

WATER FROM THE MOON

Original Screenplay by

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1 EXT. THE MOON GATE OF SUZHOU -- EVENING 1

Opening title credits appear over this Moon Gate and continue over the following action and dialog.

Subtitle on screen reads SUZHOU PROVINCE, CHINA, 1892

The sounds of actors playing to an outdoor audience can be heard.

2 EXT. BACKSTAGE -- EVENING 2

Opening title credits continue to appear over this action and dialog.

A troop of provincial players prepares for the evening performance amid background music and fireworks. Backstage, a final ray of the setting sun catches GOLDEN ORCHID, age 12, delicately painting the bridge of her FATHER's nose using a brush made memorable with red silk strings. Her MOTHER looks on, pleased. Merriment underscores her father's comic reputation, but Golden Orchid remains intently serious. Fanfare sounds loudly from the stage. Her Father kisses her hand and exits out to the stage over the shoulder of Golden Orchid who tangles the pretty red silk strings from the brush in her delicate fingers.

ANGLE ON STAGE FROM BACKSTAGE GOLDEN ORCHID'S P.O.V.

On the stage, Golden Orchid's clown-father performs the comic role in the play titled, "Make a Composition." The audience cheers. Golden Orchid moves closer to the stage, shy, hiding in the wings, watching her father. She notices her father looks funnier than ever. She can't help smiling the smile that breaks her seriousness. Suddenly, her father turns his back to the audience for three beats beyond comedy. The audience shouts, boos, throws vegetables at the stage. Golden Orchid registers helpless terror and confusion. Her father turns toward her to turn back to face his audience. The paint on his face is smeared. Suddenly blood spurts out of his nose, mouth, eyes. He collapses on floor. Golden Orchid runs to kneel next to him. Chaos is all around her stillness. She drops the brush with the red silk strings.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Father!

The last of the sunset across the stage fades on screen to blood red.

3 EXT. PEASANT COTTAGE OF GOLDEN ORCHID -- EVENING 3

Subtitle on screen reads BEIJING, CHINA, 1936

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

Early evening mist gathers along the path leading to the cottage from which an older woman's voice--hoarse but sweet--can be heard singing along with a traditional tune of Suzhou Province played on a gramophone. Occasional sprinkles fall from the approach of a drenching rain storm.

Abruptly, the tranquillity of the scene explodes into a blinding white, screen-filling flash of magnesium and the loud popping sound of a camera. The gramophone jumps its grooves and lurches down in speed as if someone inside the cottage bumped it.

JOURNALIST #1
(Speaking to nervous
FEMALE PHOTOGRAPHER
who indicates her
camera flash shot
off accidentally)
I warned you not to frighten her.
She is old. She is honorable. Save
your film.

JOURNALIST #1 approaches door and is about to ring the rusty door bell when a woman's voice calls out suspiciously from behind the door.

GOLDEN ORCHID (O.S.)
Who is it? Coming! Coming!

Golden Orchid pulls the door open to reveal her 58-year-old face. A second magnesium flash illuminates her so brightly she covers her face which is still very beautiful. The female photographer pretends a mock apology. The gramophone squeaks out another sound then dies. The sound of thunder rumbles in the dusk.

JOURNALIST #2
Please excuse our young photographer.

JOURNALIST #1
Madame, forgive us. But you are Mrs.
Envoy, Golden Orchid?

JOURNALIST #2
You are the wife of the former Envoy
to Germany, the honorable scholar,
Hong Wenqing?

A gust of wind brings sudden rain. JOURNALIST #1 and JOURNALIST #2 and the FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER crowd past Golden Orchid into her cottage. Golden Orchid, rather resigned, with a gesture, allows them to pass.

4 INT. BEIJING, PEASANT COTTAGE OF GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS 4

GOLDEN ORCHID

(With weary good humor)

Please, come in...Now that you are
in. I tell you young gentlemen always
"no," but young gentlemen have never
understood "no."

(To the young female
Photographer)

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

And you! These days young women are
so will full...I like that. You, sit
down. Here. By me.

The journalists and photographer laugh nervously. They are
obviously over-eager to get their story. They employ the
shameless enthusiasm of the young.

JOURNALIST #1

Tell us, please, Mrs. Envoy, about
the German General Waldersee...and
his nephew, Maximilian of Coberg.

JOURNALIST #2

...and how you saved so many thousands
of Chinese lives in Beijing during
the revolutionary summer of madness.

JOURNALIST #1

You are China!

Golden Orchid, does a double-take of disbelief at the blatant
flattery. She conveys she has not lost her sense of humor
and that she is nobody's fool.

JOURNALIST #2

Mrs. Envoy, you are history itself!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Phuuu! I have been swept away by
history.

JOURNALIST #1

You marched into history. You were
the wife of the Chinese ambassador
to Germany. You knew the Empress
Dowager.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

In the Paris newspapers, they printed
your photograph. You danced with the
foreign barbarians in Berlin.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

GOLDEN ORCHID

Ah! I was no more than a sing-song
girl on a flower boat in the old
time before the world changed...

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

(Intoned with a bit
of self-righteousness)

Madam, the law now forbids a woman
to be a man's concubine. You were
accused of conducting "whore
diplomacy." I hope you have regrets!

The two male journalists give the impertinent photographer a disciplinary look to soften her lack of tact. Golden Orchid breathes out a small huff of comic recognition that in matters of control nothing ever changes. At this point, she takes subtle but firm charge of these eager young journalists.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I was a concubine. Not a whore. I
have no regrets, only memories, but...

(Golden Orchid,
confidant of her
well-trained skills
at beguiling
conversation, teases,
with subtle pleasure,
the curiosity of
these three young
people)

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

...you can't possibly want to hear.

JOURNALIST #2

Mrs. Envoy, please, we have brought
some food, some cakes, some drink...

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Sweetly ironic)

You want to wine and dine me? Ah,
what's the harm. I'm as poor as proud.
Sit down. Rainy nights are long. I
will entertain you. Born an actress,
I will die an actress, but I assure
you I am far from dead. Once upon a
time in the world, in the old way
the world was, it was my turn...

5 EXT. THE COURT YARD OF GOLDEN ORCHID -- AFTERNOON

5

Subtitle on screen reads SUZHOU PROVINCE, CHINA, 1892.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

A statue of KUANYIN, GODDESS OF MERCY, overlooks the poverty of the court-yard laundry which is a casually beautiful place of a hundred wooden poles and colorful clothes. Golden Orchid singing a pretty little song to herself carries a bucket of water to her MOTHER who squats by the well pounding wet clothes. Mother looks old, worn, and crushed by the three burdens of widowhood, of a pretty daughter (age 15) with no future, and of a disobedient son (age 18) who has an unfortunate authority as "the man in the house." Golden Orchid and her mother survive by washing other people's clothes. Their brother and son, LAI SHENG, is as handsome as his sister, Golden Orchid, is pretty; he has taken up the newly introduced habit of smoking cigarets and he squints his dazzling bright eyes against the smoke. Lai Sheng leans against a wall watching Golden Orchid. He always seems to be hiding something up his extraordinarily long sleeves where his hands are molding a piece of clay which he turns into a life-like girl figure that he places on a stone table.

LAI SHENG

(Peering like a pimp
at his sister)

Women on whore boats earn much money
every day.

Golden Orchid and mother are shocked.

MOTHER

Sorry to say you're my only son.

Golden Orchid throws a wet towel at the clay figure which she knocks over. Lai Sheng merely smiles. Mother struggles to stand up.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

If your father were alive...

GOLDEN ORCHID

O-mi-ta-fu! May he rest in peace.

LAI SHENG

I'm the man now.

Mother slaps him.

MOTHER

Beast!

Mother falls to the ground. Golden Orchid rushes to her and dares to cast a warning look at her brother.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

LAI SHENG

(Quite the unperturbed
worldly boy)

Someone must earn money for this
family. Who better than she?

MOTHER

(Beside herself with
rage, facing the
statue of Kuanyin)

Goddess of Mercy! What sin I committed
that makes our family having such a
beast!

6 EXT. THE MOON GATE OF SUZHOU -- DAY

6

On a kiosk near the famous Moon Gate, hang newspapers in many European languages. An English newspaper headline reads CHINA-GERMANY ACCORDS. It has rained during the night. The street is wet. Dressed all in white, Golden Orchid steps through the circular opening in the huge stone Moon Gate. In a grassy park, three children fly kites. One kite is red, white, and blue suggesting an American presence; a second kite resembles the British flag; the third kite flies the heraldic German eagle. Golden Orchid walks down the cobbled street of a fashionable neighborhood populated with upper-class Europeans. Two German ladies, dressed in the Parisian style, stand chatting outside a French restaurant. A French couple--a man and a woman--emerge laughing gaily from the restaurant. The French woman carries a new hat box. The French couple exchange pleasantries with the two ladies. The four speak a combination of German and French "hello's," then laugh and speak English. The French gentleman, taken by the beauty of Golden Orchid, who is passing along the sidewalk, turns as Golden Orchid walks by. As he turns, his umbrella catches the skirt of one of the women, and they all laugh. The gentleman walks to the kiosk to buy a foreign newspaper, and the three ladies look approvingly after the young, beautiful Golden Orchid.

7 EXT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, IN FRONT OF DOOR -- DAY

7

The street is wet from the night rain. Lai Sheng stands near the front door of the brothel smoking and betting with other hustling young men who carry sedan chairs. Fu Jia Ban, the most famous brothel in Suzhou, is quiet after a night of business. The prostitutes and whore masters, maids, and servants are still asleep as the sun approaches noon. One of the sedan men points down the street and whistles a cat call at the girl approaching up the street stepping around the rain puddles. Lai Sheng shoves the sedan man. The girl, dressed in plain white clothes, is Golden Orchid.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

LAI SHENG

I warned you not to be late!

In the brilliant blue noon sky, a high-flying single red kite, symbolizing China, has broken loose from its string, and wafts slowly, delicately downward.

Golden Orchid walks resolutely past Lai Sheng without acknowledging him. At the door itself, she stops. Lai Sheng, a big man in front of his pals, pushes Golden Orchid through the door. Immediately inside, they meet MOTHER FU who walks around Golden Orchid making careful assessment. Lai Sheng is eager to be gone.

MOTHER FU

(Unable to take her
eyes off Golden Orchid)

Lai Sheng, you are blind, perhaps as
a brother should be.

LAI SHENG

Yes, Mother Fu.

Mother Fu hands him a bag of money and laughs at his eager greed.

MOTHER FU

Take your pay. If you could truly
see your sister, you would have
described her far better. Had you
described her as she truly is, Mother
Fu would have paid you twice your
price and still been happy. You
failed to value the only property
you had to sell.

LAI SHENG

(Obscenely)

Kiss me, Mother Fu!

MOTHER FU

(Sarcastically)

I like boys like you. You will come
to no good, and you will spend all
your "hard-earned" money here at
Mother Fu's brothel.

Mother Fu touches Golden Orchid's cheek.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

I will teach you, mmmm, all the ways
to outsmart men.

8 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM -- BEFORE DUSK 8

Almost ritualistically, Golden Orchid stands before a long mirror wearing a long silk dress with jade adornments on her head. Mother Fu, the procuress herself, is so taken with the possibilities of Golden Orchid that she is completing the styling of Golden Orchid's black hair with an exquisite comb. A servant girl, CUI'ER, stands aside waiting, learning as Madame Fu divides Golden Orchid's long hair into three parts with a bone fork. MAID SERVANT #1 stands near by.

MOTHER FU

I look at you and I see money. Good thing! Never have I spent so much money to buy a girl. I only spent five to six hundred taels of silver for Tao Hong and Gui Hua. Even high-and-mighty Miss Wen Xiang not over one thousand.

Several drops of water fall on the neck of Golden Orchid who seems to flinch.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Don't move! I must create your "look."

Through the window, a golden beam of setting sun shines on the dead-calm face of Golden Orchid. Curiously, she seems a ghost of her lively self. Cui'er stands idly by holding a wooden bowl. No one notices that from both long white sleeves of Golden Orchid's dress two streams of deep red blood have begun to drip.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Living on our profession, we must ingratiate ourselves with our customers...Yes. You are a clever girl. No need to say more.

Mother Fu turns away, rummaging for something. Golden Orchid sways a bit.

MAID SERVANT #1

New girl! Better your brother sold you to one man as first wife, or as concubine. You see I'm right. Mother Fu will sell you to many men.

Golden Orchid feels dizzy, sways a bit more, but pulls her demeanor together.

Mother Fu, hearing everything, turns back with a bejeweled hair pin which she places in Golden Orchid's hair.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER FU

Ignore the empty-headed one. She is prostitute. You are not. You are qingguang. She is experienced in sexual union. You are not for sleeping with customers. You are company for dinner, for mah jong, for laughter.

MAID SERVANT #1

You not for making funs. When men stroke at you, you polite. Not dodge. You smile. You call Mother Fu. Mother Fu call me. I making funs.

CUI'ER

As qingguang, concubine, you should not come to such grief. Qingguang best remains virgin girl. Qingguang not whore.

Golden Orchid turns pale. Her sleeves are dripping blood.

MOTHER FU

When I decide you have your day of coupling, I will choose a handsome young rich lord to satisfy you.

Golden Orchid can stand upright no longer and faints to the floor. Cui'er sees the blood, screams, and drops the wooden plate.

CUI'ER

Ah! Golden Orchid!

Mother Fu looks down in disdain and turns hostile.

MOTHER FU

You shameless bitch! Want to take my money for nothing. No way! Even if you die, I will have your corpse receive customers.

Five prostitutes enter in disarray and disbelief. The prideful MISS WEN XIANG's face, prominently discovered among them, sneers competitively down at the spectacle of Golden Orchid lying on the floor.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)
(Beginning to wrap
Golden Orchid's wrists)
Little Miss, you will learn to give
the world its money's worth.

9 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM -- DAY

9

In from another room floats music. It is the same simple melody Golden Orchid sang in the laundry yard of her mother. Perhaps it is her musical signature. In a medium shot that reveals only the upper half of her reclining body, Golden Orchid, with wrists wrapped, blotted still with blood, lies on a bed with tears on her face. The camera pulls back to reveal Mother Fu sitting in attendance while Cui'er, who has become Golden Orchid's body servant, continues gently to bind Golden Orchid's feet in the traditional manner.

10 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM -- LATE AFTERNOON

10

Red candles burn around Golden Orchid who sits up in her bed. Mother Fu has brought in her FORTUNE TELLER who sits next to Golden Orchid's bed with Mother Fu.

MOTHER FU
The Fortune Teller knows everything.

FORTUNE TELLER
(Kindly)
Tradition is the past. The future is life. The Tao teaches that you must give up ingenuity.

MOTHER FU
The Fortune Teller means you should grow up!

FORTUNE TELLER
Ah, my little Orchid, you must learn that life is always preferable to death.

Bells in the window sway and tinkle.

MOTHER FU
(Exasperated)
Don't confuse the little laundress.

GOLDEN ORCHID
I am not a stupid girl. I can read books and write letters and play music.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

FORTUNE TELLER

You will be a great lady in China
and beyond, in the ocean world.

MOTHER FU

(Muttering to herself)
When little pigs fly!

FORTUNE TELLER

Learn everything. Forget nothing.
Your head will rule your heart. But
you must take care. Your journey
will carry you far...

MOTHER FU

...and tonight, Little Miss, your
journey will carry you to the Flower
Boat!

11 EXT. GUAN QUIAN JIE -- EVENING

11

At dusk, Guan Quian Jie shines with the rays of the setting sun. Golden Orchid, riding in a sedan chair carried by two men, is elegantly dressed in white silk clothes and trousers. Her make-up is no more than lipstick. Her perfect shining hair is pinned with a jadelite clasp. She wears a simple jasmine flower pinned on her temple. Mother Fu and Cui'er follow along. Golden Orchid's eyes are ice-cold. They travel from screen right to screen left past the Moon Gate leaving the gates beauty stand alone three final beats on screen.

MOTHER FU

(Encouragingly)
Orchid! Don't take things so hard.
You have tried dying once and did
not die. You should not be headstrong
anymore. With my protection, you
will not come to grief.

12 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCK -- EVENING

12

In a setting of great beauty, music mixes with laughter. The sedan chair arrives at the dock on the river where several luxurious flower boats, or whore boats, float at anchor awaiting the nights' clientele. Mother Fu fusses as a male servant helps Golden Orchid exit the sedan chair. Immediately, Golden Orchid sees, across on another parallel dock, her brother Lai Sheng lounging like a young gangster. Lai Sheng looks up, sees her, and laughs. Golden Orchid ducks behind the protection of Mother Fu who, pushing eager men aside, escorts her toward a boat.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

Near Golden Orchid's white trouser legs, there is a splash of mud in the water which Golden Orchid side-steps. The mud misses Golden Orchid and spatters the white tunic of a male servant. Mother Fu guides Golden Orchid by the elbow out of harm's way and onto the boat.

MOTHER FU

You see? I protect you as my first daughter.

Both women turn and see Lai Sheng standing still, staring at them. He inhales a cigaret and throws it into crystal river where he then stoops to dip his muddy hand to wash it. The two women turn away from Lai Sheng and make their entrance onto the gaily decorated flower boat which is hosted by a man named HOST HUEY.

HOST HUEY

Here comes Miss Golden Orchid!

13 INT. THE FLOWER BOAT -- EVENING

13

Accompanied by Mother Fu, Golden Orchid enters the main cabin. She is cold as ice while Mother Fu smiles from ear to ear, saying hello to absolutely everyone. Prominent among the four guests playing mah jong is an imperious young man, MASTER WU. He is imperious in the way of a typical playboy dressed in luxurious clothes with diamond rings on nearly all of his fingers. Nearly everyone in the cabin is set abuzz by the entrance of Golden Orchid. Master Wu sits without turning his head, feigning to be oblivious to the presence of Mother Fu, whom he knows well, and of Golden Orchid whom he knows not at all. Host Huey, seeing there are only two call girls sitting with the four mah jong players, carries a steaming white towel on a silver tray to his number one patron, Master Wu.

HOST HUEY

(Whispers over the
steaming white towel)

Behold the Ice Princess!

Master Wu takes the hot towel, pushes Host Huey smartly away, and wipes his hands deliberately slow. Host Huey signals to Mother Fu, who playing docile and obedient, bows and scraps her way to Master Wu in a theatrical style so clever he knows her insouciance but can do nothing about it. Mother Fu in this way thrusts Golden Orchid full into view for Master Wu's first sight of her.

MOTHER FU

Master Wu, the girl comes out for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

MASTER WU

Mother Fu, all your girls come out
for the first time.

MOTHER FU

Master Wu, forgive her if she does
something wrong.

MASTER WU

(Casting his first
look at Golden Orchid
speaks coldly, but
with freshly sparked
lust)

Mother Fu, tell her to sit down.

Mother Fu makes great business telling Golden Orchid to sit
by Master Wu who ignores the two women and insouciantly tosses
a domino into play. Golden Orchid with great dignity sits
down quietly beside young Master Wu who looks up at Mother
Fu who has moved to the side. Cui'er keeps her place behind
Golden Orchid standing in attendance on her new mistress.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)

Are you still here? You have nothing
to do now.

MOTHER FU

Yes, sir! Yes, sir!

MASTER WU

So go prepare the next sweet dish,
before I tire of this one.

Mother Fu pats Golden Orchid on the shoulder and exits from
the cabin. Only now does Master Wu actually look at Golden
Orchid.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)

Looks pretty.

Master Wu pushes down his dominos.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)

I win.

HOST HUEY

When beauty arrives, luck turns in
the young master's favor.

The players mix the dominos again.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

MASTER WU

Are you lucky? Do you bring luck?
What's your name, Princess?

Golden Orchid coldly refuses to respond.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)

(Raising his voice a
little)

What's your name?

Cui'er touches Golden Orchid's shoulder gently.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Golden Orchid.

MASTER WU

A good name, but not a whore name.

HOST HUEY

Master Wu, this girl is not a
prostitute.

MASTER WU

Not yet.

HOST HUEY

Young Master, you are student of
female beauty. She is a new kind of
girl. Aloof. Distant.

MASTER WU

Cold.

HOST HUEY

Poetic. Fresh.

MASTER WU

(Playing a domino)
Amateur.

The other guests cheer. Suddenly young Master Wu is on a
winning streak.

HOST HUEY

Lucky.

MASTER WU

People say you cut your wrists.

Golden Orchid maintains her silent dignity. Master Wu throws
his dominos down again. The guests all cheer him.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

HOST HUEY
Win again. See! Lucky lady!

Master Wu turns to Golden Orchid and for the first time registers how beautiful she actually is. He takes her hand gently.

MASTER WU
Let me have a look.

Golden Orchid stiffens in her chair. Master Wu slowly pushes up her sleeve revealing her scar.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)
Truly you cut your wrists. Deeply.
You are lucky.

Cui'er looks worried. The crowd of guests is excited watching for new gossip as Master Wu's lust mounts at the new sight of Golden Orchid. He pushes her sleeve up her delicate arm.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)
(Tracing Golden
Orchid's pulse)
Lucky to be alive. So...alive!

Golden Orchid's face retains complete composure. Master Wu, having looked at her scar and found her pulse, continues a teasing push of her loose sleeve up to reveal the beautiful drape of her bare arm.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)
Why kill yourself when all anyone
wants you to be is a woman.

Master Wu, with one hand on her elbow, guides Golden Orchid's wrist slowly to his lips and kisses her scar. Golden Orchid shivers. The guests are awestruck and almost silent. Master Wu looks with deep carnal desire into Golden Orchid's face and pulls her wrist again to his lips. She pulls reflexively back.

MASTER WU (CONT'D)
Rebellious!

Golden Orchid pulls her arm free of his grasp and slaps him across the face. The guests shout at this shocking behavior. Cui'er throws her own hands over her own face. Master Wu, jumping up in embarrassment, tips over the mah jong table. The two other call girls scream. Master Wu grabs the nearest one and kisses her hard on the mouth. He holds the girl out at arm's length exhibiting her smeared lustre. He looks directly at Golden Orchid who stands facing him.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (4)

13

MASTER WU (CONT'D)
I like wild girls. But what are you?
An untouchable doll!

Mother Fu rushes in.

MOTHER FU
Oh, yes, please, young Master. She
is an untouchable whore...

HOST HUEY
...an untouchable whore...

MOTHER FU
...and you are a gentleman. Please
understand...

Master Fu's friends young and old work to mediate the tension.

FRIEND #1
She's a whore on a whore boat!

FRIEND #2
She's inexperienced. She's not even
a whore on a whore boat!

FRIEND #3
You can spill your seed over a whore,
but you can't spill your honor.

They all laugh a little--then laugh purposely more heartily
to diffuse the situation. Golden Orchid stands in their midst
watching them, learning, remembering this as a night of
lessons.

MOTHER FU
Be quick to apologize to Master Wu.

Golden Orchid radiates refusal.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)
(To Cui'er)
Call Miss Wen Xian to come.

Cui'er runs out.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)
When Miss Wen Xian comes, Master Wu,
she will help you melt your anger.

Mother Fu takes the elbow of Golden Orchid and walks her
across the room, past Master Wu, and toward the door.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (5)

13

MASTER WU

Bring her back when she has some
experience!

Master Wu's friends laugh. One athletically pantomimes the ritual moves that soon will become identified as typical of young Boxers. At the door, Golden Orchid exiting meets MISS WEN XIAN entering. Miss Wen Xian throws Golden Orchid a haughty look. Mother Fu tries to hurry Golden Orchid through the door. But Golden Orchid shakes Mother Fu's hand from her arm and exits so elegantly that the guests all look at each other. Master Wu kisses the inside wrist of Miss Wen Xian.

HOST HUEY

(Beginning applause)

...Ho! Our young master is always
lucky!

All the guests applaud.

14 EXT. RIVERSIDE DOCK -- NIGHT

14

Mother Fu, leaving the flower boat, catches up to Golden Orchid. Mother Fu pushes her and Mother Fu herself climbs into the sedan chair causing Golden Orchid, hobbled by her newly bound feet, to run after her in the night. Mother Fu spies Lai Sheng holding onto some cheap girl in the shadows by the sedan chairs. Lai Sheng looks up to see his sister Golden Orchid shuffling by at the moment Golden Orchid sees him. Their eyes meet.

MOTHER FU

(Laughing into the
beautiful night sky)

Ha-Ha! Ha! Ha-Ha!

15 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, CORRIDOR AND COURT YARD -- MORNING

15

Miss Wen Xian exits from a room where behind her young Master Wu is revealed rising from the bed as Mother Fu bustles about in the room. Miss Wen Xian leans on the second-floor corridor railing and looks down into the open-air court yard, where, in the center, Golden Orchid kneels on a washboard where she has spent the night in punishment.

MISS WEN XIAN

(Surprised, but pleased
at the sight of Golden
Orchid, she calls
over her shoulder)

Mother!

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

Mother Fu, in the room with Master Fu, perks up at the call of her name, takes a basin full of dirty water, comes out of the room, and splashes the basin down on Golden Orchid.

MOTHER FU

Good morning, laundry girl!

Golden Orchid shivers and raises her head to see Mother Fu, Miss Wen Xian, and Master Wu, dressed to leave, standing at the railing. Golden Orchid's eyes, full of hatred, burn with some conclusion she has realized. Mother Fu and Miss Wen Xian accompany Master Wu down the stairs.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

She has knelt for the whole night.
Mother Fu always satisfies the honor
of her gentlemen visitors.

They pass Golden Orchid and stand at the back gate of Fu Jia Ban where the two women see Master Wu off, and turn back, walking slowly past Golden Orchid.

MISS WEN XIAN

(Slightly mocking the
departed Master Wu
with her petulant
little hand waving)

Good-bye, Master Wu. Good luck! Good-
bye! Good riddance!

MOTHER FU

Wen Xian, go sleep some more.

As Miss Wen Xian passes the kneeling Golden Orchid, she sneers her characteristic sneer. Golden Orchid suddenly stands up startling Miss Wen Xian and Mother Fu. Her face is clear and resolved. The cruel punishment has taught her to begin to protect herself.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Kneel down, laundry girl. I haven't
told you to stand.

Golden Orchid turns and walks three confident steps toward Mother Fu and Miss Wen Xian. Her bound feet are featured as being no impediment. Golden Orchid looks directly at Mother and speaks with withering sarcasm.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You can, I suppose, afford to provide
me with all the outfit of a
prostitute!

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

Mother Fu's mouth hangs open. Miss Wen Xian covers her own mouth in shock.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
You want your money's worth? You think that cheap Miss Wen Xian is a prostitute? You want a real prostitute? I'll show you how to be a real prostitute! Smart! Rich! Fortune Teller's journey begins with one step.

Golden Orchid puts one bound foot solidly forward.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
I want everything fit for an emperor's prostitute...and not a single piece left out.

Golden Orchid smiles a lovely smile of absolute scorn at Miss Wen Xian.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
Cheap goods have little value.

Mother Fu and Miss Wen Xian look at each other in astonishment.

MOTHER FU
(To both women)
What are you young girls coming to?

MISS WEN XIAN
(Mocking Golden Orchid's decision about her new status)
Good-bye, Miss Virgin Qingguang!

16 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM -- EVENING

16

Mother Fu and Cui'er finish dressing Golden Orchid in the "bridal dress" of a whore. She is beautiful, touching, calm, and aglow.

MOTHER FU
You will like young business-man Chow. He's rich, pays plenty.

CUI'ER
Miss Golden Orchid, are you happy or sad?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Looking into mirror)
Aren't we playing a comedy?

17 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, "BRIDAL CHAMBER," -- NIGHT

17

A thousand red candles burn brightly all around the room. Covered with a red scarf, Golden Orchid sits straight up in the "bridal chamber" bed. She stares at the not-unromantic-looking, BUSINESS MAN CHOW, who, as the paying "whore master," will play the "groom," to initiate her into "womanhood." Chow throws an extra sack of coins on the table. He expects Golden Orchid to admire his money and his body. He preens with a tad of vanity. Golden Orchid deftly disguises her grin that recognizes Chow is full of himself. He is caught up "playing" the "whore master" as if the "Bridal Chamber" is a stage at the opera. His strong arm slowly pulls off Golden Orchid's veil. Through a peep-hole in the wall, the eye of Mother Fu watches unseen. Golden Orchid, painted white around the eyes and nose, smiles at the whore master.

18 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, CORRIDOR -- LATER

18

Golden Orchid's laughing from behind the "Bridal Chamber" door causes the two prostitutes leaning against the door to eavesdrop to call three more prostitutes to join them. Mother Fu also hears the wild laughter and runs to the closed door. The door opens fast, comically, and young business man Chow, the "whore master," comes running out carrying his robes. Golden Orchid's laughter continues, ambiguously. Is she mirthful or hysterical? Mother Fu and the five prostitutes rush through the door into the "bridal chamber." Mother Fu, having witnessed the "wedding," laughs in amusement, but plays along.

19 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, "BRIDAL CHAMBER" -- CONTINUOUS

19

Mother Fu and the prostitutes register shock. Golden Orchid with white paint on her face is laughing wildly, brandishing the make-up brush with the pretty red silk strings which was a gift from her father. Golden Orchid brushes her face in pantomime.

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Laughing)
Make-believe!

Mother Fu and the others look in astonishment. The prostitutes shiver. Golden Orchid, suddenly serious, stops laughing, and looks at them, pulling herself up to imperious dignity. All their eyes are shocked and frightened. No young girl on the night of her initiation has ever acted so in control of herself.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
(Very unexpectedly)
Is that all there is to a whore
master?

A regretful expression crosses Mother Fu's face.

MOTHER FU
This is the end of summer. We'll see
who laughs come the end of winter.

20 EXT. THE MOON GATE OF SUZHOU -- EVENING

20

Time passes on the Moon Gate. The trees show "autumn" which dissolves to a light dusting of snow. A silhouetted form of a woman passes by in the evening snow. This dissolves into a warm spring, then summer.

21 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, COURT YARD -- EVENING

21

In the summer evening, the Fu Jia Ban servants light the glass and gauze lanterns early. Yellow lights glow from each room and make the people look romantic. A pair of Chinese Naval officers in uniform walk across the court yard. The floors of the corridor are brightly polished. Colorfully dressed prostitutes sit with alluring smiles teasing the cruising customers. Flirtatious laughter and coquettish sings comes from various rooms. Whore masters come and go. Maid servants and girl servants carry plates of candy and fruit.

22 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, MAIN STAIR CASE -- CONTINUOUS

22

Golden Orchid, at the top of the stairs, leaves her room, and descends the stair case elegantly. Her shining hair is worn in a bun with expensive clasps. She wears a white silk dress and trousers with an embroidered short coat. All eyes follow her. The two Chinese Naval officers nod to her. She smiles to everyone but to no one in particular. Cui'er meets Golden Orchid at the bottom of the stairs and follows her to the brothel door. They pause a moment. A visible sedan chair awaits them outside the door. Mother Fu approaches her and bows deeply without ridicule.

MOTHER FU
In Suzhou, you are the most famous
prostitute.

Walking triumphantly past Mother Fu, Golden Orchid approaches the sedan chair. The full moon of summer hangs low in the branches.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

MISS WEN XIAN
(Sticking her face
into the conversation)
In Suzhou, you are the best,
ha!...actress!

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Directly to Miss Wen
Xian)
And in all China, you are the best
acrobat!

Seen through the door way, Golden Orchid climbs into the sedan chair and disappears. Mother Fu waves her hands to shoo Miss Wen Xian back to a young customer who looks like a recruiting poster for the Boxers.

23 EXT. QI ISHAN TANG, DOCK -- NIGHT

23

The full moon is seen twice, as a "Double Moon," simultaneously through the trees and reflected in the still river. A thin mist rides the water. The dock and lagoon are filled with many anchored whore boats from which comes much music and laughter. Six European men, and one very chic European woman, walk elegantly by smoking seven cigars. Two prostitutes, laughing, escort Golden Orchid, assisted by Cui'er, off a beautifully appointed whore boat. The four women walk along the dock amusing themselves with gossip of the evening.

A green official sedan chair stops at the steps leading up to the dock. An obviously successful middle-aged man, about fifty, climbs off the sedan chair. He is the famous scholar and writer HONG WENQING. He is handsome, thin, and elegant. Hong Wenqing walks up the steps to the dock.

Neither Golden Orchid or Hong Wenqing is aware that destiny is about to enter their lives.

Overhead, fireworks light up the moon-bright sky. Hong looks skyward. Golden Orchid, immediately seeming separate from the three women she's with, also looks skyward. As the fireworks fall, they leave only the "Double Moon," and at the very same moment, Hong Wenqing sees Golden Orchid who sees him. In the sky, more fireworks light the faces of the revered scholar and the beautiful woman who destined to be his wife. They do not speak. They pass by each other on the maze of the dock. Their eyes say everything. A peal of laughter from a near-by whore boat sounds. Going down the dock, Hong Wenqing cannot take his eyes from Golden Orchid. Coming up the dock, Golden Orchid's eyes follow Hong Wenqing. Golden Orchid's graceful nature shows none of the affectations of a prostitute.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

Looking at the beautiful lady, Hong is suddenly aware that he is misbehaving. He smiles. She smiles. He laughs. They are passing again, on different levels, on the maze of the docks, as Golden Orchid heads for the shore and Hong Wenqing heads for the boat. Golden Orchid, moving away, "accidentally" snags her silk handkerchief on a railing and moves on pretending not to notice. Hong Wenqing reaches over to pick up the handkerchief. He looks up. Already, she is disappearing in a sedan chair, with Cui'er tagging along. Hong Wenqing smells the silk handkerchief. Bells jingle on the flower boat to which he had been headed. The servant on the flower boat waves his hands to the guests on board.

SERVANT

Here comes Lord Hong!

24 INT. THE WHORE BOAT -- CONTINUOUS

24

Hong Wenqing walks onto the boat greeting his friends. Someone invites him to sit at the first table. He is a very important man in China.

VARIOUS FRIENDS

Come, come! Wenqing sit here!

Exquisite dishes set the table. Hong Wenqing entering makes the company into four men and four prostitutes in the luxurious cabin. Three of the prostitutes sit beside the first three men assembled. The fourth prostitute, singing in a soft voice while playing a qin zither, sees her customer, Hong Wenqing enter, and she flatters him with a smile that is pretty enough, but not nearly so beautiful as the smile of Golden Orchid who has clearly set Hong Wenqing on a happy, nervous edge. Although Hong chats and jokes with his companions, he is absent-minded.

The flower boat leaves the dock and drifts down the shoreline catching up with--and keeping pace with--Golden Orchid who travels by sedan chair on the path along the river. The eyes of the predestined lovers--in important alternating close-ups, meet, lock, and smile. Then the boat passes under a bridge. When it comes out on the other side, the sedan chair in which Golden Orchid travels has disappeared. Hong Wenqing realizes in dismay: he's in love! Already he misses the girl! He breathes the night air through her red silk scarf which he places deep in the right pocket of his trousers. Who is she? His friends continue to socialize around him, but he is aloof as the flower boat pull up to Taizi Dock.

25 INT. THE WHORE BOAT, TAIZI DOCK, CHANGMAN GATE -- CONTINUOUS 25

All the sounds of a party gaining steam fill the whore boat as it joggles into the Taizi Dock. Whores from the boat rise to exit at the same time that fresh whores enter from the dock. Bells jingle. Whores merrily compete for the gentlemen on board. One of the men is young Master Wu. From out of the crowd of entering whores appears Golden Orchid accompanied by Cui'er. Master Wu is surprised at how great is Golden Orchid's popularity and power. He looks lustfully at her, but she ignores him as if he were dead. Golden Orchid hands out small favors and charms to the lesser prostitutes as she walks, in all her new fame and daring power, up to Hong Wenqing. She is a beautiful show boat. She knows the life-span of a prostitute is short and must be fast to be successful. The actress in her makes her daring!

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Putting on a show to
spite Master Wu and
seduce Hong Wenqing)
Sir, have you seen my red silk
handkerchief?

Servants pouring tea back away. Hong Wenqing is more tempted than embarrassed as he touches at the tip of the red silk scarf peeking out of his trouser pocket. The guests grow very interested in this "pas de deux."

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
I have wondered why my red
handkerchief suddenly disappears...and
then...
(reaching over to
touch the tip of the
scarf in Hong
Wenqing's pocket,
she begins to pull
the scarf slowly
from his trousers)
suddenly...reappears...without any
reason.

As Golden Orchid pulls the scarf long and slow from Hong Wenqing's pocket, the crowd makes sexy sounds.

CROWD
OoooooooooooooEEEE!

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

GOLDEN ORCHID
(pulling the red scarf
almost the whole
length out of the
pocket)
Thank you, my Lord, for rescuing
this red...silk...hand...ker...chief
for...me!
(flipping the whole
of the handkerchief
back teasingly to
Hong Wenqing)
Perhaps...soon...you dare to return
it to me.

Golden Orchid smiles, turns, and most gracefully exits the cabin of the whore boat. Everyone applauds wildly. Hong Wenqing sits agog. Clearly he is smitten. Cui'er puts her hands over her face; she is thrilled by Golden Orchid's boldness. The crowd makes catcalls of approval. A silly prostitute makes fun of Master Wu by pulling a handkerchief around his neck. Cui'er puts two silver dollars under a tea plate.

CUI'ER
(Trying to achieve
some propriety)
Money for the cabin seat.

As Cui'er exits, Hong Wenqing, ignoring the commotion, sits wrapping the red silk handkerchief thoughtfully around his hands. He smiles. He laughs. He is in love. He looks out the cabin window and see Golden Orchid stretching out her graceful arm to touch some tassels of a big red lantern. She pulls a tassel down, holds it a beat, then releases it sharply, causing the big lantern to jump up and down. Hong Wenqing is rapt by her.

CUT TO:

26 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, CORRIDOR -- LATER

26

Mother Fu's face in close up appears in the darkness. She is pulling closed the door of Golden Orchid's room.

MOTHER FU
(Very happy with
herself)
Fate so quickly!

27 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER 27

Joyous amid a thousand red candles, later that same night, in the bed, kneeling up, facing each other, Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing embrace and kiss passionately. The genuine feeling is that this sudden love is the real thing in romance.

HONG WENQING

(Deeply)

I love you, Jinhua!

GOLDEN ORCHID

I love you too.

They hold each other close and kiss.

HONG WENQING

Jinhua. Marry me!

GOLDEN ORCHID

(In tight embrace)

My Lord!

Music washes over the tender scene. Love clearly elevates Golden Orchid above all the other women at the Fu Jia Ban brothel. She glows. Her glow makes the screen luminous.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. THE MOON GATE OF SUZHOU -- MOMENTS LATER 28

Just before dawn, the full moon is setting over the Moon Gate. A lone girl sits near a small circular bowl full of water. She casts a stone into the still water and watches the circles widening out to the rim of the bowl where the water cascades over the edge.

29 EXT. CHINESE GOVERNMENT BUILDING, BIG ENTRANCE -- MORNING 29

Exiting the government building, a very happy Hong Wenqing walks out the door, and down the steps with important Chinese friends who are obviously congratulating him. Several Europeans enter and exit the big entrance. Some wear business suits; some wear uniforms; a German missionary with a group of small European children troops past. Three women dressed in becoming Paris fashions stand chatting. A smiling European military officer in uniform, obviously German, comes out the door, and down the steps, and courteously shakes the hand of Hong Wenqing.

30 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, MOTHER FU'S PRIVATE PARLOR --
AFTERNOON

30

MOTHER FU
(Smiling knowledgeably
in tight close-up)
Fortune Teller says, "Fate happens
quickly."

HONG WENQING
That's what makes it fate, Mother
Fu.

MOTHER FU
You are the scholar, Hong Wenqing.
You are rich and your honorable family
is highly favored by the government.
In a house such as mine, I hear much
information and many rumors.

HONG WENQING
That is why I hold your house in
such respect. You yourself are thought
honorable.

MOTHER FU
Rumors speak more truth than Fortune
Teller. You are destined to great
things for China. Or else, why do
you need Golden Orchid? You have a
first wife.

HONG WENQING
Yes, a first wife.

MOTHER FU
You also have a second wife.

HONG WENQING
Yes, a second wife...and from her a
son.

MOTHER FU
So...Mother Fu thinks you maybe hide
reasons you take Golden Orchid
in...ummm...marriage as your
concubine, eh?

HONG WENQING
My reason is no secret.

MOTHER FU
Your number one wife and your number
two wife maybe not so good wives.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Some women marry because they are not clever. Golden Orchid is smart girl, learns quick. She has written you poems, yes?

(Then, as if telling an amusing secret)

Be careful of your papers...She reads!

HONG WENQING

(Gesturing as if his two wives are so-so, okay)

Yes...I love Golden Orchid.

MOTHER FU

How much you love Golden Orchid? How much value you take her as third wife, as concubine?

Hong Wenqing laughs, kisses Mother Fu's head, takes her hand and leads her toward the door.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Golden Orchid is good girl, beautiful girl. She loves you too...You never hurt her, right? Her heart? You give her everything?

Hong Wenqing throws open the door leading from Mother Fu's private parlor to the balcony at the top of the stairs leading down the main stair case.

31 INT. FU JIA BAN BROTHEL, CORRIDOR AND COURT YARD -- CONTINUOUS

31

HONG WENQING

EVERYTHING!

Hong Wenqing laughs joyously at Mother Fu's pleased reaction to the frenzied busy-ness in the court yard below which is piling up with row upon row of extravagant betrothal gifts. Everyone is happy. HONG SHENG, butler of Hong Wenqing's family, directs two lines of servants carrying even more gifts. A crowd of prostitutes and servants looks on with admiration. Golden Orchid's brother, Lai Sheng, has crept in with the servants carrying gifts, and he is seen standing off to the side, where he pockets a bauble or two for himself. Hong Wenqing gestures for Mother Fu to continue down the stairs to mingle with the members of the Hong Family household servants who are arranging the lavish displays of gifts upon long tables. Hong Wenqing stands near the top of the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

He is quite pleased with himself as a bride-groom to be. In the courtyard below, Hong Sheng begins to read aloud the list of gifts delivered to Miss Golden Orchid.

HONG SHENG
(Speaking more off
screen than on during
the simultaneous
action between Hong
Wenqing and Golden
Orchid)

Master Wen Qing presents to Miss Golden Orchid a few poor wedding gifts. Four pearl necklaces, seven jade hair clasps, a pair of S-shaped golden earrings, a pair of silver-shaped earrings inlaid with diamonds, a pair of dragon-coiled gold bracelets, a pair of gold finger rings, ten shoe-shaped gold ingots, two silver dinner sets, a pair of large silver vases...

Hong Wenqing looks across the court yard to the balcony at the top of the opposite stairs. At the open door of her room, Golden Orchid, brilliantly beautiful, stands smiling at the activity below, but more, she looks directly across at her lover, Hong Wenqing. A maid stands next to Golden Orchid and pins one last pearl flower in her hair. As Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid look intently at one another, they lock eyes and their eyes stay locked together as both begin their descent down the opposite staircases, to approach each other more closely.

HONG SHENG (CONT'D)
...a set of silver inlaid lacquer ware, a Thailand silver Buddha, ten jade animals, two jade mouth pieces for long-stemmed pipes, ten bolts of brocade, two pearl hair clasps, an ancient bronze mirror, a blue-and-white porcelain brush boat, a brush with a blue-and-white porcelain handle, an earthenware cricket container inlaid with silver wire...

Hong Wenqing stands on the bottom step of his stairs. Golden Orchid stands on the third step from the bottom of her stairs. They keep their true-love eyes locked on each other over all the action in the courtyard.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

HONG SHENG (CONT'D)
...a bronze hand warmer, a Fuzhou
dressing lacquer box, four decorative
wall hangings, a zitan wood brush
pot, a bronze censor with gold and
silver inlay, a folding fan, a
handscroll of four poems for Chen
Jiru...

The people in the court yard have grown progressively silent
as the two lovers stand on the stairs.

HONG SHENG (CONT'D)
...painting and calligraphy from
four generations of the Wenqing
family, an English jewel box inlaid
with gold...

A pretty-faced young servant girl picks up the jewel box,
opens the top, and the sweet music of a waltz pours out. The
young girls have never seen a music box and the foreign tune
it plays captivates them. Two slightly older, more
knowledgeable prostitutes begin to waltz, European-style, as
kind of a wedding party joke; other young girls mimic them,
and most of the females begin to try to waltz. Golden Orchid
and Hong Wenqing use this distraction to walk meaningfully
towards one another across the court yard, through the
waltzing girls.

HONG SHENG (CONT'D)
(Watching his master
closely, and speaking
with careful humor)
...and one red sandalwood box with
fifty red silk handkerchiefs!

Golden Orchid laughs at Hong Wenqing's wonderfully sentimental
joke as he sweeps her up into his arms. Cui'er pulls at the
red handkerchiefs and throws them into the air above the
dancing girls. The whole court yard applauds. They kiss.
Music swells.

32 INT. THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TRADITIONAL WEDDING -- DAY

32

The face of Golden Orchid dominates this fully traditional
wedding that is incredibly beautiful and sumptuous. The sounds
are of happy people and traditional music. Off to the side,
in noticeable attendance is a European couple: the wife is
dressed according to Paris fashion, and the husband has a
subdued air of a decorated diplomat. They smile and obviously
enjoy their entre to the wedding feast. Hong Sheng, the
butler, seems especially careful to make sure a servant cares
for the foreigners.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Hong Sheng also pays attention to Hong Wenqing's number one wife, FIRST MADAM, and number two wife, SECOND MADAM, who sit apart, but seem content with this new "third" wife. Other wise, the whole celebration centers around Golden Orchid and her groom, the most honorable Hong Wenqing. Also in attendance is the son of Hong Wenqing, HONG LUO, and his wife, NEW MADAM.

33 INT. HONG'S MANSION, THE BRIDAL CHAMBER -- NIGHT

33

A statue of Kuanyin stands among red candles glowing in the bridal chamber. On the wall hangs the great character "Happiness." The bride groom sits watching his bride walk slowly around the chamber singing, slightly and sweetly to him, melodic catches of some sweet aria from a Kun Qu opera. The front of Golden Orchid's garment is half open. As she walks past, Hong Wenqing unfastens several more of her buttons.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Whispering)

Eyes look love to eyes which speak
love again.

They kiss.

34 EXT. STREET NEAR CHANGMAN GATE, NEAR EUROPEAN MISSIONARY CHURCH -- NIGHT

34

A very short threatening scene. Twenty young men run quickly through the Changman Gate and past a small white-frame European church with a cross on top. Many of them carry torches. Looking out from a small window in the church, observing the young men, is the face of an old Christian missionary. In the face of MISSIONARY SEEK, and in the face of his wife, MRS MISSIONARY SEEK, who moves in behind him to look out the window, there is ambiguity: who are these young men? Are they Good? Bad? Are they a fore-shadowing glimpse of the young Boxers whose politics oppose the foreign influences on China? As the young men run away, one burning torch is tossed through the air onto the steps of the mission. A Chinese servant runs out with water and douses the flame. The night closes in very dark. The son of the missionaries, JUGO SEEK, runs out to help extinguish the flames.

35 INT. HONG MANSION, COURT YARD -- MORNING

35

The morning is very bright. At a window, Golden Orchid, with a kerchief in her hand, looks out into the street to see below a joyous marching group of young men. (Are some of their faces, perhaps, the same young men as last night?) They wear dark red-purple jackets, black belts, and red flowers on their braids.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

They carry happy flags and gauze lanterns with painted characters that read "Number One Scholar." Butler Hong Sheng walks up to Golden Orchid, sees the parade rushing by outside, and allows his face to shadow with concern.

HONG SHENG

The young!

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am as young as those boys.

Hong Sheng leads Golden Orchid toward the sitting room by passing through the court yard of Hong's mansion, which is a typical Suzhou garden featuring pavilions, terraces, storied buildings, flowers, and trees.

HONG SHENG

Your youth, Madame, does not threaten China.

Golden Orchid often stops to smell the flowers. She is very happy in this strange, new luxury. Several old servants spy at her from across the court yard.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Ah, yes...but do I threaten Number One Wife, or Number Two Wife?

Hong Sheng waves the old servants away.

HONG SHENG

Only Number Two Wife, Madame.

36 INT. HONG MANSION, SITTING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

36

Hong Sheng leads Golden Orchid into the very large, and very dark sitting room. A very big painting hangs in the center. Under the painting is a square table. Off to each side, sit two armchairs, each pair of armchairs with its own teapot. Alone and obviously lonely, Hong Wenqing's Number Two Wife, SECOND MADAM, who is not happy about being age thirty-eight, sits in the right armchair with a cat in her arms. She frequently strokes its hair and makes over it.

To the left, Hong Wenqing's daughter-in-law, YOUNG MADAM, sits isolated. She is an obscure, dull girl, but very healthy for bearing babies. She is obviously pregnant.

This household is full of tension between competing females. Golden Orchid enters, a bit nervous, and curtsies gracefully.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Madam...I am your humble servant.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

The daughter-in-law drops the English music box which rolls across the floor, stops, and begins to play. The daughter-in-law intends to pick it up, but stops.

SECOND MADAM

Idiot! She's about to give birth!

Golden Orchid, somewhat embarrassed, goes, with a smile, to pick up the music box.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

What new-fangled foreign gadget is that? Let me have a look...

(She corrects herself while laughing)

Actually, I'm not the Madam. I am the Second Madam...

(She reaches for the music box)

...the Madam one step ahead of you, Third Madam.

ANGLE ON FROM P.O.V. OF FIRST MADAM'S OPIUM PORCH

Angle reveals nothing more of First Madam than the back of her head in a cloud of smoke looking out at the conversation continuing.

BACK TO SCENE

Golden Orchid is taken aback. Second Madam takes the music box, opens it. Music starts. Second Madam studies the music box carefully.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

(Haughty, sarcastic, jealous)

Third Madam's "treasures" are very different.

(pointing to Young Madam)

This is my daughter-in-law, Young Madam "Snake Eyes"! Ha, ha, ha!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Young Madam.

The Young Madam nods dull, embarrassed "hello."

SECOND MADAM

She's from wealthy family, ha!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

Hong Sheng, take new Third Madam to
see Number One Madam. First Wife of
Hong Wenqing.

As butler Hong Sheng approaches, Golden Orchid notices for
the first time that there is another room, a porch, on the
left side of the sitting room.

37 INT. HONG MANSION, THE OPIUM PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

37

On the porch, under a window, First Madam, lies on a mahogany
couch. Hong Sheng leads Golden Orchid to First Madam. Second
Madam follows at a not so discreet a distance.

HONG SHENG

First Madam, New Madam has come to
see you.

First Madam is busy burning prepared opium paste. She coughs.
Golden Orchid is shocked, but understands immediately how to
begin to handle the power struggle among these women. A
SERVANT GIRL kneeling next to First Madam is burning small
balls of roasted opium. First Madam coughs again. Golden
Orchid nods commandingly at the servant girl who draws a
spittoon from the bedside, and holds it for First Madam who
sits up, spits, and lies down again.

FIRST MADAM

(Whispering to Golden
Orchid like a
household spy)

First Madam is old woman now. She's
same age as husband Hong Wenqing.
Your husband.

(Evil as a bitch)

How old you? We same age maybe?

First Madam, recovering, sees the apparition of the beautiful
young Golden Orchid. Bells tinkle. First Madam smiles and
lifts her arm in the direction of Golden Orchid.

FIRST MADAM (CONT'D)

Ah, New Madam! How beautiful you
are!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Madam!

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

SECOND MADAM

(Barely disguised
contempt)

First Madam has foreigner habit of
smelling too many "poppies"...when
she should be running household.

FIRST MADAM

(With some humor to
Golden Orchid)

Second Madam is like middle child of
three children. She is not the most
honorable...and she is not the
youngest.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am happy, First Madam, that you
are not without humor.

FIRST MADAM

Ancient wisdom says the first virtue
of a wife is humor.

First Madam's kind look puts Golden Orchid at ease. First
Madam takes a slip from the servant girl and picks up a small
prepared opium paste. She roasts it on a beautiful small
opium lamp.

FIRST MADAM (CONT'D)

Opium is no good. You young people
should never take it.

38 INT. HONG MANSION, GARDEN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

38

Hong Luo, the twenty-year-old son of Hong Wenqing, watches
unseen through a screen at a window that looks onto the Opium
Porch. He coughs quietly.

39 INT. HONG MANSION, THE OPIUM PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

39

GOLDEN ORCHID

You are right, Madam.

FIRST MADAM

Opium so good you should never try
it once.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Bending to assist
First Madam)

How may I help you?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Golden Orchid adjusts the cushions for First Madam. Hong Sheng enters and is intercepted by Second Madam. Hong Sheng whispers in her ear.

SECOND MADAM

(With glee)

Ha! Trouble already. In-laws arrive.
New Madam's family have come to pay
a visit

Golden Orchid reacts happily, but amazed, as Hong Sheng ushers in her mother and her brother, Lai Shang.

FIRST MADAM

(To Second Madam)

You are bad in-law. These, good.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Mother!

Hong Sheng ushers Golden Orchid's mother and brother to the opium couch. Golden Orchid embraces her mother, and merely casts a glance at her brother, as if to say, You got me into all this. Her mother, with hair shining, wears new satin clothes. She stands attentively between Golden Orchid and First Madam.

SECOND MADAM

Ha! The air drips with tension. I
like such entertainment.

MOTHER

(Trying to break ice
with First Madam)

How are you? Madam, you really have
good luck. My daughter is good luck
girl.

FIRST MADAM

Sit down. Please sit down.

MOTHER

(Not daring to sit as
long as Second Madam
stands, uneasy)

It's okay. It's okay. I stand.

Golden Orchid kindly motions for her mother to sit. Golden Orchid looks at her brother, who is nervously molding a girl-doll in clay under his sleeves. She gives him a commanding nod to exit. At this point, Golden Orchid conveys that she is taking control of this visit and this household. Golden Orchid waves to Hong Sheng.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

39

Lai Shang shows his contained anger and exits.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Please tell the servant girl to pour the tea. We should use the red lacquer tea service.

FIRST MADAM

(Approvingly)

Golden Orchid, you are a lovely new wife.

The Second Madam stands indignant.

MOTHER

Your servant is as pretty as all the girls in Suzhou.

The servant girl pours the tea and exits.

SECOND MADAM

(To Mother of Golden Orchid)

Take your seat!

Mother smiles at Second Madam, and starts to sit, but when she see that Second Madam remains standing, she dares not to sit and hastens to stand.

MOTHER

I'm used to stand. It is alright to stand.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Perturbed at the insult to her mother, but with dignified imperiousness)

You. Second Madam. Sit! I have dealt with woman like you before. And I do it no more! I said, Sit.

Second Madam is so shocked, she sits obediently wondering why she is sitting.

FIRST MADAM

Ha! Like dog! She sits. First time. Good...Now, Mrs. Mother Golden Orchid, please sit down.

Golden Orchid herself sits down, triumphant among the three other women. Butler Hong Sheng smiles in understanding.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (3)

39

HONG SHENG
(To Golden Orchid)
Madam, will there be anything else?

40 INT. HONG MANSION, GARDEN ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

40

Hong Luo, the only son of the Hong family, is twenty and very much enamored of Golden Orchid whom he watches through a window as she continues sitting with the other women on the Opium Porch. His eyes are big and wet with love. Lai Sheng enters and immediately sizes up the situation.

LAI SHENG
(Lighting cigaret)
You are peeping at the New Madam!

HONG LUO
No! I...My eyes water. I have bad asthma.

LAI SHENG
You are the...honorable...son of Hong Wenqing. Not so very honorable peeping at your father's new concubine.

HONG LUO
Who...who are you?

LAI SHENG
According to family seniority, you should call me "Uncle."

Hong Luo wheezes with serious asthma.

LAI SHENG (CONT'D)
Someday, boy, "Uncle" will let you peep. I will take you to a whore boat. Peep! Peep! Peep!

Lai Sheng blows cigaret smoke in face of Hong Luo who chokes.

LAI SHENG (CONT'D)
You like my sister...Ha!

41 INT. HONG MANSION, CORRIDOR OUTSIDE LIBRARY -- AFTERNOON

41

On a window appears yellow rain. Golden Orchid, walking while reading a book, has no idea that she is followed by Hong Luo who ducks from corner to corner. At the library door, she stops, and looks around. Her face indicates she might have seen something. There is a quick glimpse of Hong Luo. Golden Orchid puts her index finger to her lips and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

She realizes that her beauty and presence have given her power over the whole household of the Hong Family. She walks to the library door and enters.

42 INT. HONG MANSION, LIBRARY -- CONTINUOUS

42

The sound of rain continues inside the rich two-storied library filled with shelves of books. A wooden ladder leads to the second floor whose shelves spill over with books, parchments, and scrolls. Golden Orchid runs her delicate fingers over books which she obviously loves. Hong Wenqing, reading upstairs, looks down upon her. In his seat, he ducks back into shadow to watch her through the book shelves. He is playing an amorous game. Golden Orchid picks up a European book at random. She is not interested in it. She tosses it aside. Hong Wenqing frowns. Golden Orchid climbs the stairs up the ladder, and walks to the end of the second-floor book shelves. There is a small window. She pushes it open and looks far away into the yellow rain. Moments pass. She turns and takes a deep breath as she bumps into Hong Wenqing who has sneaked up behind her.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Breathless)

My Lord! You scared me to death!

HONG WENQING

Jinhua! Women are not allowed to enter this library. You come in. You must pay the fine.

GOLDEN ORCHID

How are you to fine me then?

HONG WENQING

I will require you to read one book a day.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Laughs while playing
with her handkerchief)

I already read two books a day.

HONG WENQING

Then I must be neglecting you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I would like to be your "Number One Scholar"!

Hong Luo has been peeping all this time through the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

HONG WENQING

First you must recite a poem for me.
Show me what you have taught yourself.

Golden Orchid pouts her small, pretty lips. She looks at the ceiling, pretending her poem is hard to remember.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

(Playing the lover's
game)

Alright. If you can't remember, don't pretend to.

GOLDEN ORCHID

What if I can recite it? Then you will be fined.

HONG WENQING

You may entertain me, or you may fine me...as you like.

Pleased with her way with her husband, Golden Orchid smiles and clears her voice. She recites the poem obviously imitating Scholar Hong Wenqing when he recites poems.

GOLDEN ORCHID

"poem."

During the poem, she sees Hong Luo peering down at them. This time she becomes a bit angry, and, without Hong Wenqing noticing, she gives Hong Luo the "evil eye" and he skulks quietly away.

HONG WENQING

Jinhua, you are most clever. How will you fine me?

GOLDEN ORCHID

We could go back to our room, or...

Golden Orchid kisses Hong Wenqing who kisses her back, lightly. At the end of the library, Hong Luo runs out the door in despair. With privacy, Golden Orchid leans into Hong Qing. They embrace. The book shelves shake. A book falls open to a reproduction of a French painting of classic lovers of Greece or Rome.

43 EXT. CHINESE GOVERNMENT BUILDING, BIG ENTRANCE -- DAY

43

Hong Wenqing exits the building alone. He is a happy man. A male secretary runs out the door behind him and gives him a very official-looking package he left behind. Europeans go in and out of the building.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

A newspaper kiosk is hung with headlines in a variety of languages, "FOUR POWER PEACE PACT SIGNED!"

44 INT. HONG MANSION, GOLDEN ORCHID'S DAY ROOM -- AFTERNOON

44

In close-up on parchment, there are brush strokes. Golden Orchid is painting. Second Madam peeks in, frowns, and goes away unnoticed. Golden Orchid sits at a long table opposite a window. Her great concentration breaks on seeing Hong Wenqing enter. She laughs a surprised scream, and hurriedly tries to cover her painting with a "forbidden" French fashion magazine which she feels she must quickly cover.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Don't look at it, my Lord. You will laugh.

Hong Wenqing places his official package prominently on the long table, but no attention is paid to it.

HONG WENQING

Let me see it. I must see.

Golden Orchid surrenders easily, and Hong Wenqing pretends to look "serious as a scholar," but quickly breaks into admiration of the painting.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

You are so full of talents. Truly, you paint this fragrant thoroughwort so vividly...

(Enthusiastically,
and with true
admiration)

...Sign your name on it and give it to me.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You really want it? You're not making fun of me?

HONG WENQING

I swear I really want it.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord, everything I have is already yours.

HONG WENQING

No, Third Wife. My first love.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you, my Lord.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

HONG WENQING

Sign, please. In turn, I will sign
my recipient name to show that this
is presented by you willingly, and
not stolen from you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Laughing)

My Lord is most gracious.

HONG WENQING

Turn around, please.

Golden Orchid kisses him quickly and lightly on the cheek
and turns her back to him. Both faces face forward. Hong
Wenqing reaches into his pocket and pulls out a dazzling
three-strand pearl necklace that close-up defines the
sensuality of Golden Orchid's extreme beauty. She touches
her hand to her throat. The two hold a beat. The fragile
moment is broken by the shouting from outside.

45 INT. HONG MANSION, COURT YARD -- CONTINUOUS

45

As a MESSENGER rushes into the court yard shouting, the house
hold staff comes out to meet him. Second Madam, holding her
cat, appears on the balcony over the court yard. She looks
very disheveled, as if she just rose up from her bed full of
cats--one of which she carries in her arms.

MESSENGER

The Imperial Envoy comes! Hurry! The
Imperial Envoy is...

The IMPERIAL ENVOY with full entourage enters through the
gate into the court yard.

46 INT. HONG MANSION, GOLDEN ORCHID'S DAY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

46

Through the window over the long table in the day room, Golden
Orchid, her hand still touching the pearls, sees the commotion
below. She half turns to Hong Wenqing with a curious
expression. He is smiling enigmatically.

47 INT. HONG MANSION, COURT YARD -- MOMENTS LATER

47

With one wife on each of three separate balconies watching
the action below, Hong Wenqing, amidst some ceremony, accepts
a formal packet graciously from the Imperial Envoy. His
servants bow very deeply to show much respect. On the balcony
with Second Madam stands the asthmatic Hong Luo and the very
pregnant Young Madam "Snake Eyes."

48 INT. HONG MANSION, SITTING ROOM -- EVENING

48

The entire Hong Family, much distressed, is assembled. Hong Wenqing stands near the official package. The Second Madam is crying and holding her cat. The pregnant Young Madam is twisting her hair which has come undone. Hong Luo stands next to Young Madam, coughing, and peering at Golden Orchid who sits quite elegantly, toying with her pearls. A bound book, which she had been reading, sits in her lap. She has seated herself near the distraught First Madam whom she occasionally comforts.

HONG SHENG

(Holding an official
scroll)

A great honor has come to the
household of the Lord Hong Wenqing,
China's new ambassador to Germany,
France, and Russia!

(He makes a toast to
his master)

Ken-pai!

Hong Sheng exits. First Madam shows her worried misgivings. The Second Madam's crying sets the pregnant Young Madam crying. Hong Wenqing patiently listens to the wailing which significantly grows in raucous, almost comic intensity.

SECOND MADAM

Foreign devils, I say! Foreign devils!

FIRST MADAM

Our Hong Family has never committed
a sin to deserve this.

HONG LUO

Chinese dynasty covers vast
territories. China has no need to
talk to foreign powers.

FIRST MADAM

Why the Empress Dowager choose our
Lord to go to land of Europe?

HONG LUO

Foreigners spy on our richness.

SECOND MADAM

They have sharp guns and opium.

HONG LUO

They have strong warships. I think
these foreigners force China to send
envoys to their countries.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

SECOND MADAM

Good Chinese want to keep China away
from the hairy barbarians.

HONG LUO

Many students protest the devil's
guns and gods.

FIRST MADAM

Why Empress Dowager do this?

SECOND MADAM

They force Chinese to be servants to
their hairy foreign bodies.

YOUNG MADAM

(Holding her pregnant
stomach, crying)

Foreign missionaries eat Chinese
babies.

Hong Wenqing is exasperated by the crying. He looks at Golden Orchid who sits comforting First Madam. Golden Orchid smiles enigmatically. Hong Wenqing shrugs his shoulders and turns to First Madam who is smoking her pipe.

HONG WENQING

I must keep my mind open and clear.
I am a scholar, not a diplomat. The
government asks me to be the first
ambassador to Germany and Russia. I
must serve China's best interests. I
must deal with the foreigners to
protect China.

Hong Wenqing looks meaningfully past Golden Orchid and directly at First Madam, with some real sign of tenderness for this drugged woman who is his first wife.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

I am only sorry, First Madam, you
must go with me.

FIRST MADAM

(Panicking up from
her drug-state)

Ahhhh! My Lord. This is not possible.
I'm so old. How could I go to those
barbarous countries. Ahhh! My Lord!
Foreigners kiss each other when they
meet.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

Hong Wenqing, playing a quiet game of elimination, looks directly at Second Madam.

SECOND MADAM

(Alarmed)

Ah, no! They'll rape me!

YOUNG MADAM

No! They'll rape me!

Golden Orchid blushes at the exaggerated foolishness of these household women.

SECOND MADAM

First Madam is right.

Hong Wenqing looks at Golden Orchid. She sits very calmly.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

I'm used to stay here with First
Madam. Ayy!

Golden Orchid touches her delicate hand to the new pearls lustrous around her beautiful neck.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Quietly, a bit
frightened, but
resolute)

I'll go...where you go.

49 EXT. SHANGHAI WUSONGKOU, JINLIYUAN DOCK, OCEAN LINER SAXON,
DECK -- DAY

49

Over a very tight face shot of MADAME VON MUELLER, a big, very loud blast from a huge steamship horn reverberates heavy bass to treble around an exaggerated and unflattering close-up of the German matron face of Madam Von Mueller. Madam Von Mueller looks strict and commanding, and her face is a shock to see up close as the steamship horn continues its blast. Madam Von Mueller looks meaningfully down her nose, from where she stands on the deck of the German steamship, the ocean liner, Saxon...

The sound heard in the remaining ship's horn blast is of gulls crying overhead. The roar of the dock below comes up.

50 EXT. SHANGHAI WUSONGKOU, JINLIYUAN DOCK -- CONTINUOUS

50

Title on screen reads SHANGHAI 1895

The dock is very busy, because the ship, SAXON, is scheduled to steam out of port. Horse hooves clatter along the busy

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

dock. Wheels of carriages, turning fast, pass rickshaw pullers running quickly in worn shoes that reveal their toes. There is even one automobile. Very fashionably dressed Europeans, many of them seemingly diplomatic officials, step down from various modes of transportation converging in a sociable, yet hasty, embarkation mood. They are followed by Chinese coolies shouldering their luggage and carrying their baggage. Nearby, a tall Indian policeman, his head wrapped in a red turban, stands quiet as a sentinel in all the activity. His sharp eyes are scanning all the Chinese whose reaction is to cringe. At another nearby position, three young Chinese men, with red head-bands stand with their arms on their hips; they also watch the crowd who try to avoid the young men's hard stares. A European woman carries a baby with a bottle-nipple in its mouth. The baby spits the nipple to the ground. The Indian policeman steps over, picks the nipple up, and hands it to the woman. She thanks him politely, but she doesn't take it. The Indian policeman stands embarrassed with the nipple in his hand. A rickshaw puller kneels to clean his rickshaw. The police suddenly kick the puller who jumps to pull his rickshaw and run away past the three young Chinese men in red head bands. The sound of sirens fills the air. The ship's steam horn sounds very loudly.

ANGLE ON

Over all this activity stands the stern face of Madam Von Mueller.

BACK TO SCENE

Entering the far-off gate of the dock are two green sedan chairs followed by a dozen carriages.

ANGLE ON

MISSIONARY SEEK, his wife, MRS. MISSIONARY SEEK, and their son, JUGO, a young missionary of twenty-five, walk up the ramp to the ship. They are dressed in severe black clothes. They carry their own luggage. They are observed by the three young men in red head bands. Walking behind the Seek Family is a blonde young woman, SOFIA LUDWIG. She is twenty-two, mildly aristocratic, but dressed rather simply when compared to the other Europeans. She carries her own small suitcase, and is acquainted with the Seek Family.

51 P.O.V.

51

Madam Von Mueller watches from the rail. People come to the railing near her. The Seek Family and Sofia head toward her. The crowd on deck is beginning to react to the arriving delegation of Chinese officials including Hon Wenqing and Golden Orchid.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

BACK TO SCENE

The sedan chairs stop at the gang way to the ship. Butler Hong Sheng goes to the chairs and draws back the curtains. Hong Wenqing exits and looks about reservedly. At this moment, the rather sinister INTERPRETER HE moves up to Hong Wenqing and points the way. Hong Wenqing does not move.

INTERPRETER HE
Your Excellency!

HONG WENQING
Interpreter He! I am more scholar
than an Excellency.

INTERPRETER HE
(Smiling duplicitously)
As your interpreter, Excellency, I
shall interpret you to excellence.

HONG WENQING
(Jovially)
We scholars, Interpreter He, have a
proverb that says "All translators
are traitors."

INTERPRETER HE
Forgive your humble servant,
Excellency. I shall never betray
your words in translation.

HONG WENQING
He, I was joking. If you are to
interpret me, you must learn my
temperament.

Golden Orchid exits her sedan chair. On seeing so many Europeans, she can't help smile. She is radiant. She is brilliantly dressed and wears many head ornaments. Three embarking British travelers smile their approval chin first. Golden Orchid, suddenly aware of her allure, becomes reserved, but experiences her first real understanding of her attractiveness. She walks carefully to Hong Wenqing, and she looks up into the tall face and pinched features of Interpreter He. The horn on the boat blasts again. On the dock, and on the ship deck at the railing, the Europeans stand in amazement.

ANGLE ON

PASSENGER #1
Was fur ein schoenes...She is so
like a doll.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2)

51

MADAM VON MUELLER

Young man, don't deceive yourself
with fantasies. China is a country
we Germans hardly understand.

BACK TO SCENE

Interpreter He leads Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid, attended by Hong Sheng and an Attache, walk up the gang way to the ship. Interpreter He seems to catch the attention of the three young men in red head bands. Cui'er and other servants follow behind Golden Orchid who walks carefully up the gang way. Above their heads, a green sedan chair floats up, wondrously, up, up through the air, hoisted past the faces of the amazed Europeans on deck.

Golden Orchid's face, close-up, shines with a sense of adventure.

52 INT. SAXON LINER, DINING SALON -- EVENING

52

A European chamber ensemble plays dinner music. The dining salon is crowded with happy voyagers on their first night at sea. Madam Von Mueller sits in apparent discomfort at a table by herself. Close-by, the Seek Family sits at a table, saying grace, and preparing to eat. Sofia enters, alone, looks at both tables and makes up her mind. She passes the Seek Family and nods very politely. She approaches Madam Von Mueller.

SOFIA

Madam Von Mueller, Guten Abend. We
met earlier outside the captain's
quarters. May I join you.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Please, my dear...

SOFIA

Sofia Ludwig, Madame.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Ah, yes, Sofia. What a pretty name.
But be forewarned, Mademoiselle
Ludwig, I fear I haven't my sea-legs
yet...That Seek boy has his eye on
you.

SOFIA

Madame, your company is much
preferable.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

At other tables, other passengers are already seated for dinner. Two of the tables are European families traveling with several children.

BOY #1
(Childishly entranced)
The Chinese! The Chinese!

BOY CHILD #1's mother gestures to quiet him, but every eye in the dining salon turns to the door where the five male members of the Chinese delegation, dressed in a modest Chinese fashion, enter and formally are ushered to tables. One of them is Interpreter He. There is an almost audible sigh in the room as Hong Wenqing follows his entourage into the salon. Hong Wenqing is very distinguished. He wears the Qing Dynasty's official costume. Two tables of Europeans break into an admiring quiet, and brief, applause.

A German, BUSINESS MAN VOGEL, sits himself down in one of the empty chairs at Madam Von Mueller's table.

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL
Ausgezeichnet!...Quite a show. Our
German Imperial uniforms cannot
compete with that new Envoy to Berlin.

Hong Wenqing sits at the table of Chinese gentlemen. Hong Sheng stands behind Hong Wenqing waiting.

SOFIA
(Amused, distancing
the table mate)
Why, Madam Von Mueller, must we
compete over everything that's
beautiful?

MADAM VON MUELLER
(Discomfited with
indigestion)
...Because, Fraulein, we are German.

I am curious, however. Where are the
Chinese women?

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL
I have the same thing been asking
myself.

SOFIA
The Chinese custom, for the women,
is not to be seen.

(CONTINUED)

MADAM VON MUELLER

I confess. I know nothing of Chinese customs. In China, Sofia, you have lived. I merely visited Shanghai for a month.

At Hong Wenqing's table, some concern crosses the men's faces as they look down at the place settings on the table. Hong Wenqing motions to Hong Sheng who leans over and answers. Interpreter He, trying to impress, picks up a fork and studies it. The others watch him. He quickly sets the fork down. It is obvious the men are informed, but unsure, of the European dinner service. Almost at the same moment, the waiters begin to serve the western food. The men on the staff of Hong Wenqing look ever so slightly embarrassed.

BOY CHILD #1

Oh, look at the lady!

GIRL CHILD #1

She must be the queen of China!

Golden Orchid, dressed in the Chinese manner to match the dignity of Hong Wenqing, walks demurely into the salon. As she walks to Hong Wenqing's table, a hush follows her. Two or three tables patter out slight applause as if to welcome her. Cui'er, terrified, walks behind Golden Orchid.

MADAM VON MUELLER

I must say I am impressed. Who are they?

SOFIA

He is Hong Wenqing, the first Envoy from China to Germany, and to Russia.

MADAM VON MUELLER

And the young beauty is his daughter? His wife?

SOFIA

She is Golden Orchid. She is...the Envoy's...concubine.

Madam Von Mueller is a bit taken aback. Business Man Vogel grins at his private interpretation of the idea.

At Hong Wenqing's table, Golden Orchid is seated by three enthusiastic German waiters. She smiles at her husband, and to all his entourage. Interpreter He looks indignant. He is angry that this woman does not know her place.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (3)

52

HONG WENQING

Interpreter He, sit down!

Golden Orchid picks up her fork, confidently, and looks directly at Interpreter He.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Smiling)

My husband and I are so happy we had three months to prepare for our journey.

The gentlemen at Hong Wenqing's table are sophisticated, educated, and prepared for their mission of diplomacy. Their demeanor indicates, as they begin to eat, that they are happy to have someone to guide them at table. Golden Orchid sits among them like a flower in bloom. Hong Wenqing looks at Golden Orchid with great love and admiration.

Madam Von Mueller smiles at Sofia.

MADAM VON MUELLER

A concubine?...Really! That's not quite a wife?

SOFIA

In China, she is a concubine. In Germany, she is his wife.

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

Either way...she's a great beauty...for a Chinese girl, gar nichts?

Madam Von Mueller and Sofia stare daggers at Business Man Vogel. At the Seek Family table, some unheard words have been spoken. The Seek son, Jugo, throws his napkin on the table, pushes his chair back, and exits the dining salon. His parents continue to eat quietly as if nothing can be done. Golden Orchid also notices the discord.

MADAM VON MUELLER

There's trouble in that family.

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

I once knew a missionary's son. I could tell you stories...

SOFIA

Danke sehr, Herr Vogel.

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

The Chinese use opium.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (4)

52

SOFIA

Bitten Sie, nicht zu sprechen.

MADAM VON MUELLER

She is a lovely woman. I should like to meet this Mrs. Envoy, Golden Orchid.

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

Forgive me, Madam, but those people at that table are Chinese. Very rich. Very upper-class Chinese. They are foreigners. Only here to look down on us.

SOFIA

(Satirically)

Perhaps they are spies...

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

I was going to say that myself.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Herr Vogel, you are a ridiculous man....Sofia, perhaps tomorrow, when I feel better, the Captain will introduce us to...

SOFIA

(Eagerly)

The Chinese Envoy?

MADAM VON MUELLER

No, dear. The Chinese Envoy's...

BUSINESSMAN VOGEL

Concubine!

MADAM VON MUELLER

(Very in control)

...Wife!...The Chinese Envoy's Wife.

Madam Von Mueller rises with Sofia. She puts her arm through Sofia's arm, and, together, they walk with quiet elegance through the dining salon, past the orchestra. Golden Orchid takes a brief, but definite notice of these two European ladies who seem to interest her greatly. Her eyes follow them out the door.

53 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, GOLDEN ORCHID SUITE -- NIGHT

53

Moonlight glows white in the big circle of the port hole before which Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing stand in warm

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

embrace. The port hole's circularity recalls the Moon Gate of Suzhou and serves as frame behind and around the almost-silhouetted couple. Hong Wenqing is obviously proud of Golden Orchid's skill and grace in entering a "forbidden" foreign culture event.

HONG WENQING

I love you, Mrs. Envoy.

(He kisses her)

I love you, Golden Orchid.

(He kisses her again)

I love you, Jinhua.

(She kisses him back)

54 EXT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, THE PROMENADE DECK -- DAY

54

The Seek Family has joined Madam Von Mueller and Sofia who are walking Madam Von Mueller's small dog. They pass a three-piece German oom-pa-pa band. The older three people walk together. Jugo tries to walk closely with Sofia who keeps her polite distance. As this group of five walks by the glass window of a luxury parlor, they see Golden Orchid seated elegantly. Hong Wenqing stands behind her talking to Interpreter He. Golden Orchid is reading, but looks up, sees Madame von Mueller and Sofia, and smiles through the glass. The two women return the smile.

MADAM VON MUELLER

The Envoy's Wife is a beautiful flower
in a hot house. She never walks out
on deck.

The oom-pa-pa music ends abruptly with this cut.

55 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, THE LUXURY PARLOR -- CONTINUOUS

55

Over a delicate Chinese instrument playing music, Golden Orchid smiles again at the passing group of Europeans. Hong Wenqing notices them. Interpreter He despises them. He also wants to control Golden Orchid and shape her behavior. Hong Sheng always keeps his dignity.

INTERPRETER HE

(With snide innuendo)

The German women are athletic...always
outside like horses.

HONG WENQING

Tomorrow night, Interpreter He, you
shall have much to interpret. We
wish to begin meeting our fellow
voyagers. At a small supper.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

Mrs. Envoy is very clever at arranging
social affairs.

Interpreter He rolls his eyes toward the ceiling and bites
his tongue.

56 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, LOBBY OUTSIDE THE PURSER'S OFFICE --56
EVENING

The PURSER stands surrounded with an assortment of twenty
cooks, waiters, and maids. They are abuzz speaking in French,
German, and English at the news the Purser tells them. Behind
the Purser, his door is half open with a sign on it that
reads, "PURSER," and under that, "KARL KLEINSCHMIDT."

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT

Calm down! Calm down! We have almost
twenty-four hours. We have the finest
kitchen on the sea.

FRENCH COOK

No, Monsieur Kleinschmidt...I think
I only cook the French cuisine. No
Chinese banquet. I am artiste!

GERMAN COOK

Ha! Francois! I am twice artiste! I
am German. I cook German. No foreign
food.

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT

You are French. You are German. They
are Chinese. Crepes versus strudel
versus rice. Food to an appetite is
food!

FRENCH COOK

Not if you've dined in Paris!

Everyone laughs.

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT

The Chinese Envoy has graciously
offered the services of his kitchen
staff...and his master chef.

The French cook and the German cook react. The waiters are
amused.

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT (CONT'D)

You will assist and you will learn.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT (CONT'D)

The Chinese Envoy has also ordered his servants below decks to unpack the most precious dishes. An interpreter will be provided, and the young Mrs. Envoy will, I am told, most likely keep an eye on the preparation of the feast.

FRENCH COOK

Oui! The young Chinoise madame! Tres magnifique!

PURSER KLEINSCHMIDT

Yes! Quite! Mrs. Envoy, is a person perhaps more important than we know! She is the wife of the Chinese ambassador to Germany, France, and Russia. I expect nothing less from you than excellence!

57 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, MADAME VON MUELLER'S SUITE -- NIGHT

57

Madam Von Mueller walks alone through her suite. She is watched only by her little dog. She is very uncomfortable. The chairs, tables, desks, even the bed, all seem to get in her way. There is a knock on her door. She opens it. The little dog wags its tail from its bed.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Sofia, Gruess Gott! It's you.

SOFIA

(Holding out two bottles)

I have both German bicarbonate and Chinese medicinal herbs.

MADAM VON MUELLER

(Bumping into a chair)

I am so out of my element. Which should I take?

SOFIA

(Comforting)

Why don't we sit together and I'll prepare you a little of each.

MADAM VON MUELLER

You're a dear.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

MADAM VON MUELLER (CONT'D)

You know so much about China, and the Chinese...and traveling German ladies. By the way, how is that strange boy, the missionary son of Missionary Seek?

SOFIA

Madam Von Mueller, you must not tease so.

58 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, GOLDEN ORCHID SUITE -- NIGHT

58

Golden Orchid sits facing into a large round mirror where her face is beautiful in the warm light. She is humming the same sweet song she sang as a very young girl in her mother's laundry court yard. Deeper in the mirror stands the image of Hong Wenqing.

CUT TO:

59 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, GOLDEN ORCHID SUITE -- CONTINUOUS

59

The port hole glows with moon light. The only sound is Golden Orchid's voice which turns to great music. The moon light brightens slowly to bright dawn.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Look, my Lord! The West!

Music washes across, modulating through the scene, into appropriate music for the next scene.

60 EXT. THE STEAM SHIP SAXON, THE BOW-- DAY

60

The huge liner, the steam ship, Saxon, symbol of the Industrial Age booming through Europe, cruises steadfastly on the sea, away from China, toward Germany. Ocean spray booms against the ship. Alone, mysterious, Translator He walks the deck ominously.

61 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, THE CAPTAIN'S PRIVATE DINING ROOM --61 EVENING

A single qin zither plays. Golden Orchid's demurely smiling face is close-up and held. Gradually, in pull back, the handsome, laughing, CAPTAIN DAVID FELLHAUER is revealed sitting next to Golden Orchid on her left. Hong Wenqing, smiling, sits on her right. Interpreter He, reduced to an important subliminal, stands behind Hong Wenqing. Butler Hong Sheng stands behind Golden Orchid. The splendid supper is an extravagant Chinese feast suitable to the rich interior.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

Captain Fellhauer's private dining room seats twenty guests comfortably. It is smaller, and more intimate even than the first-class dining salon. Madam Von Mueller and Sofia Ludwig are seated near the top of the captain's table. Missionary and Mrs. Seek and their son, Jugo, are also prominently in attendance. Even the bourgeois Business Man Vogel, very pleased he has been invited, sits as the man needed for two spinsterish ladies. Other European couples, fashionably dressed, fill out the seats. Three British gentlemen, two in their twenties, and one in his forties, sit in the company of their traveling companion, a bohemian British girl, age twenty-two. All four are aristocratic, stylish, and noticeable. The quartet are artists well aware of the fin de siecle. The two younger gentlemen are WILLIAM ASBURY and EDWARD WEDDING. The older gentleman is CHARLES GRACE. The Bohemian girl, HELENA THACKERAY, has a small reputation as a singer. Only two of the guests are also Chinese. They are minor, but important, male officials in the delegation of Hong Wenqing, and they are accordingly dressed "officially." Effortlessly, Golden Orchid, without speaking, graciously presides over the elegant meal whose color, textures, and design hold the Europeans enthralled. Only once or twice, has one or another of these travelers from China not been adept with chop sticks. Subtly, Golden Orchid gestures for a gold knife and fork and spoon be given to Business Man Vogel. The sound of conversation and laughter mixes with spying glances of intrigue. No one has ever seen a Chinese woman with so much charisma. Helena Thackeray is perhaps a bit jealous. Everyone is feeling formally comfortable.

CAPTAIN DAVID FELLHAUER

The end of the century ticks over
the map of Europe, Mr. Envoy. You
come to us Germans at a magnificent
time. We have new factories making
steel twenty-four hours a day. In
Hamburg, our harbors are filled with
ships. In Berlin, we celebrate an
electrical exhibition. This is, for
Germany, a new age.

(He raises his glass)

Long live the German Emperor, Kaiser
Wilhelm, the Second.

HELENA THACKERAY

(Gaily)

Long live Kaiser Willie's grandmother,
Queen Victoria.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

EDWARD WEDDING

(Tipsy)

Long live Kaiser Willie's niece, the
future Empress of Russia, the Tzarina
Alexandra....It's the latest gossip.

SOFIA

(Earnestly)

Long live Kaiser Willie's ally,
Emperor Franz Joseph, the Second, of
Austria.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Mr. Envoy! Mrs. Envoy! In Europe all
the royal families are cousins and
allies. This dynasty marries that
dynasty. Well, of course, you have a
dynasty in China.

CAPTAIN DAVID FELLHAUER

Long live the Dowager Empress of
China.

Hong Wenqing is, among all this familiar humor, a bit taken
aback. Golden Orchid plies her talents which she learned as
hostess of a sing-song boat.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Marriages between dynasties make
difficult politics.

(She smiles)

Even in China.

WILLIAM ASBURY

Well said, don't you agree, Mr. Grace?

CHARLES GRACE

Madame Wenqing will be a success as
Madame Envoy.

(He toasts Golden
Orchid)

MISSIONARY SEEK

May I, a poor missionary,
interject...that authoritarian
dynasties remain monarchies only by
the grace of Almighty God?

JUGO SEEK

My father forgets about the worship
of military power...and about the
people who allow themselves to be
ruled.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

61

EDWARD WEDDING

Young Missionary Seek, do I detect a bit of socialist in you? You sound like a German Catholic, not a German Protestant.

JUGO SEEK

I am a nationalist. I believe in the purity of Germany...

HONG WENQING

Then why, may I ask, do you live in China, turning Chinese from their ancient religion to yours?

JUGO SEEK

...as I believe in the purity of China.

Golden Orchid, sensing a need to break the tension, gives a look to Madam Von Mueller who gives a look back. Simultaneously, both women laugh, and mock the "serious" level of male conversation. Sofia picks up the laugh. Then Helena joins in. All the women are laughing at the men who sit rather stunned at, and greatly disarmed by, this female bonding response. As the laughter cascades down, it begins again; the women laugh gaily. Golden Orchid smiles. Hong Wenqing, first among the men, offers a lost expression, and then smiles.

CHARLES GRACE

Madame Envoy will be quite the success!

62 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, MADAME VON MUELLER'S SUITE --
MOMENTS LATER

62

Golden Orchid, Madam Von Mueller, Sofia, and Helena enter still laughing. Cui'er follows quietly. Golden Orchid is more reserved, but they are, for a moment, all girls together.

HELENA THACKERAY

What a brilliant time!

MADAM VON MUELLER

I haven't felt this good since we left Shanghai.

SOFIA

Madam Von Mueller has these...moods...

MADAM VON MUELLER

...Headaches.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

Golden Orchid looks with interest about the suite.

MADAM VON MUELLER (CONT'D)

Oh, Madame, don't be concerned.
Really.

Golden Orchid moves gracefully through the suite. She takes a large vase of fresh flowers to the sink, pulls out all but two, which she arranges quickly. She places it "just so" on a table, and points to Cui'er.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(In Chinese)

"Move that chair. Move it out of the path. Clear the way."

MADAM VON MUELLER

Whatever is she doing?

SOFIA

She wants to move the furniture.

Sofia rings for the porter who responds almost instantly with a knock on the door which he opens. Outside, in the hall, Interpreter He walks slowly past as the porter enters and closes the door.

HELENA THACKERAY

Who doesn't? Ugly! Ugly! Ugly!
Everything made by machine.

SOFIA

(In German, to the
porter)

"Move that chair..."

(She looks at Golden
Orchid)

Yes, Madame Envoy! I will be glad to
translate whenever you wish.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You speak excellent Chinese!...

(In Chinese)

"Tell him to balance the chairs on
each side of the window, so that
Madam Von Mueller can face the sea
without obstruction."

SOFIA

(Repeats the direction
in German)

Also, mach schnell.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

SOFIA (CONT'D)

Madame, Mrs. Envoy thinks your
balance...your headaches...will be
better with the furniture arranged
so. And the flowers.

HELENA THACKERAY

Have you noticed how everything is
overdone?...Of course, you have!
(Growing quite droll)
Mrs. Envoy, you should make a call
on Queen Victoria! Simplify things.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Perhaps, dear Sofia, you might teach
me German. I think without your help
to do so, our dynasties might collide.

Golden Orchid and Sophia smile at Helena as Madam Von Mueller
walks across to the window and looks out across the deck to
the moonlit night.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Mrs. Envoy, I am impressed at your
talent for...
(Slipping to French)
...arrangement!

63 INT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, GOLDEN ORCHID SUITE -- MOMENTS
LATER

63

Golden Orchid enters the suite. Cui'er can be seen in the
hall before the door closes. In the suite the lights are
low. Hong Wenqing is waiting.

HONG WENQING

Mr. Envoy is very thankful to Mrs.
Envoy.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Pleasing Europeans is no more
difficult, I think, than pleasing
rich customers on a sing-song boat.

HONG WENQING

Those days are long forgotten.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Shyly,)

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

(slyly, coyly)
Danke schoen, mein lieber Herr!

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: 63

They kiss.

64 EXT. THE STEAMSHIP SAXON, BREMERHAVEN, DOCK -- MORNING 64

Title on screen reads GERMANY, APRIL 1894

As the horn of the steam ship sounds, the green sedan chair swings through the air from the ship to the busy dock where the chair is lowered onto a waiting train. Walking under a huge sign that reads "BREMERHAVEN", the entire Chinese Delegation precedes Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid down the gang way, through clouds of white steam and sooty smoke. Golden Orchid covers her mouth and nose with a handkerchief against the industrial pollution. They head toward the waiting train.

65 INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS 65

Butler Hong Sheng seats Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing in an elegant private compartment.

HONG WENQING
(Reassuring Golden
Orchid)

Never fear, Jinhua! Berlin will be more lovely than this harbor. But take a good look. This busy port is the real Germany. The reason for such industry is my mission.

A knock on the compartment door interrupts them. It is Hong Sheng with a copy of the fashionable newspaper "The Paris Herald" which he pulls from hiding under his long sleeves and gives to Golden Orchid. The headline reads "ACTRESS SARAH BERNHARDT CONQUERS PARIS!"

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)
You must be discreet with your reading.

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Gently, wisely)
My Lord, even more important than the industrialization of shipping is the value of a shawl draped across a grand piano.

Rhythmically, the train compartment lurches and the train chugs out of the station. Golden Orchid watches out the window as Germany begins to pass by. Hong Wenqing holds her hand tenderly.

66 EXT. TRAIN, GERMAN COUNTRYSIDE, TUNNEL -- LATER 66

The train travels through the springtime woods of Germany. As the train approaches a tunnel, the dark circular tunnel references the Moon Gate of Suzhou.

67 INT. TRAIN, HALLWAY OUTSIDE COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- NIGHT 67

Translator He knocks on the door of the compartment occupied by Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing. Hong Wenqing, roused from sleep, opens the door himself.

HONG WENQING

Interpreter He! It's late.

INTERPRETER HE

You must listen, Excellency.

Hong Wenqing does not like Interpreter He's tone. Hong Wenqing steps into the hall way and closes the door behind himself to protect Golden Orchid. Hong Wenqing for the first time begins to see Interpreter He in a new light.

HONG WENQING

I must listen?

INTERPRETER HE

Before we reach Berlin.

HONG WENQING

German air agrees with you...and I don't particularly like it, Interpreter He.

INTERPRETER HE

Never interpret an interpreter.

HONG WENQING

Am I to believe you are something other than an interpreter?

CUT TO:

68 INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS 68

Golden Orchid's face, suddenly awake, always vigilant, overhears the conversation outside her door.

CUT TO:

69 INT. TRAIN, HALLWAY OUTSIDE COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- 69
CONTINUOUS

INTERPRETER HE
She's eighteen years old.

HONG WENQING
She's my wife.

INTERPRETER HE
She's your concubine.

HONG WENQING
She's Mrs. Envoy.

INTERPRETER HE
She's Chinese...a female.

HONG WENQING
(Very respectfully)
The Dowager Empress is...a
Chinese...female.

CUT TO:

70 INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS 70
Golden Orchid smiles.

71 INT. TRAIN, HALLWAY OUTSIDE COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- 71
CONTINUOUS

INTERPRETER HE
I will tell the Dowager Empress you
said so.

HONG WENQING
You are no threat to me in Germany.
I am sent to Europe by the Empress
Dowager to do my job. Golden Orchid,
my wife, will help me.

INTERPRETER HE
Good night, Excellency.

72 INT. TRAIN COMPARTMENT, GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS 72
Hong Wenqing sits on the bed.

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Quietly)
This train takes us, my Lord, on a
narrow path dangerous with enemies
and trouble. I wonder: will we see
home again?

73 EXT. TRAIN, GERMAN COUNTRYSIDE, TUNNEL EXIT -- CONTINUOUS 73

The train rushing out along the track roars loud.

74 INT. BERLIN, ANHALT RAILWAY STATION, PLATFORM -- DAY 74

Overhead, above the train, hangs a huge sign that reads "BERLIN". Golden Orchid, sitting inside her compartment, presses her face against the window. In her hand, she holds the pearls Hong Wenqing gave her as if those pearls are her unassailable integrity. Steam engulfs passengers and workers bustling about on the platform. The Chinese Embassy in Berlin has decorated the platform with dragon flags of the Great Qing. Many Chinese officials stand ready. Two servants enter carrying a table for burning incense. Everyone lines up alongside COUNSELOR HUANG. Several Berlin reporters and a German photographer are set up and ready to see this new ambassador to Germany.

Hong Sheng exits the train, carrying a small cloth-covered bench in his hand. Bending over, he carefully wipes the water off the steps.

Hong Wenqing appears at the door, and stands. A white photo flash explodes. The Chinese Embassy officials are slightly disturbed, but calm down at a look from Hong Wenqing who is commanding in his entrance. Hong Wenqing is a force to be reckoned with. Hong Sheng places the cloth-covered bench at the door.

Golden Orchid appears next to Hong Qing. Three successive white photo flashes light up the faces of Chinese delegation arriving as well as of the Embassy staff. The moment is fixed in time as if some ancient spirit is invoked. People hold their breath, unsure of what to do.

COUNSELOR HUANG

Kneel down!

Officials kneel. TANG SONGNIAN stands. A colleague pulls his sleeve and he kneels resistantly. Interpreter He, close up, smiles approvingly. Hong Wenqing approaches the incense burner and begins putting on the incense. Golden Orchid stands, alone, vulnerable, beautiful, at the train door. Her eyes scan the crowd as if she expects enemies. Tang Songnian cannot stand the pressure.

TANG SONGIAN

I will not kneel. I am the military
attache of the Great Qing. How can I
kneel to a prostitute.

A Chinese bodyguard and a German police officer escort the German reporters quickly away. The photographer pops off one last shot with his flash as other German Polizei dismantle

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

his photo set-up. The Chinese do not make any movement. Everyone watches the triangle of energy from Tang Songnian to Hong Wenqing to Golden Orchid.

HONG WENQING

How you deal with Mrs. Envoy tells
me how you will deal with me.

Golden Orchid walks off the train. Everyone stares as she walks directly to Tang Songnian. She speaks directly, daringly, of him, to him, about him in the third person.

GOLDEN ORCHID

The Military Attache must kneel to
the Envoy, the representative of Her
Majesty, the Empress Dowager...

Golden Orchid puts her folded fan on Tang Songnian's shoulder and stares pleasantly into his eyes. Everyone is shocked by her bold move. Tang Songnian is agape, tongue-tied. Golden Orchid exerts pressure on her fan, pressing down on his shoulder. People stare at Golden Orchid's put-down of rebellion; or is it a courtesan's bold invitation? Golden Orchid adds great ambiguity into her beauty with this gesture. Tang Songnian begins to sink to his knees. As he does so, a ceremonial singer wails out the first line of a "Song of Welcome."

COUNSELOR HUANG

Carriage! Call the carriage!

Golden Orchid stands, memorizing the face of the Military Attache who is to her just another man. Hong Wenqing touches her arm and they walk together past the carriages, through the crowd that parts for them, to the broad street. Tang Songnian starts to rise, but senior officials force him down.

75 INT. STREET OUTSIDE ANHALT STATION, BERLIN -- DAY

75

Heavy rain falls. Hong Wenqing escorts Golden Orchid to the public street. Hong Sheng rushes to them with Cui'er and they hold two huge green umbrellas over Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing to keep them dry. The Chinese people are confused. They run alongside the couple. In the street, pedestrians, passengers in carriages, and people at windows stare at the almost magical procession down the street. Finally, Counselor Huang and the others catch up to them and kneel in the street in the heavy downpour. The Embassy carriages arrive. They are virtually surrounded by the demands of their culture. Hong Wenqing escorts Golden Orchid into the lead carriage draped with a dragon flag. The German citizens of Berlin, observing this, applaud the storm and drama of the new diplomatic couple.

76 EXT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN -- CONTINUOUS

76

The rain falls in sheets across the porch where the servants watch the arrival of the Embassy carriages. STEWARDESS ZHANG stands stalwartly at the door. She, obviously, manages the household of the Embassy. Stewardess Zhang smiles a knowing smile. Under her breath, she speaks to the other servants.

STEWARDESS ZHANG

(Rather imperiously)

Hmmmmph! I'll not be the first who
does not welcome this forward new
madam.

The carriages pull up under the porch. Hong Wenqing exits the carriage with Golden Orchid. Counselor Huang leads them past Stewardess Zhang who bows appropriately.

77 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, HALL ON FIRST FLOOR --
CONTINUOUS

77

The servants make a great welcome. They steal looks at Golden Orchid. The great hall is resplendently lit. Candles shine in chandeliers next to gas lights and a few decorative electric lights. Black cloth is curiously draped over niches in the walls and over the handrails at various points on the grand staircase.

HONG WENQING

What is this black? Is this a gift
you've wrapped? Or is this bad luck.

COUNSELOR HUANG

Your Excellency, to find a suitable
embassy in Berlin is not easy. German
law forbids us to change the structure
or installations of any building.

HONG WENQING

(Amused)

What on earth are you hiding?

COUNSELOR HUANG

Excellency, I apologize.

Hong Wenqing gestures to Butler Hong Sheng who pulls loose the black cloth that looms up over the post on the stairs balustrade. The black cloth falls revealing a half-naked female statue. The women servants are shocked. Golden Orchid, with a hint of smile, puts out her hand to Cui'er who registers dismay. Tang Songnian and other male servants laugh. Hong Wenqing does not like their innuendo.

HONG WENQING

Replace the cover.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

Several servants cover the statue.

COUNSELOR HUANG

The Germans are very stubborn. We are not allowed to move the statues even if we buy them. Foreigners are not reasonable.

HONG WENQING

We are the foreigners. We know little of their taste, customs, and language.

Golden Orchid starts toward the stairs. Stewardess Zhang watches her.

78 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MAIN STAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

78

Golden Orchid walks across the hall floor. She nods to Cui'er. Then she nods her head at one, then two of the younger servant girls who look petite as South China girls. She passes the stocky-built Stewardess Zhang, and "insults" her by not acknowledging her with so much as a look. Stewardess Zhang looks at Tang Songnian, and they both look at Interpreter He, whose functionaries they are. Interpreter He stands with no expression on his face. Obviously, Golden Orchid climbing the stairs has chosen some servants over others. As Golden Orchid reaches the top of the stairs, Stewardess Zhang slams shut the folding X door of an elevator that climbs noisily up the wall to the second floor.

79 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- CONTINUOUS

79

Golden Orchid meets Stewardess Zhang at the door. Stewardess Zhang escorts Golden Orchid and her servants into the room.

STEWARDESS ZHANG

This embassy is a quiet embassy.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(To Cui'er)

Open the window.

STEWARDESS ZHANG

This window never to open.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Why ever not?

STEWARDESS ZHANG

River down below window. Last madam did not like the smell of the river.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

STEWARDESS ZHANG (CONT'D)
You can open windows on this garden
wall.

Cui'er takes the measure of Stewardess Zhang who looks
threateningly at Cui'er.

STEWARDESS ZHANG (CONT'D)
Breakfast is at seven. Lunch at
twelve. Supper at six. Don't be late.

Stewardess Zhang walks across the room, bows, exits, and
closes the door.

CUI'ER
Madam, was Stewardess Zhang talking
to me?

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Amused)
No. She was talking to me.

CUI'ER
But, Madam, she never addressed you
as "Madam".

GOLDEN ORCHID
I'm sure the stewardess fancies
herself quite the revolutionary.

Golden Orchid walks to the windows on the river-side of the
room and pulls them all open. The melody of an accordion
wafts almost unheard up to the window. Golden Orchid looks
out. Below, a German river, seen with almost Chinese delicacy,
runs into the evening sunset. Golden Orchid, with the river
and sunset framed in the window behind her, holds her
signature pearls and turns to Cui'er.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
I promise I shall make us all very
happy here.

80 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, HALL CLOSET -- CONTINUOUS

80

Interpreter He stands in the small room of the embassy closet
whose inside wall has been fixed with a small peep hole grille
which allows a hidden point of view into Golden Orchid's
suite (but not her bedroom itself). Interpreter He, dressed
in black, very subliminally, twists a small red band around
his hands. He is quite satisfied with himself.

INTERPRETER HE
I promise I shall make you miserable.

81 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, PORCH, STEPS, CORRIDOR TO
AUDIENCE HALL -- AFTERNOON

81

The carriage of the Chinese Embassy, making a very grand entrance, pulls up to the full-dress splendor of guards, servants, and officers of German protocol. The German Imperial architecture, the uniforms, the music coming from inside the palace all cause a trace of doubt to pass across the face of Golden Orchid as she exits the carriage with Hong Wenqing and Interpreter He. The three of them, followed by five other Chinese embassy officials, make their way up the steps, and begin to their walk down the corridor to the audience hall where Hong Wenqing will present his credentials to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Emperor of Germany. The Belle Epoque styles of Paris are the fashion rage, and Europe is one vast playground.

Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid speak in low voices to each other, with only Interpreter He able to converse with them, as they proceed formally through the crowded corridor toward the audience hall.

HONG WENQING

Germany seems very secure in itself.

INTERPRETER HE

Excellency, at this time, Europe is a vast decadent playground, and Berlin is the host of the party.

HONG WENQING

Nevertheless, this young German Kaiser Wilhelm is strong enough to stand in the world well into the next century.

INTERPRETER HE

The Kaiser's ambitions are limitless.

GOLDEN ORCHID

And what are the young Kaiser's ambitions?

HONG WENQING

That's what you and I are here to find out.

INTERPRETER HE

Be aware, Excellency, that Germany wants China as its number one customer for steel and trade. Germany knows China is rich.

HONG WENQING

But, Interpreter He, why should China be wary?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

INTERPRETER HE

Excellency, you must keep China free
of all foreign influences...Look!
See for yourself these guardians of
their decadence.

Interpreter He, very indelicately (trying to embarrass Golden Orchid), draws attention to the marble statues of male and female nudes that at this point line the corridor. Golden Orchid is a bit intimidated, but Hong Wenqing's sense of humor relieves her.

HONG WENQING

(Ironically)

Why are these beautiful statues not
fashionably draped in black cloth,
Chinese style?

Interpreter He winces at the remark, but the entrance to the Imperial Audience Hall grows ominously closer and closer, Golden Orchid's sense of anxiety grows as she is about to cross the actual threshold into the western world.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord, I must return home. I dare
not such a show.

HONG WENQING

Mrs. Envoy, my love, you are about
to conquer Germany.

At that moment, Golden Orchid, retreats into a certain taught timidity. She takes off her left ear ring and cups it close-up in her hand.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord, I have lost one of my ear
rings.

Hong Wenqing looks at her skeptically.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

My Lord, I will not go in. You go
yourself.

Golden Orchid intends to turn back.

INTERPRETER HE

I will gladly escort Madam Envoy
back to the Chinese Embassy carriage.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2)

81

HONG WENQING

Nonsense. You are my honorable wife.
You are also the excellent actress.
The play is about to begin.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am nothing but a Chinese girl from
Suzhou.

HONG WENQING

Precisely. A beautiful Chinese girl
can conquer the German empire. An
opponent's strength can be used
against him.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Everything moves...so fast...in the
west!

At this very moment, two German Imperial Guards open the
huge doors to the Imperial Audience Hall.

82 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, AUDIENCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS

82

Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing stand, for everyone at court
to see, in their official Chinese robes. The courtiers in
the audience hall exhale an almost audible sound of approval.

CEREMONIAL OFFICIAL

The Chinese Envoy, the Honorable
Scholar Hong Wenqing, and His Wife!

Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid walk to the throne where the
thirty-year-old KAISER WILHELM II sits with his young wife,
the GERMAN QUEEN. Kaiser Wilhelm is the grandson of England's
Queen Victoria; and he is cousin to Alexandra, Princess of
Hesse-Darmstadt, who is about to become engaged to Nicholas
Romanov, who will become Czar Nicholas II of Russia. Kaiser
Wilhelm is famous for his love of uniforms, his wicked tongue,
and his political designs on Austria and the rest of Europe.
He is the last of a long line of German emperors, and in
1916 will plunge Europe and the rest of the world into World
War I. The world of the German court which Golden Orchid
enters is giddy with success, power, and athletic positivism.

The German Queen wears a Chinese pearl and jade necklace.
Next to the Queen stands Missionary Seek. The Kaiser smiles
delightedly at Golden Orchid. All eyes are upon her. None of
the Europeans has ever seen a Chinese ambassador's wife.

The audience reception hall is large and filled with
aristocrats and their wives. Also in attendance is Queen
Victoria's son (and spy) the PRINCE OF WALES who will become

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

King Edward the Seventh of England; his sense of personal style will introduce "The Edwardian Period." Sofia Ludwig and Madam Von Mueller are visibly present and obviously happy to see Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing. Discovered close-up in the audience hall is GENERAL WALDERSEE, The Chief of General Staff of the German Army, with his wife, the BARONESS VON WALDERSEE, who before her marriage was the German actress known as HENRIETTE Mendel. General Waldersee's dashing young nephew, MAXIMILIAN, is quite visibly present. The audience hall is full of youth, money, fashion, romance, and intrigue. Even Interpreter He realizes this European court is a much faster track than he is accustomed to, yet he is not about to let Golden Orchid out from under his close scrutiny.

Kaiser Wilhelm, overwhelmed by his attraction to Golden Orchid stands up. His Queen registers this, and she herself stands up.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

(Whispering to his
wife)

Kaiser Wilhelm looks as if he wants
to...conquer China.

MAXIMILIAN

(Having overheard)

The Kaiser has excellent taste...in
foreign culture.

Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid are presented personally to the Emperor and his wife. Hong Wenqing hands his portfolio to a German official. The credential is a big imperial envelope made of yellow satin and embroidered with a golden dragon.

HONG WENQING

Your Majesties, by Imperial Order of
the Chinese Emperor and the Empress
Dowager, I wish your Majesties, the
Emperor and Empress, good health and
a long life...

Golden Orchid suddenly remembers she is wearing only one ear ring.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

I also wish the relations between
our two countries...

Golden Orchid just as suddenly reaches to her left ear where there is no ear ring.

(CONTINUED)

HONG WENQING
will always be friendly.

Golden Orchid lowers her hand, palming the ear ring she has been holding. A look of embarrassment begins to cross her face.

The Queen smiles happily at the new couple. At the same time, Golden Orchid can't help showing the Queen the ear ring.

KAISER WILHELM
Please convey to your Emperor and
Empress Dowager my wishes for lasting
peace between Germany and China.

The Queen brightens up and smiles again as if she herself has suddenly realized something from this well-styled Chinese woman, the wife of the envoy.

QUEEN
This is the way we are...

The Queen removes her own left ear ring and drops it into a dish held by her lady-in-waiting.

QUEEN (CONT'D)
...here in Berlin.

Golden Orchid smiles. Hong Wenqing senses some understanding has passed between the two women. The Kaiser is a bit perplexed. Interpreter He has seen it all and is not happy. Missionary Seek whispers to Mrs. Missionary Seek who removes her left ear ring. Almost immediately as the news of the Queen's gesture is whispered among the court, the ladies begin to remove their left ear rings.

QUEEN (CONT'D)
Do not let us overwhelm you with our
German enthusiasm.

The gentlemen, acknowledging the role of women, let these two graceful women ease them all into the kind of conversation and small talk that leads to understanding and eventual decisions of policy.

QUEEN (CONT'D)
(Touching her bosom)
Perhaps you noticed this necklace?
It is Qing Dynasty. In your honor,
wife of Wenqing. Missionary Seek
identifies it as a national treasure.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (3)

82

Interpreter He seethes with barely concealed anger at Missionary Seek who has taken such valuables out of China.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

May I present Missionary Seek.

MISSIONARY SEEK

We welcome you to Germany as you have welcomed us to China.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your wife and your son, Jugo, are well.

A German footman strikes a gong signaling that a brief entertainment is about to begin. Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing are led toward the Kaiser and the Queen. At that very moment, General von Waldersee and his wife, Baroness Henriette von Waldersee approach, and in a formal, yet happily casual way, the Waldersees are introduced to Golden Orchid and Hong Wenqing.

GERMAN NOTARY

General Waldersee, Chief of General Staff of the German Army, and, his wife, Henriette Mendel, Baroness von Waldersee.

Henriette greets Golden Orchid by removing her own left ear ring. She smiles.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

Enchanting, my dear!

GENERAL WALDERSEE

You must also meet my nephew, Maximilian von Coberg...

General Waldersee looks to see where Maximilian stands off across the room. Suddenly, the announced entertainment begins, cutting off the conversation. But across the crowded room, the handsome young German officer, Maximilian von Coberg, stands out and alone. It is apparent he is seeing Golden Orchid for the first time. It is also apparent that Golden Orchid sees him looking at her. No one else notices as the dancer runs onto the floor.

The female dancer, barefoot, and dressed in gossamer swathes of white cloth, dances, after the mode of Nike, Goddess of Victory. She is absolutely dedicated to, and inspired by the conquer-or-be-conquered music of the German composer Richard Wagner. Toward the end of her actually rather brief solo, she pulls out a red scarf and waves it as she dances.

(CONTINUED)

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

(Whispers to Golden
Orchid)

The dancer is American, you know.

The dancer waves the scarf--only coincidentally--in a way reminiscent of the way Golden Orchid used her red silk scarf on Hong Wenqing, and the way he gifted her with one hundred red scarves. In addition the red scarf is wrapped briefly around the head in a way that presages the headgear of the Boxers.

SOFIA

(Moving up to Golden
Orchid)

She's considered quite revolutionary.

The dancer concludes. During the applause, as during the dance, Golden Orchid has become increasingly aware of Maximilian. The court clears a bit. The Kaiser and Queen remain on their throne. The courtiers move about.

Madame von mueller joins Sofia and Henriette and curtsies to Golden Orchid next to whom stands a Second Chinese Interpreter.

MADAM VON MUELLER

My compliments, Mrs. Envoy.

Madame von mueller takes off her left ear ring.

MADAM VON MUELLER (CONT'D)

You have instigated a new style.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Continuing to regard
Maximilian)

Madam Von Mueller!

MADAM VON MUELLER

Here at court in Berlin, they are
starved for any new fashion from
France, England...China!

The German courtiers stare at Golden Orchid.

SOFIA

You are, of course, the first Chinese
woman anyone here has ever seen.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

The last Envoy never permitted his
wife to go anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (5)

82

Maximilian makes his way to the women and, as he bows to Golden Orchid, the women step back a pace.

MAXIMILIAN

The beauty of China is its mystery.

Maximilian smoothly guides Golden Orchid as he speaks toward the Queen who leads them all to the palace garden where the spring sun shines through the buds on the branches. With the whispering Second Chinese interpreter in tow, the royal party breaks out into the light of the garden. Missionary Seek cuts in near Golden Orchid and only subliminally suggests that translation is needed.

83 EXT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

83

MAXIMILIAN

You are the Golden Orchid of China.

MADAM VON MUELLER

(Laughing)

Oh, Max!

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Rather properly)

I am the Envoy's wife.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

This is Maximilian of Hesse-Darmstadt, the nephew of my husband, General Waldersee.

SOFIA

Max is my third cousin.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Maximilian is your fourth cousin twice removed.

SOFIA

We went to school together. Don't take him seriously. He was only good at math...and fencing.

MAXIMILIAN

And soldiering. My cousin, Sofia, thinks because she is a Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt she can say and do anything she wants.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Princess? Of Hesse...Hesse...

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

SOFIA

Hesse-Darmstadt. Our castle is not far from Berlin. I'm afraid my cousin Max makes himself foolish.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Oh, no.

Shepherded by Missionary Seek, the young trio of Golden Orchid, Maximilian, and Sofia meets the Queen at the garden where the Queen takes a position that puts Golden Orchid at her side while they walk through the garden, almost propelled to a camera set up where German ladies in waiting, wearing sunshades, stand around the camera man. Madam Von Mueller is always part of this group.

QUEEN

Der Kamera ist etwas neues, something new, yes, this camera?

GOLDEN ORCHID

A pretty toy, I think.

QUEEN

But a powerful toy. Come. See.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you, Your Highness.

QUEEN

(Enthusiastically)

Mrs. Envoy, you are the first Chinese envoy's wife we have met.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Self-deprecatingly)

A pretty toy, I am, no more, I think.

QUEEN

Perhaps a powerful toy. You have all the power of the very young.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am eighteen.

QUEEN

Would we were eighteen again.

The ladies all laugh. The Queen takes a position in front of the camera and motions for Golden Orchid to join her, all the while talking during the activity of the photographic session. Two servants hold giant umbrellas to keep the sun off the Queen and Golden Orchid until the camera is ready

(CONTINUED)

QUEEN (CONT'D)

The former Envoy's wife was always sick. And you are so young, beautiful, and healthy.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty, the former wives were not sick. They were not allowed and not willing to take part in activities ...among outsiders.

Several ladies-in-waiting keep tugging at the Queen's dress as they arrange her Highness for the camera.

QUEEN

Odd! But, of course. We are outsiders to you...mmm...These constant costume changes at court. We can only admire you who began as an actress in the theatre...

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty, I was a very good actress.

QUEEN

(To the Baroness von Waldersee)

Henriette! Oh, there you are. Henriette was also an actress, before she married our dear General Waldersee.

(To Maximilian)

And, you, young man, you're nephew to the General, yes? We should commission you in the army. We see you as a lieutenant.

MAXIMILIAN

Your Majesty!

QUEEN

(To Golden Orchid)

Then, Mrs. Envoy, tell us why you came to China.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty, as wife of the Envoy, I am able to make my country more understood in the world.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (3)

83

QUEEN

We hope the same for ourselves. Come,
come.

The Queen motions to everyone to move away so the photograph
can be taken of her and Golden Orchid who stands quite
honorably and favorably next to the beautiful German Queen.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

Madame von mueller tells us that
your talents at arranging furniture
for good health are even more
extraordinary than the expected
Chinese talent for flower arranging.

GOLDEN ORCHID

The arrangement of things...a rock...a
chair...a window...is a Chinese art
I would gladly show your Majesty.
The art is called feng shui.

QUEEN

As a German, we are interested in
health. As a woman, we are interested
in...

(Shifting to French)

...arrangement!

All the ladies-in-waiting wearing sunshades giggle. Golden
Orchid smiles as the European sense of humor comes clearer
to her.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

We think you plan to influence more
than how we wear ear rings.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty.

QUEEN

(Arranging herself,
stiffly for the
photograph)

We do invite you to the palace some
quiet afternoon to rearrange
our...private...rooms. Verstehen
sie?

The two servants holding the umbrellas, at a hand signal
from the Queen, remove the umbrellas.

GERMAN PHOTOGRAPHER

Eins. Zwei. Drei!

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (4)

83

Golden Orchid puts her hand to her signature pearls.

She and the Queen are caught in a lovely luminescence of phosphor, as if the photograph is part of some wonderful daytime fireworks display.

The ladies in the sunshades applaud.

QUEEN
(Privately to Golden
Orchid)
Now...you are entering the blood
stream of history. Be very careful...
(Looking at Maximilian)
...in what you arrange.

The Queen touches her left ear, takes that single ear ring, and places it in the palm of Golden Orchid's hand. The ladies-in-waiting applaud. Madam Von Mueller, Sofia, and Maximilian smile at a distance. Missionary Seek stands satisfied at the side. Golden Orchid's face glows with the triumph of the afternoon...and its adventurous promise.

Inlaid very adroitly, as if from a distance, comes the melody of Wagner's opera "Tristan and Isolde".

84 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MAIN STAIRS -- LATER

84

Golden Orchid follows Hong Wenqing up the stairs. As she passes each black-draped statue, she pulls off the black cloth, drops it on the stairs, and continues on up to her suite.

85 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, HALL ON FIRST FLOOR -- MORNING

85

Standing at the foot of the stairs, Golden Orchid looks at the assembled staff who are very surprised and embarrassed. She gestures very gracefully toward the undraped statues. She gestures again very gracefully toward all the servants including Stewardess Zhang and Interpreter He. Finally, she gestures again, at herself.

GOLDEN ORCHID
Any questions? This embassy is an
open embassy. Open!

86 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MAIN STAIRS -- AFTERNOON

86

German servants from the Kaiser's palace are delivering a huge piano to the Chinese embassy. They strain to hoist it carefully up the stairs. Its strings make almost sounds of the Chinese qin zither. Golden Orchid watches intently.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

86

Stewardess Zhang and Interpreter He climb into the main hall's industrial-like elevator that climbs the wall. Interpreter He is in a snit.

INTERPRETER HE

The piano is a gift...to the
concubine...from the German Empress.

The elevator bumps its way to the second floor where the workmen carrying the piano are arriving.

87 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- NIGHT 87

Golden Orchid finishes lighting the hundred or more red candles she loves. She glows in the shadows next to Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You are tired, my Lord. Germany makes
you tired.

HONG WENQING

The Emperor wishes me to travel,
with General Waldersee, to Hesse-
Darmstadt for a meeting with the
German High Command.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord...Hong, I...don't want you
to go. Don't speak, please. I know
you must go, but my heart speaks
love to your heart.

Behind Golden Orchid is the framed photograph taken earlier
with the German Queen.

HONG WENQING

I love you, Jinhua. You should not
have married an old scholar more
than twice your age.

GOLDEN ORCHID

In Europe, many girls marry older
gentlemen. Especially in Paris.

HONG WENQING

We poor Chinese are here in Berlin
only three months. Already, you
speak German. You receive gifts from
the Queen. You know the gossip from
Paris. And they call you "Souzhie".

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Endearingly)

I am lucky. That makes you, husband,
a lucky husband.

HONG WENQING

Kiss me, Souzhie! Souzhie! Souzhie!

Golden Orchid falls in Hong Wenqing's arms laughing. Hong Wenqing smiles into the darkness around them. He changes the mood.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

Missionary Seek must go back to China.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Back to China so soon? And what of
Mrs. Missionary Seek? Oh, back to
China too? And what of their son,
that boy...

HONG WENQING

Jugo. He stays here in Berlin. Some
say he is a revolutionary.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Some say he is a spy.

HONG WENQING

In Berlin...

Together, Hong Wenqing and Golden Orchid finish the sentence.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

...everybody's a spy!

GOLDEN ORCHID

...everybody's a spy!

Again, they laugh and fall into each other's arms with a
kiss.

88 EXT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MAIN STAIRS -- MORNING

88

Golden Orchid kisses Hong Wenqing at the top of the stairs.
Stewardess Zhang watches. They walk down the stairs together.
Tang Songnian watches. Hong Wenqing is dressed for travel.
The embassy carriage waits. Interpreter He watches. They
touch hands. They look with understanding at one another.
Hong Wenqing leaves. Golden Orchid walks slowly up the stairs.

89 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- 89
EVENING

At twilight, rain falls on the window over the river. Food sits uneaten on a tray. Golden Orchid sits on the floor with the "I Ching". Stewardess Zhang enters without knocking, and sees the "I Ching".

STEWARDESS ZHANG
You find good luck or you find bad
luck?

Golden Orchid simply ignores her.

STEWARDESS ZHANG (CONT'D)
I thought so.

Stewardess Zhang exits. Golden Orchid tosses the "I Ching" one more time.

90 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, HALL CLOSET -- CONTINUOUS 90

Interpreter He spies on Golden Orchid. Interpreter He sees her reach for the cup that Stewardess Zhang has delivered. He laughs.

91 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- 91
CONTINUOUS

Golden Orchid drinks from the cup, looks at the "I Ching", and then drinks again. She rises, walks to the window, turns and walks to her bed, where she lies down.

92 INT. INNER CAVE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, GOLDEN ORCHID -- NIGHT 92

Golden Orchid rises into a fevered sleep where she approaches and enters the deepest heart of darkness. All her fears fight with all her good sense. She is delirious. Repeatedly, the image of Kuanyin, Goddess of Mercy appears in this dream. Mother Fu appears against images of Golden Orchid's Brother, the squawking Second Madam, the three young men with the red head bands, her dying father on stage in full ceremonial costume, the dancing American girl, Interpreter He, Stewardess Zhang, the steam ship, the train compartment, Hong Wenqing, Maximilian, Hong Wenqing in trouble, Mother Fu and Stewardess Zhang, the Fortune Teller, Hong Wenqing riding in a carriage in frigid cold snow that is so bright it is blinding.

93 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- 93
MORNING

Unconscious, Golden Orchid wakes to find Sofia sitting on the bed shaking her.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

SOFIA

Wake up, Souzhie...Souzhie, wake up.
Are you alright? That strange
stewardess of yours let me in. "Open
embassy," she kept saying. "Open
embassy." Does she always laugh that
way?

GOLDEN ORCHID

Sofia. Oh! It's morning.

SOFIA

And you're late and lazy. We must
continue our German lessons.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Ooooh. Not today.

SOFIA

Today, we are to begin our music
lessons.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I had the strangest dreams...the
most fitful sleep.

SOFIA

You look wonderful, Souzhie,
but....Are you alright?

GOLDEN ORCHID

I think so. Yes. Call for some tea.
I must bathe. This is such a strange
feeling. I remember dreaming, but I
don't remember what I dreamed. I'm
fine. You have some tea. I'll bathe.

94 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MUSIC ROOM -- AFTERNOON

94

Sofia dances with Golden Orchid. She is teaching Golden Orchid
how to waltz. Following Sofia's direction, a prissy young
European man, hired by Sofia, plays the piano. Golden Orchid
learns the steps quickly.

GOLDEN ORCHID

The music goes faster and faster.

The sound of this waltz music from the piano continues through
the following scenes in quick montage.

95 INT. BERLIN, LADIES' FASHIONABLE DRESS SHOP -- AFTERNOON 95

The sign in the window reads "BON MARCHE DRESSMAKER, MILLINER, & TAILOR". The window is crowded with an over-abundance of fashionable shoes, hand bags, and hats. Golden Orchid, dressed in the Chinese manner, enters the shop with Sofia. In the shop, they meet Henriette von Waldersee and Madam Von Mueller. The music plays over their conversation. Henriette von Waldersee is trying on a dress made for her. It is Parisian in the Belle Epoque style. Off to the side, a Japanese diplomat, with his young son, is looking in the mirror at his new frock coat. He throws a chilly look at Golden Orchid who ignores him. The tailors cater to the women. In an inevitable moment, everyone turns to Golden Orchid.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Oh, no. I couldn't. What would my husband think.

Golden Orchid is walked up three steps toward the wide door of a fitting room. The curtains on the wide door are swept closed. The music continues. A small "fashion show" is anticipated.

DISSOLVE TO:

96 INT. BERLIN, LADIES' FASHIONABLE DRESS SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER 96

The curtains on the wide door of the fitting room are swept open. Golden Orchid stands at the top of the steps, framed in the door way. She wears a red off-the-shoulder dress for the opera that is perfection in the cut, and in the fit.

97 EXT. BERLIN, LADIES' FASHIONABLE DRESS SHOP -- MOMENTS LATER 97

Golden Orchid, again dressed in the Chinese manner, exits with a box. She is accompanied by Sofia, Henriette, and Madame von mueller who also carry boxes. As they exit, the women are very amused.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

Souzhie, you have a taste for design.

In the window, three shop clerks, are removing all the final clutter of shoes, hand bags, and hats, leaving in the big window, only one beautiful shoe sitting in splendid isolation on a red velvet box. The lighting on the shoes is superb. Golden Orchid smiles modestly.

Across the street, standing in the shadows, stands Jugo Seek.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Isn't that the son of Missionary Seek? Whatever is he doing here?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
I hear that Missionary Seek is less
a missionary and more a spy.

GOLDEN ORCHID
Perhaps, Henriette, I should not
hear every kind of small talk.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
Forgive me, Souzhie, I forget you
are the Envoy's wife.

98 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GARDEN ROOM OFF HALL ON FIRST FLOOR -- AFTERNOON 98

Inside the main front door of the embassy, Golden Orchid is directing the placement of a new statue of Kuanyin. It is a gift from Maximilian who stands next to Golden Orchid. During their conversation, they move from the door way into the garden room. She awaits Hong Wenqing's imminent return from his journey.

MAXIMILIAN
Thank you for accepting my gift.

GOLDEN ORCHID
Kuanyin is also the Goddess of the
Doorway. My husband, when he returns
today from Hesse-Darmstadt, will be
pleased.

MAXIMILIAN
(Imploringly)
Souzhie...

GOLDEN ORCHID
Max...Maximilian, please, no. Have
respect. Stewardess Zhang! Set up
the tea service.

Golden Orchid takes a flat tray and smooths the sand. She takes three small smooth rocks, a small block of jade, and a pearl, and arranges them to illustrate her remarks.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
Master Hong will arrive at any moment.

MAXIMILIAN
(Whisper)
I love you.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

GOLDEN ORCHID

I have arranged a thousand obstacles
to stop you...This rock is German
granite.

Stewardess Zhang enters with the tea service. Golden Orchid, referring ambiguously both to a fourth rock, a piece of German granite, and to Stewardess Zhang, as she places the granite in an obstructed position on the sand.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

Here is Number One Obstacle.

Maximilian and Golden Orchid both laugh. Stewardess Zhang makes no expression. Maximilian, as if he were playing chess, picks up the small piece of granite, "crowns" the other rocks, and sets the granite next to the pearl.

99 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, MAIN STAIRS -- NIGHT

99

Very late at night, lightning and thunder from a heavy rainstorm light up the statue of Kuanyin in the entry hall. Rain runs down the front doors. A carriage pulls up. A servant runs to the door. Figures approach. The door opens. Hong Wenqing enters. Interpreter He follows. Part of the embassy staff rouses itself. Golden Orchid, dressed all in white, appears at the top of the stairs. She sees Hong Wenqing. His head is bandaged.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Hong!

She runs down the stairs. Her dressing gown billowing out behind her. She runs to Hong Wenqing who can barely stand. She throws her arms around him, and they sink slowly to the floor.

HONG WENQING

Jinhua!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Hong, I love you.
(Looking at the staff)
What happened? Call Doctor Rothberger.
Telephone him. At the German Imperial
Palace. I love you, Hong.

INTERPRETER HE

The Envoy was attacked outside of
Berlin when we stopped to rest the
horses.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

GOLDEN ORCHID

He! You fail to protect the Envoy?
Hong!

(She kisses him
tenderly)

INTERPRETER HE

The Envoy long ago stopped listening
to my wisdom.

HONG WENQING

Don't worry, Jinhua. I'm alright.

GOLDEN ORCHID

What happened?
(To Butler Hong Sheng)
Carry his Lordship to my room.

Golden Orchid never lets go of Hong Wenqing's hand as he is
carried upstairs. She shouts at Interpreter He.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

You betray the Envoy. You will betray
all of us.

INTERPRETER HE

I am no traitor. The Envoy was struck
in the head with a sword.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Whose sword?

TANG SONGNIAN

A revolutionary's sword.

GOLDEN ORCHID

German?...or Chinese?

Golden Orchid continues up the stairs holding on to Hong
Wenqing.

HONG WENQING

It's only a scratch.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My husband! I dreamed violence
touched you.

100 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, CHINESE EMBASSY BOX -- NIGHT 100

From on stage, the diva can be heard singing the aria from
"La Wally". Together as a magnificent couple, the
distinguished Envoy Hong Wenqing sits next to Golden Orchid.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: 100

Hong Wenqing wears a black tuxedo. A small bandage is fixed to his left temple. His hair has turned noticeably gray. Golden Orchid sits absolutely brilliantly in the red opera dress she wore in the dress shop.

CUT TO:

101 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, KAISER WILHELM BOX -- CONTINUOUS 101

Next to Kaiser Wilhelm and the Queen sits Madam Von Mueller who is looking about the theater at the social scene. Everyone is sneaking peeks at Golden Orchid.

QUEEN

Golden Orchid wears our fashions
better than we do.

Kaiser Wilhelm looks approvingly in the direction of Golden Orchid.

QUEEN (CONT'D)

The Kaiser has much respect for her
husband. Apparently the man is as
good a diplomat as he is a scholar.

CUT TO:

102 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, WALDERSEE BOX -- CONTINUOUS 102

General Waldersee sits with Henriette and Maximilian. The older couple notice that Maximilian cannot take his eyes off Golden Orchid.

103 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, CHINESE EMBASSY BOX -- CONTINUOUS 103

Golden Orchid, close-up, is radiant. She projects dignity and force.

104 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, WALDERSEE BOX -- CONTINUOUS 104

MAXIMILIAN

China!

105 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, CHINESE EMBASSY BOX -- CONTINUOUS 105

Golden Orchid remains in radiant close-up. The aria reaches crescendo and ends with much applause.

106 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, MAIN FLOOR AND BOXES -- 106
CONTINUOUS

The entire crowd in the opera house turns, from applauding the stage, to looking up at the Chinese Embassy Box. Cheering begins.

107 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, CHINESE EMBASSY BOX -- 107
CONTINUOUS

Hong Wenqing notices the cheering crowd and leans toward Golden Orchid.

HONG WENQING

My beautiful wife, you have conquered Germany.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Sizing up the situation)

No, my Lord, Germany applauds your diplomacy.

Hong Wenqing stands, holds out his hand to Golden Orchid. She stands. Her signature pearls glisten at her throat. All of Berlin is at her feet.

108 INT. BERLIN, ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, KAISER WILHELM BOX -- 108
CONTINUOUS

KAISER WILHELM

She is truly the Chinese Envoy's wife.

109 EXT. BERLIN, STREET -- NIGHT 109

Close-up, Golden Orchid, dressed in western clothes, walks along the side walk. The oom-pa-pa of the beer halls washes over the street. Golden Orchid looks up as she passes a prostitute lighting a cigaret. Golden Orchid walks quickly away as if she has a destination. Nevertheless, German men try to speak to her.

GERMAN MAN #1

Hey, mein Liebchen! My darling!

GERMAN MAN #2

Are you lonely? She is like a lost cat.

GERMAN MAN #3

She's oriental. Diese Fraulein ist orientalisches!

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

GERMAN MAN #1

Liebchen! Liebchen! Are you looking
for your emir of Baghdad?

From the shadows, another man runs out and grabs her. She is pulled back into the dark by a temptation she has not been able to resist. She is a very young woman married to an older man who is often absent traveling.

MAXIMILIAN

Souzhie!

Maximilian kisses her.

110 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, KITCHEN -- DAY

110

Close-up the tea pot for boiling water blows its whistle. Interpreter He reaches for the pot and looks very satisfied with the temperature.

111 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, STUDY OF HONG WENQING --
AFTERNOON

111

Hong Wenqing sits with the German Missionary Seek, Mrs. Missionary Seek, and their son, Jugo. Golden Orchid attends pleasantly.

HONG WENQING

Missionary Seek, your sudden need to
return to China causes me to consider
your request for a visa.

MISSIONARY SEEK

Honorable Wenqing, our mission suffers
greatly these days. In China, as in
Germany, there is much political
unrest.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My husband, as you know, has suffered
at the hands of a German nationalist.

MRS MISSIONARY SEEK

The Germans want no Chinese. The
Chinese want no Germans.

MISSIONARY SEEK

We are all God's children.

HONG WENQING

How is it, Missionary Seek, that you
have spent more than forty years in
China?

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

MISSIONARY SEEK

Doing God's work.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You are so skilled speaking Chinese, sir, that many people in Germany and China think you are Chinese.

HONG WENQING

I am concerned for your safety, Missionary Seek. And for that of your wife and son.

MRS MISSIONARY SEEK

Honorable Wenqing, please permit us to return to China. We are only happy there.

MISSIONARY SEEK

Yes, Excellency, we are happy in China. Just as Mrs. Envoy is happy in Germany.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Then, by all means, my Lord, let the Missionary Seek Family return to China.

HONG WENQING

Agreed. Please see my secretary as you leave. You can thank my wife that the matter is so simple.

Hong Wenqing stands. The Seek Family stands and walks to the door.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

Jugo!

JUGO SEEK

Yes, sir?

HONG WENQING

(Jovially)

You mind your manners.

Jugo bows his head, blows his hair up from his face, and smiles. The Seek Family exits.

GOLDEN ORCHID

The Seek Family are German spies, you know.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

HONG WENQING

I know. Hmph! Here among the
foreigners I have learned to trust
no one from our own embassy kitchen
all the way to the Kaiser himself.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Soon Germany's demands will offend
every great power, including China.
I fear the German temperament. I do
not want to remain in this foreign
land.

HONG WENQING

You have worked your charm on the
German court.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Women survive on information. While
you talk and talk and talk with the
husbands, I listen to the wives of
the aristocracy, the military, and
the German industry. What their wives
do not tell me, their mistresses do.
I enjoy Germany, but I love China. I
work Germany the way I work a whore
boat.

HONG WENQING

Jinhua, you must forget those days.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Forget? Two years ago, I was a sing-
song girl. Interpreter He remembers.
The embassy staff calls me your
concubine.

HONG WENQING

Jinhua, I call you my wife.

Golden Orchid begins crying. Hong Wenqing quickly checks to
make certain the door is closed.

HONG WENQING (CONT'D)

Jinhua, what is wrong? Nothing can
be so bad. You are homesick.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am pregnant.

HONG WENQING

I have hoped so.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (3)

111

GOLDEN ORCHID

Have you, my Lord?

HONG WENQING

I am an older man and I have hoped so. My son by Second Madam will not remember to worship properly his ancestors. You make me very happy. You are the good daughter of Suzhou. You are the good wife who brings new life to the honorable dynasty of Qing.

112 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, MAIN BALLROOM -- NIGHT

112

Christmas trees and lights festoon the ornate ballroom. The court orchestra plays traditional German Christmas carols in waltz time. Boys and girls sit around the Christmas tree. Golden Orchid, dressed Parisian style, sits with Madam Von Mueller. Several boys dressed as tin soldiers shoot their pop guns at one another. Interpreter He is in attendance with Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I speak German so quickly that our Chinese interpreter cannot tell anything I say!

MADAM VON MUELLER

The Kaiser and the Queen are so happy you agreed to come. This is such a happy Christmas for Germany.

Sofia joins Golden Orchid.

SOFIA

An engagement is an occasion to rejoice.

MADAM VON MUELLER

(Knowingly)

As is a pregnancy. My dear, I am so pleased for you and Mr. Envoy.

SOFIA

Madame von mueller, shh! Souzhie won't want everyone to know.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Sofia won't tell you this, Souzhie, but I'll tell you. Sofia will be traveling to Russia for the wedding.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

SOFIA

Alexandra is my cousin.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Yes, yes! Your Hesse-Darmstadt family
with all the cousins.

SOFIA

My cousin Maximilian thinks so highly
of you I think he's in love with
you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

No, no. Nonsense. You are a romantic
European!

MADAM VON MUELLER

And you're a romantic Asian! I'm
old. I know. It's the same the whole
world over.

SOFIA

Love rules the world. This afternoon
the next Czar, Nicholas of Russia,
proposed marriage to my cousin,
Alexandra, Princess of Hesse-
Darmstadt. She will be the next
Czarina of Russia.

MADAM VON MUELLER

Alexandra is first cousin to the
Kaiser.

GOLDEN ORCHID

So through this marriage of the
Russian Nicholas to the German
Alexandra, the Kaiser will have a
permanent peace with Russia...on
Germany's eastern front.

Maximilian walks up to the ladies who are sitting by a big
colorful ball of the world which he sets gallantly spinning.

MAXIMILIAN

Chopping up the globe again? Dear
ladies, it's Christmas!

SOFIA

Oh, Max! Look, the footmen are
lighting more candles.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (2)

112

MAXIMILIAN
(Whispering to Golden
Orchid)
I want to dance with you.

MADAM VON MUELLER
You want to dance with all of us!

The orchestra strikes a fanfare. Across the room, the Kaiser and the Queen look on as through the entrance comes the twenty-six-year-old NICHOLAS ROMANOV with the twenty-one-year-old ALEXANDRA on his arm.

GOLDEN ORCHID
They are a truly golden couple.

The courtiers break into courteous applause as the newly engaged royal couple begins a Christmas waltz.

MADAM VON MUELLER
They are perhaps too gentle for this court.

Nicholas and Alexandra are joined by other dancers.

SOFIA
Cousin Alexandra was raised in England at the court of her grandmother, Queen Victoria. She speaks and thinks in English.

MAXIMILIAN
Tell us, Souzhie. Do you think your thoughts in German yet?

GOLDEN ORCHID
I speak in your German...slowly, but I think in my Chinese...quickly!

MADAM VON MUELLER
Clever girl! Keep them guessing who you are.

MAXIMILIAN
(Very formally)
May we dance, Souzhie?

Golden Orchid turns to Hong Wenqing with a questioning look. Hong Wenqing is intense in a conversation with an important-looking German official dressed in black. Hong Wenqing smiles and waves.

CUT TO:

113 INT. BERLIN BASEMENT, DIRTY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 113

Tang Songnian, wearing a red head band, and a red waist band, is completing the construction of a small bomb made from three sticks of dynamite.

CUT TO:

114 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, MAIN BALLROOM -- CONTINUOUS 114

Golden Orchid waves to Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I have never danced European dances
in public.

SOFIA

Souzhie, don't be shy. I taught you
well.

MADAM VON MUELLER

A Christmas waltz.

Maximilian takes Golden Orchid by the hand and leads her to the dance floor. Nicholas sees Golden Orchid and mentions her to Alexandra who looks and smiles.

MADAM VON MUELLER (CONT'D)

No one has ever seen a Chinese woman
dance.

Golden Orchid gracefully follows Maximilian as they waltz around the floor. Courtiers buzz and make pretty applause.

CUT TO:

115 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, MAIN BALLROOM -- CONTINUOUS 115

Close-up, Hong Wenqing continues to talk animatedly with the man in black. For a moment, he looks up and sees Golden Orchid waltzing gracefully. He turns from the man in black and smiles at his lovely wife. Golden Orchid sees him and smiles back.

CUT TO:

116 INT. BERLIN BASEMENT, DIRTY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS 116

Tang Songnian snaps the bomb parts into place, stuffs the bomb into a hand valise, and looks up, smiles, pulls on a winter jacket, and exits out the door of the room.

CUT TO:

117 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, MAIN BALLROOM -- CONTINUOUS 117

The waltzing continues to a happy conclusion. Golden Orchid walks over to Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord, I am so happy. So happy
with you.

Golden Orchid secretly touches her stomach and smiles.

HONG WENQING

You carry the future of the Qing...My
Jinhua, I must see to urgent telegrams
from Beijing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I'll go with you. I'll leave too.

HONG WENQING

No, my dear, you stay.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Let me walk you to the carriage.

Golden Orchid waves to the ladies and to Maximilian and walks Hong Wenqing through several hallways to the door.

118 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, PORCH, STEPS, CORRIDOR TO AUDIENCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS 118

Golden Orchid walks Hong Wenqing through the corridor to the door of the porch.

HONG WENQING

You'll freeze, Jinhua. A cold
Christmas in Germany is no place for
a Golden Orchid.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My Lord, I love you. Auf wiedersehen.

HONG WENQING

(In Chinese)
I love you. Good-bye!

CUT TO:

119 EXT. BERLIN STREET, AT IMPERIAL PALACE -- CONTINUOUS 119

In the dark street, Tang Songnian approaches the bright lights of the palace where a diplomat is saying farewell.

CUT TO:

120 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, PORCH, STEPS, CORRIDOR TO AUDIENCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS 120

Golden Orchid kisses Hong Wenqing good-bye.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I never like to see you leave on
urgent missions.

HONG WENQING

Go to the window where you will be
warm.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I'll watch the carriage until you're
out of sight.

HONG WENQING

I'll see you in the morning.

Hong Wenqing goes down the steps to the waiting black carriage as Golden Orchid goes to the palace window. She waves as Hong Wenqing turns to wave at her as he climbs into the carriage.

CUT TO:

121 EXT. BERLIN STREET, AT IMPERIAL PALACE -- CONTINUOUS 121

Tang Songnian readies his black bag as the carriage pulls away from the German Imperial Palace.

TANG SONGNIAN

Say "good-bye" to whore diplomacy!

The carriage comes close to the wall where Tang Songnian hides in ambush.

CUT TO:

122 INT. GERMAN IMPERIAL PALACE, PORCH, STEPS, CORRIDOR TO AUDIENCE HALL -- CONTINUOUS 122

Golden Orchid sees the carriage driving out into the dark night. Then, suddenly, the carriage explodes in a fire ball. Debris flies through the night air. The Christmas music stops. Golden Orchid screams. The courtiers come rushing to her. Outside in the night, palace guards are blowing sirens, and an ambulance pulls up to the scene of the carriage sitting in the burning snow. Interpreter He walks up to the crowd at the window, sees Golden Orchid.

INTERPRETER HE

(Feigning sincerity)
How lucky the lady!

FADE OUT:

123 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, GOLDEN ORCHID'S SUITE -- LATER 123

Golden Orchid is completely distraught, crying, sweeping the perfect arrangements of feng shui to the floor, tugging at her pearls, touching her stomach, falling back on the bed.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Mother! My Mother! Mother Fu!

At the door way, Stewardess Zhang stands holding a cup and pitcher on a tray. Behind her stands Interpreter He who prods her toward Golden Orchid. Stewardess Zhang approaches Golden Orchid on the bed and offers her a cup to drink. Golden Orchid looks at it...pushes it away...looks at it again...takes it...and throws the cup across the bedroom. Stewardess Zhang is insistent. Golden Orchid falls back on the bed. Stewardess Zhang looks back at Interpreter He who comes in and stands behind Stewardess Zhang. Golden Orchid fails to see him in the half-light. Interpreter He moves Stewardess Zhang's arms and pours from the pitcher to the cup, and moves the cup to Golden Orchid's lips. Golden Orchid touches her pregnant stomach, cries out, and drinks. The liquid runs down her beautiful face like red blood staining her white shirt. She falls back and convulses, grabbing her stomach. She screams, moans, and passes out.

INTERPRETER HE

This will make one less German
bastard.

124 INT. CHINESE EMBASSY, BERLIN, HALL ON FIRST FLOOR -- DAY 124

Golden Orchid sits, arranged with a simple black suitcase, on a chair in the middle of the grand hall. She wears a simple black Chinese outfit. Her face is pale, drained, with no make-up. She has dark circles under her eyes. A servant scurries up the stairs. The classic statues are once again wrapped in piles of black cloth. A clock ticks with a huge sound. Interpreter He, almost gleefully kicking the skirts of his long robe, strides across the second floor balcony, walks into the elevator, and rides it, creaking and squawking, all the way to the first floor of the hall. Golden Orchid never so much as looks at him.

INTERPRETER HE

Three weeks since Envoy Hong is dead.

Interpreter He walks to a near-by statue and adjusts the black cloth covering it with much satisfaction.

INTERPRETER HE (CONT'D)

His concubine had a most provocative
year in Germany. The Dowager Empress
is not impressed by such "whore
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

INTERPRETER HE (CONT'D)
diplomacy." You are being returned
to China in disgrace. You are in
deep shame.

Interpreter He walks over to Golden Orchid who does not look
at him and who does not resist him.

STEWARDESS ZHANG
(Entering and exiting)
The carriage is ready for the Anhalt
Railway Station.

Interpreter He points at Golden Orchid's small hand bag,
then takes it.

INTERPRETER HE
These pearls you need no more.

Interpreter He wraps the pearls around his hand and studies
them.

INTERPRETER HE (CONT'D)
These pearls are...very...Chinese...or
are they...very...European. Mmmmm!
One cannot be too careful these
days....as one cannot be too careful
with the unborn child of a whore
concubine who does not know her place!

Golden Orchid's face remains impassive. One tear, shaped
like a pearl, translucent as a pearl on her skin, escapes
her eye and runs down her cheek.

GOLDEN ORCHID
(Quietly)
You killed Hong Wenqing.

INTERPRETER HE
You are an agent provocateur.

GOLDEN ORCHID
You killed the child of Wenqing.

Interpreter He laughs and tucks the pearls into his pocket.

INTERPRETER HE
I killed the unborn German bastard
of Maximilian, the German Prince of
Hesse-Darmstadt.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

GOLDEN ORCHID

No. You killed the unborn Chinese
child of the Qing dynasty.

INTERPRETER HE

Once an actress always the whore.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Actress, yes! Whore, once! Liar,
never!

INTERPRETER HE

Sing-Song Girl, the carriage arrives
for your grand exit.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I was never unfaithful to Hong
Wenqing. If you had looked at the
face of that little lost baby, you
would have seen the face of China!

125 EXT. BEIJING, CITY SQUARE-- AFTERNOON

125

Subtitle on screen reads "CHINA, THREE MONTHS LATER"

Nightmare-like close-up of shaking colorful DRAGON HEAD pulls
back to reveal parade-demonstration of Boxers exercising.

126 INT. CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE, THRONE ROOM -- NIGHT

126

Equal in size and threat to the dragon head, the Empress
Dowager's face and head ornaments sit in extreme close-up.

127 EXT. RAILWAY -- MORNING

127

A locomotive is running head-on from afar. On the locomotive
are flying eight national flags. Obviously EUROPEAN SOLDIERS
ride on top the cars and hang from the windows. The locomotive
charges by in an explosion of power.

128 EXT. CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE, EMPRESS DOWAGER'S ANTE-ROOM -- 128
AFTERNOON

Against the brilliant yellows and cobalt blues, Interpreter
He stands triumphant in colorful robes. He is obviously very
satisfied with himself. Behind him, just visible, at some
distance in the interior, the EMPRESS DOWAGER sits.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Master He, how faithful a servant
you are. Envoy Wenqing was too free
with his wife.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

An ambassador wife is only an
adornment. Scholar Wenqing should
have remained a scholar.

INTERPRETER HE

Wenqing took his wife seriously.
This Golden Orchid met in audience
with the King of Germany.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Never has a Chinese wife behaved so.

INTERPRETER HE

Miss Golden Orchid invited foreigners
into our embassy. She danced in
foreign clothes.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

What a shame for China in Europe. We
have enough trouble with the Koreans.

INTERPRETER HE

Foreigners say China carries on with
"whore diplomacy".

EMPRESS DOWAGER

We must punish the little bitch.

INTERPRETER HE

The Great Qing, the foreigners say,
relies on a prostitute. China must
not lose face.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

We must give her forty strokes.

IMPERIAL EUNUCH

The Dowager Empress has thanked you
with this honorable promotion, Master
He.

129 INT. BEIJING, LAUNDRY, A SMALL ANONYMOUS ROOM -- NIGHT

129

As a young, but tired, Chinese woman winds up a phonograph
that has lost its speed, Golden Orchid sits in a small crowded
room which is part of a laundry like her mother's. Two
European nuns work quietly to symbolize that Golden Orchid
keeps open contact with both Chinese and Europeans. Golden
Orchid is dressed simply. She sits forlornly. A small child
crawls up into her lap. Golden Orchid holds the child. As
the record on the phonograph picks up speed, Golden Orchid
begins the first line of a lullaby.

130 EXT. RAILWAY -- MORNING

130

The roaring train flying eight European flags roars past, leaving only the faces of three Chinese peasants staring, looking very bewildered with anxiety.

131 INT. BEIJING, CITY SQUARE, -- AFTERNOON

131

Interpreter He stands on a raised temporary stage watching the scene below. Interpreter He and three other men, obviously dressed in cobalt blues and golds represent the Empress Dowager. In the square, below Interpreter He is a crowd of young Chinese men and young Chinese women. They are the Fighters of Yihetuan, the Boxers who are in open rebellion against European influences on China. They wear red head bands and red belts around their waists while they practice shadow boxing in the street. Under a canvas made of reed mat, there is an altar made up of five tables with a piece of red cloth around the feet of the tables. Candles light the Boxer altar on which are placed the five pictures of the Supreme Being. In the center of the pictures is Yuanshi Taizun. The left picture is Guan Ping with a seal in his hand and Yang Zongbao holding a flag of command. On the right are WuSong who killed a tiger and his sister-in-law; and Huang Tianba who is saluting with hands folded in front of his face. Two large flags are stuck on the two sides of the boxing altar. The flags snap in the breeze. On one of the flags is written: "LONG LIVE THE QING! KILL THE FOREIGN DEVILS". On the other flag is written: "BOXERS RULE THE WORLD". The fighters, led by a sturdy Boxer athlete, EN HAI, are practicing boxing. They are shouting slogans in a chorus with INTERPRETER HE who is speaking. INTERPRETER HE allows the two IMPERIAL SECRETARIES to rouse the crowd of Boxers.

INTERPRETER HE

Heaven assist you Boxer patriots,
Yihetuan! Foreign devils invade China.
Foreign missionaries preach Jesus.
Foreign priests teach Catholicism.
Foreign devils want Chinese to cheat
Heaven. What about respect for Buddha!
And remembering ancestors!

EN HAI

Cleanse China now!

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #1

Foreign females have no morals.
Foreign men lack integrity. Foreign
devils are not humans!

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #2

China needs no army! China needs
you, Yihetuan!

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

CROWD

Cleanse China now!

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #1

Drive foreign powers out of China!
It's easy to kill foreign devils.

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #2

Destroy railway. Cut the wire
telegraph. Sink their ships.

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #1

Terror to Germany! Terror to Russia
and France! Destroy America and
Britain.

EN HAI

Terror!

CROWD

(Chanting)

Terror! Terror! Terror!

IMPERIAL SECRETARY #2

No foreign devils must survive!

INTERPRETER HE

Yihetuan! Unite China under the Great
Qing! Create Peace and Order!

The crowd watching becomes very excited. They shout and box.

132 EXT. RAILWAY -- AFTERNOON

132

As the train, flying the eight European flags, comes slowly along a treacherous piece of railroad track in difficult terrain, Boxer fighters of the Yihetuan jump up from both sides of the railway, shouting, carrying swords and spears in their surprise attack on the train which slows to a stop. Heroic fighting, on both sides, breaks out. One young German officer shouts the call to arms. It is Maximilian.

MAXIMILIAN

Komm! Du! Du! Macht schnell!

Maximilian disappears in the smoke and fury of fighting bodies as twenty Boxers rush across the train.

133 EXT. BEIJING, ALLIED COMPOUND, GYMNASIUM PORCH -- MORNING

133

Just past dawn, the Kaiser's GERMAN AMBASSADOR KLINDER begins his morning constitutional exercise on a gymnasium porch equipped with medicine balls, Indian clubs, and light weights.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

Two young German soldiers stand by as sentinels. Sofia steps in with her morning coffee to watch. FRAU KLINDER joins Sofia.

SOFIA

Guten Morgen, Frau Klinder. Your husband makes a very fit new German ambassador.

A third German, a young Kommandant, KLEINSCHMIDT, who is stripped to the waist, winks at Sofia as he steps about punching the air with his boxing gloves. He is the new sparring partner for Klinder. He smiles at Sofia.

FRAU KLINDER

My husband's handsome new partner seems to want to spar with you.

Sofia smiles back giving an indication of incipient new romance. Between Klinder and Kleinschmidt a dozen light punches are exchanged amidst much feinting and bravado as GENERAL WALDERSEE comes through the door holding a telegram.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

The Boxer Chinese have attacked our Allied train from Shanghai.

Not comprehending immediately, Kleinschmidt socks Klinder who falls to the floor.

FRAU KLINDER

You idiot! No one touches my husband, the German ambassador!

134 EXT. BEIJING, CITY SQUARE -- NIGHT

134

Boxers have built a fire in the square. Red lanterns hang everywhere. Some buildings around the square are burning. Twenty bodies, Chinese, hang by the neck from sign posts. At one window, several Boxers appear and throw first a Chinese man and then a Chinese woman out the window. The man and woman each have a rope around the neck and the rope catches their fall and strangles them. The Boxer crowd cheers.

OLD CHINESE MAN

Chinese killing Chinese!

YOUNG BOXER #1

They dirty Chinese. They servants to European embassy.

YOUNG BOXER #2

Patriot Chinese kill traitor Chinese.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

134

In custody, Golden Orchid, in torn simple clothes, sits in the square on a wooden bench. All around her, the demonstration rages. To the left, seven Chinese men are lined up against a store front that on the plate glass window reads "PARIS MILLINERS". Ten Boxers formed into a firing squad shoot the seven men who fall as the glass window breaks into a thousand pieces. The European hats in the window are slashed to pieces.

Golden Orchid is treated roughly and led to a vantage point and forced to watch the initiation of men and girls into the Boxer group. She is threatened by the wild young men, athletic and stripped to the waist. Their knives put her in deep jeopardy. The very handsome Boxer athlete, En Hai, comes up to her, intent on killing her, but she looks him so hard, so deliberately in the face, he backs off.

GOLDEN ORCHID
(With the daring that
is survival)
Kill me. Show me you can kill someone
who is already dead.

Golden Orchid falls to the ground in despair.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)
Must I live forever?

The crowd roars, turns in one direction, and opens a path. Golden Orchid sees that the crowd has captured Missionary Seek, Mrs. Missionary Seek, and Jugo Seek who are pushed roughly through the crowd.

YOUNG BOXER #2
Foreigner missionary spies!

YOUNG BOXER #3
Kill all the foreign hairy ones!

The Seek Family suddenly sees Golden Orchid who sees them. As Mrs. Missionary Seek shouts toward Golden Orchid, Mrs. Missionary is clubbed from behind and is killed. The crowd roars, puts a noose around Missionary Seek's neck, and hoists him kicking and screaming up a lamp post. In the confusion, Jugo Seeks seizes his opportunity, grabs a knife, kills a Boxer, and runs toward Golden Orchid.

GOLDEN ORCHID
What kind of German are you? Have
you come to kill me or save me?

Before any resolution, the crowd surges, and Jugo Seek disappears. Suddenly, there are shots and an explosion.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: (2)

134

YOUNG BOXER #1

The Allies! The Germans! The French!
The Americans!

The crowd of Boxers disperse in a hundred directions. Golden Orchid is suddenly alone in the middle of the wrecked and smoldering square hung with flickering red lanterns and dead bodies. In the smoke, she sees a male face.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Hong Luo!

HONG LUO

I have searched everywhere for you.
I want you. Now.

Hong Luo takes her arm and guides her. She is beyond feeling. She walks slowly off in despair.

135 INT. BEIJING, RESIDENCE OF WENQING, ENTRY PARLOR -- LATER

135

The Beijing residence of Hong Wenqing is very formally different from the prettier house in Suzhou. Even the interior of the house shows some of the damage of the street rebellion. The Second Madam, Hong Luo's mother, admits Hong Luo and Golden Orchid into the house, and slams the door, pulling the curtains against the sounds of street fighting.

SECOND MADAM

Look at the slut my son drags home.

Golden Orchid notices and touches the statue of Kuanyin whose head has been broken and obviously repaired. Second Madam directs the two into another room.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

Look, First Madam! My son, Hong Luo,
brings home the Consort of Europeans.

136 INT. BEIJING, RESIDENCE OF WENQING, MAIN PARLOR --
CONTINUOUS

136

The YOUNG MADAM, "Snake Eyes", sits trying to play the piano given to Golden Orchid by the German Queen. FIRST MADAM lies on a bed smoking opium. YOUNG MADAM hits very discordant notes.

FIRST MADAM

Ay! Golden Orchid! You have not
been here...where you belong...at
residence of our dead Hong Wenqing.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

First Madam draws deep on her opium pipe. Hong Luo looks at Golden Orchid with fresh lust.

HONG LUO

(Whispers)

Misfortune becomes you.

SECOND MADAM

He left you no money...

Golden Orchid looks knowingly--knowing better, but too tired and worn to care. Off to the side is a shrine: a photograph of Hong Wenqing surrounded by the smoke of constantly burning incense.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

...well, no more than...a hundred
taels of silver.

HONG LUO

You are a golden prostitute. My
father's concubine. I hold the
money...

SECOND MADAM

...but we must decide your future.

HONG LUO

Are you to remain here in Hong
Wenqing's house, or are you to go
back...

HONG LUO (CONT'D)

...to the whore boat.

The Young Madam strike a series of discordant notes.

YOUNG MADAM

(Screeching)

You have eyes for your father's
concubine!

FIRST MADAM

Stop! Enough!

SECOND MADAM

That piano. Such foreign gifts put
us in danger. You caused Hong Wenqing
to be killed.

YOUNG MADAM

She's a whore. A foreigner devil
whore.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

FIRST MADAM

Come, Orchid. Sit with me. I tell
you a secret.

Golden Orchid smiles with some happiness at the invitation
of the kindly First Madam. She sits obediently next to the
old woman.

FIRST MADAM (CONT'D)

You have filial piety. Yes? No? Maybe.

HONG LUO

If you choose chastity, we give you
charity.

FIRST MADAM

No more flower boat. No more
prostitute. You stay here. You serve
Hong Wenqing's family. I teach you
secrets...

(Smoking the pipe)

...I teach you secrets of the poppy.

Golden Orchid resists and begins to stand independently when
Hong Luo grabs her arm.

HONG LUO

Young golden bitch, the family has
decided. You have no money.

SECOND MADAM

(So arch as to be
ironic)

Hong Wenqing did not leave you fifty
thousand taels of silver.

Second Madam makes a triumphant face.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

You are trained to serve. You will
be to Wenqing Family Number One
Servant.

HONG LUO

You have no family but Hong Wenqing's
family.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I have my mother in Suzhou.

HONG LUO

You have a new master now.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (3)

136

FIRST MADAM

Girl, girl. I teach you how to cook
the opium paste on the fire.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You people are disgusting.

FIRST MADAM

You will forget to remember.

SECOND MADAM

We are disgusting?

Second Madam very slowly and dramatically pulls open a screen
behind First Madam.

SECOND MADAM (CONT'D)

We are disgusting? Then what about
your degenerate brother.

Golden Orchid is shocked to see the partly obscured face of
Lai Sheng through the opening. Hong Luo propels Golden Orchid
through the door toward her brother.

137 INT. BEIJING, RESIDENCE OF HONG WENQING, BATH -- CONTINUOUS 137

Revealed immediately is the brother of Golden Orchid, Lai
Sheng, who is sitting in an ornate bath of steaming water.
She shakes Hong Luo's hand loose and walks directly toward
her brother. He looks up at her. His hand comes up with the
stem of an opium pipe. With sleepy humor, he acknowledges
Golden Orchid.

LAI SHENG

(Slowly, lasciviously)
Sister!...You come back home...You
bring more taels of silver?...Heh!
Your mother-in-law, First Wife
Wenqing, give me bad habits I like.

HONG LUO

Your brother is a bit of a pervert.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Where is our mother?

LAI SHENG

Our mother?...mmm...she dead.

Golden Orchid breaks away, screaming, and runs toward the
door which she opens. Chaos rules the street, but she runs
out through the confusion.

138 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY -- 138
DAY

On horseback, German Ambassador Klinder, escorted by Kommandant Kleinschmidt, and four young German horse troopers, is riding through the Dongdan Archway. Frau Klinder rides in an open sedan chair carried by bearers sympathetic to the Boxers. Out of the entrance of Zongbu Alley six Boxer fighters attack. The leader is En Hai. They pull all five horse troopers from their saddles and kill them.

BOXER ASSASSIN

Death to the German Envoy!

The Boxers lift Ambassador Klinder up above the crowd for the spectacle of the final kill.

Two Boxer girls, along for the assassination, unfurl a white banner painted with red letters: "KILL ALL FOREIGNERS".

Klinder is dropped in the dirt. Frau Klinder sits in the middle of the carnage, holding Ambassador Klinder, and screaming as the Boxers run away and the crowd withdraws.

139 INT. BEIJING, ALLIED COMPOUND -- MOMENTS LATER 139

A German horse trooper gallops in. He hands General Waldersee a note. The Baroness Henriette von Waldersee stands next to him in shock. Sofia runs in. Three small European children run in after her and hide in her skirts.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

This is a declaration of war.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

God in Heaven, help all the children!

Pandemonium breaks loose in the Allied compound. In an instant, more horse troopers ride out toward Dongdan Archway.

140 EXT. BEIJING, STREET OUTSIDE MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL -- 140
NIGHT

Golden Orchid sees the sign "SUZHOU BROTHEL", looks at a sheet of paper, crosses the deep-shadowed street, and walks in through the door. From the street, through the glass, Mother Fu can be seen hugging the tired form of Golden Orchid.

141 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM --141
MOMENTS LATER

Mother Fu is washing Golden Orchid's face as she half-sits in Mother Fu's lap.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

GOLDEN ORCHID

Chinese killing Chinese. Allies
killing Chinese. Chinese killing
Europeans. Boxer rebels killing
everybody.

MOTHER FU

You must face death...in the face.

Sound of qin zither.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I'm in shame. I have suffered prison,
and cruelty, and, worse...

MOTHER FU

Sleep now. Sleep now.

142 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, LARGE BATH -- NIGHT

142

Golden Orchid kneels in front of statue of Kuanyin, burns incense, and gently cuts her hair. She climbs into a huge bath, amid clouds of incense, for her obviously ritual cleansing. When she climbs down into the tub, she takes a tray filled with sand, smooths it, and deftly arranges three stones and a pearl. As she picks up the pearl, she looks at it, holds it in her hand, picks it up carefully, and kisses it. Then in a long floating shot she sits in contemplation in the deep water.

143 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, GOLDEN ORCHID'S ROOM --143
MORNING

A rooster crows. Golden Orchid stirs in her sleep on the bed. While she sleeps, Maximilian leans in over her face, kisses her tenderly, and she wakes, sees him, and smiles.

MAXIMILIAN

Shh...Souzhie. We're both refugees.
Shh...Shh...I've been cut off from
the Allied Compound. General Waldersee
is there...with Henriette and Sofia.

Mother Fu has been standing near-by.

MOTHER FU

Please, Sir. Let me attend to your
wound.

Maximilian has a small bloody flesh wound on his side.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Maximilian!

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

MAXIMILIAN

From a Boxer's knife I barely escaped.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Soothingly)

Ohh...Ohh...you'll be alright. Won't
he, Mother Fu.

MOTHER FU

Mother Fu will take care of you both.

Mother Fu reaches down and takes the single pearl Golden
Orchid has been holding in her hand while she slept. Mother
Fu studies it carefully.

144 INT. CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE, EMPRESS DOWAGER'S ANTE-ROOM -- 144
AFTERNOON

Interpreter He sits at his desk fingering the signature pearls
he took from Golden Orchid.

145 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S BROTHEL, SMALL PAGODA -- EVENING 145

Golden Orchid and Maximilian are finishing a "mock" waltz to
the tune Golden Orchid half-talks and half-sings. They laugh.
Maximilian's side hurts.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Both sides think we're both spies?

MAXIMILIAN

We're caught between two worlds.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Each night I wonder. Am I paying
enough attention. Will I really
remember all this?

MAXIMILIAN

I'll remember all this. In hiding
with you.

Maximilian kisses her. She resists, gives in a little, and
resists.

MAXIMILIAN (CONT'D)

You want to resist me so Chinese.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You want to conquer me so German.

MAXIMILIAN

Souzhie....Jinhua!

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

GOLDEN ORCHID

Max!

They kiss, but Golden Orchid, overcome with a thought, breaks away.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

I have to go home...to find my mother.

I have to go home to Suzhou.

146 EXT. BEIJING, STREETS -- MORNING

146

Blazing hot sun. Orange sand sifts down through the air. The streets are full of wreckage and survivors. Several dead bodies are being removed. Three drunken Boxers careen into the street from a very cheap brothel. Golden Orchid with Maximilian makes her way down the street. Maximilian is, almost comically, disguised as a Chinese peasant version of Mother Fu. Suddenly, as they come to the square, a face jumps up at Golden Orchid. He is a very young BLOND GERMAN SOLDIER, no more than a boy. Golden Orchid is startled. The young German soldier falls back, to his knees; he is tied and held captive with three other young blond German soldiers.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(In German)

Who is your general?

BLOND GERMAN SOLDIER

You speak German? My general is Waldersee.

A Boxer comes up to see what's happening, slaps the soldiers across the face, and motions for Golden Orchid to go away. As Golden Orchid turns into the Square of the Red Lanterns, her face is horrified.

BLOND GERMAN SOLDIER (CONT'D)

They are German Jesuit priests. We are next.

147 EXT. BEIJING, CITY SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

147

Golden Orchid sees five men in a range of ages, stripped nearly naked, and nailed to crosses standing in the square. As she and Maximilian move on through the scene, the Blond German Soldier is being dragged toward a waiting cross surrounded by Boxer rebels. She gasps. She cries out.

MAXIMILIAN

Don't speak German. They'd kill us both.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

She can do nothing. She crosses with Maximilian through the square and disappears into the golden dust and heat as the hammering begins.

148 INT. NIGHT TRAIN TO SUZHOU -- NIGHT

148

Golden Orchid has fallen asleep against Maximilian. This train car crammed with Chinese escaping the blood bath in Beijing causes Golden Orchid to look around.

GOLDEN ORCHID

So many refugees. Everywhere.
Refugees. Prisoners. Hostages. This
is the work of men, of money, of
politics. My dead husband, Honorable
Hong Wenqing, the famous
scholar...what would he say about
all this?

149 INT. BEIJING, IMPERIAL PALACE, INTERPRETER HE'S QUARTERS -- NIGHT

149

The room is perfect: yellow, cobalt blue, richly appointed. An imperial eunuch is exiting having handed Interpreter He a note.

INTERPRETER HE

That Chinese concubine...that whore
of the Germans...hmmph! As I thought.
Fools are laughable. So easy to catch.
Everyone on the run always runs
home...to mother.

In pull-back, it is revealed that Interpreter He has a guest. She is the prostitute, the ironic Miss Wen Xian, who was displaced two years before at Madam Fu's Brothel by Golden Orchid.

MISS WEN XIAN

That Orchid-Orchid girl really bothers
you...
(Taunting, teasing)
She is so young for you. So sweet.

INTERPRETER HE

Tonight will hear the death song of
the Fabulous Concubine.

Interpreter He pulls out Golden Orchid's signature pearls and dangles them in front of the lustful and greedy eyes of Miss Wen Xian.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

MISS WEN XIAN
They're beautiful.

INTERPRETER HE
They're hers.

MISS WEN XIAN
They're mine.

He lasciviously drapes the pearls across Miss Wen Xian's breasts. Miss Wen Xian slips her head through the pearls and brings her face up to the face of Interpreter He.

MISS WEN XIAN (CONT'D)
Tonight I'll be what you want. Tonight
I'll be...her...for you.

150 INT. THE MOON GATE OF SUZHOU -- CONTINUOUS

150

Golden Orchid leads Maximilian in the brilliant night light through the Moon Gate and past the European Millinery Shop whose window has a sign that says "FOR RENT."

151 INT. SUZHOU, HOUSE OF MOTHER OF GOLDEN ORCHID -- CONTINUOUS

151

Golden Orchid opens the door. Revealed immediately is her brother Lai Sheng sitting in a huge laundry tub of steaming water. She walks to him, looks at him. He looks up at her. His hand comes up with the stem of an opium pipe. He recognizes Golden Orchid.

LAI SHENG
(Slowly, lasciviously)
Sister!...You come back home...You
bring money?...Heh! Your mother-in-
law, First Wife Wenqing, give me bad
habits I like.

GOLDEN ORCHID
Where is our mother?

LAI SHENG
Our mother?...mmm...she dead.

Golden Orchid hides her face in the arms of Maximilian.

152 INT. BEIJING, ALLIED COMPOUND -- NIGHT

152

General Waldersee stands smoking, looking at the sky aglow with the flames of rebellion. At his side, very worried, stand Henriette and Sofia. Outside the compound walls, there are shots and shouting.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

Off to the side, a group of German soldiers sit nervously around a soft lamp light. One of them plays, on a lonely harmonica, a recognizably German tune of longing.

SOFIA

Maximilian has been missing for six days...a whole week tomorrow!

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Tomorrow, maybe, the Allied troops will arrive, maybe, and end this siege...

(Quietly)

...and send these pagan Chinese rebels
...to their pagan hell.

153 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, ROOM OF MASKS -- NIGHT

153

Close shot of a red mask is alarming. Golden Orchid and Maximilian stumble into Mother Fu's brothel. She takes them into her Room of Masks. A thousand faces hang on the wall like the spirits of ancestors, the gods of magic. To the side, the Fortune Teller sits, surrounded by red boxes, and working the "I Ching." Mother Fu serves the returning pair hot tea. Golden Orchid is tending to Maximilian's wound which appears much better.

FORTUNE TELLER

You have the power to heal.

Mother Fu looks at him the way a woman might look at an old lover who repeats himself.

MOTHER FU

You don't have to be a fortune teller to tell that.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Genuinely amused)

Thank you, father Fortune Teller,
all the same.

154 INT. BEIJING, IMPERIAL PALACE, INTERPRETER HE'S QUARTERS -- MORNING

154

Interpreter He walks furiously back and forth past the seated Miss Wen Xian whom he addresses sharply.

INTERPRETER HE

Miss Wen Xian! Golden Orchid, I think,
will now go to your mistress, Mother
Fu. You go spy!

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

Miss Wen Xian gathers herself up with an attitude that changes as she becomes amused at the possibilities.

INTERPRETER HE (CONT'D)

And leave the pearls here.

155 EXT. BEIJING, STREET OUTSIDE MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL --
MOMENTS LATER

155

Miss Wen Xian makes her way through the streets, passing random acts of violence, now very clearly motivated by hunger and thirst. Obscured in one back alleyway, German soldiers make sport with two unwilling Chinese girls. Farther, outside Mother Fu's brothel, a Boxer rebel leans carelessly against the wall near the door of the brothel. As Miss Wen Xiang pounds on Mother Fu's door, hungry children pull at her clothes. She pushes them away and shoves one with real venom to the ground. He is a boy ten-year-old boy who "makes a mouth and mouth sounds" at her.

156 INT. BEIJING, ENTRY ROOM INSIDE MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL --
CONTINUOUS

156

As Mother Fu lets Miss Wen Xian in, several small children, dirty and emaciated, rush in around her ankles. There is much noise.

MISS WEN XIAN

Ay! They stink!

MOTHER FU

They are hungry children. The city
is full of the hungry children of
murdered parents.

157 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, ROOM OF MASKS --
CONTINUOUS

157

Golden Orchid and Maximilian look up startled at the sounds that mean danger. The Fortune Teller simply sits on his red boxes.

A small HUNGRY GIRL CHILD runs from the entry room into the Room of Masks and sees Golden Orchid and Maximilian. She stares wide-eyed saying nothing. Golden Orchid reaches for what small food they have and breaks a crust off and gives it to the girl-child who stares so hard she seems to question why this is happening. There is a long moment of acknowledged danger. Beat. Beat. Beat. Everyone freezes, except for the children who continue to make hungry mewling noises in the entry way.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

The child, to whom Golden Orchid has given the bread, looks at the bread and at the roomful of masks and in very tight close up screams as ear-shattering loud as she can.

HUNGRY GIRL CHILD

Ayyyyyy!

158 INT. BEIJING, ENTRY ROOM INSIDE MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL --
CONTINUOUS

158

MISS WEN XIAN

Who's hiding in there?

Mother Fu and Miss Wen Xian struggle. The children grab at Miss Wen Xian and put her off balance. Mother Fu is able to knock Miss Wen Xian on the floor without Miss Wen Xian knowing exactly how she fell. The screaming child comes running out of the Room of Masks, steps on Miss Wen Xian, and runs out the door.

MISS WEN XIAN (CONT'D)

Who are you hiding in there?

The hungry children pounce on Miss Wen Xian much to the satisfaction of Mother Fu who throws a few bread crusts into the fray to stall, and distress, Miss Wen Xian as much as possible. Finally, Miss Wen Xian picks herself up, adjusts her hair, shoves Mother Fu aside, and barges into the Room of Masks.

159 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, ROOM OF MASKS --
CONTINUOUS

159

Miss Wen Xian is certain she will discover Golden Orchid. She is brought up severely short when she finds no one in the Room of Masks but the old Fortune Teller who looks quizzically at her. Miss Wen Xian begins to tip over the red boxes, searching in them and behind them. Suddenly all the children in the entry hall run in, see the masks, scream, and run out, leaving Miss Wen Xian and Mother Fu standing in the room with the Fortune Teller.

MISS WEN XIAN

Guard! Guard!

The Boxer guard from outside the door blows his whistle and comes running in. Three other Boxers run in and can be seen from the Room of Masks searching Mother Fu's Brothel quickly and thoroughly. They throw up their hands, make nasty grunts, and exit. Miss Wen Xian is beside herself. Mother Fu struggles with Miss Wen Xian who sees Mother Fu is trying to retrieve Golden Orchid's pearls. Mother Fu wins the struggle. Miss Wen Xian kicks a red box.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED:

159

MISS WEN XIAN (CONT'D)

Suspicious! You want the pearls of concubine Golden Orchid because she's hiding here.

MOTHER FU

All you think is jealousy and revenge. Shame on you, girl. I want the concubine pearls to buy food. You see children starving.

(Too inviting to be
real)

You stay, Miss fancy Wen Xian. You help me cook.

Miss Wen Xian screeches in frustration and runs out into the street. Mother Fu turns around with satisfaction and looks at the Fortune Teller.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Missionary says, "I find a pearl of great price." But where is she?

Mother Fu opens a red box. Inside is another red box. She opens it. Inside is another red box. She opens it. Out pops Golden Orchid dragging a bewildered Maximilian.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

You went to Germany and became "The Great Golden Orchid", but you have not forgot where you came from the stage trained by your father, our noble friend.

The Fortune Teller smiles. Mother Fu embraces Golden Orchid. She puts the signature pearls over Golden Orchid's head. Outside, the constant gunfire has started again.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Now you get past fear. I fix you up. You go visit Master Wu.

Golden Orchid looks puzzled, then dubious.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

Yes...you insult Master Wu on whore boat three years ago. Now Master Wu very important man. I fix you up so Master Wu will like.

160 EXT. BEIJING, ALLIED COMPOUND, GYMNASIUM PORCH -- DAY 160

Frau Klinder paces back and forth in front of five ambassadors sitting in front of five flags: Germany, Britain, France, Russia, and the United States.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

This civil war in China now expands
to involve Germany and all the
European Allies.

German soldiers fire shots from the roof of the Allied compound out over the walls.

FRAU KLINDER

Envoy Klinder, my husband, the German ambassador to China has been assassinated. The Chinese have committed an act of war. My husband is a cousin of the German Kaiser and the German Queen.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE

Frau Klinder, we must be calm. The Chinese people did not kill your husband. The rebel Boxers killed your husband.

FRAU KLINDER

The Empress Dowager supports the Boxers! Ja!...I want German vengeance. I want China destroyed.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Mein Gott! Kill or be killed!

161 INT. BEIJING, IMPERIAL PALACE, EMPRESS DOWAGER'S ANTE-ROOM -- DAY 161

Against the brilliant yellows and cobalt blues, Interpreter He stands again triumphant on this spot. This time he is twice as close to the Empress Dowager who looms, just visible, but huge behind him in the interior throne room of the palace. A richly uniformed military advisor stands next to Interpreter He.

INTERPRETER HE

The Dowager Empress approves escalation.

162 INT. BEIJING, MASTER WU'S BUSINESS OFFICE -- AFTERNOON 162

Outside gunfire and shouting can be heard. Inside, lunch has just been served. Golden Orchid looks amazingly beautiful. Her signature pearls suit her look and her mood. Master Wu

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

is flourishing obviously. He has an electric fan turning its blades. The office drips with symbols of international business of the "IMPORTS+EXPORTS" variety. Master Wu's male vanity shoots up to the preening stage because of Golden Orchid favoring him with a visit, but neither moves so much as an eyebrow during the almost ritual luncheon conversation.

MASTER WU

China's favorite export has returned.
None the worse for...adventure.

(He looks at her
cunningly)

Exactly...what is it you want? You
know you can probably have it.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I have friends who are Chinese, and
friends who are European. They all
suffer in this rebellion. Children
are starving. Old people are murdered.

MASTER WU

Now that the Dowager Empress has
thrown her support to the young Boxer
rebels what are we to do?

GOLDEN ORCHID

We are on the back of the tiger...

MASTER WU

Yes...

GOLDEN ORCHID

..and we must get off.

MASTER WU

What do you suggest?

GOLDEN ORCHID

You make your fortune. You import to
China and export to Europe and
America.

MASTER WU

And I want no politics to interfere
with my business.

GOLDEN ORCHID

A smart businessman is worth two
politicians.

MASTER WU

We must all pass tests.

(CONTINUED)

GOLDEN ORCHID

Must we?

MASTER WU

Let me be frank. I would like to be your new Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Sir...Hong Wenqing was my honorable husband, and I am his faithful widow.

MASTER WU

I can make you in China what you were in Germany. A first wife.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You think I am here for that.

MASTER WU

Riches bring honor. As my wife, you can go directly to the Dowager Empress.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You are a business man. You and your kartel make your fortune trading with international countries. It's in your interests to end this rebellion.

MASTER WU

The Dowager Empress is not called "Old Buddha" for nothing. She is a hard woman...like you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am not hard. I am sometimes foolish enough to be strong. Like you. I know what I must do.

MASTER WU

You are famous for your actions.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My honorable husband, the scholar Hong Wenqing, taught me the saying: Defeat your enemy by using their strength against them...And you and your cartel must help.

163 EXT. BEIJING, EAST OF THE CITY, DONGZHIMEN -- DAY 163

Artillery shells of the Eight Allied powers fall on the tower of Dongzhimen. The fighters of Yihetuan and soldiers of the Qing, who are defending the city, fight with the Allied soldiers who are attacking. Soldiers rise and fall one after the other. Both sides sacrifice themselves.

164 INT. BEIJING, RESIDENCE OF WENQING, MAIN PARLOR -- AFTERNOON 164

Golden Orchid is trying to calm the women who are frightened by the rebels in the streets. Sounds of fighting can be heard. Hong Luo dresses himself for the streets and runs out, leaving Golden Orchid to comfort First Madam, Second Madam, and Young Madam.

165 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S BROTHEL, SMALL PAGODA -- NIGHT 165

Very late at night, Mother Fu stands with Maximilian.

MOTHER FU

In all this confusion, you can escape
back to your General Waldersee.

MAXIMILIAN

But what about Golden Orchid?

MOTHER FU

Tell General Waldersee what Golden
Orchid would tell him. Tell him that
in such war, such cruel war, no one
wins. Everyone suffers. People are
starving. Tell him to stop.

166 EXT. BEIJING, STREET NEAR CITY GATE OF XIZHIMEN -- DAY 166

Golden Orchid walks with Cui'er. The noon sun is dazzling white in the summer heat. Orange sand sifts through the air. The dusty road is extremely crowded with old and young refugees carrying iron cauldrons on their heads, rice bags in their arms, and chickens and ducks in their hands. Everyone flees in one direction: westward. Golden Orchid, flustered, is removing her head ornaments and ear rings. She passes a small boy carrying a colorful kite and holding on to his mother's clothes. Bullets are flying overhead. Often, people fall to the ground dead. A bullet hits the small boy. His kite is trampled.

Three carriages rush by the refugees. Two are ordinary carriages and one has an iron net around it. The carriages have no top. Their curtains and paint are all cobalt blue. When the last carriage, with its tail sewn shut with reed mats, passes by Golden Orchid, the blue curtain rises and an old woman's head can be seen. It is the Empress Dowager wearing the Han costume. The eyes of the two women meet.

(CONTINUED)

Neither turns away from the other until the carriage passes through.

An Allied shell hits a building near Golden Orchid. Everyone screams. Golden Orchid drops one ear ring. She looks but cannot retrieve it in the confusion. The terrified rush of refugees nears the city gate. The refugees in front suddenly stop and fall back. The crowd is shocked to find two foreigners' bodies, a civilian woman and a German soldier, hanged on a flag pole. Two foreign horses lie on the ground twitching. Hysteria breaks out. Some run toward the huge gate, because the gate is closing. Refugees in the front, at the gate, are shot. The crowd rushes to a dark archway. Golden Orchid and Cui'er are caught in the crush. As the city gate is closed, the blue sky outside disappears, and black smoke billows back at the city. The refugees scream.

A group of German soldiers shout wildly and encircle the refugees. Icy light reflects from the German helmets and bayonets. The Germans lower the corpses of the two hanged Europeans, and cross their chests with the "Sign of the Cross". The German soldiers drive some of the refugees to the foot of the flag pole like animals to be slaughtered. The people squat down. A young officer, with golden hair and blue eyes, faces the Chinese coldly. He stares at Golden Orchid who is frightened. The young officer orders the soldiers to separate the men and women. The refugees try to resist, but bayonets and rifles separate them. The tense German soldiers look through a group of Chinese men who lower their eyes. A shabbily dressed man is pulled from the crowd and brought to the flag pole. A piece of red cloth is found on his body. The Young German Officer turns red in the face.

YOUNG GERMAN OFFICER

Boxing bandit!

The Young German Officer shoots the man who falls instantly into a pool of blood. A woman dashes up and throws herself grieving over the dead man. A second Chinese man rushes in a panic toward the gate. His long pigtail swings wildly.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

Halt! Halt!

A German rifleman shoots the Chinese man with the pigtail. Another German soldier pulls a red scarf from the man's dead body. Everyone begins screaming lamentations. The Germans shoot a volley to the sky. The crowd becomes deathly still. The German soldiers begin searching the crowd for red belts and red cloths. When they find a red belt, they shoot. Everyone is horrified at the blood bath. Golden Orchid begins to rise as a distinct person in the crowd, but Cui'er pulls her back down.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: (2)

166

GOLDEN ORCHID

Cui'er! Someone must speak out!

CUI'ER

No, Madam, don't let anyone know you speak German.

The Germans find more red belts and shoot the people who wear them.

YOUNG GERMAN OFFICER

Boxing bandits!

As the German soldier comes near, Golden Orchid stands up.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(In German)

No! Stop! Not Boxing bandits! Good Chinese!

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

Look! The little empress speaks Deutsch!

GOLDEN ORCHID

The red belt is not for Boxers. The red belt is good luck to avoid evil spirits in Chinese twelve-year cycle.

The German soldiers stop and stare.

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

She is a trickster. Shall I shoot her?

YOUNG GERMAN OFFICER

How does a dainty Chinese girl speak German?

GERMAN SOLDIER #1

Kill the bitch! She's a spy.

Allied guns fire across the city. Refugees scatter out of the way as German horse troops ride into the street before the gate. General Waldersee on a white stallion leads them. He surveys the scene. His horse rears up. Golden Orchid recognizes him and takes a step toward him. General Waldersee sees Golden Orchid. They stare at one another in a frozen moment of time. Instantly, Maximilian rides up, sees the situation, and leans into General Waldersee.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: (3)

166

MAXIMILIAN

Yes, she is Golden Orchid. As I warned
you. Do not show you know her. Boxers
kill Chinese spies and collaborators.

General Waldersee gives direct orders to Young German Officer.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Let her go.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Very intense)

No! Let all these people go!

General Waldersee throws her a glance. Maximilian smiles and
urges General Waldersee on.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Let them all go.

General Waldersee turns and leads the troops galloping out.
The refugees crowd around Golden Orchid, kowtowing, crying,
praying, thanking her for saving them.

CHINESE ELDER

You are Kuanyin herself. You are
the Goddess of Mercy. You are the
patron of the Gate of Xizhimen.

Off in the distance, Bach's "Mass" is intoned.

167 INT. BEIJING, CATHOLIC CHURCH DESTROYED BY FIRE -- NIGHT

167

Bach's "Mass" continues. A group of British Sikh soldiers
rush into a Catholic church destroyed by artillery fire.
Fires still burn in corners. The floor is covered with
corpses. Some are foreigners, but most are Chinese.

168 EXT. BEIJING, STREET -- NIGHT

168

Bach's "Mass" continues. Soldiers of the Allied forces are
plundering the city. Everywhere there are fires, shots, and
shouting in the Beijing night.

169 EXT. BEIJING, CITY SQUARE -- DAY

169

Bach's "Mass" continues. Allied soldiers, pulling down the
red lanterns hanging in the square, shoot to death a row of
Chinese in Yihetuan costume.

170 INT. BEIJING, LAUNDRY, A SMALL ANONYMOUS ROOM SET UP AS A HOSPITAL -- AFTERNOON 170

Bach's "Mass" continues. Golden Orchid and Cui'er have set up a small hospital. Six European nuns and two Catholic Jesuit priest attend to medical needs and serve food to the gathered crowd. They listen to the gunfire outside. They are surrounded by two dozen children, by twenty old people including two British women, and by seven injured men, including one young European who is the BLOND GERMAN SOLDIER who was crucified.

BLOND GERMAN SOLDIER

(Softly to Golden
Orchid)

Thank you for coming back to save
me.

171 EXT. FORBIDDEN CITY, YI LUAN HALL -- EVENING 171

Bach's "Mass" continues. The Allied forces are attacking the clearly identifiable Yi Luan Hall in the Imperial Palace.

172 EXT. BEIJING, STREET OUTSIDE THE LAUNDRY -- AFTERNOON 172

Bach's "Mass" continues. Golden Orchid, with Cui'er, is rescuing women and children, pushing them quickly down the street toward her make-shift shelter. They pass by a high terrace. In front of a gate of a burnt court yard lies a dead child. The ground is soaked with blood which clings to their shoes. Cui'er cries out in distress at the sight. On a Chinese scholar tree, at the same gate, is hanged an old man who is neatly dressed with a yellow mandarin jacket and a string of coral. On the ground lies an official cap with a precious stone and peacock feathers on top.

CUI'ER

Your husband was once such a scholar.

Golden Orchid looks tenderly at her faithful servant and together they hurry the crowd of refugees down the street past a shop with the sign "DESHOUZHAI GRAVE CLOTHES SHOP". The sign and shop have been scorched by fire, but not destroyed. A horse made of colored paper lies by the gate. Funeral wreaths are scattered on the ground. The boss of the shop stands at the door holding a wind-proof lantern that also says in blue letters, "GRAVE CLOTHES". The Boss is happy as a lunatic.

GRAVE CLOTHES BOSS

Will you buy your grave clothes now!
Hee! Hee! Hee!

Cui'er pushes the man aside. The refugees cower away from this spectre of death.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED:

172

Suddenly, from the opposite direction, a team of German soldiers, led by a German Lieutenant is driving a group of Chinese men to come head-on with Golden Orchid. She stops with Cui'er at her side. Some men in the crowd were rescued by Golden Orchid at the city gate and they recognize her. They fall and kneel down in front of her, and she cannot move.

REFUGEE MAN #1
Goddess of Mercy, help us.

REFUGEE MAN #2
You saved us before. Save us now.

The German soldiers try to drive the men back, but the men keep running back desperately and they kneel to Golden Orchid and kowtow repeatedly. Shots are fired.

Cui'er rises up and falls back mortally wounded.

The whole crowd of Chinese men, women, and children begin to cry out pitifully. Golden Orchid moves to the dying Cui'er and kneels and cradles her head. Cui'er smiles and dies. Golden Orchid has had enough. She sets her face and, kneeling in the blood and dirt of the street, addresses the German Lieutenant in charge.

GOLDEN ORCHID
Lieutenant, in the name of Kaiser
Wilhelm, the Second, Emperor of
Germany, I command you. Stop this
atrocities. In the name of the German
Queen, I beg you. Take me to General
Waldersee.
(To the Chinese
refugees)
Go! Now!
(To the Lieutenant)
I command you. I am the widow of
Hong Wenqing, Envoy to Germany...I
am...Golden Orchid.

173 INT. BEIJING, IMPERIAL PALACE, INTERPRETER HE'S QUARTERS -- DAY

173

Imperially robed, Interpreter He sits in front of a camera on a tripod as the photographer works under the camera's black cloth. Interpreter He is listening to Miss Wen Xian who is smoking a cigaret. Miss Wen Xian has obviously been talking endlessly and he is not pleased.

(CONTINUED)

173 CONTINUED:

173

MISS WEN XIAN
...and not only is your little Orchid-
Orchid more popular than you! She
has more lives than a cat.

Interpreter He slaps Miss Wen Xian across the face.

MISS WEN XIAN (CONT'D)
Ha! As long as the Empress Dowager
is hiding from the Allies, you are
too weak to hurt a fly!
(Tapping her cigaret
ash)
Your power is like ash. Tap! Tap!
Tap!

174 INT. FORBIDDEN CITY, YI LUAN HALL -- AFTERNOON

174

The eight generals of the Allied forces meet in Yi Luan Hall enjoying the spoils of war. The room, slightly ransacked, is beautiful. Frau Klinder is in attendance. The generals sit as Frau Klinder paces the room.

FRENCH GENERAL
We must take even stronger measures
to punish the Boxer bandits...

AMERICAN GENERAL
...and the princes and ministers who
support them.

FRAU KLINDER
The Empress Dowager! That old woman
should bear full responsibility for
this rebellion. The Empress Dowager
killed my husband, Ambassador Klinder.
I want you gentlemen to act!

At this moment, a noise from the hall interrupts Frau Klinder.

GERMAN SOLDIER #2 (V.O.)
Madam, please halt. You cannot enter.

Golden Orchid sweeps beautifully through the door. She is a vision of the real China in her full suit of ceremonial robes of the Qing. She is dressed as a second-rank woman with phoenix hat, satin cloak, and scarlet silk skirt with twenty-four ribbons. Everyone is surprised. The generals rise.

GENERAL WALDERSEE
Madam Envoy, Golden Orchid!

Golden Orchid comes straight to the point.

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED:

174

GOLDEN ORCHID

Frau Klinder, I am sorry. You lost your German husband in China as I lost my Chinese husband in Germany.

FRAU KLINDER

Both our husbands were killed by Chinese.

GOLDEN ORCHID

General Waldersee, put a stop to this war. The Boxers do not represent China. They are rebels against the true China.

FRAU KLINDER

I want the head of the Empress Dowager on a plate.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Frau Klinder, bitte. The Allies intend only to protect the safety of their envoys and their foreign nationals.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My husband, Hong Wenqing, your friend, would say to you, "Help the Chinese people. Help your soldiers who are also suffering.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

We are here to restore order.

FRAU KLINDER

Murderers! Assassins! Barbarians!

GOLDEN ORCHID

My husband, the scholar Hong Wenqing, would say to you, "Never work against the people."

FRAU KLINDER

I have seen your savage people!

As if in refutation, the beautiful Golden Orchid turns to the standing generals and walks past each one looking intently in their faces, allowing them to study her face for its true virtue. As she stops at the last general, General Waldersee, the room is absolutely quiet.

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED: (2)

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FRENCH GENERAL

(Gallantly)

In this way, General Waldersee, did
Helen of Troy launch a thousand ships.

FRAU KLINDER

She's a spy. The whore works both
sides.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Firmly)

Generals! Gentlemen! Do your countries
wish to fight and die in China. Or
do your countries wish to enjoy China
as a great market place for foreign
business.

FRAU KLINDER

Don't listen to this actress.

(Intently face to
face)

You are truly...a concubine whore
prostitute!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Madam, you are just me in German
clothes!

175 EXT. BEIJING, A MAIN STREET -- DAY

175

Golden Orchid rides on horse back with General Waldersee
through city streets occupied by Allied soldiers. With three
other generals, they are on an inspection tour.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Over there, at the end of that block.
At the Dongdan Archway. That is where
Germany is building a monument to be
dedicated to honor the memory of
Envoy Klinder.

A group of Allied soldiers is plundering a food shop. A
chain gang of Chinese men works off to the side under German
direction.

GOLDEN ORCHID

General, you are restoring order?
Your soldiers are as hungry as the
Chinese they plunder.

General Waldersee signals for the German soldiers to stop
their thieving. They obey, begrudgingly.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED:

175

Golden Orchid rides on with the generals. Rounding a corner, they see a dozen German soldiers forcing two sweating Chinese men to carry a sedan chair back and forth, running. In the chair rides a squealing pig. The soldiers find this very amusing. General Waldersee is embarrassed.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

War begins with flags and ends, you see, with no more than bullies.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Mrs. Envoy, Golden Orchid, you ask mercy for them?

GOLDEN ORCHID

Must women always ask mercy of men?

GENERAL WALDERSEE

The Dowager Empress is a woman. She treated you without mercy.

GOLDEN ORCHID

In adversity, I learned the quality of mercy.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Release them.

The German soldiers do as ordered. They look at each other, smile, and wink that they recognize that Golden Orchid has strong power over their general. The pig jumps out of the sedan chairs. One of the soldiers raises his rifle and shoots the pig. The pig makes a horrible shriek and lies in a pool of blood, twitching. Hungry Chinese children run up to watch.

GENERAL WALDERSEE (CONT'D)

Now they will fight over who eats the pig.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Exactly the way the Allies fight over China. The success of one general comes from ten thousand corpses.

Golden Orchid gallops off leaving the party of generals standing on prancing horses in the crowded street.

CHINESE WOMAN

Look! That girl! On horseback! She is the magnificent concubine!

A Chinese man working on a German punishment gang looks up. His face is dirty. It is Hong Wenqing's son by Second Madam,

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: (2)

175

Hong Luo. Hong Luo spits. He looks at the man chained next to him. He is Golden Orchid's degenerate brother, Lai Sheng.

LAI SHENG

My sister, your Third Madam, rides a high horse.

Lai Sheng also spits. A gruff, tough, blond German sergeant looks at the two shamed men and then he spits.

176 EXT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL -- AFTERNOON

176

Chinese cavalry, many Yamen runners, and sedan chairs are tightly jammed in the street as Golden Orchid rides up and dismounts. Everyone is solicitous of her. Mother Fu hurries out.

MOTHER FU

Minister Li has come to call on you.

Mother Fu escorts Golden Orchid into the brothel.

177 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, ROOM OF MASKS -- AFTERNOON

177

The entry hall is full of people spilling into the inner rooms.

MOTHER FU

Minister Li Hongzhang is the highest statesman in all of China. He is plenipotentiary for peace talks.

Minister Li is eighty years old and mentally and physically exhausted. Seeing Golden Orchid, he rises and then kneels before her. Golden Orchid looks upset.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You hold the highest position at court. Your knees are extremely precious. You must not kowtow to me.

LI HONGZHANG

I am not kneeling for you. I kneel for an array of ancestors of the Great Qing and for 400 million people in distress.

GOLDEN ORCHID

What do you think I am?

Golden Orchid helps the old gentleman to rise to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED:

177

LI HONGZHANG

In your hands lies the safe return
of the Empress Dowager.

Li Hongzhang suffers a coughing fit. Mother Fu stands ready
with hot towels. A servant pounds his back. He recovers.

LI HONGZHANG (CONT'D)

China is now a weak nation...divided
inside in civil war...attacked outside
by the Allies.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Forthrightly)

Perhaps the Empress Dowager should
not have supported the Boxer rebels
in their nationalism.

LI HONGZHANG

The foreigners ask reparation for
their businesses and churches
destroyed by the Boxers. They ask
450 million taels of silver.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Then let every person in China pay
one tael.

LI HONGZHANG

The Empress Dowager now regrets she
favored the rebel Boxers. The Empress
Dowager will pay the tax, but the
Empress Dowager cannot pay with her
life. She is old.

GOLDEN ORCHID

She is Old Buddha.

LI HONGZHANG

She wants to return from exile. She--
perhaps, perhaps, perhaps--will make
a formal apology to the European
nations.

GOLDEN ORCHID

What am I to do, and why should I do
it?

LI HONGZHANG

Do what I, an old man, cannot do. I
am Old China of the North. You are
New China of the South. Do what a
young woman can do.

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED: (2)

177

GOLDEN ORCHID

The Empress Dowager assassinated my husband. She named me "whore" and she ordered Master He to shame me in prison. Forgive me, Excellency. I hate her the way Frau Klinder hates her.

LI HONGZHANG

I beg you...for the sake of China... to mediate peace talks with the foreign powers.

MOTHER FU

(Wisely, gently)

You speak their language. You know their customs.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

The German Queen herself told you that you were entering the blood stream of history.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Resisting)

I am not a monument, Excellency. I am a girl.

MOTHER FU

Golden Orchid, sometimes destiny kneels down begging in a brothel.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Ah, I understand...And a good whore does her job!

178 INT. BEIJING, ALLIED COMPOUND -- EVENING

178

Sofia and Henriette von Waldersee stand near General Waldersee who is sitting with Frau Klinder.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Impossible! The Empress Dowager cannot pay with her life. Exile for her is the most punishment Germany can expect.

FRAU KLINDER

That spy-whore diplomacy! Mrs Golden Envoy, has undue influence on you, nicht wahr?

(CONTINUED)

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HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
Frau Klinder!

FRAU KLINDER
Ja! Everyone knows it.

SOFIA
Bitte! Everyone knows Golden Orchid.

GENERAL WALDERSEE
I make no explanation for my actions.
I have done what a general does. At
all times, the interest of the state
is above any personal interest.

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
Or personal vengeance...Frau Klinder!
Shame! You make a bad situation worse!

GENERAL WALDERSEE
Henriette!

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
Frau Klinder, grief makes you hate.
Hatred makes you muddle-headed.

FRAU KLINDER
Nein! Don't you speak to me like
this. Nein!

HENRIETTE VON WALDERSEE
Ja! I speak to you woman to woman,
Frau Klinder. You are the one who
exerts undue pressure. Ja! On the
Allied authorities. You cripple the
cause of peace.

FRAU KLINDER
China's best destiny is the expansion
of Germany. These pagan Chinese, by
God, must be taught a good sound
Christian lesson.

179 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S NEW BROTHEL, ROOM OF MASKS --
EVENING

179

General Waldersee, Maximilian, and Master Wu sit with Golden Orchid. Mother Fu and the Fortune Teller sit aside in attendance. A small but very striking altar to the memory of Hong Wenqing stands beneath an impressive statue of Kuanyin. The large photograph of Hong Wenqing causes the honorable scholar's face to watch out over the conversation in the room. A small pile of three books sits next to the

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED:

179

photograph. The books are the works of Confucius, Buddha, and Lao-Tze. Golden Orchid takes the books and sets them on the floor in front of her for all to see.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My husband, the scholar Hong Wenqing,
remains my teacher....Confucius,
Buddha, and Lao-Tze

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Hong Wenqing was a great scholar.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Mother Fu is my mentor. Against my
better judgment...

(Amused)

...mmmph! Mother Fu advises me to
walk this path to the end.

MAXIMILIAN

Frau Klinder should have such a
mentor.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Frau Klinder has the Kaiser's ear.
She pushes her power around me. Her
grief has made her a German
imperialist.

MAXIMILIAN

...But you have caught the hearts
and minds of the Chinese people.

(Visible emotion passes
through his being)

Golden Orchid, you...are...loved.

MOTHER FU

Nations push nations...and the kartels
push everyone, eh, Master Wu?

GENERAL WALDERSEE

The Kaiser and the German Queen are
very grateful to you. You have saved
so many German children, women, and
men. Germany desires peace with China.

GOLDEN ORCHID

But Frau Klinder wants blood.

MASTER WU

Our Chinese kartels desire to open
our markets to Germany.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (2)

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MASTER WU (CONT'D)

The Empress Dowager...well, that Old Buddha lives in exile. She is the past. China's future rests on trade. Imports. Exports.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Frankly, Golden Orchid, the peace talks have stalled. Frau Klinder has roused feelings of German pride...She works to undo your accomplishments with Master Li Hongzhang. She has the same power in China that you once had in Germany.

MAXIMILIAN

Frau Klinder champions conquest and revenge. And you...you champion diplomacy and mercy.

MASTER WU

The people call you "Kuanyin." You are so like the Goddess of Mercy herself.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(With self-effacing
humor)

From whore boat to nunnery in five years! Ha!

MOTHER FU

Germany and the Allies have executed thousands of Boxer rebels. The Empress Dowager has repented. She has apologized for her political mistake.

MASTER WU

The Empress Dowager's life is safer in exile.

GOLDEN ORCHID

...I smell a scapegoat. Who is it?

MASTER WU

One En Hai. A local athlete. A leader of the Boxer rebels.

MOTHER FU

This En Hai, of course, claims he is innocent.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (3)

179

MAXIMILIAN

En Hai was captured by the Allies
and identified by Frau Klinder.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

The Boxer En Hai is to be executed
in three days.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Where?

MAXIMILIAN

In the Dongdan Archway at the entrance
of Zongbu Alley.

MASTER WU

On the very spot in the commercial
area where Ambassador Klinder was
assassinated.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

A stone tablet, a stone memorial to
Ambassador Klinder will be
dedicated...

GOLDEN ORCHID

...At the same time? At the same
place?

MASTER WU

But, of course. A ritual act!

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Ironically)

Yes, of course. Politics demands a
little bread, a little circus. Open
trade demands a little blood
sacrifice.

MOTHER FU

And what about this scapegoat, En
Hai? Do we know him? Does anyone
know him?

MASTER WU

What is to know? We pin China's sins
to his back, punish him, and wash
away our sins away.

GENERAL WALDERSEE

Believe me, Golden Orchid. This is
in the interest of the people...of
China and Germany.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (4)

179

Golden Orchid touches the three books in front of her. She reaches to the side and places the "I Ching" book with the other three.

GOLDEN ORCHID

General Waldersee, tell me. What does your wife, my friend, Henriette think of Frau Klinder's demands?

GENERAL WALDERSEE

My wife thinks the same as you, but with Frau Klinder she carries no force.

GOLDEN ORCHID

And you think I do?

GENERAL WALDERSEE

In the name of the German Queen who loves you, will you handle Frau Klinder? We must normalize relations.

MOTHER FU

Golden Orchid realizes this truth.

Mother Fu points to a tray filled with smoothed sand and arranged with several stones. Mother Fu takes Golden Orchid's beautiful signature pearls and slowly drapes them down among the rocks onto the sand so that the pearls define and connect the rocks.

MOTHER FU (CONT'D)

The diplomacy of her husband, the scholar Hong Wenqing,
(Wrapping the first
rock and the second
rock)
China's envoy to Germany,
(Touching the third
rock)
will not be complete...if a Chinese
wife
(Touching the fifth
rock)
cannot speak to a German wife.

The signature pearls now lie perfectly arranged as if they were in an international jewel merchant's Paris window.

180 EXT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY -- DAY

180

The sign on the impressive building reads "IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY."

(CONTINUED)

180 CONTINUED:

180

Faint, exotic music can be heard from inside. The camera moves slowly up the building, crossing up past German flags, and stops on a second-story window where the face of Frau Klinder can be seen.

181 INT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, SITTING ROOM, SECOND FLOOR -- CONTINUOUS

181

Heitor Villa-Lobos' "Bachiana brasileira no 5: Aria - Cantilena" plays on the phonograph in the second-floor sitting room of the German Embassy where Frau Klinder stares out the window. Frau Klinder wears European clothes, but she has dressed her hair somewhat in the Chinese fashion. She wears a red Chinese robe. A photograph of Ambassador Klinder sits on a table. Frau Klinder holds blood-red rosary beads which she fingers nervously.

FRAU KLINDER

Heilige Maria, Hail Mary, full of
grace...Heinz! Kommen sie hier! We
feared the Chinese would attack our
embassy. Look! She's here...again!

Heinz looks out the window. Golden Orchid is approaching the embassy.

FRAU KLINDER (CONT'D)

Send her away again. Two days in a
row. This concubine is a whore without
portfolio...Close the curtain.

182 INT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, FOYER -- CONTINUOUS

182

The music of "Bachiana" from upstairs can be heard. Heinz opens the door to see Golden Orchid standing alone on the porch. He is struck by her beauty. He shakes his head "no" and slowly closes the door.

183 INT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, SITTING ROOM, SECOND FLOOR -- LATER

183

The "Bachiana" continues. The Bavarian clock on the mantel chimes nine o'clock. Frau Klinder has just finished eating supper. She walks to the window, pulls back the curtain, and is taken aback at seeing Golden Orchid standing lonely vigil in the moonlight.

FRAU KLINDER

Was fur eine Frau, what kind of woman
stands vigil in the moonlight.

184 EXT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, FRONT ENTRANCE -- LATER 184

The "Bachiana" continues to be heard from inside the embassy. Golden Orchid sees Frau Klinder pacing to and fro behind the window. The time is summer. Heat causes the bright moon into partial hiding behind the clouds. A sprinkle of rain hits the dusty court yard. Golden Orchid takes a large umbrella and opens it. She stands, sheltered, in the rain pouring down in the moonlight. From atop the German embassy, a clock chimes the hour of ten o'clock.

185 INT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, SITTING ROOM, SECOND FLOOR -- LATER 185

Frau Klinder puts another record on her phonograph and fidgets with pretty little collectibles on the mantel where a Bavarian clock rings eleven o'clock as she moves across the room, pours herself a Per Nod, and stands looking down into the court yard where she sees Golden Orchid standing in the pouring rain. Frau Klinder makes her state of mixed emotions clear. The presence of Golden Orchid makes her nervous. She looks at her glass of Per Nod.

FRAU KLINDER

I am not a barbarian.

(Then decisively)

I am the German Envoy's wife...Heinz!

186 EXT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, FRONT ENTRANCE -- LATER 186

The embassy chimes ring twelve times as Golden Orchid stands in the rain which has begun to pour even harder. Golden Orchid sees a light appear as the front door of the embassy opens. Heinz beckons for Golden Orchid to approach. She does not hesitate. She picks up a Chinese valise from the ground. She walks up to the porch, hands her umbrella to Heinz, and the door closes. Lights come on in the windows heading up to the second floor.

187 INT. BEIJING, GERMAN EMBASSY, SITTING ROOM, SECOND FLOOR -- MOMENTS LATER 187

Heinz ushers Golden Orchid into the sitting room where Frau Klinder stands. Golden Orchid sets the Chinese valise on the floor. Familiar with one another, neither woman sees any need for a greeting.

FRAU KLINDER

You were standing in the rain.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You invited me in from the rain.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED:

187

FRAU KLINDER

In Berlin, you were famous for
standing in the rain. Oh, yes. I
remember...When first you arrived by
train in Berlin...

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Smiling)

...My husband, the Envoy, and I walked
in the rain from the Anhalt Station
through the streets.

FRAU KLINDER

You set the fashion then. Walks in
the rain. One ear ring. Not two.
Robes--such as this one I wear.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Sometimes, Mrs. Envoy, the fortunes
of nations ride on the whims of women.

FRAU KLINDER

Women "so wie", so like your Empress
Dowager.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Madam, for all of China, I make humble
apology that your husband is dead. I
have little love for the Old Buddha
Dowager.

Frau Klinder remains strong, but weeps lightly, sincerely.
Golden Orchid opens her small Chinese valise and takes out
two small statues, one of Kuanyin and one of Kuan Yu. They
are exquisite figures of art representing religion. Golden
Orchid presents them to Frau Klinder.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

Please accept my humble gifts.

FRAU KLINDER

How beautiful. Thank you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

These figures are Kuanyin and Kuan
Yu.

Golden Orchid places the two statues prominently on a table
where they watch over the women's conversation. Frau Klinder
obviously finds them attractive.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED: (2)

187

FRAU KLINDER

I called you names before. I am the
one to apologize. You too are a widow.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you, Madam. So much...I also
have for you a telegram dictated by
the Empress Dowager herself...from
her exile in Sianfu.

FRAU KLINDER

Tonight a telegram. Tomorrow a
monument at the Dongdan Archway.
(Bitter with sorrow)
Where will all this wonderful Chinese
luck end!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Luck is in the peace treaty China
and Germany must sign together.

FRAU KLINDER

My patriotism is second to none. I
have already sacrificed my
husband...You should understand
assassination.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I do, Madam. Envoy Klinder and Envoy
Wenqing between them balanced peace
and trade, war and human dignity.

Golden Orchid moves to the statues and places one on either
side of the photograph of Envoy Klinder.

FRAU KLINDER

(Rising in an aria)

Human dignity? The German flag has
been insulted. Missionaries killed.
Women defiled. For fifty-five days,
we Europeans and Americans were
besieged by your Boxer rebels in the
Allied compound....Fifty-five days
of Beijing in the dusty orange heat
of summer!

(Catching her self-
control, holding her
rosary)

My religion counsels me to overcome
my hate for the Empress Dowager. I
...am...sorry. I...don't...hate
...you...people. You Chinese.

(CONTINUED)

187 CONTINUED: (3)

187

GOLDEN ORCHID

And China does not hate Germany.
You must understand, please, that
China, like Germany, was victimized
by the Boxer rebels. Now China is to
be punished? Your Allies want
reparations of 450 million taels of
silver. The Americans demand China
give free and open ports. China is
no nation's concubine.

FRAU KLINDER

I'm a shop-keeper's daughter, Mrs
Envoy, and a business man's wife. I
am not naive. I know this is about
money.

(Suddenly distracted
by grief)

We had no children.

GOLDEN ORCHID

A husband's death is a thousand
sorrows.

FRAU KLINDER

Tomorrow, after the Klinder monument
is dedicated at the Dongdan Archway,
I will begin to fade away. I am thirty
years older than you...You young
people are a different race.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I promise you, Mrs Envoy Klinder,
that I will build an altar to honor
those who die with no descendants.

Golden Orchid touches each of the two statues she brought as
gifts.

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

This figure represents Kuanyin,
Goddess of Mercy. This is Kuan Yu,
God of War...How you choose will be
how you and Envoy Klinder are
remembered.

188 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY,
KLINDER TABLET -- DAY

188

Close shot of the handsome face of the instantly sympathetic
En Hai, the local athlete who is the accused assassin of
Envoy Klinder. Behind his head stands the monument known as
the "KLINDER TABLET".

(CONTINUED)

188 CONTINUED:

188

The Tablet is garlanded with flowers and flags. A photographer with a tripod camera shoots photograph after photograph of Europeans standing in front of the Klinder Tablet. Firecrackers explode and pop. Sofia and Henriette pose for a photograph with Frau Klinder and Golden Orchid. Sofia reacts to the sound of the firecrackers.

189 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY, SMALL THEATRICAL STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

189

Off to the side a theatrical group, reminiscent of the theatrical troop owned by Golden Orchid's father performs an elaborately costumed, and obvious, pantomime of the already legendary life of Golden Orchid. A girl-actress watches as her actor-father's face explodes with blood, he dies, and she is forced to kneel and wash laundry until her evil brother sells her to a whore boat.

190 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY, KLINDER TABLET -- CONTINUOUS

190

Frau Klinder, observing the stage performance, comments to Sofia and Henriette.

FRAU KLINDER

Can our civilization in the west
ever understand the masks of China?

Golden Orchid puts her hand to her mouth. The actor on stage playing her father has pulled her attention. Memory swells up. Her beautiful eyes are bright with tears which she conceals.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Whispering to the
sky)

Father! Mother! Home!

191 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY, THE STREET -- CONTINUOUS

191

A group of twelve uniformed soldiers of the Allied Forces carrying rifles are escorting En Hai to the center of the Arch. The well-built En Hai is stripped to the waist, and his hands are tied behind his neck with a rope that is looped about his neck. He is spit upon. The crowd of Europeans and Chinese in the street and square are in one accord as if they are at a festival. A few Chinese in the crowd are skeptical.

CHINESE ELDER #2

En Hai, the athlete, is a scape goat.
As if he killed Klinder.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED:

191

CHINESE WOMAN #2

Our High Court could not hand over
the Empress Dowager to the foreigners.

YOUNG BOXER IN DISGUISE

Old China must save face...

A young Chinese woman, the WIFE OF EN HAI, twenty-two and attractive, makes her way through the crowd, leading a young male child, age five.

192 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY,
IMPERIAL REVIEWING STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

192

On the Imperial Reviewing Stage, in the middle of the crowd, Interpreter He, ceremonially garbed in imperial gold and cobalt blue, watches as if he were the Emperor himself. At his side, stands Miss Wen Xian. Next to them, stands Master Wu.

MISS WEN XIAN

You are lucky that is not you out
there who is to be executed.

INTERPRETER HE

(Smiling)

The sun is so very bright. Look at
all those foreign pigs gathered at
the Archway. Germany is to be consoled
by the Klinder Tablet. Ha, ha, ha.

MASTER WU

China is a vast reservoir of wealth,
Excellency. The foreign traders come
to drink.

INTERPRETER HE

Then let us distract these thirsting
barbarians with entertaining spectacle
that hides the true face China.

193 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY,
KLINDER TABLET -- CONTINUOUS

193

Golden Orchid continues to stand with Frau Klinder at the center of the crowd. Sofia and Henriette von Waldersee stand with Golden Orchid and Frau Klinder. Mother Fu and Master Wu stand back in the shade of the Archway. General Waldersee and Maximilian, on great white horses, ride up to the group of women, and take off their hats, flourishing them at Frau Klinder and Golden Orchid. The Wife of En Hai makes her way toward Golden Orchid, rushes up to Golden Orchid, and kneels at her feet. The Europeans are stunned.

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED:

193

Frau Klinder is especially disturbed.

WIFE OF EN HAI

Please, Goddess of Mercy. You have saved thousands of lives. Chinese and European. Save my husband, En Hai.

Immediately, German soldiers come and drag the Wife of En Hai away from Golden Orchid. Her five-year-old boy, however, stands directly in front of Golden Orchid. He looks hard at her. She looks at him. Their eyes lock for three beats and all the sound around them falls away and only a far-off qin zither can be heard. Golden Orchid falls to her knees to embrace the boy-child. He spits in her face and runs to his mother who has been turned loose by the German soldiers into the crowd in the direction of the Allied soldiers.

194 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY, CENTER OF SQUARE -- CONTINUOUS

194

The Allied soldiers, with multi-national flags flying, have strung the athlete En Hai up by his arms and are whipping his back and chest. The Wife of En Hai rushes up and throws herself against En Hai's chest to stop the beating. Soldiers pull at her. The Son of En Hai comes running up, very close, but afraid to join his parents. Golden Orchid comes running over.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Stop this! Stop this!

GERMAN OFFICER

(Not understanding)

Yes, Madam. Pull that woman off the prisoner.

WIFE OF EN HAI

Let me go! Let me stay with my husband.

GOLDEN ORCHID

No! Herr Officer. You stop this cruelty.

Everyone is watching. Golden Orchid walks to the Wife of En Hai who clings to the bound body of her husband. The Wife of En Hai does not comprehend. She beats out with the fist of one hand at Golden Orchid. The Son of En Hai joins in, scratching and hitting at Golden Orchid. The Wife of En Hai spits at Golden Orchid.

(CONTINUED)

194 CONTINUED:

194

WIFE OF EN HAI
Can you save my husband?

GERMAN OFFICER
(To Golden Orchid)
Stand back or I will shoot you.

WIFE OF EN HAI
You are no longer Chinese patriot.
You are the foreigners' whore.

At that moment, everyone stops, stunned, turned on the ambiguity of everyone being confused about Golden Orchid.

GERMAN OFFICER
(To Golden Orchid)
Stand back. I do not know your identity or your allegiance.

Faces in the crowd are amazed.

THREE CHINESE WOMEN
(In chorus)
Golden Orchid! She is Golden Orchid.
She is the patron of mercy!

The Wife of En Hai struggles free of the soldiers and throws herself up against En Hai.

WIFE OF EN HAI
Take a good look, husband, at your son.

En Hai says nothing. Tears roll down his cheeks. Golden Orchid fights back her tears, standing, held at gun point by the German Officer.

WIFE OF EN HAI (CONT'D)
(Close in to her husband's face)
Don't blame me. I don't want you to be killed by foreigners.

EN HAI
Uuuuh!

En Hai, upon uttering his cry, slumps, still tied up, against his wife. She steps back. A knife is in En Hai's chest.

WIFE OF EN HAI
(To her son)
Your father is dead.

(CONTINUED)

194 CONTINUED: (2)

194

The Chinese crowd is screaming. The Europeans stand stiffly in the background. The Wife of En Hai takes her son's hand and walks to Golden Orchid.

WIFE OF EN HAI (CONT'D)

Look at her, my son. She is a traitor bitch. These rich concubines turn China out to whore for the foreign devils.

Again, the Son of En Hai and Golden Orchid stare at one another.

WIFE OF EN HAI (CONT'D)

Remember the face of Golden Orchid.

The soldiers drag the Wife of En Hai and the Son of En Hai away into the crowd. Frau Klinder runs up escorted by Maximilian who takes Golden Orchid in his arms.

FRAU KLINDER

One day soon, Golden Orchid, they will all rise up and kill us all.

195 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY, IMPERIAL REVIEWING STAGE -- CONTINUOUS

195

INTERPRETER HE

China is now officially open for business. Ha, ha, ha.

196 INT. BEIJING, MOTHER FU'S BROTHEL, SMALL PAGODA -- LATER

196

All is peace and quiet. Mother Fu sits off in the next room.

MAXIMILIAN

I love you, Jinhua. Marry me. Come back to Germany with me and be my wife.

Maximilian takes Golden Orchid in his arms and kisses her ever so tenderly. Golden Orchid is deeply moved. Her eyes brim with tears. She pulls her face back from Maximilian. Their bodies still touch.

MOTHER FU

(Interjecting in close up)

You two want water from the moon.

Golden Orchid gently shakes her head "no" and lays her head on Maximilian's chest.

197 INT. CHINESE IMPERIAL PALACE, EMPRESS DOWAGER'S SUNSET PORCH 197
OVERLOOKING A MAGNIFICENT STAGE -- AFTERNOON

Title on screen reads EMPRESS DOWAGER'S PALACE, FORBIDDEN CITY, AUGUST 1902

The Imperial procession comes slowly to palace. The EMPRESS DOWAGER, followed by Emperor Guangxu, rides her sedan chair into the Wumen in the Forbidden City. Her sedan chair is carried by eight eunuchs in formal attire. Four eunuchs of the fifth rank are in front, and twelve eunuchs of the sixth rank bring up the rear. Everyone in the procession is carrying respectively: clothes, shoes, combs, different size mirrors, brush and ink sticks, yellow paper, tobacco, and water pipes. The old minister Li Lianying follows the Empress Dowager as she walks out onto the Sunset Porch where Golden Orchid waits for the audience to which she has obviously been summoned.

On this upper level, silhouetted against the blood-red of the setting sun sit these two personages, close, but with distinct distance between them. Clearly, they are Golden Orchid sitting with the Empress Dowager, but both are made equally into eclipses of the blood-red sun that hangs forever behind them.

Below them, but not in silhouette, actual imperial servants walk back and forth carrying objects while the Empress Dowager speaks to Golden Orchid.

As the sun sets during their conversation, the disappearing brightness reveals a magnificent stage between the sunset porch and the setting sun. On this three-story stage, final preparations are being made for the evening's performance by the Beijing Opera of "Mount Dingjun".

As the sun sets, the lanterns on the porch are lit, and the stage lamps begin to glow bright in the twilight in the background. Everything is rich, luxurious, extravagant, beautiful.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Today marks our return from sixteen months of exile in Sianfu. It is said you saved many Chinese people...It is said you saved our life.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty, you are too gracious.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

My first day home. Now I have a good look at you. You are so very young. So very beautiful. What is your age?

(CONTINUED)

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty, I am twenty-three.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

I have to thank you. Even your enemies agree that you helped saved the Great Qing two years ago. The foreigners want my head, but thanks to you I sit here steady on the throne. You understand foreigners?

GOLDEN ORCHID

As the wife of your Envoy to Germany, I had to be up to the mark. I did not want the foreign courts to laugh at China.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Tell me. Which is better? The foreign opera, or our Beijing opera?

GOLDEN ORCHID

I love whatever your majesty loves.

Two loud claps signal that the opera performance on the stage which is now brightly lit is about to begin within minutes.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

You have been in the limelight. No one else in China has ever been so in the foreigners' limelight.

The Empress Dowager signals for a blue chair to be brought for Golden Orchid to sit in to watch the Beijing opera.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

Golden Orchid, you sit in my chair.

Golden Orchid hesitates. Servants look startled.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

Nobody in the palace dares to sit in my chair. Sit down.

Golden Orchid walks with reverence and awe to the chair and sits down.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

Even the Emperor and the young Empress have never sat in my chair.

Golden Orchid stands up with some small degree of alarm. Servants stare.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (2)

197

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

But you can sit in my chair.

Golden Orchid sits again. This time confidently, as if she is remembering the courts of Europe.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you, your Majesty.

The Beijing Opera, with gongs and drums and lights, draws attention to the beginning of the evening performance. The actors take their places on the stage.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

This opera, "Mount Dingjun", is my favorite opera.

The performance on stage grows in excitement that is reflected in the faces of both Golden Orchid and the Empress Dowager. Each woman secretly peeks glances at the other. The Empress Dowager is jealous of Golden Orchid's beauty, youth, and fame, because she owes her return to the throne to the young woman who was the Envoy's wife. Golden Orchid has veiled emotions, because she knows the Empress Dowager in some way agreed to the death of Hong Wenqing. The opera progresses.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

(Speaking during opera)

You are the widow of the Envoy Scholar Hong Wenqing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Yes, your Majesty.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

You have much limelight.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Yes, your Majesty.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

You like this part of the opera where the old man sings?

GOLDEN ORCHID

I venerate my elders, Majesty, as I venerate my ancestors.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Then I grant you a great gift of one thousand taels of silver.

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (3)

197

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your Majesty! But I have only small needs.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

Too much limelight. You did splendidly.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you, your Excellency.

EMPRESS DOWAGER

You should not stay here in the capital city any longer. You are exiled.

Golden Orchid is shocked. She begins to rise from the chair. The Empress Dowager times her surprise to string out the agony to torture the sensitive Golden Orchid. Catches of opera wash up and over the two women.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

Sit! Sit in my chair!...

(Pause for opera)

You must be taught obedience.

(Pause for opera)

When the opera is finished, you are banished to exile.

(Pause for resounding opera)

You must be forgotten...even as your legend grows.

Golden Orchid's face turns stone cold pale. Her features lock. She stares straight ahead at the stage. On the stage the opera builds to a dramatic climax.

EMPRESS DOWAGER (CONT'D)

One thousand taels of silver makes you the highest priced whore in China.

198 EXT. SHANGHAI, XIAFEI ROAD -- NIGHT

198

Title on screen reads "SHANGHAI 1910"

On Xiafei Road, the "future" has arrived. An elevated tram car rattles by above a cinema marquee that lights the street with its sign "DAN GUANG CINEMA". Three music-makers with drums and whistles play a merry melody to attract people to the cinema. Down the street, electric lights shine in every shop. Golden Orchid walks on to Xiafei Road. She wears white silk pants and a beige silk jacket. She is very focussed, as if she knows the neighborhood well. An automobile passes

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED:

198

her. Sweet sounds of singers come from the second-story windows of a night club. A young and vigorous rickshaw man runs by pulling a pretty young lady wearing a sleeveless jacket. She displays her bare legs. In another cart, a man is pushing six girls down the street. Golden Orchid walks past an Indian policeman who has a red cloth wrapped round his head. A poor couple is pulling a night-soil cart with handkerchiefs tied over their mouths and noses. In front of a small grocery, an electric light spills a pool of brightness down on a young man who wears a peaked cap. A cigaret hangs in his mouth. As Golden Orchid walks by him, he whistles. Golden Orchid raises her hand and waves her fingers at him as if they both are part of the Xiafei Road neighborhood. From overhead, a passing tram car drips water. From first floor windows, five or six whores with heavy makeup lean on the windows making gestures and calling out to entice patrons.

From a near-by ballroom, the music of the tango can be heard.

In a pharmacy window is a western advertisement sign of a woman in a bathing suit selling a venereal disease medicine. A bright, clean automobile drives by, just missing Golden Orchid. The car hits a peddler with a cart full of tangerines. The peddler falls on the ground. The car stops and the big head of a GERMAN DRIVER sticks out of the window.

GERMAN DRIVER

(In German)

God damn you!

Golden Orchid hears the German.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(In German)

You should be ashamed.

The Indian policeman comes over, raises his truncheon, and begins to beat the peddler. The car drives off. The tango music becomes more insistent. The peddler escapes trying to pick up his tangerines. Golden Orchid shakes her head, looks around, surveys the context of the busy street. She smiles and looks up at a brightly lit sign that makes the second-story glow. The tango music comes from the open windows. The bright sign reads "GOLDEN ORCHID BALLROOM". Golden Orchid walks in the open door and up the stairs.

199 INT. SHANGHAI, GOLDEN ORCHID BALLROOM -- CONTINUOUS

199

Mixed couples of every kind dance with varying degrees of skill to the tango played by an Argentine band of touring musicians. The air is sexy, hot, and smokey. Several sailors dance with some of the hostess girls who are "Taxi Dancers".

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED:

199

Golden Orchid is greeted warmly. She is obviously in charge. She walks to the cash box, opens it, counts the money, smiles at the Doorman, and walks past a mirror where she observes her trim figure as she moves to the bar. She sees a floozy whore has taken a seat. As Golden Orchid moves in on the whore, she pushes the whore toward the door.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(With a serious sense
of humor)

Here's your jacket. Here's your hat.
What's your hurry. Good-bye. You go
back to street. This ballroom is
respectable. No whore house.

WEI SILING, a man who is forty, watches Golden Orchid with admiration. Golden Orchid turns to Wei Siling and smiles. Wei Siling walks toward Golden Orchid who is walking to the center of the ballroom floor. The Argentine band leader strikes up a fresh, hot tango rhythm that causes the other dancers to look, stop, and watch Golden Orchid and Wei Siling perform a dance that suggests they have danced intimately on many occasions. When the dance is complete, the other dancers applaud lightly, politely, and the Argentine band leader strikes up a waltz with his tiny band which sounds rather good. Golden Orchid and Wei Siling go together to a table on a platform, near the door, where Golden Orchid can watch the crowd. On the table is a wide bowl of carefully smoothed sand on which a piece of jade sits next to a single pearl. Golden Orchid re-arranges the jade and the pearl.

WEI SILING

Jinhua. How many times have I asked
you to marry me?

GOLDEN ORCHID

Once a week for three years...
(Studying the bowl)
You are jade. I am pearl. Nothing
moves. Look how smooth is the sand.

WEI SILING

Marriage would give you face.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Face? So long ago I lost face I have
no need of face.

WEI SILING

Marriage will restore your virtue.

(CONTINUED)

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Chiding)

Wei Siling, I never lost my virtue.

WEI SILING

You said you'd marry me the day I
could take you back to Beijing.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Ironically)

I said: "That will be the day".

Wei Siling pulls an official government envelope from his
suit coat pocket.

WEI SILING

This government envelope is addressed
to the "Honorable Merchant", yours
truly, "Wei Siling". I answered the
edict summoning men of worth to serve
China.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You are a man of much worth.

WEI SILING

You can be the wife of the new Mr.
National Senator.

GOLDEN ORCHID

How much worth did you "donate" for
this honor?

WEI SILING

No money. No land...No strings.

(Hesitantly)

I did infer that I am about to be
married, and...

GOLDEN ORCHID

Why am I suddenly suspicious?

WEI SILING

...and that the legendary Golden
Orchid is about to be my wife.

Golden Orchid takes the letter and reads it quickly.

GOLDEN ORCHID

You forget that your Golden Orchid
is banished in exile from the capital
city.

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED: (3)

199

WEI SILING

That was long ago. That was the will
of the Empress Dowager, not the will
of the people.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I cannot compete with that "Golden
Orchid" who is a legend.

WEI SILING

Marry me, and "Golden Orchid"
disappears under the wedding veils,
and, like magic, the "Honorable Mrs
Wei Siling" appears.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Marriage is like a red Chinese box.

WEI SILING

Is that a saying of Confucius?

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Laughing)

It is a saying of Mother Fu...On the
outside of the red box, I will be
"Mrs Wei Siling".

(Changing facial
expression)

On the inside of the red box, I will
hide "Golden Orchid".

WEI SILING

Then you will marry me?

GOLDEN ORCHID

"Golden Orchid" likes you enough to
marry you. "Mrs Wei Siling" may even
learn to love you.

WEI SILING

I am a lucky man with a lucky lady.
We will have luck and happiness.

GOLDEN ORCHID

In the capital city, we will need
luck, happiness, and...a sharp stick!

WEI SILING

You love government life, don't you.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Like an addict loves opium.

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED: (4)

199

WEI SILING

Beijing, then, is my wedding gift.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I think if you had not secured this national senate seat..., well, I was afraid I'd die in exile. I would never again in this life go to Beijing.

WEI SILING

This time, Mrs. Wei Siling, I will not let you suffer through politics.

Wei Siling reaches into the bowl of sand and moves the jade next to the pearl. He kisses Golden Orchid's beautiful hand. Golden Orchid's face looks like she thinks she might have found a new home.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My mother would have approved of you.

200 INT. SHANGHAI, PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO -- MORNING

200

A magnesium flash explodes with a pop. Golden Orchid stands relaxed with Wei Siling as their wedding photographs are taken. Golden Orchid wears a beautiful wedding garment. Wei Siling is dressed in formal Chinese robes.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Thank you.

WEI SILING

You honor me too much, Madam. I should be thanking you.

A final flash pops and explodes, fixing the image of the couple.

201 INT. BEIJING, WEI LING'S HOUSE, PARLOR -- AFTERNOON

201

Close up stands a wedding photograph exactly the same as the photograph taken in the previous shot. The photograph sits on the piano on which Golden Orchid is playing a waltz while she hums little German oom-pa-pa syllables. She is a bit nostalgic, and justified, because Germany has this day been defeated in the Great War in Europe. She is thinking of her European friends.

An array of the day's newspapers lays across the piano and on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED:

201

The headlines announce the defeat of Germany in the Great War: "GERMANY SURRENDERS", "GREAT WAR ENDS," "PEACE IN EUROPE", "KAISER HUN DEFEATED".

The title on screen reads BEIJING 1918

Wei Siling enters.

WEI SILING

Today's victory proves how skillful
you were. The Allies and America
stopped the German conquest of Europe
the way you stopped them in China.

Golden Orchid shakes her head, shaking off the compliment.
She changes her tune on the piano to a pretty Chinese melody
that is not German. Wei Siling crosses, and kisses her hair.

WEI SILING (CONT'D)

Mrs. Wei Siling, you play very well.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Not well. I know.

(With a bitter smile)

I know myself very well. I am getting
old.

(Picking up a newspaper)

I won't have my self-confidence much
longer.

Wei Siling carries Golden Orchid's signature pearls.

WEI SILING

Golden Orchid must always wear her
pearls.

Wei Siling tenderly slips the pearls over Golden Orchid's
head. The pearl fall gracefully on her bosom.

WEI SILING (CONT'D)

I love you, Jinhua.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I love you, Wei.

WEI SILING

(Looking at his
European watch)

We're late. The minister expects us
at the Dongdan Archway. For the New
Monument ceremony.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED: (2)

201

GOLDEN ORCHID

Ah, yes! Another command performance.
I love it when "we" turn into "them."

WEI SILING

When the private couple, you and I,
turn into the public couple, National
Senator and Mrs National Senator.

GOLDEN ORCHID

We play our parts so well.

202 INT. BEIJING, CHAUFFEURED AUTOMOBILE -- MOMENTS LATER

202

Golden Orchid rides with Wei Ling in the back seat of their chauffeured automobile. From inside the car, they observe that the streets are crowded with people. Horns honk. Newspaper kiosk headlines read, in various languages, "GERMANY DEFEATED" and "GREAT WAR ENDS!" and "PEACE IN EUROPE".

WEI SILING

Today is a wonderful day. Victory!

GOLDEN ORCHID

I never thought the world would come
to this.

French soldiers in French uniforms rush past the car windows, celebrating with the Chinese people the defeat of the German expansionist empire.

WEI SILING

The French suffered so many losses
from the Germans...

GOLDEN ORCHID

Wei! Look! The Klinder Memorial
Tablet!

203 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, ENTRANCE OF ZONGBU ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

203

French soldiers shoot rifles and pistols at the Klinder Tablet which crumbles slowly away under their long barrage. Off to the side, stands a ceremonial stage decorated for the day with a banner that reads "MONUMENT TO THE VICTORY OF JUSTICE". The crowd surges around the new monument (which is covered with billowing white sail cloth) in wild abandon. The chauffeured car, with Chinese flags on each front fender, moves slowly through the people. Many people, seeing the car, let it pass untouched. In fact, they stand back, French and Chinese alike, and salute the passing vehicle which drives directly into the Dongdan Archway.

204 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE -- 204
CONTINUOUS

As Golden Orchid and Wei Siling exit the car, a handsome young man of twenty-two, the unidentified, grown SON OF EN HAI begins to walk in step with them as they walk toward and up the stairs to the stage. In body and face, the SON OF EN HAI, is obviously a noticeably attractive person. They pass one, then two, then three photographers who shoot off popping shots. Obvious, when they walk out on stage is a motion picture camera set up on a high stand.

205 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE, THROUGH 205
MOVIE CAMERA LENS -- CONTINUOUS

Golden Orchid and Wei Siling receive much applause. Golden Orchid sits down as Wei Siling begins to speak. His voice sounds with an echo the way voices sound in early electric sound speakers.

WEI SILING

Today is a day for history. Today
the "Klinder Tablet" gives way to
the "Monument to the Victory of
Justice."

206 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE -- 206
CONTINUOUS

The SON OF EH HAI edges closer up into the crowd who stand on the stage around the notables who are seated on chairs on the stage.

WEI SILING

In the year of Gen Zi, eighteen years
ago, we Chinese could not escape the
national burden the Germans demanded
of China. Rebellion led to war which
led to murder and starvation. One
young Chinese woman captured our
hearts, gave us courage, and carried
us through crisis...

WOMAN ON STAGE

((Whispers to Golden
Orchid)

Everyone knows who you are. You are
the lady of mercy.

Golden Orchid shrinks back from the inevitable weight of legend and history. Above the crowd, several colorful kites float in the blue sky.

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED:

206

GOLDEN ORCHID

I pray to the gods this is not the
bad old days come back again.

WEI SILING

I present to you, the patriot woman,
the woman who loves the Chinese
people, the former Mrs Envoy Hong
Wenqing, now Mrs Senator Wei Siling,
my wife, Golden Orchid!

The band begins to play. The motion picture camera is turning.
Golden Orchid stands to much applause.

A Chinese actor in full costume off to the side stamps his
left foot down and stands on his left leg as he raises his
right knee up and his right foot out. The actor is costumed
and his face is painted identically to the way Golden Orchid's
actor-father was costumed the night he died on stage.

207 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE, THROUGH THE 207
MOVIE CAMERA LENS -- CONTINUOUS

In the same identical movement, but repeated in black-and-
white slow motion, with the real sound drawn down to very
slow sound that makes a basso roaring sound, the Chinese
actor in full costume, again stamps his left foot down and
stands on his left leg as he raises his right knee up and
his right foot out.

208 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE -- 208
CONTINUOUS

The crowd cheers. The SON OF EN HAI edges farther out on to
the stage. The politicians all stand to applaud Golden Orchid.
Golden Orchid moves gracefully to the microphone. Flashes
pop off from the photographers. Smoke swirls around in the
confusion on the stage. Much cheering is punctuated with
the sound of firecrackers exploding on long strings. The
microphone squeals.

GOLDEN ORCHID

I am not good at speaking...Everyone
must share in responsibility for the
destiny of one's country.

209 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE, THROUGH 209
MOVIE CAMERA LENS -- CONTINUOUS

Close up of Golden Orchid in black and white as seen by
flickering movie camera.

(CONTINUED)

209 CONTINUED:

209

GOLDEN ORCHID

How can a Chinese refuse to help
other Chinese?...The past was my
turn to help the Chinese people...

210 EXT. BEIJING, DONGDAN ARCHWAY, CEREMONIAL STAGE --
CONTINUOUS

210

GOLDEN ORCHID

Now it is your turn. The Chinese
people must always help the Chinese
people...Never work against the
people...Thank you.

The crowd grows enthusiastic with cheers and chanting of the
name "Golden Orchid." The face of the SON OF EN HAI glistens
with nervous sweat. It is obvious he has a gun, a small
pistol, inside his coat.

CROWD

Golden Orchid! Golden Orchid! Golden
Orchid!

Golden Orchid waves bravely. The actor in full costume, who,
suddenly, appears to look like the stage actor, the father
of Golden Orchid, hands her a small national flag on a stick.

GOLDEN ORCHID

(Very quietly)

Father? You remind me of my father.

CHINESE ACTOR

(Speaking low in this
almost mystical moment)

Daughter, you are China's daughter.

She waves the flag to many cheers. She smiles and begins to
walk from the microphone to Wei Siling. From the other side
of the stage, the SON OF EN HAI walks quietly, then more
boldly toward Golden Orchid. His face drips with sweat. His
small gun is now visible in his hand. It is quite clear that
the SON OF EN HAI means to shoot Golden Orchid specifically.

A kind of slow-motion intense "ballet" of ambiguity starts
here.

Wei Siling sees the gun and stands up, pushing into Golden
Orchid. The SON OF EN HAI is startled. He sees the married
couple, Wei Siling and Golden Orchid, standing close together,
so close they seem as one person. The SON OF EN HAI looks
directly into the face of Golden Orchid.

(CONTINUED)

210 CONTINUED:

210

SON OF EN HAI
Whore concubine traitor!

The SON OF EN HAI fires his gun directly into the couple. All the crowd freezes, pulls back, leaving only the married couple standing in tight embrace. Then slowly, very slowly, as a couple in tight embrace of love and death, Golden Orchid and Wei Siling sinks by slow degrees to their knees, and then slowly, as the crowd watches hypnotically, they fall on the stage floor, and do not move.

SON OF EN HAI (CONT'D)
(Shouting)
I am the son of En Hai! I avenge my
father's death. Death to the whore
concubine.

Soldiers, police, and guards grab ahold of him, wrest away the gun, pinion his arms, and stand with him arrested as they all freeze on stage watching.

CHINESE OFFICIAL
They are dead. The Senator! Golden
Orchid!

WOMAN ON STAGE
Golden Orchid! Goddess of Mercy. No!

The Chinese actor, in ceremonial garb, walks over to the fallen couple, kneels, gently examines the two bodies. The tension is unbearable. The actor lowers his head to the fallen couple. He very carefully rolls the dead body of Wei Siling over, and bends to the body of Golden Orchid.

CHINESE ACTOR
Daughter!

The Chinese actor raises up the shoulders of Golden Orchid. Taking her body, he stands up. Everything freezes in ambiguous tension.

WOMAN ON STAGE
She's alive. Golden Orchid lives!

On stage and in the crowd there is much consternation as it becomes clear that Wei Siling was shot, and Golden Orchid was not even injured. Golden Orchid breaks free of the actor holding her, falls to her knees, and cradles the head of the dead Wei Siling in her arms. Her face is overcome with sorrow. Wei Siling's blood streams down through her hands like the blood stream of history the German Queen predicted Golden Orchid would enter.

211 INT. BEIJING, PEASANT COTTAGE -- NIGHT

211

The two young males, Journalist #1 and Journalist #2, and the young FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER sit spellbound by the story concluded by Golden Orchid. The rain outside has turned from a drenching storm to a gentle but steady shower seen through the windows and heard on the roof.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Your wine makes this story spill
out. You will forgive me.

JOURNALIST #1

No, Mrs Envoy. History has not swept
you away.

The Female Student Photographer keeps looking at the faces in the photographs that Golden Orchid has arranged around a small altar.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

I photograph faces, Mrs Envoy. Tonight
I studied your face.

GOLDEN ORCHID

This is the face I have saved.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

Forgive me, for the comments I made
before...hoping you had regrets...as
if I was cursing you, my elder.

GOLDEN ORCHID

Elder, yes. Ancestor, no. My one
regret is my lost child. That was
the one mistake the politicians made.

JOURNALIST #2

What precisely do you mean?

GOLDEN ORCHID

When I lost my child in Berlin, the
night my first husband was
assassinated...

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

Yes?

GOLDEN ORCHID

The politicians who killed my child
in my belly...That loss of my child
made me fearless.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

Your motivation became clear to you.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:

211

GOLDEN ORCHID

Oh, yes. I was motivated by "Water from the Moon".

JOURNALIST #1

"Water from the Moon"?

GOLDEN ORCHID

You have not heard that old proverb?
"What you want is like water from the moon".

JOURNALIST #2

(Laughing)

Is it from Confucius?

Golden Orchid and FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER look knowingly at each other, roll their eyes and, bonding, laughing, speak simultaneously.

GOLDEN ORCHID

No, it's from...MOTHER FU!

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

(Simultaneously)

...MOTHER FU!

Golden Orchid and the FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER touch shoulders laughing. The two male journalists sit there.

JOURNALIST #1

I don't get it.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

You...are...such...BOYS!

GOLDEN ORCHID

Such...lovely...BOYS!

Golden Orchid and the FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER laugh again.

JOURNALIST #2

I think this is more the special stuff that women know. Yes?

Golden Orchid is suddenly serious. She reaches out and takes the hands of JOURNALIST #1, JOURNALIST #2, and the FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER, and holds them as if they were all her family.

GOLDEN ORCHID

My children.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED: (2)

211

GOLDEN ORCHID (CONT'D)

I once promised to build an altar
for people who died without
descendants.

Golden Orchid gestures to the photographs sitting about a dish of arranged stones on sand. Incense is burning. The photographs are of Hong Wenqing, Wei Siling, Madam Von Mueller, Sofia, and a newsclipping photo of Maximilian with the Kaiser and the German Queen. In the back sits a photograph of Frau Klinder.

JOURNALIST #1

To have no children is, forgive me,
bad luck.

GOLDEN ORCHID

So everyone knows...and so, I tell
you. "Water from the Moon". Remember
that. "Water from the Moon". If you
remember me, remember that.

FEMALE STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER

But Mother Orchid, what is "Water
from the Moon"?

GOLDEN ORCHID

My darling! My dears!
(A far-away look)
"Water from the
Moon"...is...something...anything...
we can never have!

THE END