERS INTO HER EAR.)

HIDEKO: Do you really have some?

GIJUN: Yeah.

HIDEKO: (JOYOUSLY) Give it to me . . . do it now!

GIJUN: (GRUNTS, WHISPERS INTO HER EAR AGAIN.)

HIDEKO: (SHOCKED) What! At your age!

GIJUN: No?

HIDEKO: (GASPS)

GIJUN: Well, if you don't want to . . . (HE GETS UP)

HIDEKO: No, . . . wait! You can do whatever you want.

GIJUN: (TO FUTABA) A needle . . . and some distilled water.

FUTABA: A needle?

GIJUN: Mine's rusted already.

FUTABA: What do you want to do with it?

GIJUN: Needle, woman! And distilled water!

FUTABA: (INTIMIDATED) There, . . . in the desk. There are some new ones in the left hand drawer . . .

GIJUN: Go get it.

FUTABA: Yes, sir. (SHE GETS THE FLASK OF DISTILLED WATER FROM THE SHELF, THEN GOES INTO THE EXAMINING ROOM AND TAKES A HYPODERMIC NEEDLE OUT OF THE DRAWER) Here. Needle . . . distilled water.

GIJUN: Good. (HE TAKES BOTH FROM HER, THEN HOLDS THE NEEDLE UP TO THE LAMP AND LOOKS AT IT. HE GRINS, THEN LAUGHS. AS HE LEAVES, TO HIDEKO) Are you coming?

HIDEKO: Yes. (SHE GETS UP AND FOLLOWS HIM, STAGGERING)

FUTABA STARTS TO FOLLOW THEM, CHANGES HER MIND, AND COMES BACK INTO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. SHE OPENS HER BOOK.

FUTABA: (READING) "The symptoms are as follows: Circulation is often impaired; the pulse becomes weak; blood pressure falls markedly. The patient may become less sensitive to touch. He becomes retiring, avoiding people whenever possible. He may get excited or resentful at petty, unimportant things, or he may retreat into sullenness with no apparent motive. His thirst for alcohol becomes insatiable. If the wound is in the front part of the lobe, the patient often turns sentimental; if in the back, he is calm or dull, and often becomes sexually impotent . . ." Sexually impotent . . .

GIJUN'S VOICE: Don't put it on the tatami! I said not to put it there!

HIDEKO'S VOICE: All right!

FUTABA STOPS AND LISTENS FOR A MOMENT. HEARING NO MORE, SHE CONTINUES READING.

FUTABA: Injury to the front part . . . sentimentality, injury to the back . . . calm, dull . . . sexual impotence. Impotence . . .

HIDEKO'S VOICE: I told you, not there!

GIJUN'S VOICE: (SHARPLY) This is fine! Right here!

HIDEKO'S VOICE: That's where he stuck me yesterday! You can try it as many times as you want, but it's not going to go in . . . ow! It won't go in! It's gotten tough on that arm! It's like leather . . .

GIJUN'S VOICE: I said don't move!

HIDEKO'S VOICE: I warn you . . . that needle's going to snap . . .

GIJUN'S VOICE: Shut up.

HIDEKO'S VOICE: Please don't talk to me in that tone . . . Your hand is shaking so much . . . ow! It hurts!

GIJUN'S VOICE: Shut up . . . It went in!

SUDDENLY, THE FRONT DOOR OPENS. AS FUTABA IS ABOUT TO STAND, KAWAMOTO COMES INTO THE ENTRANCEWAY. THOUGH WE CANNOT YET SEE HIM, HE IS WEARING ARMY FATIGUES AND SHOULD BE CARRYING A LANTERN.

KAWAMOTO: 'Scuse me . . . Is the Doctor here?

FUTABA: (OPENS THE PHARMACIST'S WINDOW) Yes?

KAWAMOTO: Listen. My boy--He was playing all day, and healthy and everything . . . He was okay till just tonight. After supper, he got real tired. Kinda mopey . . . and it looks like he's got a pretty high fever.

FUTABA: I'm sorry, but the Doctor is gone right now . . .

KAWAMOTO: Damn! Maybe I shoulda gone to Doc Doi's after all. Will he be gone long?

FUTABA: He's gone towards Shinda, so it shouldn't take long . . . He ought to be back very soon. Are you new here?

KAWAMOTO: Yeah. My house is on the other side of the river. I know it's a little far, but old Doi is old, see, and he ain't too good either. So I come here. Boy, I don't know what to do now, though! This is bad. It don't look like a regular stomach ache, see. Looks like something else.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AGAIN.

FUTABA: Ah. (GOES TO MEET JUNNOSUKE)

KAWAMOTO: Sorry to bother you. It's my boy . . . He got real weak-like . . . and he looks like he's got a big fever.

JUNNOSUKE: How much is it? The fever . . .

KAWAMOTO: Oh, it was hot . . . even to the touch.

JUNNOSUKE: Where are you from? Do you live near?

FUTABA: He says he lives across the river.

KAWAMOTO: Sorry it's so far . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Across the river. I've already made two house calls tonight. I just got back. I get tired too, you know. (CLOSES HIS EYES)

KAWAMOTO: (HE IS HALFWAY THROUGH THE DOOR NOW) I know it's hard to ask you like this, but . . .

JUNNOSUKE: How old?

KAWAMOTO: Who, me? How old . . .

JUNNOSUKE: (GLANCES AT HIM SHARPLY)

KAWAMOTO: Oh, the kid! He's six. Look, I'm awful sorry. But please don't wait til tomorrow. You gotta come tonight.

FUTABA: Please go. I know you're tired, but . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Doctor Doi is on the other side of the river.

KAWAMOTO: Bah! Old man Doi is . . . (SUDDENLY) Hey! Aren't you Private Tsuyuki?

JUNNOSUKE: That's right. (HE IS STRUGGLING TO CONTROL HIMSELF)

KAWAMOTO: (DELIGHTED) Hey, I was right! I'm Sergeant Kawamoto!

JUNNOSUKE: Sergeant Kawamoto . . .

KAWAMOTO: What luck, hey old buddy? Hey Doc, you'll come now, won't you? Please? (HE GETS NO ANSWER)

(TO FUTABA Before the end of the war, we was in the same squad. Like brothers, you know?

FUTABA: Is that right?

KAWAMOTO: Boy, I never dreamed the old Doc here would be Private Tsuyuki! No more rank nowadays, huh? We're all the same now! (LAUGHS) Wait a minute, though. If you was a Doctor, how come you didn't apply for a medical commission?

JUNNOSUKE: (VAGUELY, SPEAKING TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR) I don't know any Sergeant Kawamoto . . .

KAWAMOTO: What! What do you mean? You shouldn't put me on. Say, I used to slap you around pretty good . . . Don't you remember? Lots of times. You got it because your gun maintainance was no good, remember? You used to put it back together backwards! And then you got it because you didn't yell loud enough. All you guys got it . . . You was too soft. Boy, it was a real job training you guys, too. Remember? Slapping was the only way to teach you guys some real discipline. I mean, it wasn't just you--the whole company got it. Five or six of you guys got the slap each day, so everybody had it in the end. If one guy messed up, then the whole company took the rap. Remember? Hey! Waita minute . . . The old Doc's cicada was the masterpiece, though, right? (LAUGHS) Yeah, you were good at that!

JUNNOSUKE: (HE HAS LOST PATIENCE AND EXPLODES) Kawamoto!

KAWAMOTO: Huh!

JUNNOSUKE: Now <u>you</u> do the cicada!

KAWAMOTO: What, me?

JUNNOSUKE: That's what I said.

KAWAMOTO: Do the . . . (LAUGHS) What the hell for?

JUNNOSUKE: Never mind why, just do it!

KAWAMOTO: (DOESN'T RESPOND)

JUNNOSUKE: When I say do something, I mean do it now!

KAWAMOTO: But you . . .

JUNNOSUKE: You do that, and I'll make your house call.

KAWAMOTO: Aw, come on, this is dumb.

JUNNOSUKE: What's the matter . . . Can't you do it? Can't you?

KAWAMOTO: I don't want to . . . Look, I'll do anything you want, but ... . not that. I mean . . . I ain't gonna do that . . .

JUNNOSUKE: (SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY) Then I'm staying right here. (HE TAKES OUT HIS CIGARETTES)

FUTABA: (LIGHTS A MATCH FOR HIM. SOFTLY,) What's the matter with you?

JUNNOSUKE: Nothing. I just think I'll stay around here for now . . .

PAUSE

KAWAMOTO: If I do it, will you come? If I do this . . .

JUNNOSUKE: I'll go.

KAWAMOTO: All right, I'll do it. (HE COMES INTO THE ROOM, THEN HESITATES)

JUNNOSUKE: Put a move on, will you.

KAWAMOTO: Where do you want me to do it?

JUNNOSUKE: (POINTS TO THE VERTICAL SUPPORT AT THE ENTRANCE DOOR)

KAWAMOTO: (GRABS THE SUPPORT WITH BOTH HANDS)

JUNNOSUKE: With the feet, too.

KAWAMOTO: (FOLLOWS JUNNOSUKE'S DIRECTIONS, TAKING UP AN INSECT-LIKE POSITION PART WAY UP THE SUPPORT) How's that?

JUNNOSUKE: Chirp.

KAWAMOTO: Aw no, Doc . . . That's enough, isn't it?

JUNNOSUKE: Do the sound!

KAWAMOTO: "Meen."

JUNNOSUKE: Louder!

KAWAMOTO: "Meen."

FUTABA: (GIGGLES)

JUNNOSUKE: Go on.

KAWAMOTO: "Meen. Meen. Meen."

JUNNOSUKE: Well, that's a pretty pitiful cicada, isn't it? No, you can't lower your feet! <u>That's</u> better. Now, lets hear some more chirps. More. Good ones!

KAWAMOTO: "Meen-meen-meen."

FUTABA: (DOUBLES UP WITH LAUGHTER)

JUNNOSUKE: The summer cicada gives this kind of chirp: (HE DEMONSTRATES, GIVING A HIGH PITCHED, MELODIOUS QUALITY TO THE CHIRP. BUT IT SOUNDS SOMEHOW CRUEL, ALSO) Now, lets hear it.

FUTABA: (STOPS LAUGHING SUDDENLY) That's enough. Stop it please. You stop it too, Mr. Kawamoto, please.

JUNNOSUKE: (IGNORES HER, BRUSHES HER HAND AWAY) I said you can't take your feet down.

KAWAMOTO: Look, I can't take this any more.

JUNNOSUKE: What? Does the cicada speak in human words? Huh? All right, say, "I can't take this any more," in cicada. In cicada-ese.

KAWAMOTO: "Meen. Mimimeen."

JUNNOSUKE: Put more in it. Let's hear it like a song.

KAWAMOTO: (MUSICALLY) "Meen! Mimimeen, mimimeen!"

FUTABA: Oh God, please stop it now! I hate it! I hate it!

KAWAMOTO: (LOSING STRENGTH, HE BEGINS TO SLIDE SLOWLY DOWN THE SUPPORT, KEEPING HIS FACE HIDDEN AGAINST IT)

JUNNOSUKE: Are your guts in a vice? Huh? You know the feeling now? You understand what it's like to perform like a trained monkey? With people looking on, falling over each other laughing at you? You feeling it now? You get it? And you <u>do</u> know why! Just because your salute wasn't quite right!

FUTABA: All right! That's enough, then . . . so please . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Wait a minute. . . not yet. We haven't done the dog bit yet. The begging dog.

KAWAMOTO: (STANDS UP, HIS EXPRESSION BETWEEN AN IDIOTIC SMILE AND A TOTAL BREAKDOWN)

FUTABA: Stop! I mean it! If you go on with this, I will leave this house. I can leave this house right this minute! Doctor, you're not doing this because you're sick. You're just a dirty coward. You're mean! You're disgusting . . . You . . . ohhh, bastard! (SHE CANNOT GO ON, BREAKS DOWN CRYING ON THE BED)

JUNNOSUKE: Do you . . . really think that? (SUDDENLY, HE LEAPS TO KAWAMOTO'S SIDE) Sergeant Kawamoto . . . Why are you just crying like that, silently? Why don't you <u>say</u> something? It's your turn! Now you order me to do something! Play like a dog! Come on, order me to do the begging dog. Like you did in the old days . . . in the company. (SHOUTING) Private Tsuyuki, make like a dog! Hup! (HE GOES INTO THE ENTRANCEWAY IN DOUBLETIME, AND RETURNS WITH ONE SHOE IN HIS MOUTH. CARRYING IT BY THE LACES, HE CREEPS INTO THE ROOM ON ALL FOURS)

KAWAMOTO: (AGHAST) Hey, what the hell's going on? What are you doing, doc?

JUNNOSUKE: Bow wow! I have borrowed your shoe, bow wow!

(AS HE BARKS, THE SHOE FALLS TO THE FLOOR. HE PICKS IT UP IN HIS TEETH AGAIN.)

KAWAMOTO: (LOOKING AROUND FOR HELP) Mrs. Tsuyuki!

FUTABA: Oh! (SHE COVERS HER FACE HOPELESSLY)

JUNNOSUKE: Bow wow. Heh heh eh . . . (WITH A SILLY GRIN) Hey, Sergeant. I . . . ah . . . gave you a pretty bad time back there a minute ago, huh? So this is my turn, see? That makes us even up, OK? You wouldn't hold a grudge would you? You wouldn't kill me? Please . . . I'm not worth killing. There's no point in killing a worm is there? I'm just a weak man. No matter how much I try to be strong, I just can't be. And besides, I'm just mean and cowardly . . . So please forgive me. Won't you? Please? Won't you forgive me, please?

KAWAMOTO: (EMBARASSED AND FRIGHTENED AT THIS SCENE) Mrs. Tsuyuki, I . . . what . . .

FUTABA: (SIGNALS WITH HER EYES AND NODS HER HEAD AT HIM)

KAWAMOTO: Huh? What do I . . .

FUTABA: (COMES TO KAWAMOTO'S SIDE AND WHISPERS IN HIS EAR)

JUNNOSUKE: (CRAWLING AROUND IN CIRCLES) Bow wow!

KAWAMOTO: Huh? (LISTENS, NODS) Oh! Ah, I get it. Yeah . . . Okay, if you say so. (TURNS TO JUNNOSUKE) I forgive you! I forgive you!

JUNNOSUKE: Oh, you do? (HE STANDS UP) Oh, thank you! God, I'm so relieved! I was afraid . . . Futaba, I'm just what you said I was. You were right. I'm really a horrible man, aren't I? I'm useless. Just a drone. Just a waste of food. Worthless to everybody . . . (HIS FACE APPEARS DELIGHTED).

FUTABA: (HELPS JUNNOSUKE TO HIS FEET AND SLOWLY GUIDES HIM TO THE BED) There's a good boy, now . . . Come on, and you can lay down, right here. That's right.

JUNNOSUKE: (CHILDLIKE) Can I? Is it all right if I sleep here?

FUTABA: Yes, it's all right. It's all right. There . . . (PUTS HIM TO BED AND COVERS HIM WITH A BLANKET) Mr. Kawamoto, I'm sorry. I know you're worried about your son, but as you can see, the doctor is too weak to go.

KAWAMOTO: (NODS)

FUTABA: Please go now. You'll have to go to Dr. Doi's.

KAWAMOTO: Yes of course. I . . . I feel sorry for him. I guess this is what comes out of it . . . War, I mean. Busts up everything. (STARTS FOR THE FRONT DOOR, LIGHTING HIS LANTERN)

FUTABA: Mr. Kawamoto, please don't talk to anyone about this.

KAWAMOTO: Huh?

FUTABA: Please. I beg you . . .

KAWAMOTO: Ch . . . Yeah, sure. I won't tell anybody. I mean, it was pretty rough, having to go through all that back there. I mean I put up with it, see . . . because it's all part of the war. You know what I mean? Everything is screwed up now. It's part of the war, see? It's our punishment. We bought it. You just gotta look at it that way when things like this come up. (EXITS ON HIS LAST LINE)

FUTABA: Goodby. (AS HE LEAVES, SHE GOES QUICKLY TO THE BED) Well, are you calmed down a little bit?

JUNNOSUKE: Ummmmmm.

FUTABA: I'm sorry for what I said earlier. There was no excuse for . . . that kind of language. Forgive me. Can I get you some medicine?

JUNNOSUKE: I don't need any.

FUTABA: That man said that all this . . . turbulance . . . that it's our punishment because of the war. There's no reason for you to be punished . . . my doctor. You're one of the victims. That's what I think. Your injury . . . the one to your head has healed. But the injury to your heart, your mind . . . That hasn't healed at all. All it takes is a reminder of those horrible times, and it opens up again. You just become like one obsessed . . . obsessed by a persecution complex. And when that happens . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Yes? Then . . .

FUTABA: In order to fight the fear--to conquer that terrible fear--Even if you are a good, kind person, you become obsessed, you do terrible things--In order to conquer it. Isn't that right?

JUNNOSUKE: (DOESN'T ANSWER)

FUTABA: (EAGERLY) That's right, isn't it? You're not a terrible person. You are a good man. Perhaps you were too good a human being. And that's why you've reacted so violently. Don't you think so?

JUNNOSUKE: (DOESN'T ANSWER)

FUTABA: Well, let's not worry about it. Forget about it. Forget all those things . . . Everything that went before. Let's cheer up, and we can start over again. (SHE WIPES HIS TEARS) And get stronger. You are stronger. You have to be tough in this world! And you can be just as aggressive as you want to be.

JUNNOSUKE: I don't know whether I'm happy or not. Here I am, crying all over the place . . . like a baby being cradled in his mother's arms! Whatever might come to me right now, I'd take it meek as a lamb, no reservations. My ego has suddenly . . . disappeared. I'm empty. I don't know who I am. I'd follow anybody--just tell me what to do, and I'll follow without question. It's funny. I felt the same kind of . . . dreaminess

that I did in the hospital, when I lay there . . . my head in your lap like it was a pillow . . . forgetting all feeling of time. No past, no present, no future. And you used to sing to me, often, just above my head. The song about "Beyond, beyond the clouds . . ."

FUTABA: (JOYOUSLY) Oh, yes! That's it. Yes, that's what it is. How wonderful just to relax, just give in completely. Like a child in my arms . . . I love to hold you like this, too. Just to be quiet and to look at the world without hurrying. It isn't such a terrible place then, is it? Oh yes, I want you to keep thinking that way. Gradually you can make yourself more and more confident . . . And then, pretty soon your sickness won't be there at all, and . . .

JUNNOSUKE: What . . . My sickness?

FUTABA: Hmm? Here . . . (SHE REALIZES THAT SHE HAS MADE A MISTAKE)

JUNNOSUKE: Oh, so that's it! You've been comforting me, oh so sweetly, because I'm sick!

FUTABA: No no, I don't mean that you're sick . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Well I'm not sick! What did you do, pull down Dr. Shoku's lecture on psychiatry and read it behind my back?

FUTABA: Oh!

JUNNOSUKE: You were going to study me! Hah! Too bad . . . (SNEERINGLY) Because I ain't sick, see!

FUTABA: All right, if you're not sick, why were you pretending to be a dog?

JUNNOSUKE: That? (LAUGHS) That was pure dramatics!

FUTABA: Dramatics?

JUNNOSUKE: Yes, dramatics. I completely fooled you with my little play! And that wasn't the only time, either. Everything I do is part of the performance. You see what I mean? You look flabbergasted. (LAUGHS) You don't believe me? Okay, just sit there for a minute and I'll explain it to you. All right? Now, the back of my head was wounded; there is no doubt about that. It's clear, unmistakable--a scientific fact. Not ambiguous, like having a mental disease. But my concern after that was what effect it would have on my . . . sexual capabilities. Impotent. Right? And we still don't know whether or not I'll be able to have children.

FUTABA: (TURNS HER FACE AWAY)

JUNNOSUKE: Well, that's that. But it doesn't have anything to do with what we're talking about . . . This is a problem within myself--my own ego . . . and it doesn't have anything to do with the war. You're blaming the poor war for something it had nothing to do with. The problem was there first. And there isn't

any question about my being sick. I can show you a detailed, accurate self-diagnosis that proves clearly and simply that I am healthy of mind. (LAUGHS MOCKINGLY) But then, you wouldn't want to believe that without question, would you? You wouldn't want to take my word for it right off. That would be foolish. Now listen. What I did to Sergeant Kawamoto was simply the satisfaction of a little revenge. And what I did after that was nothing more than a show of vanity. My self-respect demanded that I cleanse myself of what I did by getting down in it myself. See? (PAUSE) Well, what do you think? You can see that I'm able to talk about this calmly, cooly. Where is the sickness in my mind?

FUTABA: Now doctor . . . Is it self-respecting to get down and imitate a dog?

JUNNOSUKE: Yes! I just told you why. I want you to stop treating me like a patient. There's no reason to be tolerant and sweet . . . I'm not sick! I want you to get past that idea and get to know the real me. And I mean my true self--not the one I've been performing.

FUTABA: I have a feeling you're scolding me. It frightens me.

JUNNOSUKE: Why? There's nothing to be afraid of.

FUTABA: All right, then. What about the Junnosuke Tsuyuki

who's sitting beside me right now? Who is he? Which one is performing? I think that you are what you are . . . That's the way it should be, isn't it?

JUNNOSUKE: What do you mean, I am what I am?

FUTABA: I don't know, I . . . It's just a feeling. It's too hard to explain.

JUNNOSUKE: Why is it so hard? I think that you . . . You're a woman. You're honest. You can see things clearly, objectively. That's why I had you come home with me from the hospital.

FUTABA: No, I'm just a woman . . . no more than a woman.

JUNNOSUKE: No, I don't agree. (GRASPING HER SHOULDERS) When I sit by your side, you make me feel cleansed of my . . . of my dirtiness. That's the kind of person you are. You . . . you make me into a defenseless child. That's all I am around you. And yet at the same time, my ego completely rejects that feeling. So what do I do? Balanced in mid air like this . . . Who am I? Tell me who I am--sitting here, chattering away like this . . . Help me. Tell me. There isn't anyone else I can turn to. I am opening myself up completely--in front of you--showing you everything. I leave it up to you.

FUTABA: No, you don't. You're not showing me everything.

JUNNOSUKE: What do you mean? After all I've told you? Don't you know what that took? How can you . . .

FUTABA: I understand how much it took. But if you really leave it up to me . . . Would you leave this house, if I asked you to?

JUNNOSUKE: Leave the house? This house?

FUTABA: Yes. Get away from your father and Mrs. Ono. All of your troubles originate in this house.

JUNNOSUKE: But . . . (PAUSE)

FUTABA: Well? What do you say?

JUNNOSUKE: (DOESN'T ANSWER)

FUTABA: By doing that, you can really begin to open yourself up, and . . .

JUNNOSUKE: And if I did, would you open yourself up to me also?

FUTABA: Yes.

JUNNOSUKE: Truly?

FUTABA: Truly. Yes!

JUNNOSUKE: (SUDDENLY EMBRACES HER) Oh. . . uh . . . (HE IS MAKING STRANGE SOUNDS IN THE BACK OF HIS THROAT) But . . . but if it turns out that my fears come true . . . Once you realize that we won't be able to . . . that I can't . . .

FUTABA: (HUGS HIM TIGHTLY) Don't be so pessimistic! You're stronger! You're getting stronger!

JUNNOSUKE: Once you know it for sure, you'll leave me!

FUTABA: I won't! Trust me.

JUNNOSUKE: (TEARS HIMSELF LOOSE) No no, I can't! You still see a sickness! You don't understand what I am! You're not with me!

FUTABA: Oh! How can you say that still!

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, AND SUDDENLY WE HEAR THE VOICES OF HIDEKO AND GIJUN FROM THE OTHER ROOM.

HIDEKO'S VOICE: (AS IF SHE WERE BEING TICKLED AND IS NO LONGER ABLE TO CONTAIN HERSELF) Stop that! Don't . . . (SHE GIGGLES) Don't . . .

GIJUN'S VOICE: Ssh! Be quiet!

HIDEKO'S VOICE: (LAUGHS)

JUNNOSUKE: Hideko!

FUTABA: (SPEAKING QUICKLY) Don't go in. Let's leave them alone . . . please. Then we can leave this place. Let's get out of this house and go far away. Anywhere--far away, so no one will know where we are. Please. There's no other way.

JUNNOSUKE: I can't do it.

FUTABA: Why? Why can't we?

JUNNOSUKE: I can't . . . abandon my father.

FUTABA: But . . . I . . . well then, maybe our relationship is ended already.

JUNNOSUKE: Why?

FUTABA: Because your first thought isn't with me. It's with . . .

HIDEKO'S VOICE: Leave me alone! Stop it now . . . (LAUGHS)

GIJUN'S VOICE: Come on . . . let's do it. Come . . . come . . .

JUNNOSUKE: (STANDS ABRUPTLY. AS HE RUSHES INTO THE ROOM WHERE THE VOICES ARE COMING FROM, HE SAYS OVER HIS SHOULDER,) It's not ended!

AFTER JUNNOSUKE LEAVES THE ROOM, WE HEAR HIDEKO'S VOICE CALL CHEERFULLY, "Ah, my little one, have a cup!" GIJUN AND HIDEKO ARE DRINKING SAKE. WE HEAR JUNNOSUKE SCREAM, "Get out!" THERE ARE VIOLENT SOUNDS OF CROCKERY BREAKING. HIDEKO SCREAMS. FUTABA STANDS UP AT THIS POINT, LOOKING VERY ANXIOUS. IT BEGINS TO SOUND AS IF THE WHOLE ROOM IS BEING TURNED OVER. HIDEKO FLEES ONTO THE STAGE. SHE IS DRUNK.

GIJUN'S VOICE: Stop making such an uproar! Come on, sit down, now. We can straighten this out if we just talk about it. Come on, now, calm down. Listen to me . . .

HIDEKO: Oh God, it was terrible! I thought I would be killed! Oh! Terrible . . .

JUNNOSUKE APPEARS AT THE DOOR. HE IS GRASPING A BOTTLE, UPSIDE DOWN. HIDEKO SHRINKS

BACK IN FEAR.

HIDEKO: What did I do to you, my little one? I didn't do anything!

JUNNOSUKE: Shut up! By God, if you ever come back here again . . .

HIDEKO: Listen, my little one . . . The old Doctor--he gave me the right medicine. See? He had it hidden. Hidden away!

JUNNOSUKE: (RECOGNITION) Ah! So that's it . . . (THE BOTTLE DROPS FROM HIS HAND)

HIDEKO: Oh, it works wonders. It feels so good. (GIGGLES) The old man doesn't know his age, thought. He still wanted to do it with me . . . (GIGGLES)

JUNNOSUKE: Get out! Go on, go home! And don't come back! I lose everything I have because you're here!

FUTABA: No no, this woman isn't the thing that's wrong. It's . . . the house. It's this house.

JUNNOSUKE: No it's not. It's something else. It's not this . . .

HIDEKO: Yes, it is the house! That's it. It faces the wrong way. It's in the wrong direction. Well. I'm going home. I'll sleep like a log tonight! Futaba . . . Aren't you coming to my house? To plant some tulips? (SHE BEGINS TO LEAVE)

JUNNOSUKE: Wait! (HE GRABS HOLD OF HER SLEEVE) Forgive me! Please forgive me!

HIDEKO: (BEWILDERED) What . . . what's the matter with him? What is he . . .

JUNNOSUKE: I should have said these words to you ten years ago. It's my fault that you . . . I caused you to become depraved. Forgive me. Just tell me that you forgive me, please!

HIDEKO: (AFRAID) What did I do?

JUNNOSUKE: No no no, I'm the one who did wrong! It's me! I'm afraid of you! It's me who is at the bottom of the swamp. It's not you. I'm afraid of you! I'm afraid of myself! Please help me! Say you forgive me, and save me!

HIDEKO: (CONFUSED) Futaba, what . . .

FUTABA: Now now, doctor . . .

JUNNOSUKE: Can't you see that I'm apologizing to you? Just say that you'll forgive me . . . Just a word! If you won't say it . . . I can't be saved! I'll never be saved! What am I going to do! (HE IS NEARLY HYSTERICAL) It's all a play! I'm still acting! I'm still in the play! Acting my whole life! I can't stand it! I can't stand it! (HE BENDS DOWN TO THE FLOOR, WAILING)

HIDEKO: Oh! I see what you mean . . . He's still not

well. Here. (POINTS TO HER HEAD)

FUTABA: Listen, Hideko . . . Something happened ten years ago. Were you lying to me?

HIDEKO: Ten years ago? But . . . I don't know what it could be. I don't remember . . . Oh . ... Wait. Is that what he means? Oh, no! But that was nothing! That kind of thing happens all the time, to little boys. Oh, dear, I didn't care about that! I even forgot it happened. Oh now, come my little one. (SHE GOES TO HIM) Here here . . . You shouldn't carry on like this. You musn't sit on the floor crying like that. (SHE TAKES HIM IN HER ARMS AND, WITH FUTABA, HELPS HIM OVER TO THE BED) Oh my, isn't he heavy . . . ugh . . . here.

JUNNOSUKE: (CONFUSED STILL) Mrs. Ono, I . . . I'm sorry for shouting at you. Inexcusable. I . . . I made a spectacle of myself and . ... Stupid. I . . . I've had it. No good. I don't make any sense. There's no hope any more. I'm just no good. There's no hope . . . (HE TRAILS OFF)

PAUSE

HIDEKO: It looks like he's quieted down now.

FUTABA: Yes. I think everything is going to be all right now.

HIDEKO: Listen, honey. I've gone off and left the place

open. It's been an awful long time. Do you think I could leave . . .

FUTABA: Yes, of course. Please do go. I'm sorry . . .

HIDEKO: (SHE TURNS TO LEAVE) Well, you just can't build a house facing this direction. It's the wrong way. How many times have I told the doctor that? You see? This front door . . . it just isn't right. Everybody knows it's the wrong direction. It has to face east. I've said it . . . Well, goodby dear . . . (SHE TRAILS OFF AS SHE EXITS)

AS HIDEKO LEAVES, FUTABA FOLLOWS HER AND CLOSES THE DOOR. GIJUN ENTERS, SNEAKING THROUGH THE DOOR. HE GLANCES AT THE BED.

GIJUN: Hasn't the newspaper gotten here yet?

FUTABA: What did you say?

GIJUN: Uh. Nothing. Looks like she's gone already, huh? Well . . . (HE EXITS)

FUTABA FLIPS A SWITCH AND THE WAITING ROOM LIGHTS GO OUT. SHE GOES TO THE BED. PAUSE.

FUTABA: (LOOKING DOWN AT JUNNOSUKE, SUDDENLY SHE BEGINS TO SHAKE HIM BY THE SHOULDERS) Everything! I hate everything now! Everything disgusts me! What is truth? Reality? Honesty? What is it all worth? What good is it? It's just something in your own mind, and it only lasts while you're alive. Meaningless! And

I can't even build a dream of my own! Why can't you believe me yet? Why don't you hear anything I say? (PAUSE) Well, say something!

PAUSE

JUNNOSUKE: It's a quiet evening.

FUTABA: What . . . what?

JUNNOSUKE: I said the evening is quiet.

FUTABA: (DOESN'T RESPOND)

JUNNOSUKE: Just let me finish. There's one more act to play. Just the leading character . . . no partner this time . . .

FUTABA: Yes, alone! Alone to the end!

JUNNOSUKE: Yes, I guess it does look like the end. And then you'll be free to go anywhere you want to. I'm . . . sorry. I know it's been hard for you. But I want you to listen. (PAUSE) It was a quiet evening--a warm one. It was the last warm night of spring. There, wasn't that an eloquent line? I crept . . . quietly . . . into the room where she was sleeping. I sneaked over, very silently . . . and she was asleep, just as I expected. How am I playing it? Pretty good? A little broad, maybe.

FUTABA: What happened then?

JUNNOSUKE: Then . . . Now, remember that I had no intention of doing anything. I wasn't going to rape her, or

anything like that. I . . . I just wanted to touch her there. To see what it was like. Just curiosity.

FUTABA: (BURSTS OUT LAUGHING)

JUNNOSUKE: What's the matter?

FUTABA: (SOLEMNLY) No. I'm sorry I laughed.

JUNNOSUKE: (CLOSES HIS EYES, SPEAKING SADLY) I tried to touch her there, but she groaned and moved . . . maybe she said,"don't!" She brushed my hand away. I . . . I was only fifteen. (HIS JOCULAR MANNER HAS DISAPPEARED) Then I came back to this room and knelt down . . . I clasped my hands in the air as if I were praying repentance. I don't know why I did that. Or why I felt that way . . . praying, when I wasn't a Christian, or anything else. I never had so noble a thing as belief in God. The point is that I was just . . . taking the easy way out. Dramatics. Getting out of facing what I had done. Acting the feeling! And I knew it right then. I thought, what kind of man would do this? Who would be so hypocritical at such a moment? And suddenly I was knocked over with what I was doing. Going through the motions--motions that didn't have anything to do with me. It struck me like a hammer! And from then on, I was two people. Me . . . and the actor.

FUTABA: (CARESSES HIS HEAD SOFTLY)

JUNNOSUKE: God, it was bitter to see Hideko then, day after day. I never looked at her. I kept my eyes away from hers. If I had been nearly as overwhelmed by what I had done . . . I mean, truly sorry, I could have asked her frankly to forgive me. And I could have been saved. I could have found myself. But I wasn't. I didn't. I was stubborn. I struggled to save myself. Set my own rules . . . create my own values . . . forget about what had happened. Ignore it. I . . . How do I describe myself then? I was proud, arrogant, stuck up. It was pathetic. I tried to ignore it and keep myself busy. I tortured myself--anything to make up for it without admitting it. Expiate myself. But God, it tormented me! I couldn't stand it! I knew! The second me, the one who split off--the actor--he watched as I went through all the daily habits. Eating, sleeping, sitting at my desk at school . . . he helped me put on great airs of importance. All those years . . . and somehow I became a doctor like my father. But it was all a play. I was weak, but I pretended to be strong. I felt inferior, but I wanted to stand in the front of the crowd. I had a strong sense of responsibility, but I was totally inept. I even went into the army as a private . . . with my odd sense of justice. Just a play. It didn't help at all.

FUTABA: Junnosuke . . .

JUNNOSUKE: The swamp . . . isn't in Hideko, or my father either. It's in me. In the depths of my own mind. That's where every man's essence is . . . and I . . . have a swamp. It's my own. And I . . . I'm quiet now. Maybe if I can just stay still . . . maybe I won't stir it up. Maybe the water will clear someday. That's all that's left. (SIGHS DEEPLY) Well. My curtain line was eloquent . . . in spite of myself.

FUTABA: No, Doctor. You've just been so obsessed with this . . . you think that you have a bad character . . . essence, you said. I don't believe that. That's not the way people are. You're a good man. An honest man. And you're strong after all, aren't you? You . . . oh, it's no use. I can't say it so that you'll believe me, or understand.

JUNNOSUKE: You don't need to pretend with me now. Now's the time when it ends. My one man drama is over. Thanks to you. I know it's been silly to make you go on with this . . . but let me play it to the end. I beg you. I'm content to leave it as it is.

FUTABA: Are you? Yes, I suppose you feel best all alone. But that leaves me alone too. With nothing more . . . (LAUGHS SADLY)

JUNNOSUKE: No, that isn't what I mean. I won't make you go . . .

FUTABA: Then why do you continue to act it out? For what purpose?

JUNNOSUKE: (DOESN'T ANSWER)

FUTABA: To impress some audience? Or do you mean that you're your own audience?

JUNNOSUKE: Yes . . . that's it. But I'm quiet now. Don't stir it. Don't . . .

FUTABA: Oh, God you're cruel! (BEGINS TO WEEP) You're terrible . . .

JUNNOSUKE: You're crying . . . no, don't. It's no use. This is my . . . happiness, I guess. You weren't really a part of it. I just . . . I . . . used you. So don't you see? That's what I mean. That's what I am. Mean . . . cowardly. My essence. That's all it is . . .

FUTABA: No! Human beings are good! Beautiful and kind . . . the essence is good. They are that way. And you talk about yourself as if . . . Oh, I don't know. It's odd. . .

JUNNOSUKE: Uh huh . . .

FUTABA: People start out good. It's when they become proud--when they try to fit themselves into some standard, or try to squeeze themselves into somebody else's value system, or put themselves above it. Or when they try to be better than somebody else . . .

That's when things get twisted. That's when the mean, twisted things, the disgusting things begin to creep into the mind.

JUNNOSUKE: Yes . . . yes, that's right.

FUTABA: And if that's true . . .

JUNNOSUKE: But you have to do <u>something</u>. If you just let yourself go, if you never decide, then you're just following along in the flow of the stream. You're nothing. You don't mean anything. Unless there were some kind of absolute--some kind of ultimate values to guide you through the stream. If you only have your own ego, then you have to let it lead you.

FUTABA: What do you mean by an absolute? What would it be? What kind of absolute?

JUNNOSUKE: That's it, isn't it? That's the vanity--the pride that twists things. Thinking that you can describe it, or define it. If it's absolute. But if you don't . . . then what do you do in the middle of a world where you sit trembling, not knowing? Who is going to pick me up? Who is going to save me? Who is going to head me in the right direction? How will I know?

FUTABA: It's gotten a little chilly, hasn't it? (SHE STANDS UP. CASUALLY,) Perhaps it's God. Probably. (WITHOUT A TRACE OF ANXIETY) He would be greater than human beings . . . absolute. (SHE GOES INTO THE

DISPENSARY, TAKES THE YELLOW SWEATER OFF A NAIL AND PUTS IT ON)

JUNNOSUKE: God!

FUTABA: Doctor, how do you like my sweater? It's a pretty color, isn't it. Is it becoming?

CURTAIN

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