

PHYLLIS LIN

Written by

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Based on a true story

Address
Phone Number

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EXT. OUTSIDE ZHIMO'S FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

YOUYI ZHANG, 20', the bridegroom, is sitting inside a red wedding litter carried by eight strong men. She is wearing a red veil that prevents us from seeing her face. The litter is approaching the front door of ZHIMO Hsu's house, a quadrangle courtyard. The orchestra behind the litter keeps playing an exuberant song with drums and gongs.

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INT. ZHIMO'S FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

Servants and cooks are bustling around the house, making final preparations for the wedding. The relatives are congratulating Zhimo's parents, who both wear very regal costumes and big smiles. On the tables are baskets with fresh vegetables, fish and meat, and teacups full of hot green tea. On the walls are red paper cuts reading HAPPINESS. ZHIMO, the bridegroom, is waiting in his room. But instead of being happy, he seems to be melancholic and at a loss.

EXT. OUTSIDE ZHIMO'S FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

The litter arrives at its destination, the men lower their backs to put it on the ground. The orchestra stops playing. Someone sets off firecrackers as Zhimo's family members pour out to meet the bride. Zhimo's mother helps her out the litter and together they go into the yard.

INT. ZHIMO'S HOUSE - DAY

The bride and bridegroom stand next to each other in the center of the living room. There's a Buddha on the main table. Other people stand aside. A male emcee declares in a musical tone and the new couple follow his instructions.

EMCEE (V.O.)

The first kowtow for the heaven and
the earth!

The new couple bow to the Buddha.

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EMCEE (V.O.)

The second kowtow for the parents!

The couple bow to the parents

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EMCEE (V.O.)

The third kowtow for the wife and
the husband!

The couple bow to each other.

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After the three kowtows, Zhimo slowly lifts the veil. We see the bride's face. Youthful, pretty, and pinkish under the veil's shadow. She smiles shyly. The veil drops, Zhimo doesn't smile back.

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

PHYLLIS LIN, a girl of 15, is quietly reading a book
outsidethe-

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BACK ROOM.

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She wears braided pigtails and a bang. She also lives in a quadrangle yard, but her dwelling appears simpler in style and more elegant. Calligraphy is hanging on the walls.

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The camera pans to show the whole structure of the quadrangle. The yard is surrounded by a circle of connected rooms. We hear laughter of a young woman and toddlers in the background coming from the front room near the front door of the quadrangle. Phyllis is sitting outside the back room. Her MOM, a woman about 35, is coming towards the back room. Mom appears irritated.

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MOM

Don't read here after sunset,
you're blinding yourself!

PHYLLIS

(imploring)

The light is just fine, mom.

MOM

Don't you know anything other than
reading? Why can't you keep your
father like your sister and
brothers? I said you'll be blind!

Phyllis closes the book and goes into the room. She knows her mom's just picking at her AGAIN.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Phyllis is reading a textbook in a room of all girls in blue and white uniforms.

The school bell rings and the students are dismissed. She packs her bag and walks out with her besties.

EXT. STREET OUT OF SCHOOL - DAY

Phyllis parts with her besties at the school gate and proceed alone onto a street. After a few steps she spots SICHENG LIANG, who is walking ahead of her carrying a trumpet case on his back.

PHYLLIS

Sicheng!

He stops and turns around.

SICHENG

Hey Phyllis!

They walk side by side now.

PHYLLIS

Are you going to a rehearsal?

SICHENG

Thanks god I just killed one. I've been blowing my lungs out for two hours straight and now I have chipmunk cheeks.

He makes a funny face by puffing out his cheeks and both of them laugh wildly.

PHYLLIS

How's it going with the Chopin record I asked for last time?

SICHENG

Oh, my bad! I've already got it from my teacher, forgot to tell you. Come any time to pick it up.

PHYLLIS

What about now?

SICHENG

Of course! Ah, but I'm a bit hungry. May I get some pancakes first?

PHYLLIS

Let's see who gets there first!

The two race to the-

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SPRING PANCAKE SHOP

named Tang dynasty, which is guarded by a majestic STONE LION in front of it. Sicheng is constantly bothered by the trumpet and therefore loses the game. As a rule between the two, he has to pay.

SICHENG

All right. Hi grandpa! Two spring pancakes please. Sweet for one and salty for the other.

The SHOP OWNER gives Sicheng two pancakes, then unexpectedly, he gives him an extra two.

SHOP OWNER

We close early today. This is for you, don't tell others.

SICHENG

Thank you grandpa! Have a good day!

SICHENG (CONT'D)

(to Phyllis)

Sweet ones for you.

They go halves with the cakes. Phyllis takes a big bite of the sweet one, yummy.

EXT. YARD OF SICHENG'S HOME - DAY

Sicheng also lives in a quadrangle yard. As they enter the front door, his playful mind thinks of a trick.

SICHENG

Hey Phyllis my room is a bit messy. Can you wait outside while I go for the record?

PHYLLIS

Sure.

Phyllis waits in front of his room, face to the door. However, Sicheng comes out secretly behind her through the connected aisles, and quietly climbs up the tree in the center of the yard.

SICHENG

Guess whose record is up here?

Phyllis turns around in a startle and immediately knows she's been tricked.

PHYLLIS

Get down here you monkey!

SICHENG

No you get up here.

PHYLLIS

All right. I'm leaving.

SICHENG

Oh come on.

Phyllis pretends she's going to leave. Sicheng gets on the ground and goes after her. As he fetches her, Zhimo walks in from the front door, meeting them head on. Sicheng immediately behaves himself.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Uncle Hsu.

ZHIMO

Sicheng, is your father home?

SICHENG

Yes, in his room. Please follow me.

Sicheng gives Phyllis the record and leads Zhimo inside. *

INT. MR. LIANG'S ROOM - DAY

Zhimo walks into the room, MR. LIANG raises his eyes from his reading. He signals Zhimo to sit on the rosewood chair across the table.

MR. LIANG

You're here. Take a seat.

ZHIMO

Mr. Liang, I come to say goodbye.
I'm going to England this week.

MR. LIANG

So you finally made up your mind,
congratulations! What do you intend
to do?

ZHIMO

I'm going to Cambridge. Prof.
Russell has agreed to have me as a
student.

(MORE)

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

He and his wife Dora really have sharp insights and reflections on China. It's true that sometimes the outsiders see most clearly.

MR. LIANG

And when are you leaving?

ZHIMO

The end of this month.

MR. LIANG

You are? Why such a hurry?

ZHIMO

I'm tired of the warlords' ongoing dogfights. I'm tired of seeing innocent people being killed everyday whereas I can do nothing for them. We have just won the war and it's a perfect time to grow, to find the remedy to our own problems. We need more mature systems of economy and politics. And we need methodology. I got to find a way to an ideal revolution. There must be a way to build an ideal modern country.

MR. LIANG

You'll find it, son. I have every faith in you. The only thing I worry about you is being too ahead of our time and idealistic, and not able to get your feet on the ground. But I don't mean to discourage you in the least. Mr. Russell is a great philosopher and you're going to learn so much from him.
Uh...By the way, what's your baby's due date?

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ZHIMO

There's uh...still three months ahead.

MR. LIANG

Are you not going to wait till then?

Zhimo purses his lips.

ZHIMO

It's a boy...Youyi and the baby
will be fine... My duties to my
family are fulfilled and I think
it's time to leave.

Mr. Liang simply nods. He isn't fully in support of the
choice but he chooses to respect.

EXT. ZHIMO'S HOUSE

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We see Youyi, pregnant with the baby, seeing Zhimo off at the
front gate of their house. Zhimo waves goodbye, and Youyi is
very upset, and confused. She looks at her swollen belly,
unable to understand why her husband has to leave in such a
hurry, and turns around into the house.

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EXT. BEIJING - DAY

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We see people boarding a ferry to England at a port. Then
zoom out to the city of Beijing, its hustle and bustle, its
people toing and froing. Suddenly we zoom in to a street
where angry students are marching, shouting slogans while
pointing their fists to the sky.

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STUDENT LEADER

Defend our sovereignty!

OTHER STUDENTS

Defend our sovereignty!

STUDENT LEADER

Expel the traitor!

OTHER STUDENTS

Expel the traitor!

STUDENT LEADER

Give back Shandong!

OTHER STUDENTS

Give back Shandong!

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

Phyllis and her little brother and sister are looking out of
the window very tensely as the parade march by.

LITTLE BROTHER

Big sister, what are they doing?

PHYLLIS
They are parading.

LITTLE BROTHER
What is parading?

PHYLLIS
Ummm...It's a way to protest when
unfair things happen.

A male's voice is heard from the living room and the little
brother runs to see who it is.

LITTLE BROTHER
Dad's back!

They all run to meet dad in the-

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LIVING ROOM

and see what news he brings back. Phyllis' mom stands beside
him. The two smaller kids grab their father's legs, one on
each side. He pats their heads. Phyllis stands by quietly
beside her mom.

MOM
So what did the Committee say?

Mom looks worried. She takes the coat off her husband's
shoulder and hangs it aside. Then dad's second wife enters.

SECOND WIFE
(flatteringly)
My lord you're back! How did it go?

Mom throws a scornful look at her.

DAD
(to the second wife)
Call it good or bad - can you take
the kids to the lobby?

SECOND WIFE
Of course. Dinner's ready, I made
your favorite dishes. Come over,
would you?

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DAD
All right. I'll first stay here for
a while.

Second wife exits in a triumphant air with the smaller kids. Mom looks at her disdainfully, then quickly turns to dad and sits at the table with him. Phyllis then sits on a chair next to them.

MOM

Now tell me, what did they say?

Beat.

DAD

They want me to go to Europe...

MOM

Europe! What a joke! They are kicking you out!

DAD

Calm down, calm down. Listen to me. Why do you think it's bad? I don't have to deal with this corrupt regime no more and it's worth celebrating. I'm not losing a job. I'm just turning into a diplomat.

Mom's voice trembles, she grieves tremendously, then suddenly turns angry and starts a fierce argument with dad.

MOM

Oh how can a family ever be without a man...What shall I do without you...I should've never let you write that stupid article about some stupid people in Paris!...How can you leave me, leave your daughter just like this?

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(beat)

Are you taking that bitch with you? I know, you are taking that bitch with you, aren't you? I know it, I know it! Are you?

DAD

Hey! Mind your words in front of a child!

(a look at Phyllis)

Other countries are eating us raw in Paris and all you know is hating people living under the same roof?

MOM

What do other countries have anything to do with you? Do you not care about me and Phyllis at all?

DAD

Do you think I want to be a
whistleblower? 40 million acres of
land, a signature, gone! You think
you are married to a man who can
sit and watch all this happen?

Mom starts sobbing.

DAD (CONT'D)

(exhausted)

All right, no more of this. My
brother will take care of
everything while I'm away.

(to Phyllis)

Phyllis dear, come close.

Still in panic and shock, Phyllis stands up and walks to him.
He holds her hands.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry my dear.
Listen, maybe this is good news for
you. I'm taking you to Europe.
Would you like to come with me?

PHYLLIS

What?

MOM

What?

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DAD

You are the smartest child of mine.
And you have showed your talent in
whatever you learn. I do hope you
can take this opportunity to
broaden your horizons, and come
back a useful person to the
country. I'll be meeting people
there, and you can be alongside and
learn.
What do you think?

CLOSE IN ON
PHYLLIS

EXT. LONDON PORT - DAY

Zhimo is waiting for Phyllis and her father at the port. His
looks have changed a lot. His hair is now oiled and slipped
back, and he is wearing a handsome suit. The ferry comes in
and releases a long horn. Phyllis and dad get off the ferry,
both carrying two large wooden suitcases in their hands.
Zhimo searches for his guests within the crowd.

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ZHIMO

Hello! So you must be Mr. Lin.

DAD

Yes I am. Are you Zhimo?

ZHIMO

Yes that's me. Nice to meet you sir! Mr. Liang told me you are arriving. And he told me to look for a man with awesome beard.

They both laugh, the two men shake hands. The camera shows Phyllis, who's wondering if she has met the man before.

Then Zhimo turns to Phyllis.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

And...this must be the famous Miss Lin. A real beauty.

Dad laughs. Phyllis lowers her head.

DAD

She is the smartest child of mine.

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Phyllis and Zhimo shake hands.

PHYLLIS

Hello uncle Hsu.

ZHIMO

Just call me Zhimo.
Now Phyllis is quite sure she has met the man. And Zhimo, on the other hand, is amazed by her good looks and good manners.

Zhimo takes a suitcase from each of them. They're the only Asians at the port. Passers-by keep eyeing Phyllis and dad for their exotic clothing. Phyllis, still with her braided pigtails and a bang, is wearing a white cheongsam and dad's wearing a dark long robe. Phyllis looks around curiously.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

They arrive at the apartment and get off the carriage. The English landlady gives them a warm welcome. Zhimo walks in with them and helps them settle.

LANDLADY

Would you like some tea, sirs and miss?

DAD

Yes please. Thank you madam.

The landlady goes off to make tea. The three walk up the stairs carrying suitcases. They arrive at the first room on the second floor.

ZHIMO

This is your room, Mr. Lin.

He opens the door and puts down one suitcase in the room.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

Your room is over here, Phyllis.

He leads her forward to her room on the other side of the aisle.

LIVING ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR

The three are having tea.

DAD

(to Zhimo)

How long have you been here? A year?

ZHIMO

Yes. A little more than a year.

DAD

And what have you been up to? Mr. Liang kept telling me you are an excellent young man.

ZHIMO

I'm so honored to hear that. I had come for Russell, the great Cambridge philosopher and social activist. He lectured in Beijing for a year and that's how I came to know him.

We exchanged letters and he agreed to have me as a student. I was so thrilled. But after I got here, I found he had resigned his job for personal reasons. What a shame! He really knows China, and so is his wife Dora. Amazing couple. Uh, anyhow, now I end up in LSE.

DAD

LSE?

ZHIMO

Oh, the London School of Economics
and Political Science.

DAD

And you like it?

ZHIMO

To be honest, not my type. A bit
dull.

DAD

Do you know Goldsworthy Dickinson?

ZHIMO

No I don't.

DAD

He's a Cambridge philosopher, a
good friend of mine. Maybe you
would like to meet him.

ZHIMO

Of course! That'll be lovely! Thank
you Mr. Lin.

Phyllis is gaining interest in Zhimo, who seems to have no
less a passionate and youthful mind. Dad finishes his tea,
and wants to take leave.

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DAD

We can talk about that later, I'm
feeling a bit tired. Excuse me, jet
lag kills old people. How about
you, Phyllis?

PHYLLIS

Actually, dad, the tea makes me
sober.

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DAD

(to Zhimo)

Zhimo, are you free to show her
around?

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ZHIMO

My pleasure.

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DAD

Thank you. Make sure to bring her
back before dinner.

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EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

It's a rare sunny day in London, they stroll a not-so-crowded street lined with trees and flanked by typical stone buildings. Phyllis is taking in all the new excitement. Zhimo, on the other hand, finds her extremely lively and spirited.

On the street there are: flowers outside the windows, the sound of someone practicing the piano, carriages, couples, and--an OLD LADY selling hats.

OLD LADY
(stopping Phyllis)
Hello darling. May I ask where you
got this beautiful outfit?

PHYLLIS
Thank you. It's a Chinese
cheongsam.

OLD LADY
Oh! How sweet. It fits you
perfectly. Well, I think this baby
blue boater hat might be a good
match. Have a try!

She gives the boater hat to Phyllis. It's feathered and elegant. Phyllis puts it on and looks into the mirror. We see her reflection in the mirror.

OLD LADY (V.O.)
What do you think? Isn't it lovely?

PHYLLIS
Yes,...I'll take it.

Phyllis reaches for her purse, Zhimo stops her.

ZHIMO
Let me buy it for you as a little
welcome gift.

Zhimo pays the old lady. They walk off.

PHYLLIS
Thank you.

ZHIMO
Not a big deal.
How do you like Cambridge? Shall we
go there?

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PHYLLIS

Sure!

EXT. CAMBRIDGE CAMPUS - DAY

Phyllis and Zhimo are strolling the campus of Cambridge. Zhimo is doing the introduction as Phyllis looks around, touching this and that, reading the signs on the buildings, amazed by all the new things she hasn't seen before.

Some students cycle by them, some are reading on the lawn, some are chatting on the bench. We hear the chimes from a church.

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ZHIMO

That's from St. Bene't's. It's about a thousand years old, the oldest on campus.

PHYLLIS

Oh wow. So what we're hearing are chimes from...the Song dynasty.

ZHIMO

That's right. Its bells have been repaired multiple times. Actually, they have a showroom displaying all the archival materials from 13th century Latin manuscripts to 19th century maps.

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PHYLLIS

That's fantastic! Shall we take a look?

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ZHIMO

Sure.

INT. SHOW ROOM - DAY

Phyllis looks carefully at the archives preserved in glass caves. Writings in Latin, writings in English, scrapbooks, blueprints and drawing of rebuilt aisles, photographs. She looks at the blueprints a bit longer.

PHYLLIS

I've never seen such blueprints before. It's like doing anatomy on stones.

ZHIMO

Yeah right.

PHYLLIS

We have old buildings too. But I've never seen such things.

ZHIMO

Yeah, but we've heard of many in poems, that's our way. We learn about a building through writings about it, not blueprints.

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Phyllis contemplates for a while.

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They walk out of the church, and stroll to the RIVER CAM. On the river they see punts, ducks and ducklings. The MATHEMATICS BRIDGE is within sight from afar.

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They sit on the river bank and watch. There's a silence, Zhimo glances subtly at Phyllis, she feels his glance and looks down.

PHYLLIS

I guess I know why you like Cambridge so much.

ZHIMO

Why?

PHYLLIS

It's a romantic place. And it makes you feel like you're part of the long history of mankind.

ZHIMO

It humbles people...And it also excites me, just to think of all the things I can do to add to the of glory of humanity. But yeah, I like it here.
And I like talking to you. You're smart, and you can understand.

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The sun is short-lived, as always. A piece of cloud blocks the sun and it suddenly turns cool. The river generates winds that blow their way.

Phyllis puts her hands on her bare arms to stay warm. Zhimo notices it. He takes off his suit and covers it over her shoulder. Body contact. Something about the man feels different.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

Shall we go indoor?

Phyllis nods. Zhimo stands up first, lending his hand to Phyllis and helps her up.

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INT. CAMBRIDGE SECONDHAND BOOKSTORE - DAY

They get inside a secondhand bookstore. Bookshelves, stacks of books on the floor, on the table, everywhere. Their pages are mostly yellowed.

The shop owner is an old man wearing spectacles. He is occupied in his own job, buried in books that surround him. Phyllis and Zhimo explore the place freely, and careful not to trip over some books on the floor.

Zhimo pulls out *Poems By William Wordsworth* and turns the pages. The camera pans, Phyllis, on the other side of the bookshelf, is still looking around.

Suddenly she seems to notice something. She stands on tiptoe and reaches for it. The book is full of dust and she blows it away, and chokes on dust inevitably.

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Its title—*A Tang Person's Travelogue*, in ancient Chinese. The only Chinese book within sight. The book is quite thin, its pages are stained and look fragile, as if they'd break upon touch.

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Hands of Phyllis turning the pages slowly and carefully. The book has vertical layout, its first pages are an intriguing read.

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OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT—We see Phyllis turning the pages.

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SUPER: Once upon a time, a legendary craftsman named Lu Ban built a magnificent 9-story-high pagoda within a day. The pagoda was said to be on Mount Cool.

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After many years, the Buddha died, his Sarira was stored in the temple by the smaller gods.

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I, a small town craftsman, want to learn Lu Ban's craft. I left my family and set out for the legendary temple.

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It begins to rain outside, but Phyllis doesn't notice it at all. Reading about a Chinese adventure story in a foreign country feels amazing to her.

Zhimo wants to tell her about the rain, but remains silent because she seems very occupied in the reading. He returns to his own reading too.

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Only the clock's ticking and the rain. Sacred silence in the bookstore.

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Phyllis turns a page. The man gets to the front gate of the temple.

PHYLLIS (V.O.)

After ninety nine days I finally
find the temple. Upon my approach,
the thousands of birds on the eaves
begin to sing...

Phyllis turns another page. The folk goes inside. We see the pages as we hear her read.

PHYLLIS (V.O.)

The pagoda is stunning and
magnificent. The door opens, an old
monk and a young monk come out.
They welcome me inside.
The Buddha in the middle is ALIVE!
It is glittering. The monks say I
am the chosen one. I instantly make
up my mind to be a believer. I'll
dedicate myself to the maintenance
of this sacred place...

The reading haunts Phyllis. The temple feels real and also magical.

She's taking it home with her. She walks to the counter.

PHYLLIS

(to shop owner)

Hello! I'd like to buy this book,
please.

Zhimo also comes to the counter. He's curious.

SHOP OWNER

You're taking the only Chinese book
I have from me.

Phyllis pays, Zhimo takes the book and quickly goes through the pages.

ZHIMO

(to shop owner)

Where did you get it?

SHOP OWNER

Not me. It's been here since my
father's time. No one ever bought
it.

Now I have all these books
(he points at the stacks
of books everywhere)
(MORE)

SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)

I'm thinking of getting rid of some
old antiques that's even...older
than me. You guys saved its life.

Phyllis and Zhimo look at each other, amazed.

ZHIMO

I'll take this one.

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He buys *The Poems by William Wordsworth*.

Phyllis walks to the doorway and looks at the rain outside.

PHYLLIS

(to Zhimo)

I didn't even notice the rain. Can
we still get back before dinner?

ZHIMO

Don't worry, it never lasts long.

EXT. OUT OF THE BOOKSTORE - DAY

The rain has stopped. Phyllis and Zhimo come out. Phyllis
still wears Zhimo's suit.

PHYLLIS

Maybe it's time to return.

ZHIMO

Wait. It suddenly occurs to
me...Come!

Zhimo drags Phyllis' wrist and runs.

EXT. THE MATHEMATICAL BRIDGE - DAY

They arrive at the mathematical bridge huffing and puffing.
The run refreshes their mind and body. We see Zhimo's
searching eyes, and suddenly these eyes are filled with joy.

ZHIMO

Look!

There's a big rainbow right across the bridge. It's STUNNING.
Phyllis shouts:

PHYLLIS

WOW! So beautiful--

They stand and watch, as if to make this moment eternity.
Then Phyllis hears Zhimo quietly saying:

ZHIMO

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man.
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

Phyllis looks at him in wonder.

PHYLLIS

Did you just compose a poem?

Zhimo laughs.

ZHIMO

It's a poem by Wordsworth. It
speaks my mind.
The rainbow is just as beautiful as
you.

Then he stares at her. It's an intense stare. Phyllis looks
down shyly, realizing that he's still holding her wrist. She
doesn't know what to do.

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PHYLLIS

Maybe it's time to leave.

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ZHIMO

Yeah.

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Phyllis turns around and takes the chance to free her wrist.
They walk back home.

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EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

The exterior of the apartment. Zhimo hurries to the apartment
and knocks on the door.

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INT. APARTMENT - DAY

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Dad opens it. Zhimo seems very excited.

ZHIMO

Thank you Mr. Lin! It's a life-
changing talk with Mr. Dickinson. I
got to transfer to Cambridge!

DAD

Congratulations! It's my pleasure
to help you. Please come in.

Zhimo goes into the living room. Phyllis is there, too. She finds herself more than glad to see him.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm hosting a Salon this weekend.
Are you free to come?

ZHIMO

Of course! I'll be more than happy
to come.

He looks at Phyllis. They sit down for tea.

EXT. BEIJING PORT - DAY

Youyi is hurrying onboard a ferry to London, carrying two wooden suitcases. She has delivered the child and her belly is flat. We see her navigating through the crowd as we hear her reading the letter.

YOUYI (V.O.)

Zhimo, our father is sending me to
London to take care of you. He's
afraid of you being lonely, and
think it's best that I keep you
accompany. Studying abroad can be
hard. It might be good to have
someone cook and wash for you...

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INT. ZHIMO'S HOUSE - DAY

Cut to Zhimo reading the letter, frowning.

EXT. LONDON PORT - DAY

Youyi steps off the boat and looks around for Zhimo. He already sees her from afar, but is hesitant to take his steps.

Finally she sees him, she drops one suitcase and waves to him passionately, and Zhimo has to react. Youyi walks towards Zhimo, and he takes a suitcase from her.

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ZHIMO

I don't have an extra room at my
place. You'll settle at the
Students' Union.

Youyi is bit disappointed. But she's still largely cheered at seeing her husband.

INT. BUILDING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION - DAY

Young Chinese men in the lobby. We see Zhimo and Youyi appear at the front door.

YUELIN

You're back.
(to Youyi)
And this must be...

Youyi looks at Zhimo.

ZHIMO

She's my wife from home.

They walk upstairs to the room for Youyi, on the stairs they meet Phyllis head on.

PHYLLIS

You're here! I'm handing
invitations to dad's salon on
Saturday.

She hands him an invitation smilingly. Zhimo is extremely surprised at seeing her and he is abashed.

*
*

Phyllis notices the face of a strange woman behind him. The two women are curious about each other and await an introduction. Zhimo awkwardly turns around, and introduces Phyllis to Youyi first.

*

ZHIMO

This is Phyllis Lin.
(to Phyllis)
Phyllis, this is Youyi...

Beat.

Youyi picks up the conversation.

YOUYI

I'm Zhimo's wife, I'm sent from
home to take care of him. Nice to
meet you miss Lin.

Phyllis freezes, but still manages to force a polite smile. She looks at Zhimo, who dodges eye contact. She can't exactly tell her feelings, shock, confusion, sadness all tower upon her. At the moment, she simply wants to hide.

PHYLLIS

Nice to meet you! Umm...I got to
go. See you later.

She walks down the stairs, trying hard not to run. She feels extremely stupid.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

BACKYARD

Phyllis doesn't enter the apartment. Her uneasiness will be too obvious to her father. Instead, she curls up under a tree in the backyard and begins to sob quietly.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Zhimo hurries to Phyllis' apartment, but he hesitates just as he is about to knock.

He turns around, realizing that this is rather impulsive. He needs time to gather his words first. He strolls around the house.

He strolls to the backyard and sees Phyllis. He hesitates for a second before entering the back door. The door is unlocked. He sits beside her. Phyllis is burying her head in her lap, unconscious of his presence.

ZHIMO

Phyllis.

Phyllis raises her head. She has calmed down. She rubs her eyes.

*
*

Zhimo moves over to Phyllis, she moves away and stands up instantly. He stands up too.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

Phyllis, please don't go. I want to confess.

Phyllis simply stares at the ground.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

I must confess I am a married man. But it was an arranged marriage, and I hated it from the very first day. I had no choice, I am the only child in the family... And you know, I have duties...

PHYLLIS

Why are you telling me this.

ZHIMO

But after meeting you, everything changed. It was like life never started, until I tasted the sweet nectar of love. You are the April of my life. For thirty years I have never lived, even once, for myself. I am torn, Phyllis. I am chained by a chain of four thousand years, oh just let me be that frog in the well. Why show me the sky? Now I suffer even more.

Phyllis is overwhelmed, and moved by his speech. She tries to stay calm.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

But I fell for you, Phyllis. And I am now breaking free of that chain. Don't worry, I am divorcing her, legally.

Phyllis, having kept her eyes on the ground, suddenly looks up unbelievably, staring straight into Zhimo's eyes with fire in hers. She feels scared, and then the scare turns into anger. She can't believe what she is hearing.

PHYLLIS

Are you crazy? No one has ever had a divorce in our country!

ZHIMO

Then I'm proud to be the first. Someone has to fight for freedom of marriage and defend the sanctity of love.

*
*

Phyllis can't stand it any longer. She trembles, and takes a step back.

PHYLLIS

Why are you doing this? There's nothing between us. And I would never forgive myself, if you divorce your wife and hurt her because of me.

*
*
*
*
*

Phyllis tries to run, Zhimo takes her by the hand.

Dad happens to see this from the upper floor window. He's smoking a pipe.

ZHIMO

But we get along together, don't we?

PHYLLIS

Yes I get along with you, and yes I appreciate you, but...you're crossing the line!

*
*

She gets rid of his hand and rushes into the house, banging the door behind her.

EXT. BUILDING OF THE STUDENTS' UNION - DAY

Zhimo enters into the student union crossly. Yuelin is sitting on a sofa in the lobby.

ZHIMO

Yuelin, can you help me with one thing?

YUELIN

Just say it.

CLOSE ON Zhimo

*

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

BESIDE THE FIREPLACE. Both Phyllis and dad are pretending to read, neither wants to be the first to speak. Finally dad goes first:

DAD

Phyllis, you know you can always talk to me if anything bothers you.

Beat.

PHYLLIS

I'm just...I just don't know what to do.

DAD

It's all right, girl. You don't need to know everything about your life.

PHYLLIS

I...I don't think I should see uncle Hsu any more...

*

DAD

I'll turn him down for you, if you
want.

Phyllis nods. Dad takes a paper and a pen, and begins
writing.

INT. HOUSE OF THE STUDENTS' UNION - DAY

Three men and a woman are sitting around a table in a room.
The three men are Zhimo, Yuelin, and another student. Youyi
is facing a piece of paper on the desk.

*

*

ZHIMO

(Youyi)

With the presence of the two
notaries, you'll sign this paper,
and we'll both be free.

Youyi stares at the paper with no expression. It doesn't seem
like she's going to sign it. The notaries stand by silently.
Zhimo tries again.

ZHIMO (CONT'D)

Youyi, you know this is good for
both of us. There's no love in our
marriage. Why would you want to
spend the rest of your life with
someone that doesn't love you?

*

Youyi looks up at him, she looks hurt and wronged.

YOUYI

What about our child? I am his mom,
and you are his dad. What good does
it do to him?

Zhimo lowers his head, so do the notaries. They feel
embarrassed for being involved.

YOUYI (CONT'D)

How am I supposed to face my
parents? Face your parents? What
will people think of me? What will
people think of them?

She turns her head angrily.

ZHIMO

But I don't love you. And you don't
love me. Time has changed.

Youyi looks up in grief.

PHYLLIS

I have been taught nothing, but to
love you, and obey you.

Silence. It feels like a lifetime. She's still not signing.

A man walks into the room and gives Zhimo a letter, and a
blue boater hat.

A MAN

A letter from Miss. Lin for you,
sir. And she wants to give this
back to you.

Youyi watches. She purses her lips. She knows the reason. *

EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY *

SUPER: Two years later

Phyllis' family in Beijing are in a festive mood. It's the
day of return, they are laying out cuisines on the table and
cleaning up dust in the room. For the first time mom and the
second wife are on the same boat--though only temporarily.

Mom's POV - Phyllis and dad appears at the front door. They
drop the bags and smile. *

MAMA LIU (V.O.) *

The lord and missy are back! *

The family gather around them, filling the air with joy and
laughter like it's New Year's day. Phyllis' little brother
and sister have grown a lot.

MOM

God knows how long I have been
waiting for this moment!
You must be tired and hungry. Come
change your clothes and we'll sit
down for dinner.

Just as Phyllis is going into her room, Sicheng appears at
the front door.

SICHENG (V.O.)

Phyllis!

Phyllis turns around and sees Sicheng, who has become a
handsome young man now. She is pleased to see him.

SICHENG

Your hair's cut short. And your striped coat! You are such a Brit now Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

I'll take that as a compliment, Mr. trumpet.

SICHENG

Actually, Orchestra leader. I bring you some spring pancakes and sugar pies. I bet you miss them.

PHYLLIS

Oh dear, they are my only support in those days of fish and chips!

*
*

Mom comes to greet Sicheng.

MOM

Look who we get there! Haven't seen you a lot after Phyllis' gone.

Sicheng scratches his head awkwardly.

*

SICHENG

Sorry madam.

MOM

No worries. Come join us for lunch. I'll send someone to tell your father.

Sicheng can't refuse.

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

LIVING ROOM, the family are gathered around a round table with all kinds of appealing cuisines on it. Dad takes a first bite and then others follow.

MOM

You're not leaving again, right?

DAD

No.

*
*

MOM

Right.
(looking at Phyllis)
(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

Phyllis is almost 18 now, it's also
time to find someone nice for her.

Apparently she's alluding to Sicheng. Both Phyllis and
Sicheng take the hint, the chemistry gets awkward.

SECOND WIFE

Right. In the past, girls of the
same age have had two kids!

Both Phyllis and Sicheng blush incredibly.

DAD

Well, though you two were engaged
in the cradle, I'm a very
democratic parent. You're all grown-
ups now, it's all up to you.

(To Sicheng)

Are you going to college next year,
Sicheng?

Sicheng breathes a sigh of relief.

SICHENG

Yes uncle Lin.

DAD

What do you want to study?

SICHENG

Uh...Not very sure. I do talk about
politics a lot, but my dad says I'm
not a material for politics.
Besides that, I do like drawing a
lot.

Phyllis takes a look at him.

DAD

You have a dream school?

SICHENG

Dad says it would be better to
spend a few years abroad, away from
the warlords.

DAD

I'll talk to your dad about it.
Phyllis is going to college too.
It'll be best if you can accompany
each other.

MOM

She is? College?

(sigh)

I never understand what good
education does for her.

*

*

*

PHYLLIS

(to mom)

Then let me show you, mom. I've
decided to be an architect, you and
dad are going to be so proud.

MOM

SECOND WIFE

What?

What?

MOM (CONT'D)

(to second wife)

Mind your own business!

(to Phyllis)

Are you out of your mind? I never
heard a girl can be an architect.

SECOND WIFE

The pride of family carrying bricks
on a building site, what a
spectacle!

MOM

Oh shut your stupid mouth up!

Phyllis hasn't quite expected this chaotic situation. She
also feels humiliated in front of Sicheng.

DAD

She has her reasons. And I assure
you she's not going to carry
bricks.

Let's just eat. The dishes are
getting cold.

The family eat in silence.

*

EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

*

YARD.

They finish lunch and Phyllis is catching up with Sicheng.
Somehow Phyllis is holding grudges against him for witnessing
her family chaos, which Sicheng is totally unaware of. He is
more concerned about his little gift of affection.

SICHENG
I'll tell you a secret.

PHYLLIS
What?

SICHENG
I made the spring pancakes.

PHYLLIS
No way!

SICHENG
It's real. I learned it from the
grandpa at the shop.

PHYLLIS
But why can't you just buy it?

SICHENG
Well...they're closed.

*

PHYLLIS
What?

SICHENG
It's the only pancake shop you like
and now it's closed. So guess what
I did. I asked from door to door
and finally found where grandpa's
currently living, and begged him
for a recipe.

PHYLLIS
You're kidding. You're not his son
and he's not gonna tell you.

SICHENG
But he told me anyway. I promised
to zip my mouth. It'll be forever
in here.

*
*
*

He points at his head. Phyllis takes a moment to believe him.

PHYLLIS
Why did you do that?

SICHENG
Uh...

It doesn't feel like the right time to confess.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Because I had a lot of free time.
Plus, it's fun.

We hear Sicheng's V.O.

*

SICHENG'S THOUGHTS

You dickhead!

Phyllis sees through his lies immediately. She feels funny
and her grudges are gone.

PHYLLIS

By the way, why is it closed?

SICHENG

The whole lane is renovating now.
Beijing has been doing away with
old things lately.

EXT. QUIET LANE OF SPRING PANCAKE SHOP - DAY

Sicheng takes Phyllis to the once prosperous street, which is
now deserted and quiet with only a few pedestrians. The lane
is largely in debris, among which stands some crooked
scaffoldings of new buildings. Ugly banners and dirty chalks
can be seen on some of the remains, the legible ones reading-

#6. #10. Fashion Design. Modern Heaven. New English style.

PHYLLIS

New English style?

Phyllis soon finds out the place is not turning into better.
As she goes to check the debris of the pancake shop, she
observes the stone lion that stands its guard, whose mighty
face has been cut in half. She touches its face, and can't
withhold grieving any more.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

What happened to you, Pudding?

SICHENG

You used to freak out over it so
much. But then we adopted it as a
puppy. You were mom and I was dad.

*

They stroll the area. It feels bleak.

*

PHYLLIS

You know what? I've seen so many
ancient buildings in London.

*

(MORE)

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

And they are just stunning,
irreplaceable creatures. They have
a life, they're alive, not some
dead, cold, lifeless stones.
I've never felt more alive, just
being there, feeling the non-
stopping pulse of humanity,
overlapping mine, through a stone
crack, chimes of a bell, a raindrop
that falls from a thousand years
ago. That feeling is sacred.
And a lot of times Beijing gives me
the same feelings too, it's just I
was too young to tell exactly. The
first time dad took me to the
Imperial Palace, I was completely
choked out of words by a strong
grip of force. It must be the
guardian of the place. I have
believed these buildings have
spirits since then.

*

*

Sicheng is lost in thought, perhaps recalling his own
experience with the Imperial Palace. They walk side by side
in silence for a while. Then Sicheng suddenly says--

SICHENG

Do you think I'll make a good
architect too?

Phyllis is surprised, then gives an affirmative smile.

PHYLLIS

You can draw.

EXT. BUSY STREET IN BEIJING - DAY

They exits and lane into a busy street. Cars, taxis,
rickshas, restaurants, movie theaters, modern-looking young
people and traditional-looking elders, all kinds of noises
from humans and vehicles.

The newspaper boys are having a busy day, weaving their way
through the crowds and the traffic jam. One boy almost got
knocked down by a loaded ricksha, and is scolded by its
puller. But he gets on his feet again and continues to shout--

NEWSPAPER BOY

Breaking news! Breaking news! First
divorce ever in history! First
divorce in China!

The boys comes their way and peddles his newspapers.

NEWSPAPER BOY (CONT'D)

Sir, miss, newspapers? First divorce in China.

SICHENG

How much?

NEWSPAPER BOY

Five cents.

Sicheng pays the boy and takes the newspaper. He holds it and read together with Phyllis. He looks at the title and CAN'T believe his eyes.

SICHENG

Uncle Hsu?

Phyllis painfully casts a few glances while Sicheng is devouring the article like mad. He reads out the article unconsciously.

SICHENG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

To my fellow people: I'm finally breaking free of hell, the chains that have chained us all for four thousand years...I am converted to the religion of Freedom of Love, and thereby I announce to the world of my divorce with Youyi Zhang, and I hope you all can share my joy...

SICHENG (CONT'D)

I'm happy for him.

He turns to Phyllis, who hasn't uttered a word yet.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Do you know uncle Hsu? What do you think?

PHYLLIS

I think we shouldn't judge people's personal affairs. I'm going home.

She walks off. Sicheng doesn't understand why she looks pissed, but he is too excited to care.

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

PHYLLIS' ROOM

Phyllis is packing her bags. She's leaving for the U.S. for college.

*

There is one closed suitcase by the bed, and the opened one by her feet is half-loaded with clothes. She continues to take things from the bookshelf into the suitcase.

Then she happens to see A Tang Person's Travelogue. She takes it out and turns its pages. Then she puts in into the suitcase and continues the packing.

The camera pans to an enrollment letter on the table, whose beginning reads: Welcome to the University of Pennsylvania!

EXT. BEIJING PORT - DAY

The two families of Phyllis and Sicheng seeing them off at the Beijing port. From left to right stand Mom, dad, little brother, little sister, and second wife. To their left is Sicheng's dad and mom. They are happy and sad at the same time.

Phyllis and Sicheng are on the deck, waving goodbye. The ferry releases a horn, ready to set off. The two moms start sobbing. The dads appear more contained.

MR. LIANG
I'm glad. I'm glad.

DAD
I am relieved they're going together.

MR. LIANG
We had a vision, didn't we?

CLOSE ON dad's satisfied look.

EXT. UPENN CAMPUS - DAY

SUPER: University of Pennsylvania, 1924

First day of college. Phyllis and Sicheng are very cheerful. They are going to-

COLLEGE GREEN,

where a MEET-YOUR-MAJOR fair is going on. The lawn is very crowded, students line up in front of the tents for consultation. Phyllis and Sicheng tries to find the department of architecture where WARREN LAIRD, the dean of the department, is sitting.

They take the line. The line is all boys and they look at Phyllis strangely from time to time.

She feels a bit uncomfortable, and she tries to avoid eye contact. Someone calls out MICHAEL, the boy right behind her.

JACK
Hey Michael!

MICHAEL
What's up bro.

Jack throws a football at Michael, who catches it with a bang. A bit of shock for Phyllis. She turns around, casts a glance, and turns back, clenching her hands in front of her body. Finally it's their turn.

SICHENG
Good afternoon, sir.

LAIRD
Hi how can I help you?

SICHENG
We hope to take architecture as our major. We want to see if we're qualified.

Laird casts a suspicious glance at Phyllis.

LAIRD
Both of you?

SICHENG
Yes.

LAIRD
Well I hate to say this, but I'm afraid we don't accept women.

What? PHYLLIS SICHENG What?

Phyllis is completely stunned and couldn't utter a word. Her heart's broken.

SICHENG (CONT'D)
But that's not fair! She is as good as any man, I promise, and only better.

Hiss coming from the line behind them.

LAIRD
Well, I have absolutely no doubt in that. But rules are rules.
(MORE)

LAIRD (CONT'D)

Maybe she can apply to the school
of arts which is open to all.

*

Phyllis doesn't want to give up so easily.

PHYLLIS

Excuse me. But is there a reason
for such a rule?

LAIRD

Well, architecture is very
intensive, and our students usually
have to work night shifts.
Therefore we reasonably consider it
inappropriate to have a lady's
presence.
Please let me know if there's
anything else I can do for you.

*
*
*
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*
*

PHYLLIS

No, thanks.

*

They get off college green and walk to

*

LOCUST WALK.

Phyllis and Sicheng walk grimly down Locust walk. Phyllis'
head is almost drooping to the ground, Sicheng steals a
glance at her from time to time.

SICHENG

Don't worry. We'll figure a way
out...Arts is pretty cool
too!...Or, I can tell you about
everything in class.

Beat.

PHYLLIS

Thank you. But I'm decided to take
them anyway...I'll just enroll in
all the courses as an arts student.
I don't care if it's non-degree.If
the teacher wants me out, then I'll
just stand in the hallway. I don't
mind. They can't blame me for
standing in the hallway!

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

SICHENG

Don't worry, it won't happen. If it
has to be this way, I'll stand in
the hallway with you.

*
*

Their eyes meet. There's a spark in their eyes, a spark of trust, comradeship, and mutual affection. *

At this moment, an Asian boy comes over and greets them cheerfully. *

ZHI

Hey guys! What's up! I stood behind you just now and, I thought maybe you are Chinese too. *

PHYLLIS

Yes we are. Where are you from?

ZHI

Shanghai. What about you?

PHYLLIS

We're from Beijing.

ZHI

Are you both taking architecture? *

Then we can be classmates!

Sicheng looks at Phyllis, not sure how to answer. *

PHYLLIS

Yes we are. I'm Phyllis, this is Sicheng.

ZHI

Nice to meet you. I'm Zhi.

They shake hands with each other.

ZHI (CONT'D)

Um...Have you had lunch?

SICHENG

Not yet.

ZHI

Great. I know a pretty good Mexican food truck over there. Shall we?

The three now walk down Locust Walk together and Phyllis is gradually restoring her usual liveliness.

PHYLLIS

(to Zhi)

It shocks me how tacos are like
rougamos in some ways. Do you like
rougamos?

ZHI

Oh, sorry guys we don't have that
in Shanghai...Do you guys eat
steamed buns?

FADE OUT.

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

An architecture history class by prof. ALFRED GUMAER. Phyllis
and Sicheng wait outside the lecture hall for the professor.
After a while, Alfred Gumaer comes, Phyllis steps forward.

PHYLLIS

Hi prof. Gumaer! I'm a student from
the school of arts, and I'm
enrolled in this course...I know
your department doesn't accept
women, but I am really a fan of
architecture and I would be so
honored to be able to sit in your
class.

Alfred Gumaer looks at her, a bit surprised, and amazed too.

ALFRED GUMAER

It's true we don't accept women,
but you can come to my class as you
wish.

PHYLLIS

Thank you so much sir!

Alfred Gumaer walks into the lecture hall. Phyllis merrily
walks inside too, and sits right in the middle of the front
row, Sicheng sits beside her.

The boys start to notice and murmur. Zhi is narrowly late for
class, he hurries into the classroom, finds Phyllis and
Sicheng at the front row, and sits beside Phyllis.

ALFRED GUMAER

Morning class. Today we'll continue
to talk about temples in ancient
civilizations. And we'll also have
a guest speaker today, but before
that, you'll still have to put up
with me for half an hour.

He takes out his teaching materials.

ALFRED GUMAER (CONT'D)

Ok. So this is a conjectural wooden temple at Isthmia. It's located in Peloponnese...

His voice trails off to an inaudible background sound. The camera pans to show the whole class. Most students are listening while those in the back row seem to doze off already.

CLOSE UP of students in the front row from right to left. Student #1--Student #2--Sicheng--Phyllis--and then Zhi, who is openly dozing off in the front row.

ALFRED GUMAER (CONT'D)

Ok, my part is over. Then we'll welcome our guest speaker. Mr. Itō Chūta. He is a very well-reputed Japanese scholar, expert in oriental architecture. I bet there's no better person to walk you through the mysterious eastern world.

He then looks to the door and spreads his hands.

Students applaud loudly, awaking Zhi in a startle. He rubs his eyes and whispers to Phyllis.

ZHI

I'm never sitting here again.

An elderly man of about 60 walks into the classroom and bows to the audience. Alfred Gumaer shakes his hand and they exchange a few words of greeting. Itō Chūta wears a dark long robe, a pair of round spectacles, and his white beard is long and thin.

Itō Chūta stands onto the platform and begins speaking. His English is accented.

ITŌ CHŪTA

Nice to see you, young chaps...

Then he sees Phyllis.

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

And young lady.
I am very honored to be here. Prof. Gumaer wants me to talk about wooden temples in Asia as a complement to his teachings about Europe.
Let me ask you a question first.
(MORE)

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

Do you know where the oldest
remaining wooden temple is?

STUDENT #1

(without thinking)

In Asia!

MICHAEL

In Japan!

*

We hear laughs from the audience. Then Phyllis speaks loud
and firmly--

PHYLLIS

In China.

Itō Chūta glances at her and pulls up his spectacles. He then
turns to Michael and says:

*

*

ITŌ CHŪTA

You're right! In Japan. The Horyuji
in Nara.

Phyllis purses her lips.

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

The Horyuji is a Buddhist temple
founded in 607 A.D by a Japanese
prince. It is the living fossil for
scholars today who want to study
wooden temples.

*

*

Then he turns to face the blackboard and in a few seconds
sketches a pagoda. And to its right, he sketches in more
details a particular part of its eave consisting of connected
wooden knots. His sketches are nearly perfect.

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

(point at the pagoda)

This, is a pagoda.

(at the eave)

And this, is called a Tou-kung.

Phyllis suddenly seems to be reminded of something. We hear
her whisper:

PHYLLIS

Tou-kung...

We see the book from Phyllis' memory, turning its pages. As
ITŌ CHŪTA is speaking, key words from the book FLOAT from the
pages, GLITTER, FONT BOLD. ITŌ CHŪTA is always talking in
the background.

*

*

*

ITŌ CHŪTA (O.S.)

No clay, no glue, just wood,
interlocked, and lasts for
thousands of years. The Romans
didn't came up with it, and they
resorted to stones. But WE,
conquered the wood.

*
*

Sound of chalk scratching the blackboard.

ITŌ CHŪTA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This we call a FLYING RAFTER. Don't
you think it looks like a bird that
is about to fly?

Can you find its BEAK?...

If we check the interior, the walls
are mostly painted ORANGE-RED...

More than a thousand years ago,
Japanese architects traveled to
China by boat. They learned the
form of Chinese temples and brought
it back to Japan. Today, if you
want to know what buildings of that
period looks like, you can only
find them in Nara.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Back to reality.

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

Thank you, and that's all for
today.

*
*

The room bursting with applause and cheers.

Class is over, students pour out of the classroom. Phyllis
and Sicheng go up to ITŌ CHŪTA.

PHYLLIS

Thank you professor. You opened an
entire world for me.

ITŌ CHŪTA

My pleasure.

PHYLLIS

But I don't understand why Nara is
the only place we can find those
temples. How can you be so sure...

*
*
*
*

ITŌ CHŪTA

Well, I have conducted field
research in China several times.

*
*

(MORE)

ITŌ CHŪTA (CONT'D)

I've been to a lot of places,
mountains and villages, a lot of
amazing discoveries. But as to your
question, I'm afraid the answer is
no.

*
*
*
*
*
*

PHYLLIS

I...I actually have a book about a
similar temple in China. Would you
like to take a look?

*
*

ITŌ CHŪTA

Ok. Come to my office tomorrow.

*

PHYLLIS

Sure! Thank you!

*

INT. ITŌ CHŪTA'S OFFICE - DAY

ITŌ CHŪTA is reading the book. Phyllis and Sicheng are in his
office.

*

ITŌ CHŪTA

Mount Cool...It's the nickname for
Mount Wutai.

*

PHYLLIS

In Shanxi province?

ITŌ CHŪTA

Yes, I've been there. We found
Daxiantong temple, Cifu temple,
Luohou temple...Mostly Ming or Qing
dynasty products.

*
*
*

PHYLLIS

What about earlier ones?

*
*

ITŌ CHŪTA

No. None.

*
*
*
*

Phyllis and Sicheng look at each other in disappointment.

*

INT. FISHER FINE ARTS LIBRARY - DAY

*

Another day. Phyllis waits in front of the library for
Sicheng. Shortly after, Sicheng comes out.

*
*

SICHENG

I checked his book about Mount
Wutai.

PHYLLIS

What does it say?

SICHENG

He really did amazing work. A lot
of sketches and annotations beside
them. But the thing is, Mount Wutai
is such a huge complex of
mountains...

PHYLLIS

And he only went to a few?

SICHENG

Exactly. Mostly famous tourist
attractions.

Beat.

PHYLLIS

Wonderful news! ...At least for us
researchers.

SICHENG

But for a civilization...I can't
just watch so much about it being
forgotten.

PHYLLIS

Have you checked all relevant
books?

SICHENG

I hope I had. God how I wish they
would allow you inside.

PHYLLIS

It's fine. At least the cafeteria
lets women in.

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Phyllis and Sicheng are in the classroom among a few others.
Phyllis is writing a letter home while Sicheng is sketching.
Zhi comes into the classroom wearing an academic dress. He
holds another one in his arms.

ZHI

Sicheng, I got yours.

Sicheng takes the dress. Phyllis watch them.

SICHENG

Thank you.

Zhi sits on the desk in front of them, turning his body to Phyllis.

ZHI

Hey Phyllis, I can get the same dress for you, you know, secretly, if you want.

PHYLLIS

No worries. I got mine.

ZHI

What a shame. They don't put architecture on your diploma even if you're always the first in class!

PHYLLIS

It's nothing. I learned what I learned. A diploma is just a paper. You don't get a job in Shanghai because of that diploma, do you?

ZHI

Of course, I get a job because I'm an excellent architect.

All of them laugh.

ZHI (CONT'D)

Seriously, I'm doing a startup in Shanghai, called the Zhi Architects.

SICHENG

Good one for you! You really have a business mind.

Zhi scratches his head.

ZHI

Yeah...but, I'm wondering if you guys are interested in being my partners.

Phyllis and Sicheng are surprised.

PHYLLIS

Oh! But you know we want to be
scholars.

ZHI

As far as I know, scholars don't
make much money.

SICHENG

Well that'll still be enough to
feed us.

ZHI

All right. You guys really open my
mind, immune to money!

Phyllis and Sicheng find him funny. Zhi slides down the desk.

EXT. COLLEGE GREEN - DAY

Graduation ceremony. Teachers, students, and parents all
gather at the college green. Heated conversations, hugs,
tears, groups and groups of students in graduation gowns,
photographers. Phyllis and Sicheng are standing beside a
tree, and Zhi is taking a photo for them.

ZHI

ONE. TWO. Three. Cheese!

Click. The photo is taken. Big grins. Sicheng's hand on
Phyllis' shoulder. There's a RING on his ring finger.

FADE TO:

EXT. BEIJING PORT - DAY

Ferry pulling into shore. Phyllis and Sicheng get off the
ferry with other passengers. They flag down a ricksha and get
on it.

LONG SHOT. The ricksha goes down the road where a line of
uniformed soldiers are marching. We hear their conversation:

SICHENG (O.S.)

We'll go to your place first.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

Can't wait to see mom and dad freak
out over our rings!

INT/EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

The ricksha stops at Phyllis' home. They appear at the front door.

PHYLLIS
Mom, dad, I'm back!

But only mom and Mama Liu show up. Mom looks older and weathered, her hair has turned grey. The yard behind mom is quiet, unlike before when laughters and chatters can always be heard.

MOM
My child...

She touches Phyllis' shoulder. Phyllis casts a glance inside the house.

MOM (CONT'D)
You're so much thinner. What did you eat in America? Didn't you take good care of yourself?

Then she turns to Sicheng.

MOM (CONT'D)
You're thinner too. God, it must be very tough to study there.

PHYLLIS
We're fine mom. It's so good to see you again! Where's dad?

Mom hesitates to answer. Mama Liu asks for leave.

MAMA LIU,
I'll go get tea for you.

That's strange. Phyllis asks again.

PHYLLIS
Mom, where's dad? And my siblings?

Mom turns around and walk inside. She is abashed.

MOM
Come in first.

They follow mom, Phyllis persists.

PHYLLIS
Is dad at work? Mom, what happened!
Are you pissing him off again?

Mom is offended by this remark.

MOM

I'm not pissing him off! He is
pissing me off all the time...not
any more...

Mom becomes quiet and upset, while Phyllis gets extremely
impatient. She dashes to-

DAD'S ROOM.

It's EMPTY. There's a black-and-white photo on the wall,
several garlands beneath it on the table. Phyllis' eyes are
wide open with fear and astonishment. She freezes. This is
too heavy, and too sudden a blow.

Her head's swirling crazy. She has to support herself by the
table. After catching her breath, she notices a stack of
bundled-up letters in front of her. The one on top is sealed,
unopened.

INSERT - THE ENVELOP ON TOP

To dad, Phyllis

BACK TO SCENE

Phyllis takes the letter from the stack.

PHYLLIS

(murmur)

Dad never opened it...

Phyllis then notices the letter that is now on top. It
doesn't have an envelop, and looks half-finished. It's dad's
writings. Phyllis picks it up.

DAD (O.S.)

My dear Phyllis, I'm glad to know
you're doing well in America. If I
did the math correctly, there're
only four months towards your
graduation. You must be busy with
your final project at this time,
right? Tell me more about it, what
is my gifted one designing? ...

Phyllis can't contain herself any longer. Tears flood down
her face. She lets out a long, desperate cry.

Disappointment, anger, confusion, but desperation towers over them all. She can't support herself any longer, she collapses.

INT. PHYLLIS'S ROOM - DAY

Phyllis is sitting on her bed, mom is beside her.

PHYLLIS

What happened? And why didn't you tell me?

She sounds resentful. Mom feels judged.

MOM

You think it's easy for me? None of us had an easy time! How is a widow like me supposed to live? I only have one daughter and even the daughter was not by my side!

Phyllis turns her head away. The air freezes. Mom can't withhold herself now. She begins to sob.

MOM (CONT'D)

Mr. Liang and I agreed on keeping it from you, but it was for your benefits...You can't afford to stop your studies at this time!

PHYLLIS

What happened?

Beat.

Mom is gathering strength to speak the truth.

MOM

It's...It's a stray bullet! I told him not to mess with the warlords, he just wouldn't listen!

A sudden burst of grief. Tears quickly fill Phyllis' eyes. After a while, Phyllis is reminded of something.

PHYLLIS

Then who paid for my tuition this semester?

MOM

Mr. Liang did...He paid everything for you.

Phyllis looks away.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Phyllis and Sicheng come to the cemetery to grieve for her father, both of them wear black and hold white mums.

The tombstone reads: Changmin Lin, 1876-1925. Died for his country.

They drop the flowers by the stone, then kneel down and pray. Phyllis closes her eyes, solemn look on her face.

PHYLLIS

Dad, I'm back.

(beat)

I have graduated. You would have been so proud...You asked what I did as my final thesis...You already knew the answer! I wrote a paper on Chinese architecture. Sicheng did the same topic, too. It's hard, we didn't have many references...Sicheng and I are going to be field researchers. We're probably the first in the country. I've always imagined your face when I tell you in person...Sicheng and I are engaged! Eventually, we still fall into your trap. He is a very good person, very considerate, and clever...

Suddenly, a string of gunshots break the silence. Phyllis opens her eyes without moving while Sicheng quickly stands up to her protection. They stay still and listen.

Silence. Then suddenly another string of gunshots.

Realizing this is not accidental, they get on high alert. Phyllis stands up.

HILL BEHIND THE CEMETERY.

Shrubs, bushes, burnt weeds. Then two heads appear behind the bushes. Sicheng and Phyllis peep through the woods. Some men in yellow uniform are visible, who are practicing shooting. To their left, there are a line of targets full of bullet holes.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Why are they shooting near a cemetery? They'll disturb the spirits!

SICHENG

(whisper)

Shhh....

*

The officer is commanding the soldiers in Japanese.

*

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Japanese? Let's go, quickly.

*

*

The heads disappear behind the bushes. Another terrifying string of shots.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The couple are walking home. Phyllis is extremely disturbed while Sicheng, still on alert, notices the unusual number of soldiers on the street who are wearing a different black uniform.

Citizens are living their lives as usual, though. There's a GRANDMA selling vegetables in a basket by the street. A creepy man in black suddenly appears from nowhere, runs over her basket, and quickly disappears around the corner. Grandma murmurs complaints. But just as she's picking up the vegetables, another three creepy men in black runs past and kicks her basket even further. She cries out and hits her lap. Phyllis and Sicheng have never seen such men in Beijing before.

*

*

*

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

They got home and Mama Liu, having waited anxiously for them at the door, go up to meet them.

*

MAMA LIU

Phyllis, Sicheng, you're finally back! We've all been looking for you!

*

*

SICHENG

What's wrong?

MAMA LIU

Terrible gunfire in downtown! Our lady has sent people out for you.

*

*

(MORE)

MAMA LIU (CONT'D)

Thank god you are safe. Come in,
come in.

Mama Liu shuts the door behind her.

PHYLLIS' ROOM

Phyllis and Sicheng are packing.

PHYLLIS

What's all going on here? When is
there going to be an end?

SICHENG

Until there's only one party left.

PHYLLIS

I hope that day will come soon.
Anyway, we should start work right
now.

SICHENG

Right, the car's ready to go
tomorrow, I'll go get our
passports.

PHYLLIS

And I'll do the packing.

On the desk we see their TOOL KIT: customized sketchbooks and
rolls of papers, two tape measures, a set of scales, a stack
of pencils, protractor, compasses, pens, a plan wheel. She
carefully puts them all in a linen messenger bag.

Mom has been watching her pack quietly in the doorway. Her
eyes are filled with worries. Phyllis glances at her, mom
starts to speak as Phyllis continues packing.

MOM

Do you have to go so far?

PHYLLIS

Yes, we're going to Mount Wutai.

MOM

I'm just worried. It looks tough,
the work you're doing. Do you know
how to take care of yourself?
You've never done any chores! You
sure you don't want Mama Liu to
come?

PHYLLIS

Mom, I'm a woman, I must learn to do these.

MOM

Yes...my girl's a woman now. Oh these bags look heavy.

*

Phyllis closes the last suitcase, done with the packing. Phyllis goes forward and hugs mom.

PHYLLIS

Take care, mom. Be happy.

*

MOM

Take care too.

*

PHYLLIS

If anything happens here, just move to uncle's, will you?

MOM

Don't worry. We'll be fine. Oh, have you taken green tea? I saved superior Longjing just for you.

*

Mom hurries to fetch the tea.

*

EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

*

A car is waiting outside Phyllis' house. Sicheng shuts its trunk after cramming in their last suitcase.

Mom and Mama Liu is standing at the front door to bid them farewell. Phyllis and Sicheng look back at them and get into the car. The car drives away.

*

*

*

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

The car weaves through the busy streets of Beijing to the outskirts of the city. After some twists and turns, they arrive at the Beijing train station.

*

All sorts of people at the station. Business-looking people, men in black robe, men in black suit and black hat, women in light-colored cheongsam, farmers carrying huge sacks, crying young children and their scolding mothers. Those people diverge to different trains. The train to Taiyuan is a third-class train. Phyllis and Sicheng board the train.

*

*

We see the train's front window, where there's a sign reading: Beijing - Taiyuan. The train starts to move.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Phyllis and Sicheng are sleeping, they have window seats. The world is moving fast by the window.

Suddenly Phyllis wakes and scratches her arm. There's a bug sting on her arm, and then her back starts to itch, too. Then her neck, her legs. She is embarrassed. She wakes Sicheng.

PHYLLIS

I'm itchy all over my body.

Sicheng inspects her arm and neck, the only parts uncovered by clothes, then suddenly press down on her arm.

SICHENG

A flea.

The rest of the trip is absolute torture. Phyllis is embarrassed by scratching her body all the time in front of so many strangers on the train. Sicheng wants to help out but is banned from doing so, because it will only make things stranger. Phyllis tries hard to ignore the itch with her will power.

INT. TAIYUAN STATION - DAY

They finally get off the train, and walk onto a street. Phyllis is now free to scratch her body.

EXT. A STREET IN TAIYUAN - DAY

They're heading to the bus station. The street here feels very different from Beijing. It's not covered with tarmac, but is rather dried mud, and is crowded with farmers followed by their poultry, flocks, herds, and dogs. All the farmers are going the same direction. Sicheng approaches one of them and asks the way.

SICHENG

Excuse me, uncle. Do you know where the bus station to Wutai town is?

FARMER

Only one, only one.

SICHENG

Only one bus station? Where is it?

The farmer wants them to follow. Phyllis and Sicheng walk beside his flock of goats.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

As they approach the station, the sounds of animals grow louder and louder. As they get closer, they recognize the sounds are actually SCREAMS. Just as they're walking in wonder, they bump into groups of flies...more and more, and animal stink increases too. They shield the flies off with hands while trying to cover their noses.

They arrive at the station and the farmer walks off with his goats. The station consists only of a wooden pole, a few people are waiting under it. They look like farmers, and they all wear straw hats and have sun-burnt dark skin. They stare at the modern-looking couple and Phyllis especially without saying a word.

There's a gate behind them, Phyllis and Sicheng realize that's where the screams come from. They try to talk to each other, but their voices are drowned by the screams.

CLANG! The gate slowly opens. Out comes a huge truck fully loaded with SCREAMING PIGS. The truck lumbers away, leaving behind it lingering stink. Through the open gate, Phyllis and Sicheng steal a glance inside--there are about 4000 SCREAMING PIGS in a huge fence, crying for their tragic destiny. They stare in absolute AWE as the gate slowly closes.

The other people, on the contrary, simply watch blankly, not surprised at all. One of them laugh at the couple-

FARMER #1

Hey you city people never seen
pigs?

SICHENG

No...Yes, I mean, not so many.

The farmers all laugh. Sicheng is abashed.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

It's dusk, even the pigs are tired of screaming. They have also grown accustomed to the stink and no longer feel the need to cover their noses. Phyllis is thirsty and she wants water. She asks a farmer beside her.

PHYLLIS

Excuse me, is there water?

FARMER #2

There's a well.

He points to a direction, Phyllis and Sicheng go over. The well is deep, beside it is a rusty basket and a basin. They drop the basket into the well, fills it with water and pulls it up.

*

Phyllis pours the water into her water cup. It's very cloudy, and Phyllis has to toss it.

SICHENG

Wait.

Sicheng takes over the basket. He pours some water to wash the basin, then pours the remaining water into it.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

You'd better take off your shoes and socks.

*

Phyllis does what he says. Then she stands into the basin, Sicheng helps her shake her cheong sam.

Fleas drop into the basin. Their dead bodies float on the water.

*

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

*

They are sitting on the ground and almost half asleep when the noise of the lumbering bus awakes them. The bus finally comes. It's barely a bus, but rather a hunk of metal staggeringly fueled by a coal-burning engine. They carry all the luggage onto the bus. The door closes and the bus lumbers forward.

*

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The bus arrives at their destination after a night's travel. Only Phyllis and Sicheng get off at this stop. There's still quite some distance to their house, but there's nobody within sight at the moment. They have to walk with the heavy suitcases.

Mount Wutai is visible in the distance, towering over the village, its tip looming in the clouds. The mountain is huge and holy, humbling everyone who sees its presence. Looking down, there are a sea of wild flowers and golden fields. The couple feel joyful and refreshed.

*

PHYLLIS

Hope we made the right choice,
going off the beaten track.

SICHENG

There's nothing to see at those
places of interest. Almost all are
touched by later generations.

PHYLLIS

Yeah remember Itō Chūta once made a
mistake as to claim a Qing
dynasty's reconstruction as Liao
dynasty!

SICHENG

Indeed there're a lot of mistakes
in his book.

Just at this moment Sicheng sees a middle-aged farmer riding
a donkey cart from afar. The cart is loaded with wheat.
Sicheng calls out to him.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Hi uncle! May I ask where you're
going?

UNCLE WANG

That way.

He points at one of the country roads.

SICHENG

We're going to the Wang's village.
Can you give us a lift?

The farmer doesn't reply, perhaps he nods. Anyway, he drives
the cart slowly towards them. Phyllis and Sicheng wait.

UNCLE WANG

That's where I live. You can sit at
the back.

Sicheng throws their suitcases onto the cart, then jumps on
the wheat himself and helps Phyllis get on it.

WIDE SHOT-They're on a village road flanked by fields and
hills. The couple watch and enjoy the wonders of nature
around them. UNCLE WANG, a man of 40s, is very curious about
the modern-looking newcomers.

*

UNCLE WANG (CONT'D)

Where are you from? What are you here for? You got relatives in our village?

PHYLLIS

We're from Beijing. We hear there're some real ancient wooden temples nearby. We're here to take a look.

UNCLE WANG

Oh a lot! But I've only heard my father say, I've never been to any myself. These temples don't work, not even a monk is there. Don't waste your time.

PHYLLIS

Well they're actually invaluable in terms of structure and crafts.

UNCLE WANG

Invaluable? First time to hear!

*

Sicheng tries to change a topic.

SICHENG

Uncle Wang, we heard there used to be Sarira in these temples.

UNCLE WANG

Gone! Long been stolen.

SICHENG

Oh that's a shame.

UNCLE WANG

You are here for Sarira?

SICHENG

No we're not. We are architects, we study the structure of buildings and sketch them.

UNCLE WANG

You do this for a living? Does it earn much?

*

*

SICHENG

Just enough.

*

*

PHYLLIS

Uncle Wang, do you know the road to
any of these temples?

*

UNCLE WANG

Look, there's one.

They look at the direction he's pointing at. Phyllis, who is far-sighted, spots a small white pagoda halfway on the foothill immediately while Sicheng's still struggling.

SICHENG

I regret my poor sight.

Finally he sees it too.

UNCLE WANG

Others are deep in the mountains.

*

More houses begin to appear along the road. The whole village rests at the foot of the mountains. They see smoke arising from the chimneys. The cart stops in front of a house. It has white walls, gable roofs and a backyard.

*

*

SICHENG

A nice place! Thank you uncle Wang.
Come to us for tea when we're
settled!

*

UNCLE WANG

Not a big deal. Tomorrow, tomorrow
my brother will come. He can take
you to the temple if you like. I
live ahead.

PHYLLIS

That's fantastic!

They wave goodbye. Phyllis and Sicheng enter the front door.

FADE OUT.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

The next day, Phyllis and Sicheng leave their house and go to uncle Wang's. They take the green tea with them.

*

They see some kids on the street. The kids get very shy and quickly run to hide, but still unable to resist curiosity. A braver elder kid hides behind a tree and peeps at them. Phyllis tries to say hello.

*

PHYLLIS

Hello there! What's your name!

The kid giggles and runs away, some smaller kids take the chance to run with him. Phyllis and Sicheng are amazed, they walk on.

They get to uncle Wang's house. They knock on the door, MRS. WANG, 30s, opens it. *

MRS WANG

Please come in.

INT. THE WANG'S HOUSE - DAY *

In the yard they see the family. There's uncle Wang, Mrs. Wang, another younger-looking man, a baby in a cradle, and-- the elder boy that has just run away. He now peeps them shyly behind a column. Uncle Wang greets them. *

UNCLE WANG

This is our distinguished guests from Beijing! Architects, not like us, farmers. *

SICHENG

We're flattered.

PHYLLIS

We bring some green tea, please take it.

UNCLE WANG

No no that's too much.

SICHENG

A little gift, do us a favor.

They go back and forth several rounds, finally uncle Wang takes it and gives it to his wife, who takes a smell. *

MRS WANG

It smells great! What tea is it?

PHYLLIS

Superior Long Jing.

MRS WANG

Good stuff, good stuff.

The wife goes off to store the tea, uncle Wang introduces his brother. *

UNCLE WANG

This is my brother, Wang Jr. He can
bring you into the mountains.

His brother comes forward and nods. He is a steady-looking
young man with red cheeks and a round face.

WANG JR.

We can go after lunch.

SICHENG

Sure.

UNCLE WANG

It looks near at hand, but it
actually takes hours of hiking.

SICHENG

All right. We'll take our sleeping
bags.

WANG JR.

You're not coming back tonight?

PHYLLIS

It usually take several days to
document a temple. We won't come
back until we finish.

WANG JR.

(to Phyllis)

Impressive.

Wang Jr. gives a thumbs up for Phyllis. Mrs. Wang puts a bowl *
of fish soup on the table.

MRS WANG

Lunch is ready!

They all sit around the table. The table's full of dishes,
and a good balance of protein and vegetables, all made by
Mrs. Wang. The chairs are long benches made of a single piece
of wood, whose growth ring remains clear. Phyllis and Sicheng
sit on the same bench. Instead of taking a seat, Mrs. Wang *
sits beside the cradle. The boy sits on the doorsill. They *
begin eating. Phyllis tries the fish soup first.

PHYLLIS

It's so good!

UNCLE WANG

Yeah the carp are fresh. You can
get a lot of these in the summer.

They finish lunch. As they're about to go, Mrs. Wang gives them a bag of freshly-baked steamed buns.

MRS WANG

Take them lest you get hungry.

PHYLLIS

Thank you Mrs. Wang!

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

Phyllis, Sicheng and Wang Jr. set off. They all wear the same type of stray hats. Phyllis and Sicheng are carrying their sleep bags, and each carry a messenger bag with them. Wang Jr. is casually dressed and wears a sandal.

Wang Jr. is driving the donkey cart this time, which is now covered with a thin blanket. He chews a piece of straw in his mouth.

They have to drive through the village before getting to the foot of Mount Wutai. They drive past a river where several women are washing clothes. SPLASH, SPLASH, the women strike the clothes on the stones in the riverbed and then rub them, some are humming songs. Some of them spot the group, they stop and look.

*
*

They arrive at the end of the road. They get off the cart and the brother ties the donkey to a tree. The climb begins.

EXT. MOUNT WUTAI - DAY

They are now trekking the mountain trails. The mountain's populated with trees. Wang Jr. walks in front of them, pushing aside low-hanging branches.

The camera shows the scenery on the mountain. Bench terraces growing wheat, several stray hats working within the fields, households scattered on the slope, and THE TEMPLE they're heading towards, on top of their heads across the field.

WANG JR. (O.S.)

There it is.

BACK to the group. Now they are taking stairs. The stairs look steep, and are made of rugged limestones from perhaps hundreds of years ago. Weeds and grass grow within their cracks.

PHYLLIS

It's a pleasant hike.

WANG JR.

Yeah the mountain's full of
treasure.

SICHENG

And mosquitoes.

Sicheng swats a mosquito on his arm.

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

Wang Jr. is taking them on a less trodden shortcut, it's very steep and therefore slippery. Wang Jr. gets to the top first, then gives a hand to Sicheng, who then helps Phyllis up.

They are right here at the temple. It's a huge wooden temple with a stone pagoda in front of it. The temple is two stories high, its doors are closed. They put their bags on the floor. *

The stone pagoda is about the height of three people. Its foundation is the shape of a lotus.

By experience, Phyllis and Sicheng walk to the pagoda first to see if there are inscriptions on it. And they find words on its foundation.

PHYLLIS

(reading the inscription)

The shrines were built in the 3rd
year of Chun-Xi...

She looks at Sicheng. Then they shout at the same time-

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

The Song dynasty!

SICHENG

The Song dynasty!

SICHENG (CONT'D)

It's true. Look at that hexagon
structure.

Huge first success. They feel on cloud. Wang Jr. tries to figure out what's happening.

WANG JR.

So how old is it?

PHYLLIS

Almost eight hundred years!

WANG JR.

Wow. Wow. Eight hundred years.

Then they come to inspect the temple. They open the door, where there are many delicate carvings. The door screeches.

INT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

HUGE SHOCK. The ground floor is full of forage. Looking around, there are LARGE SACKS everywhere, wheat everywhere, piling all the way up to the shoulder of the Buddhas.

The Buddhas--there are five of them, in the center of the floor facing the door. They're of medium height, their colors slightly faded, and all of them are drowned by the wheat. The higher floor are free of forage. *

PHYLLIS
What's going on?

SICHENG
Holy cow.

A rat runs over the beam above.

The brother hesitates at the door. He is a bit disturbed.

WANG JR.
I don't think we should stay here
for long.

Phyllis and Sicheng turn around.

SICHENG
Do you know what's going on here?

Wang Jr. looks around, worried looks in his eyes.

WANG JR.
Could be the bandits' nest.

Sicheng gets alert.

SICHENG
There are bandits?

WANG JR.
Used to. But this looks like their
nest...Anyway, I gotta go. I'm not
staying. *

He quits the temple and quickly disappears.

Phyllis and Sicheng, however, appear more excited than afraid.

PHYLLIS

You remember the Mongolian bandits
in Beijing?

SICHENG

A bandits' nest doesn't look like
this.

*
*

Sicheng goes to inspect the sacks. He unties one of them, and
sees potatoes. He takes one potato.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Fresh potatoes.

*

Phyllis unties another sack. Wheat grains.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

If anyone should come, we have the
passport from the Beijing
government.

PHYLLIS

Right. Let's just start work.

SICHENG

I'll help you move these sacks.
Then I'll sketch the exterior and
keep an eye out there.

*

PHYLLIS

The staircase is over there!

They try to clear the sacks around the staircase to the
second floor while not touching the others. The sacks are
HEAVY, they have to pull together to make them move. Piles of
dust arise in the mean time, making them cough all the time.

*

Finally it's all cleared. Sicheng goes out, and Phyllis takes
her messenger bag inside and puts it on.

Phyllis goes up the stairs. It is steep and narrow. The wood
is mothly and screeches loudly. Phyllis takes her steps
carefully. Her cheong-sam doesn't hinder her movement in the
least.

She is at the second floor. It's filled with dust that seems
to have been left alone for hundred of years. It treads
softly like mattress. Phyllis holds on to the columns next to
her to keep balance, and she coughs when dust gets into her
lungs.

She coughs, and SUDDENLY, a screaming flying object flies
over her, almost knocking her out.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Ouch!

The air begins to stir and rumble. It seems like her sound has waken more of that objects. Very nervous, Phyllis stays still. And SUDDENLY, an army of BATS rush out from the dark, spreading their wings and screaming at the top of their lungs.

Terrified, Phyllis crouches down immediately and covers her head. She feels her ankles are rubbed. She opens an eye and find a bunch of extremely large MICE running around. She tries hard not to throw up. Perhaps she screams too, but her scream is drowned. *

EXT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

Sicheng is working on the outside, pulling the tape measure from corner to corner. Suddenly, he feels the earthquake, and then sees hundreds of bats pouring out of the windows of the upper level floor.

INT. THE TEMPE - DAY *

Sicheng rushes into the temple, running directly into a late-coming bat.

SICHENG

Pah!

He stands on the ground floor, looking up to the second floor, searching for Phyllis.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Phyllis! Are you OK?

Phyllis stands up, shellshocked.

PHYLLIS

I guess so. Are they all out?

SICHENG

I guess so.

They look at each other. Phyllis has dust on her face, and Sicheng's hair is all messed up by the bat.

They burst out laughing together. They laugh and laugh until Phyllis begins to cough.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Get down here you monkey.

PHYLLIS

What?

Phyllis thinks for a while, then suddenly it dawns on her. She laughs even more, covering her mouth to prevent inhaling dust.

*
*

They both return to work. Phyllis finds a beautiful TOU-KUNG structure at the beam. She walks over to the beam and takes out her sketchbook and pencil, quickly drawing its rough shape. Then, she takes out a TAPE MEASURE, leaning her body slightly forward to get its number, and puts them down at the sketch. She seems very skillful, the beautiful wooden structures amaze her.

EXT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

*

Sicheng has finished measuring the ground floor, he takes out a ladder from the temple. Phyllis calls out to him from the inside-

*

PHYLLIS (O.S.)

Be careful!

He climbs up the ladder and begin to measure the structure of the eave.

SPEED UP OF THE SUN'S MOVEMENT-The sun sets quickly.

EXT. THE TEMPLE - DAY

The next day, Sicheng is working on the outside on a ladder when SUDDENLY, a male's voice shouts behind him-

SOLDIER

Hey! Get down there!

Sicheng struggles to turn around on the ladder as both of his hands are occupied. He tries hard not to fall down. A fairly young man in brown uniform carrying a rifle at his chest is standing behind him.

*
*
*
*

Phyllis hears the noise and hurries outside.

SICHENG

Brother, don't shoot. We're researchers from Beijing.

*
*

SOLDIER

Researcher? This is our place!
You're not supposed to be here!

PHYLLIS

We have a passport! Please let him
show you the passport.

Sicheng gets down the ladder slowly, takes the passport from
his pocket and hands it to the soldier.

The soldier takes a look and reads out-

SOLDIER

Sicheng Liang, Phyllis Lin.
Scholars from Beijing. Let them
pass...

He returns the passport.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

What's good with this shabby
temple? It's our storage place.

PHYLLIS

It's 800 years old, all the way
from the Song dynasty. It's a
national treasure!

The soldier now seems pretty calmed down.

SOLDIER

You guys got leisure. Looking at
useless old woods when your home is
being bombed.

Both Phyllis and Sicheng are deeply astounded.

SICHENG

What do you mean?

PHYLLIS

What?

SOLDIER

Don't you know? The Japanese have
fired bombs in Beijing.

SICHENG

What the hell! When?

SOLDIER

Days ago.

PHYLLIS

And Where? Where? Did they fire the
east district?

SOLDIER

The Lugou Bridge. East or west, I
don't know.

They are a bit relieved, but still largely worried.

PHYLLIS

Only the bridge? And why? What's the reason? What do they want? Did many people die?

SOLDIER

One question at a time, madam. One of their soldiers was missing, they wanted to search the area, got rejected, and then they fired. They now control the bridge.

SICHENG

Ridiculous! This is not their place!

PHYLLIS

What do they want? Just a missing soldier?

SOLDIER

I don't know. The commander wants us to get prepared for escalation of conflict. That's all I know.

Phyllis and Sicheng ponders.

PHYLLIS

You mean...War?

SOLDIER

I don't know. Better be prepared. All right, I got to go. You guys can stay here but don't touch our things.

The soldier heads off, leaving Phyllis and Sicheng wonder-struck.

PHYLLIS

I hope they'll handle it soon.

SICHENG

Thank god it's far from home.

PHYLLIS

Yeah but we gotta connect with mom as soon as we finish this one.

They return to work with a heavy heart. Phyllis goes to the Buddha statues on ground floor.

She clears the wheat beside them, pulling them over to one side when suddenly she sees A ROW OF RIFLES. She stares at the rifles, lost in thought.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BEIJING - DAY

Gunplay in a street. Men in black shooting each other, men on horsebacks shooting men in cars. Sounds of explosion.

INT. PHYLLIS'S HOME IN BEIJING - DAY

The whole family is packing and hurrying to move out while Mom, sitting in her room, refuses to go. Her window's open. Shouts, clogs and pistols can be heard outside.

Mama Liu walks into her room. *

MAMA LIU *

My lady! How many times do I have
to tell you to close the window!

She hurries to close the window, a huge barebacked man on a horseback run by. Mama Liu locks the window, turns around, catches her breath. *

MOM

Bloody hell! What a life! Bloody
hell!

MAMA LIU *

I agree. Who knows Beijing will
turn into this! But we got to go.

MOM

I'm not leaving!

MAMA LIU *

Yes you are.

MOM

Who are you to tell me! I said I'm
not leaving! I have lived here for
30 years! *

Then mom begins to sob.

MAMA LIU *

I know, I know. It's not easy to
leave for any of us...But if we
stay, all of us will die. *

There's a knock at the front door.

MAMA LIU (CONT'D)

The car's ready. Hurry up.

*

Mom collapses. Mama Liu takes mom's arms and helps her up. Mom feels her bed for the last time. They walk out as mom wipes her tears.

*

MOM (O.S.)

God damn the Japanese!

*

EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOME - DAY

The family get in a car. Shortly after the car drives away, a bomb drops somewhere near the house. The roof shakes. Things collapse. The car disappears in smoke.

*

We hear a radio announcer as the smoke fades and transition to Wutai town.

*

EXT. WUTAI TOWN - DAY

*

Wutai mountain, the golden wheat fields, the households, the stream.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

The government is negotiating a treaty with Japan. The Japanese want us to stop firing and withdraw to the right bank of the river. In that case, they promise not to cross the left bank of the river...We are seeking peaceful negotiations with the Japanese troops... Citizens in Beijing don't need to panic.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Phyllis is making a meal in the kitchen while Sicheng is sketching on a table in the living room. Phyllis serves two dishes on the table and goes back to the kitchen to cook rice. She is PREGNANT. Her belly's big enough to tell.

*

*

Sicheng has a mouthful, and complains.

*

SICHENG

This is too sweet. How many times do I have to tell you?

*

*

Phyllis stops her work and turns to confront him. She is annoyed.

*

PHYLLIS

Well then make you own food!

SICHENG

You know I have to transcribe the drafts!

PHYLLIS

Can't you multitask? I am having your baby, washing your clothes, and making your food at the same time!

*

*

*

SICHENG

And I'm washing the dishes!...Hey, listen, I don't want to fight.

*

PHYLLIS

Well then who starts a fight!

*

SICHENG

...All right let's just stop it here.

*

He puts the food into his mouth. Cold war in the house.

Some airplanes thunder outside the house. Sicheng jumps up in a startle and dashes outside. Phyllis lifts her eyes without moving.

*

*

The planes roar by and we hear Sicheng's exclamation from the outside.

*

SICHENG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey! Hello!...Safe trip!

He returns.

SICHENG (CONT'D)

Come take a look!

He almost pushes Phyllis outside.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

They look up, there's a parade of airplanes in the sky. They disappear behind the mountains.

EXT. THE BRIDGE - DAY

Camera tilts down from the sky to the bridge. ZAIBING, a little girl of 3, is playing with other bigger kids in the stream that runs under the bridge. They are picking stones and catching small fish and shrimp..

Phyllis and Sicheng come to the bridge. Phyllis has delivered the baby.

PHYLLIS
Zaibing, time to go home.

Zaibing sees her parents and begins to cry.

ZAIBING
No...!

Phyllis comes down to the stream and reaches her. She carries her baby to the land.

PHYLLIS
Good girl. It's late. We'll come here tomorrow, all right?

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

They walk home. Zaibing is still unhappy. Sicheng tries to distract her by poking funny faces. It works. The girl laughs.

As they're walking, suddenly there seems to be a vibrance in the air. After a short while, they hear roaring thunder coming from afar. They stop and stare.

Airplanes, one after another, appear from behind the mountains.

They airplanes fly by. They can't exactly tell whose airplanes they are. They look big. The first three airplanes glide by, when out of the blue, the last two in line suddenly drop FIVE BOMBS down to the village. Sicheng and Phyllis take a second to respond.

SICHENG
Run!

They run to take refuge under the nearest roof.

BOOM!BOOM! Two terrible explosions behind them, and only two. They cling to the wall, Phyllis holds Zaibing tightly in her arms. They wait and wait until the planes are completely gone.

They check to see if there's absolutely no danger from the sky. Then they hurry home. Sicheng takes over Zaibing to his arms.

*
*
*

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

The stop in front of their house. SHOCKED. Zaibing points forward.

*
*

A huge PIT in the yard.

*

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

They go into the house. Sicheng puts Zaibing on a chair, and comes to another room with Phyllis.

*
*

SICHENG

It's too soon.

*

PHYLLIS

The Japanese have found us.

SICHENG

Zaibing is not safe here.

PHYLLIS

Shall we send her to Mom?

SICHENG

That's best. Your mom's place is safe. I'll arrange it.

PHYLLIS

And our blueprints. They're not safe here any more.

*
*

SICHENG

They have no copy. We must find the safest place on earth.

*
*

PHYLLIS

(thinks)

The safest place on earth...the safest...Every place on the ground can be destroyed...What about...a vault?

*

SICHENG

A vault...in a Concession! That'll be absolutely safe!

*

They quickly reach an agreement and Phyllis go to the kitchen to cook food. *

EXT. A CITY STREET - DAY

A man picks Zaibing up. Zaibing looks at her parents and wave goodbye. The man gives Zaibing a lollipop. Phyllis and Sicheng smile at her. *

INT. AN ENGLISH BANK - DAY

They are carrying two boxes at the reception desk. They sign a document, and press their fingerprints onto it. A staff shakes their hands and takes the boxes. The staff goes through several doors and finally into- *

THE VAULT.

He puts the boxes into a locker and locks it.

INT. THE TRAIN - DAY *

Sicheng and Phyllis sit by the window at the train to Taiyuan. Sicheng is reading a newspaper, its title reads- *

INSERT-Japan is landing massive attack on north China.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY *

They wait for the lumbering bus to Wutai town. The bus comes, they get on it.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

Sicheng is riding a donkey cart and Phyllis is sitting at the back. They're driving through the golden wheat fields. *

PHYLLIS
Here we are again.

SICHENG
How do you feel this time?

PHYLLIS
I was half a tourist last time. But this time... looking at this eternal beauty of nature, I only grieve more. *

Beat.

SICHENG

We don't have much time left.

PHYLLIS

I have this feeling...That we're
close.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Sicheng and Phyllis are packing in their house. They roll their sleep bags, take the papers they still have, the pencils, pens, plan wheels scattered on the table into their messenger bags. Phyllis goes to the kitchen to take some rice rolls, buns and cured meat. They finish packing and set off.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

The camera follows them out of the house, past the bomb-cracked yard, onto the road. They are now outside uncle Wang's house.

EXT. THE WANG'S HOUSE - DAY

They knock on the Wang's house. Uncle Wang and his wife go out to greet them. *

SICHENG

Uncle Wang, Mrs. Wang, we're
setting off. *

Uncle Wang pats on Sicheng's shoulder. Mrs. Wang presses on Phyllis' hands. *

MRS WANG

Take care! *

PHYLLIS

You too. *

Camera pulls away. Uncle Wang leads them to the other side of the house and takes out two donkeys. They get on the donkeys and wave goodbye. *

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

They pass the village road, there's an unexploded bomb by the road. *

They pass the households. Fallen tiles from the roofs on the ground. *

The pass the stream. A woman's washing clothes. SLAP. SLAP, and for a moment it seems like there's never been a war. *

Finally they reach the foot of the mountain, they get off the donkeys. *

EXT. MOUNT WUTAI - DAY *

They're taking the stairs on the mountain. They are more expert mountain climbers now. Sicheng walks in front, pushing aside the branches that block their way. Phyllis walks behind, coughing from time to time. She looks weaker than before. *

WIDE SHOT-The camera pulls back further and further away, finally to show the whole mountain for a few seconds.

CLOSE UP on Phyllis and Sicheng again. There're no stairs now and they are trekking a narrow mud road. They look on the ground to mind their steps. *

They walk for several days, until they finally get close to the mountain top on an- *

AFTERNOON. *

The sun's setting and they sit down for a rest. Looking into the distance, the clouds are ablaze.

We look at their faces. Suddenly, Sicheng's eyes are caught by a gleam from afar. He covers his eyes with his hands.

PHYLLIS
What happened?

SICHENG
Just a glare. *

Phyllis looks to the direction. She too, is flashed by the glare. She narrows her eyes. The glare is so sharp and distinct in the sky that she takes a moment to get accustomed to it---she looks at it, stares, her pupils narrow. It is the glisten of an IRON TOP. She blinks, not believing herself. *

PHYLLIS
Do you see it? *

Sicheng has already looked away. *

SICHENG

Staring at the sun isn't good for
you.

PHYLLIS

I think...it's a pagoda.

Sicheng hurries to take a look.

SICHENG

I can't see clearly. What
about...let's see who gets there
first!

They pick up the childhood fun and speed up hiking. The road
gets thicker with trees and there's almost no hint of trodden
trail. Sicheng walks in front to carve a way in. Phyllis is
still coughing from time to time.

They're lost. There's no sign of road at all. All they can do
is keep walking towards the sun. There's a wind rising in the
mountains. Suddenly, they hear something. It's the soft
chimes of WIND BELLS from above.

They look up. The pagoda is right towering upon them.

CLOSE UP of a fluttering wind bell.

EXT. THE PAGODA - DAY

They push away the bushes and step onto the platform on which
the pagoda stands. The pagoda is fully revealed--

It's a MAGNIFICENT WOODEN PAGODA. Five stories high, set
ablaze by the fiery sunset.

Legs soft, they kneel to the ground. Tears stream down their
face like waterfalls.

PHYLLIS

I think we find it.

SICHENG

So beautiful.

They kneel for a while, time seems to stop. Sicheng slowly
stands up, he then helps Phyllis up. She wipes her tears.
They put their larger gears outside, then go into the Pagoda.

INT. THE PAGODA - AFTERNOON

They push the door open carefully. The door creaks, nobody inside the pagoda, no even a monk. Inches of dust beneath their feet.

The camera shows the crossed legs of a Buddha at eye level. Then tilts up to reveal its whole body. It's a MASSIVE Buddha, looking down, smiling mercifully.

EXT. THE PAGODA - DAY

The sun is setting. It looks like a big orange ball on fire.

INT. THE PAGODA - DAY

The sun fits into a window on the upper floor, casting its light beam straight through the window, and reaches the Buddha. A golden halo emerges around its head.

It's SACRED. Phyllis and Sicheng look at it in awe.

SICHENG

I am positive this is THE Pagoda in your book.

PHYLLIS

Me too. Though it's four stories shorter. But nine is usually a fake number.

They start work.

They move around. Sicheng looks up to the upper floors and as expected, they are covered with bats. Sicheng takes out two thin metal bars and strike them loudly. The bats awake, their wings flutter. Sicheng strikes more forcibly, more bats awake, and then they agitate. Sicheng strikes even more forcibly, and all of a sudden they start screaming and pouring out the temple, forming a black tornado. Sicheng and Phyllis look at them calmly. The bats are gone.

E/I. THE PAGODA - DAY

Phyllis is working on the inside and Sicheng from the outside.

INTERCUT BETWEEN SICHENG AND PHYLLIS

Sicheng sets up a HYPSONETER in front of the pagoda and measures its height.

SICHENG
67.31 meters high, 9 stories.

Phyllis draws out the tape measure at the ground.

PHYLLIS
30.27 meters in diameter.

Sicheng looks at the pagoda.

SICHENG
Octagon structure.

Phyllis feels the wood.

PHYLLIS
Rosewood.

She moves her hand to reveal a hole.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)
With a bullet hole.

Sicheng looks at the eave.

SICHENG
Flying eave like birds.

Phyllis looks at the Buddha.

PHYLLIS
Tri-colored pottery.

She looks at the Tou-Kung.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)
Splendid.

SPEED UP of them working on site.

EXT. THE PAGODA - NIGHT

The sun sets, it's dark. Sicheng has fetched several branches and stacked them together. He lights a fire at the lee. Phyllis takes out the rice and cured meat, and heat them over the fire.

SWAT! Sicheng swats a mosquito on his arm.

SICHENG
I hate mosquitoes.

PHYLLIS
Lucky me! They only bite you.

They both laugh. Camera tilts to show the milky way and the galaxy above. It's GORGEOUS.

EXT. THE PAGODA - DAY

Rolls of sketched paper beneath their bags. Phyllis is on the third floor, leaning her body out of the window to sketch the bird-like eave. Her cheongsam is stained. And she coughs from time to time. Sicheng appears from somewhere within sight, she calls out-

PHYLLIS
Sicheng! Big discoveries!

Sicheng looks up at her.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)
The pagoda really has nine stories.
Four hidden ones inside.

SICHENG
Let me take a look!

Sicheng is climbing the stairs when they hear a horrifying sound from the sky.

A squad of airplanes. A bomb drops in the mountain, the wind bells chime loudly, they feel the ground shake. A string of gunshots from the mountainside, then another bomb lands.

Phyllis hurries inside the window, but misses a step on the ladder beneath her feet. She lands on the floor heavily, spraining her ankle. Sicheng is coming to her help, but the stairs rock and he doesn't dare to move. The wood around them creaks.

Both gunshots and explosion relent. Phyllis and Sicheng stay still for a while.

PHYLLIS
Did you see it?

Sicheng looks at the Tou-Kung near Phyllis.

CLOSE UP of the Tou-kung.

SICHENG

I think I know why this temple can
last for a thousand years.

PHYLLIS

Look at these wood biting into each
other! Look at these perfect air
buffer!

Almost instantly they resume their cheerfulness. Phyllis
stands up and they both inspect the Tou-Kung.

Suddenly, another bomb lands even closer to them. The wind
bells roar like mad for a few seconds. They fall to the
ground again. Huge amount of dust falls from the beams, fall
ing on their backs.

Phyllis and Sicheng bend over and wait. After a while they
start to move again. Phyllis lifts her head.

FOCUS on a beam, blurring Phyllis and Sicheng in the
background. There are faded ink writings on the beam.

Phyllis calls out-

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Sicheng! Writings!

They move to the beam. A hand removes the dust from it.

SUPER: Female disciple Ning Gong Yu, Da Zhong 11th year

They are wild with joy. They look at each other.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Tang dynasty.

SICHENG

Tang dynasty.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

This is the oldest remaining wooden
structure. We have proven ITÔ CHŪTA
wrong!

SICHENG

We made it!

Sicheng takes the camera out of his messenger bag and takes a
photo. Phyllis almost weeps.

EXT. THE PAGODA - DAY

They have finished all the work. They collect the things on
the ground, and then take a last glance at the pagoda.

PHYLLIS

Hope this is not the last time I
see you.

They go down the mountains.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

They are down from the mountain and standing at the entrance
of the village. The village is quiet. Phyllis and Sicheng
walk along, households begin to appear, and they are looking
around for old acquaintances when suddenly their faces
FREEZE.

Their POV-the village is SLAUGHTERED. Houses have been burnt
down, fragmented bodies of animals lay dead on the road. The
road is stained with blood. The fields were bombed too.

They walk past a broken wall, dead bodies beside it.

They drag themselves through the village with heavy hearts
and empty eyes. No signs of life everywhere. Phyllis is near
a breakdown.

They now stand in front of the Wang's house. They hear a
women's desperate piercing cry from within.

Phyllis can't support herself any more. She faints.

EXT. TIANJING - DAY

Huge flood rushing onto the street. The sign of the building
reads: TIANJING BANK

INT. THE VAULT - DAY

Flood runs into the vault.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - DAY

Sicheng sits in-

A WARD

With his glassy eyes fixed on Phyllis. She is lying on the
bed, still in coma.

CLOSE UP of Sicheng's blank face, the room is quiet but for
the clock's ticking.

At this moment, sound of a high heel clearer, door is opened. *
Sicheng seems to be awakened from a dream. He turns and sees *
Youyi. She comes to sit next to him. *

YOUYI *

Don't worry. She'll wake soon. *

Sicheng nods slowly. *

YOUYI (CONT'D) *

Are you sure you're not going to *
Tianjing? I can take care of her. *

SICHENG *

(sighs) *

Thank you Youyi. I want to be with *
her. *

They sit in silence for a while until Sicheng starts to talk. *

SICHENG (CONT'D) *

May I ask...How did you come to *
know Phyllis? *

Beat. *

YOUYI *

We...um...we met through a common *
man we know. *

SICHENG *

I see. She's lucky to have you as a *
friend. *

Youyi purses her lips, then smiles. It is a relieved smile. *

YOUYI *

Yeah, me too. *

CLOSE UP of Phyllis' little finger. It's moving. Once. Twice. *

CLOSE UP of Phyllis' eyes. Very slowly, she opens her eyes. *

Sicheng is the first to find out. *

SICHENG *

Phyllis! *

They almost jump to her bedside. Slowly, slowly, Phyllis *
recognize them. *

PHYLLIS *

Sicheng... *

Then she sees Youyi. *

PHYLLIS (CONT'D) *

...Youyi? *

YOUYI *

Hi Phyllis. *

PHYLLIS *

How... *

SICHENG *

It's all Youyi's credit. *

CLOSE UP of Phyllis' face. *

SICHENG (V.O.) *

But for her, we wouldn't have got
an empty bed in the hospital. *

Youyi lowers her head. *

YOUYI *

It's nothing. *

BEGIN FLASHBACK: *

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY *

Sicheng carries Phyllis into the hospital. A group of nurses
and doctors pushing a sickbed go past him, they're carrying a
wounded soldier. *

SICHENG *

Doctor, doctor, please save her! *

No answer. *

Sicheng rushes to the front desk. *

SICHENG (CONT'D) *

Please get her a doctor! *

NURSE *

We're running out of doctors!
You'll have to wait over there. *

She points to her side. A line of wounded soldiers lying on
the ground. *

Sicheng is devastated. *

Youyi happens to walk into the hospital carrying a soup box.
She overhears the conversation and takes a look at Sicheng
and Phyllis. Youyi recognizes Phyllis.

YOUYI
Is this...Miss Lin?

SICHENG
Yes, you know her? Can you help us?
Please!

YOUYI
Come with me.

Youyi walks past the operation rooms and looks inside,
finally she stops at one.

YOUYI (CONT'D)
My husband's operating inside.
We'll wait till he gets out.

After a while, the door opens and JIZHI, a man of 40s, walks
out, his clothes are covered with sweat.

JIZHI
Youyi, why don't you stay in my
office?

YOUYI
My friend's injured, can you
operate on her now?

JIZHI
All right...Just let me drink some
water...

END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

Phyllis is almost recovered now. She sits up at her bed.
Youyi is sitting beside her. The two women's having a
conversation.

PHYLLIS
I'm sorry. Truly.

YOUYI
You don't need to. You have done
nothing wrong.

Phyllis looks down.

PHYLLIS

If I had known earlier, I would
never...

YOUYI

Please don't say that. The past is
the past...Our marriage is doomed
to fail from the very first day.
The divorce is good for us both.
Now I find a person who truly loves
me, and we're moving to Germany
after the war.

Phyllis takes her hand.

PHYLLIS

I'm so happy for you.

A groaning soldier is carried past her ward. Phyllis watches
him pass, then slowly begins sobbing.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

I feel so useless...I can't fight
like the soldiers, and I can't save
them like a doctor...And now I'm
taking up their place at the
hospital...I'm a war trash to my
country.

YOUYI

Don't say that. You are a great
woman. You're doing a great job.
The war will end, but these
temples...Once they're gone,
they're gone forever...
Take a good rest, don't think too
much.

Youyi pats her hand.

SUPER: People's Republic of China, 1949

INT. A ROOM OF SCHOLARS AND OFFICIALS - DAY

Phyllis and Sicheng are hand shaking with some government
officials. The room is full of talking and laughing.

MR.ZHOU

Thank you, we'll give you the money
and people. The team can go with
you any time.

SICHENG
Thank you Mr. Zhou!

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

The team drive through the village in a car.

EXT. MOUNT WUTAI - DAY

They walk up the mountain with walking sticks. Phyllis and Sicheng walk at the front, expectant and nervous at the same time. The other 7 people consist of 2 women and 5 men. The 7 team members are carrying large bags.

EXT. THE PAGODA - DAY

They reach the pagoda. Phyllis and Sicheng are appalled, eyes wide open.

The pagoda is TILTED for about 30 degrees. The other people look at it in awe.

TEAM MEMBER #1
Why is it tilted?

TEAM MEMBER #2
Yeah it's so strange!

The camera turns to Phyllis and Sicheng, then close up on Phyllis. She seems more relieved than surprised.

PHYLLIS
It's so good to see you again.

Her POV: the camera tilts up from eye level to a BIRDS EYE VIEW of the area in 1949.

TEAM MEMBER #1 (V.O.)
We need to repair it.

TEAM MEMBER #2 (V.O.)
We can cover it with...

EXT. PAGODA - DAY

Modern day people sightseeing at the pagoda. It's still TILTED.

INT. PAGODA - DAY

*

A sign at the staircase reading NO ENTRANCE.

*

The all-time merciful Buddha and the tourists looking up at it.

*

*

CLOSE UP of a girl looking at something.

*

GIRL

*

Mom!

*

We see a standing board with Phyllis' photo and introduction of her work.

*

*

The girl's mom comes over, hugs her from the back and looks at the board with her, the camera facing them.

*

*

THE GIRL'S MOM

*

She's amazing. Isn't she?

*

The mom looks at the girl.

*

CLOSE ON the girl. Her eyes filled with admiration.

*

FADE OUT.

*