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Senso no Himitsu (Secrets of War)

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SENSO NO HIMITSU
(SECRETS OF WAR)

A Thesis
by
RICARDO TIJERINA JR.

Submitted to the Graduate School of
The University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

May 2011

Major Subject: Creative Writing

SENSO NO HIMITSU

(SECRETS OF WAR)

A Thesis

by

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May 2011

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ABSTRACT

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This creative thesis is a divided into two parts: “Critical introduction” and “Senso no Himitsu”, which is a full-length staged play. The play involves the lives of two brothers secretly stationed with a family in Okinawa Japan during WWII.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the completion of my Masters to my mother, Irma, my father, Rick, and my two sisters Vanessa and Natalie, whom, motivated, supported, and made sure to be quiet when I needed to think and write so I could finish my thesis. Thank you for all your love and understanding.

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I would like to thank Fr. Michael Annunziato for helping me with the translations in my play; your knowledge in the Japanese language helped my research tremendously. There are not enough thanks in the world that I can give to Dr. Philip Zwerling, chair of my dissertation committee, for introducing me to the world of creative writing. Without him, I would have never known the beauty of playwriting. Throughout my thesis writing, his mentoring, knowledge, infinite patience, and true belief in me made this thesis possible. I am indebted to my dissertation committee members: David Carren, and Dr. Eric Wiley. Without their classes, positive advice, input, comments, guidance, and enthusiasm, this thesis would have never been created. To my three greatest teachers: I thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CRITICAL INTRODUCTION.	1
War on Stage	1
Battling other Play: For Common Ground.....	9
Victory in the Field.....	16
REFERENCES.....	21
SENSO NO HIMITSU.....	23
Act I.....	25
Act II.....	73
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	118

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

War on Stage

The men who start the wars are responsible, they bring out the worst in people.

- Chaplain, *Mother Courage and Her Children*

The day I learned how to write a play, was the day I knew that this was something I wanted to do forever. Playwriting itself is a unique creature, unlike novels, short stories and the like; playwriting gives characters tangible flesh and individual audible voices. The playwright has total freedom to imagine and create new places, sounds and feelings that can't always be cultivated on paper. Being a history minor, I've learned about many pivotal changes in mankind, those changes mainly revolve around war. Since war itself is one of man's oldest behavioral inclinations, warfare portrayed and dramatized in theater follows the real battlefield.

My play, *Senso no Himitsu* (Secrets of War), is about a clash of cultures, Japanese and Okinawan. It's about the atrocities of war. It's about seeing the effects of war on people in the present instead of the future or past. This play presents war from the inside; showing the reader and audience that battles don't always take place on the field, but in the hearts, minds and souls of people, even from the perspective of what we would consider the enemy.

In a historical context, this piece is fictional, though it contains many accurate historical elements. While I'm not the first to fuse fact and fiction, having the two coincide makes for a more plausible and believable play. To make the play more realistic, I used factual elements, like

characters' names and objects which really existed at the time this play is set. For example, in the second act, Hana reads an excerpt from a little pamphlet that gets blown into the house. Those pamphlets were actually dropped by the U.S. so as to warn the Okinawans to be careful and stay out of harm's way.

I also wanted to set the piece in a real but uncommon locale, an area foreign to the typical audience. In researching where to imagine a house that no one would find, I discovered that the northern part of Okinawa was the most believable place to hide one.

The northern portion, [of Okinawa] constituting two-thirds of the island's area, is mountainous, heavily wooded, and rimmed with dissected terraces...[it is] Blanketed with a dense growth of live oak and conifers, climbing vines and underbrush, the highlands of the north rise to jagged peaks of 1,000-1,500 feet which extend the entire length of the region. (Nichols 6)

I wanted to make the idea of hidden house something that could really be possible. With a real sense of the terrain and layout of the area, I knew this would be the most ideal place for a secret house to be set.

I specifically designed the house to be unique in two ways. One: I wanted it to serve as a social observation on the wealth that is to be had in times of war. This is later mentioned in the play by Kenji Oshiro, the head of the household. While this is no ordinary Okinawan home, it lets the reader and audience know that this home is definitely upper-class. Two: I wanted its design on stage to be something a little different, influenced more by a Japanese sense of style but built to withstand the weather and climate from the island itself. The structure of the house is large but narrow with a tall, steep roof and a full wrap-around veranda.

Though my play doesn't mention or use any sort of weather conditions during the piece, the house is designed to combat rain and wind, which is a common occurrence. "Annual precipitation is heavy and erratic, and a day's downpour frequently equals a month's average" (Nichols 8). To be period correct, I didn't include rain and wind in the days that pass within the play but I hinted to the precipitation when Kenji's truck got stuck in the mud. I wanted to leave the freedom of change up to the director.

The time is also very crucial. The entire play takes place between March 26, 1945 and April 7, 1945; roughly a little less than a month's time span. I wanted the main characters to arrive right before the attack by the U.S. so as to get to know the family a few days before the shelling by the U.S. began on April 1, 1945, which was, ironically, both Easter Sunday and April Fool's day. Having a realistic timeline match with the action in the play helped move the story forward in sync with the characters interactions.

I specifically wanted to raise the drama in the play by putting opposing characters, in terms of culture, that is, and have them interact together. Having two different types of people, who would otherwise not be together, really made my idea come to life. To further emphasize that point, a Japanese Superior Private stated in his diary: "The natives bear ill feeling toward military personnel, and as the days go by, their feelings appear in their actions... This has become a very unpleasant place to live" (Nichols 11). Knowing more about how real Japanese soldiers personally felt while interacting with Okinawans helped create more realistic characters.

The Japanese at that time viewed the Okinawans as an inferior class of people, and so I designed the characters of Toshiro and Masaru to be just like that. "From the native islanders standpoint, there was a deep feeling of resentment because of the social, political, and economic discrimination that existed in favor of the Japanese" (Nichols 11).

From their introduction in Act One, Captain Toshiro and Sergeant Masaru insult and harass the Oshiro family even before getting to know them individually. Toshiro, the main character, is a torn between his older brother, Masaru and his job as a Captain. He goes along with what his brother says but doesn't really want to. He leads but then follows. Masaru on the other hand wants and tells things the way he sees them, without any thought to what he is doing. The only thing keeping him back is the fact that he is under rank of his younger brother. I wrote the Oshiro family to be the opposite of the boys. They are kind, humble, and giving early in the play, but, even as the play progresses, they keep their kind and respectable manners in front of the boys despite being disrespected.

Interestingly enough, two of the characters mentioned by Toshiro and Masaru are of historical significance; Chief of Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Yoshijiro Umezu and Lieutenant General of the Thirty-Second Army Mitsuru Ushijima. Though Yoshijiro Umezu never had children that I know of, I fabricated the idea that he was Toshiro and Masaru's father. In real life, Yoshijiro Umezu was actually one of the last of the high ranking officers who refused to surrender to the U.S. even after the Atomic bombing of Japan.

Though Umezu is never seen in the play, I wanted to create a father for the boys that was metaphorically, absent and distant to his children. It was Umezu's will to keep fighting that I wanted to emulate through the radio. Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima was actually the General in charge of the Thirty-Second Army on Okinawa. He was also one of the last Generals on Okinawa who refused to surrender, even after he had been given a chance to, and instead committed suicide.

In my research, I discovered that the Japanese had small independent units of personnel that were stationed with Okinawan families' right before and during the war. These units were

called “Boeitai” or “Okinawa Home Guards” and were composed of both native Okinawans and Japanese soldiers. In the book, *Okinawa: The Last Battle*, the author states that: “At the time of the American landings on Okinawa, about 20,000 *Boeitai* had been mobilized by the Japanese for duty as labor and service troops” (Appleman 89). To establish a plausible connection for why the boys transferred to a remote Okinawan home, I used the idea of these Boeitai units. I thought that if these units existed in real-life then the idea of two Japanese Soldiers stationed with an Okinawan family would work out as well.

To streamline this connection for the boys being stationed on Okinawa, I created the character, Kenji Oshiro, the head of the household and war-time munitions businessman. My character of Kenji went to school with the boys’ father and supplies the Japanese Army with weapons. Kenji resides in Okinawa when not working in Japan and would be considered a higher class citizen along with his wife, Akemi Oshiro. She once worked in Kenji’s factory but now is a stay at home mother who takes care of their daughter, Hana Oshiro, who later becomes the love interest of Toshiro. Hana is essentially a good character overall but she makes bad choices in the play that act as a catalyst with already the volatile Toshiro and Masaru.

There are also three other characters in the play that do not have dialogue, those characters are personified as war itself. There is the war outside the Oshiro’s house and the war inside it. Though these characters for the most part remain silent, the war outside influences the entire family, their actions and their reactions. From the moment Masaru and Toshiro step inside the Oshiro’s house, the family is doomed, for they had brought the physical embodiment and elements of war inside their home to eat, sleep and interact with them. It is those actions and interactions that destroy their home and their lives. The radio is also an integral part of the play. It is the link that enables the war to be transmitted in and out of the house. I wanted to show the

radio as a symbolic device for war. Since its invention, it has been used in many ways to communicate information, it is a juxtapositional tool that can be used positively but it can also be used negatively, as it is in my play. Radio, like war, is something that will be around for a long time.

Many of the characters I based on myself. I related the most to Toshiro in ways that he feels obligated to follow orders no matter what. He wants to see his mission through to the end, even though he cannot see that far ahead into the future. Masaru is also a small part of myself that I wish I could be. He is loud, rude and makes his presence known to everyone around him. He is the character that has power but no control; he is even out-ranked by his own family. I based Akemi on various motherly persons that I encountered over the years as a child. She is warm, mindful, smart and delicate. Kenji is based in a similar fashion. Though he acts weaker than he really is, Kenji is very smart and business savvy. He is also kind and personal when the right moment occurs. Hana is based on various girls I've known; she is innocent, observant, smart, pretty and strong.

I wrote this play in an uncommon manner. I knew I wanted the play to be set in the past, but didn't know where to start. I originally thought I could set a piece in the feudal era of Japan with Samurai, emperors, and the like, but I wanted to try something a little different than what I already was used to writing. However, I kept the elements that I still liked about samurai, those elements being swords and armor. I also used aspects of samurai culture such as bushido, which is a "strict philosophy of honor and loyalty" (Ito 11).

This philosophy was instilled in the Japanese soldiers at the time so that they could fight to the last breath. In an interrogation by the U.S., one Japanese officer stated: "we must give our lives to the Emperor and Country, this is our inborn feeling... We Japanese base our lives on

obedience to the Emperor and Country” (Nichols 83). Knowing the personal views of Japanese soldiers helped me create more ideas for characters.

Narrowing the idea down was the hardest part for me. I had originally come up with five different stories before realizing that they were nowhere near what I wanted. So, I scrapped all of them and remained virtually clueless until I saw the History Channel’s presentation of *WWII in HD*. That’s when the idea came to me. Seeing many stories told from different soldier’s perspectives really brought the locations, emotions and sacrifices of the soldiers to life for me. It gave me direction. Seeing WWII in color, rather than black and white, made me visualize the dynamics and stories that I had never known about in WWII, and made me start to think about what the enemy was thinking when fighting or hiding from their enemy, the U.S. So, I began with that basic idea.

But it wasn’t that simple. Plot wise, I knew where I wanted to start and I knew where I wanted to end. I started off correctly with the initial idea, and that was about it. Basically, I knew what I wanted but didn’t know how to get there. So, instead of working in a linear fashion, from beginning to end, in to out, as should probably be done, I started from outside and worked my way back inside from each end.

I knew only how I wanted to start and end the play, but even then I continued to keep changing beginnings and endings. I didn’t want a whole bunch of characters, so I narrowed my characters down from about seven to five. I set my location and time, but then needed action and dialogue.

In small increments, I began writing backwards toward the inside, back and forth in small sections, until the play was basically where I wanted it. My main problem while writing was trying to make a convincing story. I asked myself questions. Would it be believable? Has this

type of play been done before? Does the dialogue make sense? Are the characters round or square? All these types of questions I kept in mind while writing.

The revision process is what made the task of writing the most difficult for me. After cutting, reading, re-reading, and going back to fill in the areas that I had removed, I couldn't see what I was missing, what still needed to be cut and what needed to be added most of all.

I made many changes while writing the play. Initially the ending was going to be a dreamlike sequence in which Toshiro, the main character, re-enters the house after killing his brother Masaru, to find that the destroyed house he had been living and working in was back together again along with the family that had been killed. I also cut four to five pages out of act one because it didn't add anything to the story other than exposition between characters. Also, in the second act of the play Kenji starts to tell a ghost story. I had originally wanted to include the entire story but thought that it would distract from the overall play, so I cut it out as well. If it didn't jive with the piece, it was eliminated.

The process itself of writing this piece was a struggle for me. I originally wanted to write a play for mere entertainment, but as I wrote further into the story I found that there was more meaning than what I had started out with. The characters became more whole, the setting added to the tension, and the story evolved from a rather obscure idea into a more solid state. I had been told as an undergrad that "a good play leaves you thinking." And that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to write a story that left the audience and reader wondering "what is going to happen next?" Most of all, I wanted to write a play that hasn't been done from this exact perspective.

So, with my ideas and my writing I fought to create a play that would be different, compelling and worthwhile to both an audience and a reader. But, in order to be different in a certain area, you sometimes have to find and define what would be considered the same. I

wanted a good, original story but needed to look to other plays for inspiration, for guidance. I wanted to know what they had in common with my own play; I wanted to know what did they have to say? When did they take place? And most of all, what could I learn from them?

Battling other Plays: For Common Ground

From the early plays such as *The Persians* by Aeschylus to more contemporary plays such as *Flags* by Jane Martin, plays about war revolve around many different themes, some similar, some different, but all work on the stage to get a message across to the audience. The depiction of war on stage in my play *Senso no Himitsu*, shares many commonalities from these earlier works on different levels and subjects. As a playwright, I thought it was best to find similar elements in other plays in order to help me work towards better humanizing the characters in my play.

As I made my way through more of the plays and was writing more sections of my play, I started finding various little things that I didn't notice before, elements in scenes and even actions between characters that shared a link between other plays about war and my own.

So what are the elements that other war plays have in common with my own? Well, besides war itself, many contain: fighting, violence, on a physical or mental level, defeat, be it in the act of war itself or personal level, honor, courage, love, detachment, racism, capitalism, murder. Many interconnect and many are different from my own work.

Violence is a big part of many war plays. It is used in over half of the plays I've read to establish certain emotional points with characters or used to lead up to the climax of a plot in a story. Violence isn't the best thing to portray in a play, but it does have the ability to grab the audience or reader's attention better than a casual and calm dialogue. Violence is also a big part of my play, it is everywhere. I tried to make my piece as gritty and realistic as possible for the

characters under the circumstances that were presented in the play. I attempted to show and use violence when the circumstances permitted and or built up to it. The main point in the violence used in the play is to show the reader and audience that in certain circumstances, people are susceptible to this type of behavior.

In Act One of *Senso no Himitsu*, I try to show the discrimination that was going on at the time between the two cultures, Japanese and Okinawan, so as to show the audience and the reader that the characters involved were going to be submerged in something they didn't like. The opposite effect can be had on the side of the Americans fighting the Japanese, in which Americans felt a deep hatred toward their enemy. In plays such as *Mister Roberts* by Thomas Heggen and Joshua Logan, and *Home of the Brave* by Arthur Laurents, the American soldiers within the two plays who interact between each other express a type of dislike, almost hatred, for the Japanese, often times referring to them in negative connotations such as "Japs."

In the play, *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* by Frank McGuinness, the characters fighting during WWI have a hard time adjusting to each of their own comrades. Their own identity in the military is constantly being questioned in an attempt for self change. It is that idea of characters failing to transcend their own identity, which is one theme that really lingers in my own play. My characters only change under violent or ominous circumstances. When my characters are not under this stress, and attempt to change on their own, they are futile at trying to do it for themselves. The characters try and shoot for self change but end up missing the target altogether. This was one of the more important traits that I wanted to instill in my own characters so as to show that they have humanistic qualities.

In the play, *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes, the characters unite to try and stop the war. In my play, my characters' ideals and perspectives have opposite effects on each other. They cannot

unite because of their differences. My characters remain stubborn until they need help of some sort to achieve a desired need or outcome. I wanted to emphasize the unwillingness to change and or cooperate between my characters.

The Brig, by Kenneth Brown, captures the essence of the destruction of human beings' souls through repetition and confined quarters. I used this concept of confined quarters in my play because I wanted the characters to have something that would start eating at them right away. I wanted something that would make both the audience and reader feel what the characters were going through. Certain rooms of the house in my play are wide and long while others are small, tight and narrow. I wanted to compound the frustrations of the characters by putting them in these tight quarters, doing repetitive tasks so as to exacerbate the tension within a scene.

A Soldiers Play by Charles Fuller incorporates the elements of mystery with murder to draw the reader and audience into the play's plot. With *Senso no Himitsu*, I tried to use the allure of mystery between characters to try and achieve a similar effect, saving murder for the end. I wanted to have the reader and audience try to figure out what is going on, what is going to happen next with the characters, without giving away too much information right away.

In the play *Persians*, by Aeschylus, Aeschylus depicts the play from the perspective of the enemy so as to try and have the audience sympathize with them. I also attempt to do this in my play because I wanted to show a perspective that is rarely done in WWII based plays. I wanted to show the conflict of the enemy on their own turf. I wanted to make the reader and audience forget that the Japanese were not only our enemies at that point in time, but real people that felt, thought, and interacted the same way as any other human being.

In the play, *What Price Glory?* by Maxwell Anderson and Laurence Stallings, two Marines fight for the affections of a young French girl named Charmaine. Similarly, in my play, there is a conflict of interest, between brothers instead of acquaintances over a woman.

With *Senso no Himitsu*, I wanted the characters to have conflicts on different levels, not only with other characters but conflicts of personal values like in Jane Martin's *Flags*. I wanted to show the hypocrisy of my characters' views on war when they had to confront their inner selves. At times, my characters say something then turn around and do something completely different. I wanted to show the reader and the audience whether the characters would buckle under pressure or succeed in an inner transformation of self by having them struggle between thoughts and actions.

War and peace is a common theme in my play, my characters are frequently asking if the war will ever end. They are always unsure, only hoping that they can live long enough to either fight and die or return home safely. Toshiro and Masaru have opposing views; Toshiro leans toward peace and order, while Masaru wants war and chaos. They however aren't out for glory and profit as opposed to the play *Mother Courage* in which Mother Courage doesn't want the war to end so as to make a profit from selling goods from her wagon. Mother Courage says: "This is war. A nice source of income, I must say!" (Bentley 2137).

There is business to be had in war. I wanted to make that evident while creating the piece. I wanted to offer realistic dynamics to the character of Kenji, who is a business man who makes a profit selling munitions to the Japanese government. Kenji says in the play that all he has acquired has been because of his weapons manufacturing business.

Mother Courage says: “But in general both defeat and victory are a costly business for us that haven’t got much. The best thing is for politics to get stuck in the mud” (Bentley 2115). Like mother courage, the character of Kenji sees war as a source of income and profit.

Truth comes from experience. In *Mother Courage*, Mother Courage instructs her daughter Kattrin to take notice of the character Yvette’s story of falling in love with a soldier. “Let this be a lesson to you Kattrin, never start anything with a soldier” (Bentley 2110). In my play, a relationship starts to develop between Toshiro and Hana but ends up turning out horribly misguided. Toshiro thinks that Masaru wants Hana all to himself but he really doesn’t and it causes friction between these two characters. Like Mother Courage, I wanted to show the dichotomy between soldiers and civilians. I wanted to show that while they may interact, they are just two types of people who can mix well together.

My play contains certain elements that relate to other war plays, for example, my play involves soldiers interacting with civilians, like *Arms and the Man* by Bernard Shaw, where a soldier hides among civilians to escape being shot. I wanted to pair this unusual combination of civilians and soldiers so as to draw the reader and audience into the story. Since each of the characters is so different, I thought that this would be even more effective to the overall plot than rather just having soldiers interact with other soldiers.

In the play *Mother Courage*, the Chaplin says: “The men who start the wars are responsible, they bring out the worst in people” (Bentley 2136). I thought that this related to the whole concept of my play. My characters are the ones that really put this quote into action within my play. In subtle ways, my characters’ inner selves come out in the play, and those inner selves aren’t very likable at times. I wanted to show that they change because of inner conflict inside the house and the outer conflict that is going on with the war with the U.S.

Some of the plays I've addressed mainly involve the personal side effects of a war after the fact. In *Still Life*, by Emily Mann, an ex marine named Mark talks about his life after the Vietnam War. The war has somehow distorted him in a way when he comes back home. I used this concept with my characters so as to show that war really affects the characters. Other plays, such as *Tracers* by John DiFusco, try to show and recount the lives of soldiers who also went and came back from the Vietnam War.

Some of these plays also switch forward and backward in time so as to revisit the scene briefly. Mine, however, takes place during the war from the perspectives of the soldiers. In the play, *Home Front*, by James Duff, the character Jeremy comes back from the Vietnam war disturbed by what he was instructed to do by his commanding officers. I really liked this idea and wanted to include it in my piece with the characters, I wanted the effects of war to wear away at the already fragile states of my characters to as to mutate them or even cripple them.

Tracers and *Home of the Brave* use the elements of moving back and forth through time in different scenes in order to establish a connection to the events that happened to the characters in the plays. I originally wanted to use this approach too but didn't because I felt that it would take away from the action that was happening in the play. Though, in both of the mentioned plays above, the scene always returns back to the spot where they left off. This is effective if done correctly. I wanted to keep all the locations in one place. I felt that it would increase the drama by keeping the same location for the entire duration of the play and to immerse the audience in a single setting.

Toshiro is my main character; I created him to be the anti-hero. He knows what he has to do, he follows orders, he tries his best to help out, but, in the end, he realizes he was wrong, that

he was a monster all along. He doesn't want to be a hero, but his emotions keep pushing him to try and do the right thing until he snaps.

In the foreword to *Mister Roberts*, by Thomas Heggen and Joshua Logan, John Mason Brown states:

The hero who is man-sized rather than of god-like proportions; the good individual, not the fabulously noble one; the decent fellow instead of the over-virtuous prig; the person whose influence is based upon quiet example and understanding...is the hardest to make real in either fiction or drama. (Heggen vii)

I incorporate the anti-hero in my play. I decided I needed an anti-hero because I think that the good, old-fashioned hero has been done so many times before it has become just that, old-fashioned. I didn't want a character that was outdated. I wanted to create a character that people could relate to at one level or another. I also didn't want my character to be easily seen as the good guy, I wanted him to do good things but ultimately become what he was fighting against. The flawed characters that I created were meant to show the reader and audience that there are many sides to the human identity, that there is an inner conflict against what is right and what is wrong.

In *Bury the Dead*, fallen soldiers come back from the dead to try and live again. In my play, the characters of Toshio and Masaru have been trained in the opposite way. They are trained to fight and die; this is the Japanese soldier's philosophy. This is more evident on Masaru's part in the second act of the play, but not with Toshio. While my characters were trained the same, they believe in different things and have different views on what is right and wrong.

Victory in the Field

I consider what I bring to the field of theater as a playwright and creative writer is fresh ideas from a new perspective. I've never seen an Asian inspired drama made by a Latino before. I want to go beyond my own cultural experiences and try to imagine someone else's. In the book, *Out of the Fringe: Contemporary Latina/Latino Theater and Performance* by Caridad Svich and Maria Teresa Marrero, Svich mentions that there is a new kind of Latino/a theater writer that is being created. Their work, she states:

[Is] a bold frank, uncompromising, lyrical, private, metaphorical kind of work that re-visions what it is to be a Latino/a dramatist in the U.S. Created outside the mainstream of 'official' culture (both Latina/o and Anglo), this new generation of theatrical writing seeks to deconstruct and reconstruct not only theatrical forms but also the boundaries by which those forms have been created. (Svich ix)

In general, I want to break away from the essentialism that I have seen in many different forms of writing, including theater. I attempt to add my own interpretations and perspectives to the field of theater so as to try and break away from essentialism.

I'm not the only who thinks this way. A new cultural shift is underway. As Svich states: "These dramatists have slowly taken their work beyond the expected and established tropes made available to them by 'official' culture, and in doing so have moved out of the fringe and into the virtual center of contemporary American performance" (Svich ix).

So what is essentialism in Latino/a theater? Merriam-Webster.com defines essentialism as: "The practice of regarding something (as a presumed human trait) as having innate existence or universal validity rather than as being a social, ideological, or intellectual construct" (Essentialism). Essentialism simply put, is used when trying to find a universal characteristic of a

particular nation or culture, as in, Latino Theater. It's an identifier so people can be understood in simplistic way that has created the "token" characteristic, hence the term the "Token Mexican" the "Token Black Guy". Just because I'm a Latino playwright doesn't mean I have to write about Latinos, or the Latino experience. Everyone is different. And that is how and why I chose to write an Asian inspired play.

So who and where are these new groundbreaking and reinventing Latino/as in theater? That's a good question with an ever evolving answer. In the book *Jose Can You See?* by Alberto Sandoval Sanchez, quotes Ruby Nelda Perez describing Latino/a theater as being "An Octopus with many legs" (Sanchez 103). While the image of this comparison is fairly clear, Sanchez goes on to say; "the body of this cultural form is a heterogeneous and plural one, comprised of a host of playhouses, playwrights, performances, genre, styles and histories" (Sanchez 103). There are many Latinos who are starting to write in these different genres and styles, but there are very few who have written about war. *Gas*, by Jose Rivera is one contemporary play that comes to mind, but others, if they are out there, have not surfaced in recent times.

The fact that there are many "Arms" of this spectrum of theater is an interesting one indeed, in that they all spread out in many directions and are composed of such a vast conglomeration of areas. I can't help but ask myself if I am I in one of those "arms"? Where does that leave people like me, who are interested in theater outside of the token Latino/a experience?

I feel that I am the short leg of this octopus that is theater; I am the Latino individual who writes about what he knows best. That is, Japanese film and Anime. As a kid, I grew up watching old Japanese films about samurai with my friends, films like (Seven Samurai, Rashomon, Throne of Blood, Yojimbo and Sonjuro.) These films helped shape my idea of samurai and Asian culture on me at an early age. Later on, I also watched Anime like (Full Metal Alchemist, Afro Samurai,

Inuyahsa, One Piece, Cowboy Bebop, Neon Genesis Evangelion, Death Note, Naruto, Trigun, Bleach, Spirited away, Ghost in the Shell, and Dragon Ball Z), and reading Manga comics have also helped me keep the elements of story, plot, character, and action in focus when I began writing. All these different films and comics were influential factors for me deciding to base my play on Asian culture.

My style of theater is that of mixing traditional elements of Japanese film and Anime and adding a theatrical flare to it. I use this intermixing by performing historical roles in a new way. As Sanchez says: “The old paradigms of race, nation, and sexuality are being reconfigured” (Sanchez 123). This style and idea are not new to film, but, as a creative writer in theater, it is something I have never seen before.

So far I have not been able to situate myself with any other playwrights that try and follow what I am attempting to do, what I am interested in doing. There seems to be a gap between me and the playwrights that I’ve met, and so far, none seem to fall into any of the categories that I’m attempting. The inability to see other playwrights with similar interests such as myself is quite depressing to me. I know I’m not the only one doing this, but I want to know where are the others with interests like mine?

In an article written by Liesl Schillinger for The New York Times, Eduardo Machado, who is the artistic director of the Hispanic theater company Intar, makes a point in saying, “A Latino who lives in Latin America knows that he has a culture, that he belongs in the country where he lives. But us, living here, we are still looking for a culture, and for a place to belong.” That’s where I feel Machado is correct. Though I may be a Latino, I’m looking for a chance to write about a variation of many different cultures, and this is visible in my own work. I don’t

want to be bounded by ethnicity in a stereotypical way. It is in writing that I found I could express who I am through intermixing cultures and genre.

As Sanchez mentions: “A new U.S. Latino theater has emerged, with new dramatic structures, new protagonists, new perspectives, and new ways of articulating, negotiating, and accommodating bilingual and bicultural identities” (Sanchez 122). My thinking has led me to try and break into new areas of theater so as to become a better playwright.

In the case of intermixing genres in the past, I have also created works based on other alternate cultures, some, Anglo, some Native-American, African-American, but mainly Japanese. I incorporate many of the themes I have learned from a variety of films and playwrights over the years; Playwrights such as David Henry Hwang, David Ives, Eric Lane, Jose Rivera, Nina Shengold, David Mamet, Jane Martin and many others.

As for my work, I have attempted to incorporate some of the elements from these theatrical texts in order to come up with an original storyline and then make custom usage of different forms of theatre. This relates to the subject matter I’ve been mentioning about U.S. Latino Theater. Sanchez states that this new type of writing “incorporates a cornucopia of themes, dramatic actions, and issues” (Sanchez 122).

Though I may feel like the short leg of the “octopus” I believe that Latino/a playwrights such as myself will begin to grow and extend this side of Latino/a theater into something stronger and more visible in time. And as Sanchez states: “The presence and visibility of U.S. Latino Theater can no longer be ignored. It is here to stay, in all its diversity and difference” (Sanchez 123).

In all, my main goal was to write a play with a creative compelling story that tries to capture the essence of cultural intermixing in an attempt to go against essentialism. My desired

outcome however is giving the reader an original example of what a Latino playwright's Asian inspired play can be.

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Senso no Himitsu
(Secrets of War)

A Full Length Play

by

Ricardo Tijerina Jr.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TOSHIRO UMESU	23, Japanese Soldier, Captain
MASARU UMESU	28, Japanese Soldier, Sergeant
KENJI OSHIRO	55, Business man
AKEMI OSHIRO	48, Mother
HANA OSHIRO	19, Daughter

TIME

March 26, 1945

SETTING

A hidden house of the Oshiro's, in the northern mountains of Okinawa.

ACT 1

SETTING: A house hidden in the northern mountains of Okinawa during WWII, 1945.

AT RISE: The lay out of the Oshiro's home is seen. The house is richly appointed and massive in size. It is built in a farmhouse style, with a hipped and gabled thatch roof. An *engawa* (veranda) wraps around the entire length with *shoji* (translucent screens made of wood and paper) windows and doors that encase the majority of the perimeter. Three *tatami* (recreational or sleeping) rooms are also seen on up stage left, up center and up right of the house. *Fusuma* screens (sliding screens) divide each room of the house. The third *tatami* room sticks out the most as it appears almost isolated from the house as a whole. It is plain, bare and utilitarian. Though it has its own access to the garden, it is not as warm looking or inviting. The tea room is situated center stage. It is finely decorated with lacquered shelves, furniture and porcelain pottery that adorn the cupboards and other various areas. The garden, positioned down stage right conceals a small stream with a rock garden running along side it. A statue of Buddha can also be seen hiding

in the shrubbery. The *zashiki* (reception or foyer) room is seen stage left toward the entrance of the house. It contains decorative elements with scrolls that are delicately inked with hues of pink and green. Beneath the scroll is a small incense burner. Down left in the far corner of the room is a shrine with a samurai sword and armor skillfully lacquered. Akemi comes into the house from stage right between the garden and third *tatami* room. She is clothed in a red kimono and is carrying a small pot for tea. She stops at the entrance removes her shoes and makes her way toward the tea room. Hana appears from her room up stage center when she hears her mother walking toward the tea room. Hana is neatly dressed in a jade kimono but her hair is slightly disheveled. She rubs her eyes and yawns. Hana listens again and looks around. Akemi delicately places the pot of tea on a lacquer-ware table surrounded by several *zabutons* (slim cushions). Akemi turns, and gets some cups from the cupboard and places them around the pot of tea. She softly turns and gets some bowls and inspects them. Hana goes to the entrance of the tea room's *fusuma*, parts them and peaks inside. Akemi

Organizes the tea room some more then stops and feels the outside of the tea pot. She pours herself a cup and drinks. She makes a pensive face while tasting the tea but then turns and exits with the tea pot. Hana watches as her mother leaves. She exits to her room after a small beat. The house is quiet and seemingly empty for a moment. Then a vehicle is heard pulling up outside.

KENJI

(Kenji's voice is heard OS)

This is it gentlemen. Follow me. (Kenji enters the *zashiki* room. He is wearing a business suit and tie. He removes his shoes and walks inside.) Come on, this way. (Masaru and Toshiro enter and remove their muddy boots. They look around with a smirk. Masaru and Toshiro are dressed in military attire, they carry packs, holstered pistols and military issued katanas)

TOSHIRO

Hey, this is much nicer than what I was expecting.

MASARU

Yeah, almost looks livable.

KENJI

(Laughs nervously)

This way, this way gentlemen, let me show you to your room.

TOSHIRO

(Looks around)

When do we eat? I'm starving.

(Hana exits her room holding something in her hand, she is nicely made up now.

She enters the *zashiki* room and freezes when she sees her father with Masaru and Toshiro)

HANA

Father? (Sees Masaru and Toshiro and retracts) Sorry, I didn't mean to intrude.

KENJI

Oh, Hana. This is Captain Toshiro and Sergeant Masaru, the guests that will be staying with us.

HANA

(Bows to her father, Masaru and Toshiro)

How do you do?

MASARU

Could be better.

TOSHIRO

Fine, thank you.

KENJI

Uh, this is my daughter, Hana, gentlemen.

TOSHIRO

I could figure. Unless she's your little toy?

MASARU

You sly dog you, I knew it.

HANA

(Looks down)

I have gifts for our guests' father.

KENJI

That's very nice of you, Hana.

TOSHIRO

Oh, and gifts too? Fantastic.

MASARU

(To Toshiro)

Shut up. (Back to Hana) I get one also? (Hana looks down and nods)

KENJI

(Steps forward and takes the gifts from Hana's hand)

This is a custom here. This is for your travel. (Hands them to Masaru and Toshiro)

MASARU

(Takes his gift and opens it)

What the hell is this?

TOSHIRO

(Takes his gift and opens it too)

Thanks.

KENJI

You're supposed to open them later.

TOSHIRO

(Stops opening his gift)

Oh.

MASARU

(Stops fidgeting with the gift and smirks)

I know, but I didn't want to wait.

HANA

It is also customary to give gifts in return.

TOSHIRO

I didn't know.

MASARU

(Shrugs)

I don't have anything, so don't look at me kid.

KENJI

It's quite alright, don't worry about it.

HANA

Father.

KENJI

(With a glance to Hana)

Where is your mother?

HANA

(Looks around)

She's in the tea room.

KENJI

(Looks seriously)

Well go get her; our guests are thirsty and hungry.

HANA

Yes, father. (Hana closes the *fusuma* and exits)

MASARU

(Looks around some more and spots the samurai sword and armor)

Where did you get that?

TOSHIRO

(Looks over to the armor slightly)

That's nice.

KENJI

(Walks over to it and smiles)

This was my great ancestor's armor.

MASARU

(Looks at Kenji)

Samurai.

KENJI

(Looks back at Toshiro and Masaru)

Yes. It's very old.

MASARU

(Looks back at Kenji)

I thought your family was just from here.

KENJI

(Rubs the back of his neck with his hand)

They are, but we Oshiro's descended from Japan.

TOSHIRO

(With a weak smile)

Yup, descended, there's no going back up to Japanese standards.

MASARU

(Nods head in agreement)

Once an Okinawan, always an Okinawan.

KENJI

(Smiles politely)

Did you get all of your belongings, gentlemen?

MASARU

(Steps forward with hand on katana)

I did. Did you? (Looks to Toshiro)

TOSHIRO

(Thinks for a moment)

I left something in the vehicle.

MASARU

What's wrong with you? You're always forgetting stuff. Go get it.

TOSHIRO

Watch that mouth, Sergeant.

MASARU

Yes, sir.

KENJI

I'll show Masaru to your room then. (To Toshiro) Is that alright?

TOSHIRO

Go ahead, it won't take me that long.

MASARU

Hurry up. (Toshiro gives a sharp look to Masaru)

KENJI

(Nods head)

Very well then. This way Masaru. (Kenji and Masaru exit. Toshiro lingers behind and stares at the samurai armor. He reaches to touch the katana as Hana enters)

HANA

Oh, I'm sorry; I thought my father was still here. Do you know where my father went?

TOSHIRO

(Is startled but attentive)

I, I, he went to show Masaru where we'll be staying.

HANA

Shouldn't you be with him?

TOSHIRO

(Looks at Hana)

Yes, but I forgot something outside. I was just admiring the armor.

HANA

Oh, that. Father always gets mad if I get near it.

TOSHIRO

It's very beautiful.

HANA

There's something special about it but I forgot what it was.

TOSHIRO

(With a puzzled look)

How could you forget something like this?

HANA

(Clears throat)

I don't know- (Beat) Are you hungry?

TOSHIRO

What? Oh yes, yes.

HANA

I'll go get you something to eat.

TOSHIRO

(Nods head)

Thank you, I'll be right back. (Toshiro exits)

AKEMI

(Akemi enters with another pot of tea)

Hana, are they here yet?

HANA

(Eyes go wide)

Mother, they've been here for a while now. Father is mad.

AKEMI

What? Why didn't you tell me?

HANA

(Shrugs shoulders)

I thought you were still in the tea room.

AKEMI

I was, but the tea got cold. I had to get a hot batch.

HANA

I'm sorry. I should've gone to get you.

AKEMI

Don't worry about it; I'll deal with your father later.

HANA

Our guests are hungry, mother. (Under her breath) And rude.

AKEMI

(Softly)

Well then? Where are they?

HANA

Father took one to the ugly *tatami* room. But there is another outside too.

AKEMI

Why is he outside?

HANA

(Shakes head)

He said he was going to get something. (Loud laughs are heard coming from the third *tatami* room)

AKEMI

I'll go greet our guests.

HANA

Ok.

(Toshiro enters with a large pack on his back)

TOSHIRO

Now there's two of you.

AKEMI

(Bows)

Welcome, my name is Akemi. You must be one of the guests that my husband has brought.

TOSHIRO

(Smiles with slight bow)

I guess so. (Beat) My name is Toshiro.

AKEMI

(Steps forward and bows)

Pleased to meet you, Toshiro. My husband will be with you shortly.

TOSHIRO

Alright.

MASARU

(Kenji and Masaru enter)

Captain, there you are. Wait till you see where we'll be working and sleeping. It's a real shit room.

TOSHIRO

Sergeant.

MASARU

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. (Looks at Akemi)

TOSHIRO

(To Kenji)

Is this true? You gave us a bad room?

KENJI

No, Captain. It's perfectly fine.

TOSHIRO

We'll see.

AKEMI

(Bows to Kenji and Masaru)

Welcome. I'm Akemi.

MASARU

Nice job, Kenji, you've got two good looking dishes now.

KENJI

(Laughs nervously)

It's true. I'm blessed with women.

MASARU

(Leans on the wall)

How do you do? I'm Masaru.

AKEMI

I'm fine thank you. I have some tea and soup ready for you gentlemen if you're hungry.

KENJI

(Nods head and parts the *fusuma* to the tea room.)

This way, gentlemen.

TOSHIRO

(Sniffs the air)

What's that smell?

AKEMI

Oxtail soup.

MASARU

If it's edible it doesn't smell like it.

KENJI

(To Masaru and Toshiro)

You'll like this, trust me. It's really good. (Kenji notices that Toshiro has a loaded pack on his back and taps Toshiro on his arm)

KENJI

Let me get that for you. I'll get Hana to put it in your room.

TOSHIRO

Alright, but it's heavy.

(Kenji removes pack and hands it to Hana)

KENJI

Hana, please take this to their room.

HANA

(Grabs pack and bends a bit with the weight)

Yes, father.

MASARU

There's how you do it. Send a girl to do a man's job.

KENJI

She's stronger than she looks, Sergeant.

MASARU

Oh, a tough girl, aye?

AKEMI

(Looks hard at Kenji then smiles at Masaru. She begins serving tea and food)

Would you care for some more tea, Masaru? (To Toshiro) Toshiro? Some more, yes?

MASARU

I'll take some. A little more this time, will you please?

AKEMI

Of course. (Akemi pours tea into the cup)

TOSHIRO

Just a little is fine. (Akemi goes around and pours tea for Toshiro)

KENJI

(Slurps soup)

What is that you boys do for the government again? The details were a little murky.

MASARU

(With a mouthful of hot food)

We're weapons and ordinance logistics.

TOSHIRO

(Swallows food)

It's a small but major part in the war.

KENJI

How will you be working with the government from here?

TOSHIRO

(Looks at Kenji)

By telegraph and radio. You have electricity don't you?

AKEMI

Yes, but we hardly use it. We like to keep things simple.

MASARU

Excellent. That will work out perfectly.

TOSHIRO

We'll communicate with them and they'll communicate with us.

KENJI

They say soldiers like you are called *Boeitai*.

TOSHIRO

Yeah, home guards. I dislike the name.

KENJI

Shouldn't you boys be in the front lines?

MASARU

Shouldn't you?

KENJI

(Stops drinking tea)

Me? I'm too old for war.

MASARU

Too old. (Laughs and bangs on table) That's ridiculous, you're half the age of some of the men I've seen.

KENJI

Thank you, but I hardly believe that.

MASARU

It's true. The government will take anyone who is able to fight. And you look pretty damn able.

AKEMI

Really? They're that desperate?

MASARU

From young boys to grandfathers, Kenji would fit right in.

KENJI

I don't think they would want to expend me.

MASARU

And why is that?

KENJI

Well, we're in the same governmental trade. Mine is just business related. Yours is related to business.

TOSHIRO

(Leans forward slightly)

How so?

KENJI

You demand the supply. I supply the demand. It has given me all I have and connects me to everything wanted and unwanted.

MASARU

Weapons manufacturing?

KENJI

Precisely. So imagine my surprise when the Chief of the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff sends me correspondence saying that I have the privilege of housing you two fine gentlemen.

MASARU

Yoshijiro Umezu?

KENJI

Yes. We were colleagues many years ago.

MASARU

Really?

KENJI

Yes, because of him, I now supply directly to Japan. So, when he asked about you two, I couldn't help but accept his request.

TOSHIRO

(Masaru gives Toshiro a sharp look)

So you think you're exempt, then?

KENJI

No, but it doesn't hurt to say that I'm helping my country for the greater good.

MASARU

The only good you're doing is being an ass...(Akemi interrupts)

AKEMI

I think we're all a little tired right? Some rest would clear our minds of the day.

KENJI

I believe Akemi makes a good point. We'll have plenty of time to talk later, gentlemen. Let us

get some rest, yes? (Laughs)

TOSHIRO

My pack?

KENJI

Hana put it in your room. Good night, gentlemen. (Kenji bows to Toshiro and Masaru as they exit. Lights fade.)

SCENE 2

MASARU

(Masaru and Toshiro are in the third *tatami* room working. Various papers are pinned on the wall along with a bulky radio and a telegraph.)

I can't stand this room. It's shit. We've been here for three days and it's the same shit.

TOSHIRO

Just deal with it for now. (Back to radio and telegraph) No, that's fifteen Type-eleven's. Fifteen. Yes, with the spare hoppers. No, I don't want the Type-three. (Back to Masaru) It's better than being in the tunnels.

MASARU

You're wasting your time. We both should be out there fighting. The Americans wouldn't stand a chance between the two of us. (Telegraph starts going off)

TOSHIRO

We're more important than that. (To the radio) No leave the dust covers on. Yes. I don't care if they make noise. (Reads the telegraph and hands it to Masaru)

MASARU

Why? Because Yoshijiro Umezu tells us we're important? We're just the same as the other soldiers out there. We trained the same and we should die the same.

TOSHIRO

Nobody should have to die at all.

MASARU

This is war, little brother, we're all supposed to fight and die.

TOSHIRO

We're fighting in a different way. (To radio again) What do you mean all out? Order them. (To radio) Pickup will be in Ishikawa.

MASARU

No, this is nothing.

TOSHIRO

(Removes headset)

If you want, I'll radio in a boat to take you off this island. Father will be pissed, though.

MASARU

(Breathes deep and looks around)

Forget it.

TOSHIRO

It's no problem, but you can talk to him. I won't. (Toshiro hands him the headset)

MASARU

(Smacks it away)

I said forget it.

TOSHIRO

(Looks at the headset then back to Masaru)

Alright.

MASARU

(Looks at the headset for a bit, he then picks it up and hands it to Toshiro)

Sorry. (Beat) Yoshijiro won't have the privilege of knowing that I've given up.

TOSHIRO

I hate when you call father by his first name. (Smiles and puts the headset back on. The telegraph starts to go off again) Let's get back to wor- (Toshiro listens in carefully)

MASARU

(Tries to listen in)

What?

TOSHIRO

Shh. Something's going on.

MASARU

What happened? Did they mess up your order again?

TOMOE

Shh. There's a report.

MASARU

About?

TOSHIRO

The Americans.

MASARU

Anything good?

TOSHIRO

I don't know. (Beat, to radio) When the hell did that happen? (Beat) Who's moving? Predicted targets? Repeat.

MASARU

Moving? Moving where? (Telegraph goes off)

TOSHIRO

(To Masaru)

The coordinates are being sent in. Predicted targets: Formosa, Nansei Shoto, and or Okinawa.

MASARU

(Writes down the message from the telegraph, looks up from the paper in realization.)

They're coming.

TOSHIRO

(To radio)

Yes, no, no, no, we'll update you. Over.

MASARU

Toshiro, (Beat) they're coming.

TOSHIRO

I know. Keep it down, the Oshiro's will hear you.

MASARU

I don't care. I hate it here.

TOSHIRO

I don't like it here, either, but we'll just have to do what we're told.

MASARU

To hell with Yoshijiro, he knew about this from the start.

TOSHIRO

I don't know. Why would he do that? He didn't know. He couldn't have known. This island is just an outpost.

MASARU

They're coming. (In a deep stare) and he knew it.

TOSHIRO

Shut up. Look, hey, we can't tell Kenji, Akemi or Hana anything about this. Ok?

MASARU

We're sitting targets out here.

TOSHIRO

No we're not, we're hidden deep, so shut up. I'll radio it in and find out what's going on. He'll send for us if it gets crazy down here. He has to send for us. Swear to me you won't tell these people what's going on. (Toshiro starts to radio in) Swear.

MASARU

Yeah, yeah, I swear.

TOSHIRO

(Into radio)

This is Ghost Order six-nine-one-five-two-two-three. We need an updat- (Is interrupted by Masaru)

MASARU

(With a crazed smile)

Wait, call it back.

TOSHIRO

What? Why?

MASARU

Do you know what this means for us?

TOSHIRO

No? (Confused)

MASARU

Call it back.

TOSHIRO

I can't call it back if I haven't even called it in. What the hell is the matter with you?

MASARU

This is a test. Yoshijiro wants us to prove ourselves to him.

TOSHIRO

This is not a damn test, you fool. I'm calling in.

MASARU

No.

TOSHIRO

Why? No one is testing you.

MASARU

This is great. They're coming right to us. (Masaru unsheathes his sword)

KENJI

(Kenji knocks on the *fusuma*. Waits a beat then opens it. He is wearing a kimono)

Who's coming, gentlemen? (Sees Masaru's sword)

MASARU

The shipment we ordered is coming in. Isn't that correct, Toshiro?

TOSHIRO

(Takes headset off)

That's right. If you'll excuse us we have to get back to this.

KENJI

(Looks at Masaru and his sword)

Oh, practicing? I was once pretty good at that.

MASARU

(Sheaths his sword)

Would you go away if I said I bet you were?

TOSHIRO

(Shakes head)

Either you tell us what you want or go away.

KENJI

(Beat)

Yes, sorry, I'm sorry to be interrupting you two, but could you help me with something?

MASARU

What is it? We don't have time for foolish matters.

KENJI

The truck is stuck and I can't get it out. Could you help me?

TOSHIRO

You can't move it yourself? We're busy.

KENJI

I'm not strong enough.

MASARU

Use the winch and quit bothering us.

KENJI

(Shakes head)

I've already tried that but it's inoperative. Please, can you help me?

TOSHIRO

(Gets up and stretches)

This better be something fast.

KENJI

It is. Just a quick push and it's out.

TOSHIRO

If it's more work than you say it is I'm leaving you there with it.

KENJI

You'll help, then?

MASARU

We're busy. Go away.

TOSHIRO

We can help. (Nudges Masaru) Come on, you lazy ass. (Pats Masaru's shoulder roughly) We were just finishing anyway.

MASARU

(Looks at Toshiro harshly)

Shit.

TOSHIRO

Sergeant.

MASARU

Yes, sir. Coming, sir.

KENJI

(With a smile on his face)

Thank you.

MASARU

(To Kenji)

This is the only help you're gonna get, so be grateful.

KENJI

(Bows and exits)

Thank you.

TOSHIRO

Come on. It won't take that long. (Masaru and Toshiro exit)

AKEMI

(Akemi knocks on the *fusuma* entrance)

Captain Toshiro, Sergeant Masaru, do you need anything? (She enters the room. It is quiet and empty. She looks around at the papers on the wall and attempts to read them without success. She then turns and admires the radio equipment. She touches it gently. After a beat she turns and proceeds to exit the room when the telegraph goes off and startles Akemi. She laughs and continues to exit when the radio goes off too. She stops at the *fusuma* and lingers there for a moment. She goes back to the radio and puts the head set on and listens. Her eyes go wide as she listens. She gets up and staggers back a bit. She removes the headset and quickly places it down where she found it. She exits, the room is empty again. The headset drops to the floor, Lights fade.)

SCENE 3

(Kenji, Masaru and Toshiro enter the *zashiki* room. Masaru is laughing at Toshiro who is covered in mud and leaves.)

MASARU

Toshiro, you fool, look at you.

TOSHIRO

(To Kenji sharply)

Why didn't you tell me the damn truck was in gear?

KENJI

I'm so sorry, Captain, I didn't know you were still pushing.

TOSHIRO

You're not sorry, you piece of shit.

KENJI

I didn't mean to do it, I said to let go, but you held on.

TOSHIRO

You did that on purpose.

KENJI

No, I didn't, I'm sorry.

MASARU

(Masaru is still laughing hysterically)

I love this.

TOSHIRO

Shut up. That's an order.

MASARU

(Becomes serious)

Don't you tell me to shut up.

TOSHIRO

You'll get respect when you give it, Sergeant.

KENJI

Gentlemen, please. Toshiro, I'm very sorry. (Akemi enters)

AKEMI

What's going on here?

TOSHIRO

Nothing, now go away.

AKEMI

Captain Toshiro, are you ok? What happened?

MASARU

(Starts to laugh again)

We were pushing the truck out of the mud for Kenji and he forgot to tell the Captain to let go.

KENJI

That's not how it happened.

MASARU

He dragged him for about a meter and a half.

AKEMI

I don't care who did what, Toshiro needs some clean clothes.

KENJI

(Calls to Hana)

Hana, come here.

AKEMI

(With a sharp glance to Kenji)

You should've been more careful.

KENJI

Hana.

AKEMI

(To Kenji)

I'll go get her. (To Toshiro) Toshiro, go ahead and wash up. We'll bring you some clean clothes.

TOSHIRO

(Starts to take off his shirt)

Here. (Angrily) You better not mess up my uniform. (Akemi nods and exits) Shit. (Begins to walk to his room but stops next to Kenji and draws his pistol) Better be more careful next time. (Taps the barrel on Kenji's chest then Exits)

KENJI

Again, I apologize. (Looks down)

MASARU

Hey, old man.

KENJI

(Turns to Masaru)

Yes?

MASARU

How do I get off this sweat-hole island?

KENJI

What do you mean, Sergeant?

MASARU

I mean, if I want to get out of here, I want to know the easiest way back.

KENJI

(Looks at Masaru)

The only way is the way we came.

MASARU

Shit, I figured.

KENJI

Why would you want to leave?

MASARU

Safety protocol.

KENJI

(Curious)

You don't feel safe here?

MASARU

(Smiles)

No.

KENJI

What? Why?

MASARU

I have my reasons.

KENJI

And what reasons are those, if I may ask?

MASARU

I find it strange that a weapons manufacturer doesn't have any weapons in his own home.

KENJI

I don't find it strange. I just don't like to bring my work home with me.

MASARU

Well, you should've brought something.

KENJI

You expecting intruders?

MASARU

No. (Beat) Never mind. (Masaru exits)

AKEMI

(Akemi enters)

What did you do?

KENJI

Nothing.

AKEMI

The Captain looks like he could kill you right now.

KENJI

It was an accident.

AKEMI

(Shakes head)

Accident or not, you have to be more careful.

KENJI

Why do I have to be more careful?

AKEMI

Because. (Beat) They're our guests.

KENJI

They are an unwanted burden.

AKEMI

That may be, but in these times they could be useful.

KENJI

Useful?

AKEMI

We're in a war. Anything could happen.

KENJI

You're right. (A beat in realization) Where's Hana?

AKEMI

She's getting some clothes for Toshiro.

KENJI

And Toshiro?

AKEMI

Bathing.

KENJI

Oh. (Beat) I want them out of my house.

AKEMI

(Nods)

Maybe they'll leave soon.

KENJI

Soon is not soon enough. (Lights fade)

SCENE 4

(Toshiro enters the *Tatami* room clean and semi dry, half covered with a towel. He checks the radio but there is no new information. Hana enters the room but does not see Toshiro behind the radio. She is carrying a set of clean clothes for Toshiro. She walks past him and places the clothes next to his equipment. Toshiro stops what he is doing and watches Hana walk by. When she gets back up to leave, she sees him but does not get startled)

HANA

I'm washing your uniform. (Picks up the clothes and hands them to Toshiro looking down)

These are my father's old clothes. They should fit you.

TOSHIRO

Thank you. (Toshiro gets up and takes the clothes)

HANA

I'll be leaving now. (Hana starts to get up)

TOSHIRO

(Grabs her shoulders gently)

Wait, don't go, just wait, ok? I'll be right back.

HANA

Ok. (Toshiro exits with clothes, then comes back to the room after a few beats dressed in Kenji's clothes)

TOSHIRO

You still there?

HANA

(Turns but is still looking down)

Yes.

TOSHIRO

(Pulls on his clothes and smiles)

Do they fit?

HANA

(Looks at Toshiro)

Yes, surprisingly well.

TOSHIRO

(Smiles)

Good.

HANA

I'll be going now. (Bows and starts to exit)

TOSHIRO

Wait. Can you do something for me?

HANA

(With a curious glance up)

What is it that you need?

TOSHIRO

(Points to the corner)

Could you bring my pack over here please?

HANA

Oh. (Beat) Sure.

TOSHIRO

It's not so heavy this time.

HANA

(Nods head and goes to pick up the pack)

Here you go. (Hands Toshiro his pack)

TOSHIRO

(Tilts head to left side slightly and smiles)

Don't think I forgot.

HANA

Forgot what?

TOSHIRO

(Looks at Hana)

The gift you gave me.

HANA

I didn't think you would.

TOSHIRO

(Reaches into his pack)

Here, I have something for you too.

HANA

(Looks at Toshiro)

You don't have to give me anything.

TOSHIRO

(With a weak smile)

I want to.

HANA

(Shakes head)

It's quite alright, really.

TOSHIRO

(Finds what he's looking for and pulls it out)

This is for you. (Hands Hana the compass)

HANA

(Takes the compass and looks at it)

Thank you. (Beat) Toshiro.

TOSHIRO

(Smiles)

Do you know what it is?

HANA

Yes, it's a. (Beat and tries to think) Uhm. A compass.

TOSHIRO

Yeah, that's right.

HANA

Yes. I couldn't remember. I've only heard about them.

TOSHIRO

Do you know how to use it?

HANA

(Beat)

No.

TOSHIRO

(Takes the compass and opens it up)

It's really quite simple. (Points to the innards of the compass) This is North, the needle here will

always point in that direction. That's South and there's East and West. (Beat) Whenever you're lost just take this out and it will guide you in the direction you want to go. (Beat) You'll never get lost wherever you're at. (They both look at each other. Toshiro kisses Hana on the cheek. She kisses Toshiro on the lips)

MASARU

(Enter room and stares at Toshiro and Hana)

They have you dressing in their clothes now, Captain?

TOSHIRO

(Toshiro turns, Hana puts the compass away)

My uniform is being washed.

MASARU

Right, and next thing you know, you'll be talking like them. Filthy bastards.

HANA

I should go now. (Gets up slowly and bows. Then tries to get past Masaru) Good night.

MASARU

(Grabs Hana's arm as she tries to walk past him)

Hey, bitch, where you going?

HANA

(Is hesitant but answers looking down)

I'm interrupting, I'll leave you two be.

MASARU

(Is still holding onto Hana's arm but smells her hair)

What? No you're not. Stay here a little while, let me look at you.

HANA

I'm sorry, I have to go now.

TOSHIRO

Sergeant Masaru, let her go.

MASARU

(Pulls her closer and reaches into her clothes)

You ever been with a real man?

HANA

(Struggles but keeps looking down)

Please, let me go.

MASARU

Captain Toshiro, hold her down. I'm going to show this bitch how we do it.

TOSHIRO

(Moves closer with his fist clenched)

Leave her alone, Masaru.

MASARU

No. What are you going to do?

TOSHIRO

(Grabs Masaru)

I'll have you're ass demoted back down to private for disobeying a direct order, you'll be thrown in the brig for misconduct. Now, let her go, Sergeant.

MASARU

(Lets Hana go)

Go on, get out of here. (To Hana while she exits) I'll catch you later.

TOSHIRO

What the hell are you doing?

MASARU

(Sharply)

Just having a little fun, brother.

TOSHIRO

(With a hard stare to Masaru)

You're going to get us in trouble.

MASARU

I've got to entertain myself with something.

TOSHIRO

(Shakes head)

We're not here for that shit. You want a whore, go back home because that's all there is.

MASARU

Then why the hell are we here? (Beat) What, you think you're some kind of hero?

TOSHIRO

No.

MASARU

Then why are you acting like one?

TOSHIRO

(Looks)

Look, I don't like these people anymore than you but just leave them be.

MASARU

(Pushes Toshiro aside)

Leave them be? You just pointed a damn gun at Kenji right now.

TOSHIRO

(Sits down)

I was pissed and wasn't thinking clearly.

MASARU

(Smirks)

You never think clearly.

TOSHIRO

(Looks toward the door)

Yeah, well neither do you. (Beat) Any word from Command?

MASARU

(Moves across from Toshiro and grabs a piece of paper)

I don't know, I haven't checked.

TOSHIRO

It's been quiet.

MASARU

(Reads the paper)

Too quiet.

TOSHIRO

(Grabs the headset, puts it on and turns on the radio. There is no response)

It's dead. (Toggles the switch on and off a few times)

MASARU

(Looks at Toshiro)

Dead? How can it be dead?

TOSHIRO

It's dead. (Toggles the switches a few more times) Check the power.

MASARU

(Grabs the cord and follows it)

Everything is plugged in.

TOSHIRO

Shit.

MASARU

Go ask Kenji if there's a fuse box.

TOSHIRO

I'm not asking him, you go ask him.

MASARU

No.

TOSHIRO

Give me a flashlight.

MASARU

What're you going to do?

TOSHIRO

Turn the power back on.

MASARU

Good luck, I'm not getting up.

TOSHIRO

(Looks hard at Masaru)

Come on, I might need backup.

MASARU

Shit.

TOSHIRO

Come on, Masaru.

MASARU

Fine. Pussy. (Masaru gets his pistol and loads it. He then grabs Toshiro's sword and tosses it to

him)

TOSHIRO

Ladies first. (Masaru and Toshiro exit out through the garden. Lights fade)

SCENE 5

(It is pre-dawn. Toshiro and Masaru have been up all night. They are both tired looking, dirty, sweaty and slightly cut up. Both enter the house through the front *engawa*. Masaru pulls out a cigarette and lights it up. He takes a long drag. Toshiro looks at him then takes the cigarette from his mouth.

TOSHIRO

Put that shit out.

MASARU

Hey, that was my last one.

TOSHIRO

If we were in the field you'd be dead before you put that cigarette up to your mouth.

MASARU

Yeah, well, we're not in the field. We're in the damn jungle.

TOSHIRO

Damn right, an endless jungle.

MASARU

Walking in circles for hours.

TOSHIRO

No stars.

MASARU

No moon.

TOSHIRO

No trails.

MASARU

Just cliffs.

TOSHIRO

And rocks.

MASARU

Nothing.

TOSHIRO

Absolutely nothing. (Long beat)

MASARU

We're stuck here.

TOSHIRO

You don't know that.

MASARU

I do, I know it.

TOSHIRO

We'll be alright. (Beat) Shit, if this ends, we could be back home by tomorrow.

MASARU

Well, I hope we win.

TOSHIRO

We will, brother. (Beat) Ugh, Sergeant.

MASARU

Where the hell is your damn compass?

TOSHIRO

I don't know.

MASARU

If we go out next time you better have it.

TOSHIRO

I'll look for it later.

MASARU

It's always later with you.

TOSHIRO

Come on.

(Toshiro looks around the perimeter while Masaru parts open the front *fusuma* slowly.

Masaru looks inside then signals Toshiro to come in. Masaru continues walking forward into the dark lit house while Toshiro closes the front *fusuma*. Toshiro and Masaru blindly make their way to their *tatami* room. In the silent darkness, a match is lit, lighting up a lantern and the *zashiki* room. Toshiro and Masaru both stop walking as soon as the match is lit, revealing a confused Kenji watching them)

KENJI

Been sleepwalking?

MASARU

Just out for some fresh air.

KENJI

For six hours?

TOSHIRO

What does it matter to you, old man?

KENJI

I'm supposed to watch over you two.

MASARU

Watch us?

KENJI

Yes, watch you. It's my job to keep you two out of trouble.

TOSHIRO

We're not prisoners here.

KENJI

I didn't say you were. (Akemi enters)

AKEMI

There you boys are. We were worried about you.

MASARU

You don't need to worry about us.

AKEMI

Well, we did, and we do.

KENJI

You could've at least told me you were going out, Captain.

TOSHIRO

How did you know we were gone?

KENJI

Your damn radio equipment gave you away.

TOSHIRO

The radio?

KENJI

It's been going crazy ever since you two left.

TOSHIRO

(In realization)

Shit. (Toshiro runs to the *tatami* room, Masaru follows for a bit then stops)

MASARU

I guess we got it working after all. (He exits to the *tatami* room)

AKEMI

What's going on here, Kenji?

KENJI

I don't know. (Hana enters)

HANA

Did you find them, father?

KENJI

Yes, Hana.

HANA

Where were they?

AKEMI

In the woods, dear.

HANA

In the woods?

AKEMI

Yes. (Back to Kenji) What's going on?

KENJI

(To Akemi)

They're hiding something from us.

HANA

Why?

KENJI

They were trying to leave us.

HANA

Why would they do that, father?

KENJI

Because they don't belong here.

AKEMI

Oh, come now, Kenji, don't be mean.

KENJI

Mean? I think I've been polite enough.

AKEMI

You've been very tense since last night.

KENJI

I'd rather not talk about last night.

AKEMI

Are you alright?

KENJI

Yes. I mean, no. This is my fault. I shouldn't have ever- (Toshiro enters with Masaru)

TOSHIRO

Alright, old man, what's going on here?

KENJI

What do you mean?

MASARU

The goddamn radio is dead. Again.

KENJI

I don't know what you're talking about.

TOSHIRO

Well, someone better start saying something because it was working just fine up until yesterday.

KENJI

I haven't touched anything, Captain.

MASARU

Well someone did.

TOSHIRO

You said it was working right? That it woke you up?

KENJI

Yes.

TOSHIRO

Then it was working. It isn't anymore.

KENJI

I swear to you, I didn't touch anything.

TOSHIRO

We found the fuse removed last night.

MASARU

(Grabs Akemi by her hair and holds a pistol to her head)

Which one of you pieces of shit did it? Huh? (Points the gun at Hana and then Kenji)

TOSHIRO

Sergeant, restrain yourself.

MASARU

Tell me who did it. Talk, dammit.

KENJI

Sergeant, what are you doing? We can discuss this. Please put the gun down.

HANA

No, please stop this.

TOSHIRO

Sergeant. Put the gun down now. (There is a low hum of airplane engines outside)

HANA

What is that sound?

TOSHIRO

Aircraft.

MASARU

Military. Aircraft. (Beat) They're here.

TOSHIRO

We don't know that. Put the damn gun down now, Sergeant.

MASARU

No. You see what you stupid bastards did? They're here. They're here. (The humming of the engines becomes louder outside)

KENJI

Who's here? Who?

MASARU

The Americans. (Cocks the gun and points it at Kenji)

HANA

Stop. Please stop.

MASARU

Shut up. Shut up. Shut up.

(Masaru pushes Akemi away from him while pointing the gun at Hana.)

TOSHIRO

Sergeant. (There is a beat followed by a sudden blast that surrounds the entire house. Masaru fires his gun as the blast enters the house. The bullet hits Akemi in the shoulder.)

HANA

Mother.

KENJI

Akemi. (Akemi falls to the floor bleeding. Kenji and Hana huddle together on top of Akemi scared and frightened. The house begins to shake. Toshiro and Masaru look at each other in horror. Masaru runs out of the house.)

TOSHIRO

(Yelling)

Sergeant. Sergeant. Sergeant. (Flashes of light blast through the *shoji* windows and doors that encase the majority of the perimeter. Unseen aircraft flying overhead is heard. Ordinance is being fired all around the island. The shelling of Okinawa has begun. Lights fade.)

ACT 2

AT RISE: The lay out of the Oshiro's home is seen. A layer of smoke and dust covers the entire house. Everything inside is broken and wrecked. The hipped and gabled thatch roof now has numerous areas exposed to the elements. The *shoji* (translucent screens made of wood and paper) windows and doors that encase the majority of the perimeter are blown out and flap loosely in the wind. Several paper leaflets dropped by U.S. aircraft blow in through the roof. The *Fusuma* screens (sliding screens) dividing

each of the three *tatami* (recreational or sleeping) rooms seen up stage left and up center of the house are twisted and torn. The third *tatami* room housing the radio equipment is intact with the exception of the *shoji* screen that provides access to the garden. It is missing. The tea room situated center stage is completely destroyed. The lacquered shelves, furniture and porcelain pottery from the cupboards and other various areas are shattered and strewn about the room. The garden, down stage right, is filled with debris. The small stream with a rock garden running along side it is choked with its own rocks. The statue of Buddha is now headless. The *zashiki* (reception or foyer) room seen stage left toward the entrance of the house remains intact. Down left in the far corner of the room, the shrine with the samurai sword and armor are slumped over. Akemi is seen lying down in the middle of the *zashiki* room with a bandage across her semi-bare chest. Hana pats Akemi's forehead with a damp cloth. Kenji enters the front *fusuma* upset and worried. He rushes to Akemi's side. When he sees Hana, the expression of utmost hopelessness washes across his face.

KENJI

How is she?

HANA

Not good.

KENJI

Has she woken up yet?

HANA

No, she's just been stirring.

KENJI

How's the wound? (Hana lifts her hand off the wound and shows Kenji)

HANA

I can't stop the bleeding, I'm scared father.

KENJI

Just keep your hand on it.

HANA

Mother needs a doctor.

KENJI

I know Hana, but we have nothing to get her to a doctor, the truck is destroyed.

HANA

(Starts to cry)

No.

KENJI

(A low rumble of distant bombs and gun fire is heard OS)

There was no sign of Sergeant Masaru. The blast must've-(Hana interrupts)

HANA

I hope he's dead.

KENJI

(Serious)

Hana?

HANA

It's true father, I hope he's dead.

KENJI

(Beat)

Where's Captain Toshiro?

HANA

He's in his room.

KENJI

What is he doing?

HANA

I don't know, he's probably messing with that radio.

KENJI

Oh. (Beat) Maybe he can get help with it?

HANA

I doubt he wants to help.

KENJI

We have to try. (Gets up and starts to walk to the *fusuma* leading to the *tatami* room. Toshiro enters fully dressed in uniform with his pack and pistol.) Captain?

TOSHIRO

What is it?

KENJI

Where are you going?

TOSHIRO

I'm going to try and find Sergeant Masaru.

KENJI

It's dangerous out there, you'll be killed.

TOSHIRO

I don't care, I need to find Masaru. Just stay out of my way. (Starts walking out)

KENJI

Wait Captain, can you please help us? Akemi is, is. Please, we need your help.

TOSHIRO

(Stops and turns)

Take the truck.

KENJI

Everything is destroyed. Please, Captain. (Shows Toshiro the wound) She needs help now, or she'll-

TOSHIRO

(Is hesitant, but drops his pack)

I know a little.

KENJI

You'll help?

TOSHIRO

I'm no surgeon.

KENJI

Please, anything. I can't get her to a real doctor. (Hana looks at Toshiro desperately)

TOSHIRO

Well, shit. (Turns and goes back to his room)

KENJI

Please, Captain. Wait, come back.

TOSHIRO

Hold your ass, old man. I'm going. (Comes back after a small beat with his uniform shirt and pistol removed. He goes to his pack and removes a small medical kit from it)

KENJI

Thank you. Thank you. (Goes to hug Toshiro)

TOSHIRO

(To Kenji)

Yeah, yeah. Go get me some clean water. I can't see what I'm doing with all this blood.

KENJI

Hana, go get him some water. (Hana starts to get up)

HANA

Yes, father.

TOSHIRO

(Grabs Hana by the wrist)

No. You stay here. I need your hands. (To Kenji) Go get it.

KENJI

(Is a bit taken aback)

Alright. (Kenji gets up and exits)

HANA

Is she going to be alright?

TOSHIRO

Yeah, if I can get the bullet out. Get me those tweezers please.

HANA

Ok. (Reaches into the pack) These?

TOSHIRO

Yes. Now get me that small pan.

HANA

(Searches)

This one?

TOSHIRO

Yes. (Starts wincing at putting the tweezers in) Ugh.

HANA

Does she feel anything?

TOSHIRO

Yes, she's still conscious. (Motions) Give me those pliers.

HANA

These?

TOSHIRO

No. The pair right next to it.

HANA

Oh. Here.

TOSHIRO

Hold there.

HANA

Why did Sergeant Masaru run away?

TOSHIRO

I don't know. Scared I suppose.

HANA

Scared?

TOSHIRO

Yes. If he's alright, he's going to be shot.

HANA

By the Americans?

TOSHIRO

No, by me.

HANA

You'd shoot him?

TOSHIRO

Yes. Here, wipe right there. Bastard bullet is stuck in deep.

HANA

You'd shoot y-your own brother? (Toshiro pulls hard and gets the bullet out)

TOSHIRO

Ah, got it. (Tosses the bullet in the pan) He's not my brother.

HANA

Oh, I thought that he was your- (Toshiro interrupts)

TOSHIRO

No. What makes you think that? (Yells to Kenji) Where's that damn water?

KENJI

(OS)

It's coming. I'm trying to find something to put it in.

TOSHIRO

(Still yelling)

Hurry, old man.

HANA

You seem close to him.

TOSHIRO

Can you hand me that packet?

HANA

Here.

TOSHIRO

Thank you. (Opens the packet and pulls out a surgical needle and thread, then starts to stitch up Akemi) We've been friends a long time.

HANA

It seems like it.

TOSHIRO

Longer than I can remember.

HANA

Is my mother going to be alright?

TOSHIRO

She should.

HANA

Thank you, Thank you so much.

TOSHIRO

She's lucky. (Beat)

HANA

We're lucky we have you.

TOSHIRO

(Beat)

You're very observant you know that?

HANA

What do you mean?

TOSHIRO

You're right about Sergeant Masaru. (Beat) he's my-

HANA

I knew it.

TOSHIRO

How?

HANA

I don't know, a feeling. I guess, being an only child, well, it makes you see things differently.

TOSHIRO

I suppose it does. (Finishes stitching the wound and looks around for something to cut the remaining thread)

HANA

Do you want me to cut that?

TOSHIRO

Yeah. I have some scissors over there.

HANA

I'll get it. (Crawls over to get a pair of scissors then crawls back to Toshiro when an object falls out of her pocket and rolls on the floor. Kenji enters with a semi cracked bowl with water)

TOSHIRO

(Looks at the fuse)

That's- What the hell?

HANA

I'm sorry.

TOSHIRO

What the hell are you doing with that?

KENJI

Hana?

HANA

I'm sorry; I didn't mean to do it.

TOSHIRO

It was you.

KENJI

Hana? What did you do?

HANA

I, I, don't know.

TOSHIRO

You put us all in danger.

KENJI

You cut the power?

HANA

(Starts to cry)

Yes. I-I, was mad that night.

KENJI

Why?

TOSHIRO

I kept you safe and you did this?

KENJI

Captain, what happened?

HANA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to cause this. I didn't know. I-I, wanted to get back at Sergeant Masaru.

TOSHIRO

Dammit, Girl.

HANA

I'm so sorry. Please, forgive me. (Toshiro gets up as if going to slap Hana but stops)

TOSHIRO

Dammit. (Toshiro turns and exits. Lights fade)

SCENE 2

TOSHIRO

(Toshiro is in the *Tatami* room connecting wires into the radio and looking through scattered paper work. He can't find the coordinates he is looking for and tosses various papers around. He then grabs the headset nearby and loosely puts it on and starts tuning the knobs on the radio and tries to listen in)

Shit. Come on. Where are you? Come on. (To radio) Hello? Hello? (Keeps turning the dials on the radio) Hello? Hello? (Turns the knob some more then stops when the radio starts to whistle with inaudible noise) H-Hello? This is Ghost Order six-nine-one-five-two-two-three. Repeat. This is Ghost Order six-nine-one-five-two-two-three. What is your status? Over. What? Repeat. Over. Hello? (Away from radio) Shit. (Takes the headset off and gets up looking around. After a while, Toshiro notices that his katana and several items of Masaru are missing. Hana enters the room as he is looking around.)

HANA

Toshiro?

TOSHIRO

What?

HANA

I'm sorry about what- (Toshiro interrupts)

TOSHIRO

Just look, not right now, ok?

HANA

Please.

TOSHIRO

It won't do any good.

HANA

I didn't know this was going to happen.

TOSHIRO

Yeah, well we could all be dead.

HANA

But-

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Dead. (Distant ordnance exploding can be heard O.S.)

HANA

(Nods)

Are they going to find us?

TOSHIRO

That's what I'm trying to find out. (Smacks the radio) Damn thing doesn't work.

HANA

Paper fell from the sky.

TOSHIRO

What?

HANA

Paper just fell from the sky, like rain.

TOSHIRO

It did?

HANA

Yes. They're everywhere.

TOSHIRO

The planes must have dropped it. Does it say anything?

HANA

Yes. It's a: "Notice to refugee civilians."

TOSHIRO

What does it say?

HANA

(Picks up a paper)

It says: "Keep away from aircraft." "Keep away from the roads." "Don't go near ammunition dumps." "Keep away from military positions." And "Even if by accident, you overlook any of the warnings set forth above, you may meet with a sad fate."

TOSHIRO

Anything else?

HANA

No, that's all.

TOSHIRO

The enemy is pretty smart.

HANA

Are they going to hurt us?

TOSHIRO

I don't know. Maybe not you.

HANA

What about you?

TOSHIRO

(Laughs)

Well, they're just going to have to come and get me.

HANA

Oh no.

TOSHIRO

If they can find me, that is. (Radio starts to hiss and whine with inaudible noise again)

HANA

Your radio is working again. (The telegraph starts clicking)

TOSHIRO

And the telegraph too.

HANA

I'm sorry for what I did.

TOSHIRO

It's in the past already. You should go check on your mother.

HANA

I-I, ok. (Hana turns and exits)

TOSHIRO

(To radio)

Come on. Talk to me. Hello? Hello? Yes, Yes I can hear you, Command. This is Ghost Order six-nine-one-five-two-two-three. Casualties have occurred. Requesting assistance. What is your status? Over. What has happened? I need an update. Power fluctuates. Repeat, I need an update, over. Yes? I can hear you. The Thirty-Second is forwarding the attack? How did they land near Hagushi? Where were they? Command, I need to contact Chief of Imperial Army General Staff. What? Just do it and do it quickly. What? I'm not too sure how long I'll have contact. I don't care, transfer me now. Yes. Hello? Hello? (Toggles the radios switches. It is dead once more) Dammit. (Pushes the radio equipment over, letting it crash to the ground. He then walks out into the *engawa* through the blown out *shoji* door that leads into the garden, where he sits and begins to cry with his head in his hands.)

KENJI

(Kenji enters)

Captain?

TOSHIRO

(Wipes his eyes)

Yes?

KENJI

I want to thank you for what you did. (Finds Toshiro out on the *engawa* and proceeds to sit right next to him)

TOSHIRO

(Toshiro pulls a cigarette from his pocket and lights it)

It could've been worse. (Takes a long drag)

KENJI

Yes, indeed.

TOSHIRO

I'm busy.

KENJI

Talking to a dead radio?

TOSHIRO

It was working before you came in.

KENJI

It doesn't seem to be anymore.

TOSHIRO

It wanted to be there. (Points to the floor)

KENJI

(Nudges Toshiro and points to his cigarette)

Can I have one?

TOSHIRO

(Surprised)

Yeah. (Takes one out and hands it to Kenji)

KENJI

You know, I've lived in this house my entire life. I used to play in this garden here as a child.

TOSHIRO

Now it's gone.

KENJI

I'd always wanted to be an architect. I'd build little house out of twigs and leaves and I'd just spend hours outside enjoying building with my hands. I felt like I could do anything, build anything I wanted if I'd put my mind to it. I'm sure you're the same way too.

TOSHIRO

I try to be.

KENJI

But you know what?

TOSHIRO

What?

KENJI

As much as I loved creating, I also loved destroying. There was something I loved about it even more than building.

TOSHIRO

We all do that.

KENJI

That's just my point, we as people have an inclination to destroy everything that we create. The same thing goes for this war.

TOSHIRO

What about this war?

KENJI

We have brought this upon ourselves.

TOSHIRO

The U.S. cut off our supplies, and placed embargoes on us.

KENJI

We have no one to blame but ourselves. We didn't have to do what we did.

TOSHIRO

We needed them out of the way.

KENJI

And look what it's brought us. Fear, destruction, death. We knew what we were doing, what it would bring, but we did it anyway.

TOSHIRO

Cause we were right.

KENJI

Akemi is awake now. That's why I came out here in the first place.

TOSHIRO

That's good.

KENJI

(Takes a drag and looks into the garden)

Listen, about Sergeant Masaru.

TOSHIRO

I don't want to talk about Sergeant Masaru. He's dead.

KENJI

(Angered)

By his own doing.

TOSHIRO

Bastard, your family brought it upon themselves. He was my friend.

KENJI

You're right, I suppose we did.

TOSHIRO

Go away, old man.

KENJI

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-

TOSHIRO

Shit, I don't want your damn apologies.

KENJI

I-Alright. (He rises, bows and exits. Lights fade)

SCENE 3

(A few days pass. It is night time. The family is in tea room is situated center stage. The house is still a wreck, but a bit more tidy now. The lacquered shelves, furniture and porcelain pottery that survived are back in cupboards and other various areas. Kenji has made a makeshift cooking area on the far corner. Akemi is still bandaged around the shoulder but looks livelier now. Toshiro sits across from the family looking into the fire)

KENJI

Finally, the first warm meal in days.

TOSHIRO

Hope it has some meat in it this time.

AKEMI

Our meat is all gone, Toshiro. (Several explosions can be heard far away O.S.)

HANA

All we had left was a little bit of rice.

TOSHIRO

I'm so hungry.

KENJI

This is all we have. Let's enjoy it together shall we?

AKEMI

Yes, that would be nice.

KENJI

(To Toshiro)

What should we do now, Captain?

TOSHIRO

Wait it out.

KENJI

For how long?

TOSHIRO

As long as it takes. We can't leave.

KENJI

Why?

TOSHIRO

Cause we are hidden in deep.

KENJI

Yes, but I think we're down to our last meal.

TOSHIRO

How far is the nearest village?

KENJI

About twenty-four kilometers away.

TOSHIRO

Damn, we'd be captured.

AKEMI

What if we walk at night?

TOSHIRO

That's the worst time to be walking around. You'd be shot for sure. Besides, it was hard enough getting here with a vehicle, I can't imagine traveling without one.

AKEMI

Oh no.

KENJI

And your radio?

TOSHIRO

Dead.

KENJI

I see. (Discouraged)

TOSHIRO

I'm so hungry.

HANA

The rice is almost ready.

KENJI

Good.

TOSHIRO

I could eat the whole pot.

HANA

Not before I do.

KENJI

Do you still have your weapon, Captain?

TOSHIRO

Yes, why?

KENJI

If it gets bad, would you let me use it?

TOSHIRO

What?

AKEMI

(Shocked at Kenji)

Kenji. You wouldn't.

HANA

Father, that's terrible.

KENJI

I would. Would you rather be starving and in pain?

AKEMI

Well, no.

KENJI

You see?

TOSHIRO

I don't think it will have to come to that.

KENJI

What if it does, hmm?

TOSHIRO

Then, I'll take care of you. (The family all turn to Toshiro)

HANA

No. How horrible.

KENJI

Thank you, Captain. See, he understands me.

TOSHIRO

I'm so hungry.

AKEMI

Looks like we're going to have to take care of you first. (They all share a laugh)

TOSHIRO

How did you two meet?

AKEMI

Well, I used to work in a shelling factory when I was a young girl, no older than Hana. Kenji just so happened to be the owner of that factory and was walking around inspecting the casings that we were producing. I was so dirty that day; I had oil and powder all over my face, it was horrible.

KENJI

It wasn't that bad. You we're beautiful.

TOSHIRO

You worked in Kenji's factory?

AKEMI

Yes, it was the only job I could get at the time.

KENJI

It was hard work but it paid well.

AKEMI

Like I was saying, it was horrible. My stamping press had stopped working so I tried to repair it quickly but I suppose Kenji saw me struggling with it and came by my work station. I looked up and couldn't hear a word coming out of his mouth. The machines were so loud in there. Well, I told him that everything was fine and that I didn't need any assistance, but Kenji was persistent. He tried to help me but ended up getting his suit covered in oil. I couldn't help but laugh. He was so angry that day.

KENJI

The next day I sold that machine and asked Akemi to the *Obon* festival.

TOSHIRO

Obon festival?

HANA

It's a festival that celebrates the return of spirits from the dead. Ancestral spirits.

TOSHIRO

Interesting. I've never been to one of these festivals.

KENJI

You've heard of it then?

TOSHIRO

A little.

KENJI

It takes place on the fifteenth day of the seventh month every year.

AKEMI

We invite the dead back into our homes.

TOSHIRO

I didn't know that.

HANA

Now you do.

TOSHIRO

I wouldn't want the dead visiting me.

AKEMI

You wouldn't want to at least know you're with your loved ones that have passed on?

TOSHIRO

I suppose I would. Yeah. Yeah, that would be kind of nice.

AKEMI

See.

TOSHIRO

Speaking of the dead, do you know any ghost stories?

HANA

Father does, he's good at telling ghost stories.

KENJI

Oh, come now, I'm not that good.

HANA

Yes you are father. You scared everyone at the *Obon* festival last year.

KENJI

No, I'm not that good, really.

AKEMI

He's just being modest.

TOSHIRO

Come on Kenji.

HANA

Well you asked about ghost stories right?

TOSHIRO

Yeah.

HANA

Well Father? A story, yes?

KENJI

Oh, all right. (To Toshiro) Well Captain, since you are particularly hungry I've got a story for you. (Clears his throat) There was once a hunter, named Sonjo, who- (Lights fade slowly)

SCENE 4

(Later that night. Toshiro enters his room rubbing his stomach. It is dark, but he is able to find his way into the room. As he is walking, the radio lights up and fills the room with the low hum of static. Toshiro scrambles for the radio and looks for the headset. The

sound begins to fade as he is doing so)

TOSHIRO

Wait, wait, no. (He turns the dials on the radio and again it lights up, static and inaudible voices that can be heard. Toshiro picks up the radio and puts on the headset) Hello? (Beat) Yes. (Beat) This is Ghost Order six-nine-one-five-two-two-three. Yes, I can hear you. (Looks up in thanks) Father. (Back to radio) Yes sir. (Beat) What? Yes. Evacuation? I never got the order. When did it come in? (Beat) No. No. (Beat) I know you didn't anticipate their move. We've- Yes sir. Yes. (Beat) Sir, about Sergeant Masaru. He- (Beat) well, we were hit by artillery. He's dead. (Beat) I know. Yes. No. No. (Beat) I-I don't want to go home sir. I can't. (Beat) No. Yes sir. When? No. I can't, I won't. (Beat) Wait, let me get that down. (Toshiro looks for a small candle in his pack. He finds it, then a match and lights it, illuminating the room. Masaru is sitting in the corner of the room. His face comes into view as Toshiro lights the candle. Toshiro stumbles back in fright.)

TOSHIRO

M-Masaru?

MASARU

(Looks at Toshiro blankly and rises from the floor. His uniform is stained in blood)
No, it's the Emperor. (He laughs)

TOSHIRO

You son of a bitch, y-you're alive. You're really alive. (Gets up and hugs Masaru, then notices the blood on his shirt)

MASARU

Yeah. (Toshiro pulls back)

TOSHIRO

I thought you were dead. (Pointing towards the radio) I told father you were dead. (Tries to had

Masaru the headset) Here, it's Father. (Masaru shakes his head refusing) Are you alright? Why don't you want to speak to Father? Where've you been?

MASARU

So many questions. Oh, I've been around. You ever try looking for me? Hmm?

TOSHIRO

Yes, yes I did, but I never found anything. I-I thought you had been blown up. Where've you been?

MASARU

With the Thirty-second Army. General Mitsuru Ushijima's looking for soldiers.

TOSHIRO

With the Thirty-second?

MASARU

Yeah, they are recruiting wherever they can find men. They even thought I was one of them. Didn't know where the hell I came from, they told me to get back to my ranks. Imagine that, back to my ranks. (Laughs)

TOSHIRO

Why didn't you come back sooner? Why didn't you tell me you were alive? What the hell is the matter with you?

MASARU

I didn't want to come back.

TOSHIRO

Why?

MASARU

I finally am part of something.

TOSHIRO

Part of what?

MASARU

The war.

TOSHIRO

You are part of the war. Here, together with me.

MASARU

Not in this house.

TOSHIRO

Where did you go?

MASARU

I don't know, as soon as I go out of here I just started walking. I just walked and walked till I came to a small village.

TOSHIRO

You could've radioed me. You could've just stayed.

MASARU

I hate this damn place. I hate everything about it.

TOSHIRO

I thought you were dead.

MASARU

I was dead till I joined with the Thirty-Second. They gave me a gun and told me: "One man to ten of the enemy." So, that's what I did. That village was crawling with Americans later that day.

TOSHIRO

You saw them? You killed them?

MASARU

Killed them by the bucket load. Huge bastards. Strong too, but slow.

TOSHIRO

(Toshiro looks at Masaru in disbelief)

What?

MASARU

Took us almost a whole day to get most of them. One soldier from the Thirty-Second ran into a crowd of them with a two grenades in each hand. Boom. (Laughs) Took out a whole bunch of them. Ah, brother it was, beautiful, like nothing you've ever seen. You know, then I realized I forgot something.

TOSHIRO

What was that?

MASARU

You brother, you.

TOSHIRO

Why did you do it? Why did you leave?

MASARU

I had to do it.

TOSHIRO

Why did you shoot Akemi?

MASARU

Bitch had it coming.

TOSHIRO

She didn't do anything. You nearly killed her.

MASARU

Nearly killed her? I was hoping I did kill her.

TOSHIRO

What the hell happened to you?

MASARU

Do you know what it's like to see a man's guts and skin hanging from the trees? A soldier who was just fighting right next to you?

TOSHIRO

No.

MASARU

I know what its like. (Beat) You ask what the hell happened to me? War happened. (Beat) Come with me, Toshiro, Let's go and fight with the Thirty-Second together, as brothers.

TOSHIRO

We've got a job to do here.

MASARU

Forget this shit, this isn't a job, this is a damn joke. Come with me brother. You want to please father, then come and fight with me.

TOSHRIO

What? That's not what he wanted.

MASARU

We've got everything we need. Come on. They're waiting for us. (Static from the radio is heard)

TOSHIRO

We're doing are part. There's no need for anything else.

MASARU

I've got orders from Ushijima, for a more important job. Now, let's go. (Pulls out his pistol and shoots the radio. The lights flicker and die out.)

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Why did you do that? What the hell is wrong with you? We were just fine here.

KENJI

(Yells from OS)

Toshiro? Are you alright? Toshiro? What was that?

TOSHIRO

Father wouldn't want this.

MASARU

Forget about Yoshijiro, he doesn't give a shit about us.

TOSHIRO

Yes he does, yes he does.

MASARU

It's always been about him don't you see? He sent us here to cover his ass. He doesn't want anybody to know about us. We're mistakes, we're his mistakes.

TOSHIRO

Shut up. Shut up, no, no. We've got a job to do. He told us. We've got a mission. And when it's over, he'll send for us.

MASARU

There's no reason to stay here.

TOSHIRO

There is a reason. There is. He told us. It's our job to stay here.

MASARU

He sent us here to hide his secrets. He's ashamed of us.

TOSHIRO

That's a lie, a lie.

MASARU

I've got orders from General Ushijima. You have to come with me. Any able-bodied man has to come with me. That includes Kenji. (Grabs Toshiro's arm)

TOSHIRO

Fuck you, let me go.

MASARU

Let's go, little brother; we don't have much time.

TOSHIRO

Didn't you just hear? Father is going to send for us. He's coming.

MASARU

No one is coming. It's up to us now to win this war.

TOSHIRO

You're crazy. We were going home. (Punches Masaru in the face)

MASARU

Guess I'm gonna have to drag you with me. (Toshiro takes another swing at Masaru and misses as Masaru dodges his swing.) Quit messing around. Let's go. (Punches Toshiro in the ribs)

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Bastard. (Runs at Masaru and tackles him. They clash together. With the momentum, they tear through the walls of the house fighting their way through the tea room. By this time Kenji, Akemi and Hana are all awake and watching in horror as they see Toshiro and the presumably dead Masaru fighting.)

MASARU

Come on, let's go. (They continue fighting)

TOSHIRO

Fuck you.

MASARU

(Punches Toshiro a few more times then grabs a bowl and smacks it over his head)

Stay down. (Toshiro stumbles back and falls semi-unconscious)

KENJI

S-Sergeant?

MASARU

Boo. (Akemi's eyes widen in fear)

AKEMI

You're alive.

MASARU

I've come back to collect.

KENJI

What do you want?

MASARU

Why, you, of course.

KENJI

Me?

MASARU

Yes you. Let's go. (Points his gun at Kenji) You have been selected to fight for your country.

Congratulations.

TOSHIRO

(Tries to get up)

Masaru, Stop this.

MASARU

I can't. We're all in this now. They know we're here.

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Stop it, dammit. (Gets up and tries to run at Masaru, but is countered by him and gets pushed into the floor)

MASARU

We've gotta kill those Americans, before they kill all of us. They know we're here.

HANA

I thought that the Americans didn't want to hurt us?

MASARU

They lied; they want to kill all of us.

HANA

They want to kill us?

MASARU

(To Akemi and Hana)

Oh, but not you, no, no, they want to rape you and make you their slaves.

AKEMI

No.

HANA

That's a lie, they-they said they didn't want to harm us. I read it. I read it.

MASARU

That's their trap you see, they want you to think they're your friend so they can catch you, torture you, and kill you.

HANA

It's all lies. They want us to stay out of their way.

MASARU

It's not a lie, it's the truth.

AKEMI

How do you know?

MASARU

I've seen it, with my own eyes. If I was you, I'd find the nearest cliff and jump right off it.

HANA

What if we surrender?

MASARU

You can't surrender. You can never surrender. They'll still kill you. I've seen it. I've seen it.

They'll kill you.

AKEMI

No, it can't be true. No.

MASARU

They're gonna cut you open and eat your beating heart. They're monsters.

KENJI

You've gone mad.

MASARU

Mad? If you won't kill yourselves when the time comes, I'll just do it for you. That's a promise.

(Masaru points his pistol at Akemi and Hana)

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Masaru, no.

MASARU

(Gun fire is heard in the distance OS)

You here that? They're coming this way.

TOSHIRO

(To the family)

Nobody's coming, don't listen to him.

MASARU

Let's go, Kenji.

KENJI

I'll never go with you.

MASARU

Yes you will, yes you will.

TOSHIRO

(Starts to get up)

Brother, stop this, please.

KENJI

Brother?

AKEMI

Brother?

MASARU

Sons' of Yoshijiro Umesu.

KENJI

No, it can't-, it isn't possible. He never said he had children.

MASARU

Well he did. Had we been better children, then maybe you would've known about us. A man of power can afford to hide his secrets.

TOSHIRO

Masaru, stop this. I'll go with you. Just leave them alone.

MASARU

One's not good enough, I need both of you. The Thirty-Second needs every man to fight and die.

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

Leave them alone. (Lunges once more at Masaru. The gun fires in his hand barely missing Hana. They crash through the tea room's wall and into the *zashiki* room)

KENJI

Masaru, Toshiro, stop this. I'll go with Masaru. We'll both go. (To Toshiro)

TOSHIRO

What?

KENJI

(To Masaru)

I'll go with you. Just stop this madness.

MASARU

(Dusts himself off)

Ah, good, more soldiers for the Emperor's Army. (Signals the gun at Kenji to move. He does)

HANA

Please, don't hurt my father.

KENJI

(Walks by Hana)

Hana, shh. It's ok. It's ok.

MASARU

Your daughter never shuts the hell up. (Takes the gun and smacks it across Hana's face)

TOSHIRO

Leave her alone, Masaru.

KENJI

Hana. (To Masaru) You bastard.

AKEMI

(Rushes to help Hana)

Hana, no.

MASARU

I didn't say move. (Points the gun at Akemi)

TOSHIRO

Masaru.

KENJI

I'd die before I'll let you do anything to her.

MASARU

That can be arranged. Come here, bitch.

HANA

(Screams)

No.

MASARU

(Fires gun next to her feet)

I said come here. (Grabs Akemi by the hair and throws her to the floor)

TOSHIRO

(Steps forward but stops when Masaru points the gun at him)

Don't do it.

MASARU

I will, it's about time someone listened to me.

KENJI

Damn you. Leave her alone.

MASARU

I don't trust any of you. You move, and she's dead. (Points the gun at Akemi's head)

HANA

Please, stop.

MASARU

Shut up. (Back to Kenji) Keep moving. Let's go.

HANA

No. Stop.

MASARU

Shut up, bitch.

HANA

No, leave them alone. (Hana reaches for a piece of broken wood and tries to swing at Masaru)

MASARU

Do it and I'll blow your brains all over the floor.

HANA

Then kill me. Kill me.

MASARU

Don't you listen? (Hana continues forward. Masaru takes the gun and aims it at Hana's head and pulls the trigger. The gun clicks. Its magazine is empty) Hmm, all out. He reaches for a new clip and attempts to reload the gun)

TOSHIRO

(Toshiro, seeing this opportunity, runs and grabs the katana from the shrine and unsheathes it, pointing it at Masaru)

Stop this, now.

MASARU

Oh, I see what's going on here. (Holsters his pistol and draws his katana out) You two are a little pair, huh? Isn't that sweet.

TOSHIRO

(Recognizes the sword)

That's my sword.

MASARU

Finders keepers.

TOSHIRO

Father gave it to me.

MASARU

It's rightfully mine. It should've been mine from the beginning.

TOSHIRO

Masaru. (Toshiro and Masaru engage in a fight with their swords. Masaru takes the first swing at Toshiro but hits the wall. Toshiro strikes while he removes it but gets kicked backed by Masaru. Their katanas' collide in several moves of intense back and forth exchanges. Masaru lands a slice on Toshiro cutting his arm. He reacts in pain but continues fighting. Toshiro comes at Masaru but deflects his swing with one hand and with the other grabs him by his collar and bashes the hilt of the katana against Toshiro's face. Toshiro staggers back. Masaru comes at him again with his katana but turns as he swings and quickly draws out his pistol and fires at Toshiro hitting him in the arm. Toshiro deflects the next shot and shoves the katana into Masaru, making him drop to his knees instantly while spraying blood everywhere. Toshiro and Masaru embrace each other)

TOSHIRO

Masaru, no.

MASARU

Good move, B-Brother. But, I still got you. (Gasps last breath of air, exhales in a smile then dies holding onto Toshiro)

TOSHIRO

Masaru. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. (Starts to cry) I'm sorry, brother.

HANA

Toshiro.

TOSHIRO

What did you do? What the hell did you do, Masaru? (Weeps)

KENJI

Toshiro, you saved us.

AKEMI

Thank you, Toshiro. You saved us all.

TOSHIRO

No.

HANA

I-I'm sorry. (Touches his shoulder)

TOSHIRO

(Pushes her hand away)

Just leave me alone. (Gets up from the ground with the bloody katana in hand and looks at Masaru)

HANA

Toshiro, please.

TOSHIRO

(Yells)

No. (Beat) What did I do?

KENJI

You saved us.

TOSHIRO

Masaru.

HANA

(Hugs Toshiro)

You saved me. (Kisses Toshiro)

TOSHIRO

I- (Kisses Hana back)

KENJI

Hana?

TOSHIRO

I'm no hero.

HANA

Yes you are. You're my hero. (Kisses and hugs Toshiro some more)

TOSHIRO

Masaru. (Grabs Hana and starts kissing her harder)

HANA

Toshiro, you're hurting me.

TOSHIRO

No. (Starts fondling Hana)

AKEMI

(In horror)

Toshiro, stop. Toshiro.

TOSHIRO

Shut up. (Starts to strip off Hana's clothing. She starts screaming) Yeah, you want it. (He starts to undo his pants with one hand. She screams and struggles in Toshiro's grasp) A hero's reward.

HANA

No, stop, please, stop. (Toshiro tries to rape Hana)

KENJI

No. No. No. Hana. (Hana continues screaming, Toshiro forces himself on Hana more)

TOSHIRO

What did you make me do? I killed for you. I killed for you.

KENJI

Toshiro, stop this. (Pushes Toshiro off of Hana)

TOSHIRO

(Yells and cries)

I killed to save all of you, bastards. (He grabs the pistol from Masaru's body and shoots Kenji and Akemi)

HANA

(Screams in horror)

No. (They fall to the floor dead. Toshiro unloads a few more shots into their bodies)

TOSHIRO

Ungrateful bastards. (Turns to Masaru's body and drops the empty gun) I'm sorry. (He picks up his katana and drops to his knees) This is the only way, brother.

HANA

(Screams crying)

You killed them. You killed them.

TOSHIRO

(He pays no attention to Hana and raises the katana high in the air towards his stomach)

I have failed my mission. (Beat) I have failed my family.

HANA

(Screams)

Murderer.

TOSHIRO

(Turns to Hana)

I have failed myself. (Lowers the katana and commits seppuku. Hana picks up the other katana and walks toward Toshiro)

HANA

(Raises the Katana above her head and brings it down, screaming, on Toshiro's head)

Ahh. (Lights go black. There is silence for a long beat. A small flickering of light in the third *tatami* room goes on. It is the radio. A low muffle of inaudible voices is heard. A single light concentrating on the radio grows bright. The inaudible voices become louder for an instant then lower. The light in the radio flickers then slowly fades to black)

END

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ricardo Tijerina Jr. obtained his Bachelors degree from the University of Texas-Pan American with a major in English and minor in history. It was there that his passion for playwriting led him to pursue his MFA from Pan American shortly after graduation. Ricardo is a licensed locksmith in his hometown of Edinburg and enjoys writing plays when he is not making keys for customers, raising chickens, welding and fabricating knick-knacks, or restoring antique vehicles.