

M. BUTTERFLY

A Screenplay by David Henry Hwang

(SHOOTING SCRIPT)

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1 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. VARIOUS - DAY

1

CLOSE ON A FILE FOLDER passing through the halls of a large bureaucratic organization. Carried by a COURIER, it begins at the polished desk of an important official, then travels into the halls of a musty administration building.

The folder proceeds down a flight of stairs. The air becomes darker, more dank, descending to a lower level of existence.

Double-doors BURST open as the folder enters a large hall full of bookkeepers at their identical desks. Here, ceiling fans operate only sporadically, coat-&-tie decorum is lost to the sheer volume of grunt work.

The file enters a small office which is open for all to see through a large glass window. It arrives on a desk alongside a hand-cranked adding machine, a tiny French flag, and ledgers with endless numbers. We're in the accounting department of a French office.

COURIER (O.C.)
Expense reports from
Intelligence.

The man at this desk is RENE GALLIMARD, 39. Sweat drips from his brow as a desk fan mocks him with its ineffectiveness. Nonetheless, he smiles at the Courier - this is a man well-liked by his colleagues.

GALLIMARD
Thank you. I'm happy to see
they've gotten a bit more prompt
up there about submitting
receipts.
(glances over contents)
And documentation attached?
Well, I couldn't be happier.

He closes the file, as the Courier moves wordlessly away.

2 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY STAIRCASE - DAY

2

Gallimard and a co-worker, VALERE, whose mousey stature and spectacles are more those of the stereotypical bookkeeper, join a shuffle of bureaucrats towards a large entryway. It feels like quitting time at any large organization.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONT'D

2

GALLIMARD

When you're going through the
expense reports for Intelligence,
you never know what you'll find -
hairpieces, jewelry, once even
the rental of an entire chicken
farm.

They head past ARMED GUARDS towards towering double-doors,
through which the hazy light of a humid late day glows.

3 EXT. FRENCH EMBASSY - DAY

3

The French Embassy is a fairly plain two-storey building in the
early sixties functional style. They pass through the towering
portals into a small courtyard.

GALLIMARD

I don't know about a license to
kill, but those boys definitely
have a license to spend money.

4 EXT. DONGSI SHI TIAO STREET - DAY

4

A title: Beijing, China - 1964. This is the first clue that
we're anywhere outside North America or Europe.

It's rush hour - an overwhelming sight. A human tidal wave of
pedestrians and bicycles flows relentlessly in one direction,
a mass of people collectively part of some larger whole.

Except for the two Europeans, that is, who have some trouble
crossing the street with grace.

VALERE

At least it breaks the routine.
I started on transportation this
morning. So far, I'm up to fifty-
seven windshield wiper blades in
the past six months. What're
they driving through - sulphuric
acid?

GALLIMARD

Actually, it's probably from all
the locals spitting on our
windshields.

5 EXT. JOHANSSSENS' HOME. ENCLOSED COURTYARD - NIGHT

5

In a former colonial residence, Westerners greet one another near a gracious doorway. There's only a smattering of Asians, certainly none of the riff-raff from the streets.

The expatriate community circles itself, each person attempting to appear more relaxed than the next. From these evening performances, as well as the daytime work, will promotions be granted and careers broken.

DISCOVER Gallimard, glad-handing with a number of junior-level diplomats from the various embassies. He is cheerful, if undistinguished, a pleasant but benign companion to all.

DIPLOMAT #1

There're changes coming in the French embassy too, Gallimard.

GALLIMARD

I wouldn't be surprised. The visa department has been a constant shuffle the last few months. They've had so many farewell parties, they've had to dip into their contingency funds.

DIPLOMAT #1

I'm not talking about clerks! I mean, real changes!

DIPLOMAT #2

Like last year, when you said Hans Tweitmeyer would be transferred to Malaya and he ended up being promoted to Consul-General?

DIPLOMAT #1

I said he'd either be transferred or promoted!

DIPLOMAT #2

Whatever this man says, believe the opposite.

(to Gallimard:)

Rene, there won't be any personnel changes at your embassy for at least a decade!

GALLIMARD

I guess that means even my job is secure.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONT'D

5

They laugh at his self-deprecating remark, as he drifts towards Valere, who's watching native servants putting out folding chairs in the courtyard. A makeshift stage complete with curtain has been erected.

GALLIMARD

What are they planning to inflict on us this time? I have to say, I'm getting a little tired of those Chinese acrobats. I mean, how many times can you watch a man wrap his leg around the back of his neck?

Valere points to FRAU BADEN, a rather sexy fiftyish woman waiting for the performance to begin.

VALERE

Frau Baden says there's going to be an opera performance.

GALLIMARD

And is some diva passing through China?

FRAU BADEN

No, it's a local singer. We're going to hear excerpts from "Madama Butterfly."

GALLIMARD

You know, it's almost embarrassing to admit, but I've never even seen "Madame Butterfly" before.

FRAU BADEN

(affectionate grimace)
Really?

GALLIMARD

(with a smile)
Please don't tell anyone - I've got a few people around here believing that I'm profoundly cultured.

He and the older woman exchange a conspiratorial chuckle.

The first haunting phrases of the "Un Bel Di" aria come wafting through the air. DISCOVER Gallimard, packed in amidst a full contingent of diplomats, some half-asleep, others scanning the room for important faces.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONT'D (2)

5

ONSTAGE, a few delicate cherry blossom sprigs in a jet-black lacquer vase sit beside a low table on a straw tatami mat.

We DISCOVER the tiniest feet clad in white tabi-socks. TILT UP the body of the singer - the most glorious gold-brocaded kimono. The voice is not powerful, not operatic at all, but is blessed with a purity which seems to come from the heart.

We reach the tightly-wound bun of black hair and realize she's begun with her back to the audience - this is clearly a performance more theatrical than operatic.

Frau Baden nudges Gallimard beside her.

FRAU BADEN

Her American sailor's left her.

(beat)

He's not coming back.

As the music crescendos, the singer turns towards her audience. The face of SONG LILING is as beautiful and innocent as a child's, her eyes downcast in submission and a hint of shame that she's given so completely of her heart. Gallimard sees her longing, as a little girl longs for her father, to be taken care of, protected, taught the difference between wrong and right.

To his surprise, he's riveted by the spectacle. He feels for her plight, wishes he could somehow rescue her. It's all taking him completely and breathlessly.

6 EXT. JOHANSENS' COURTYARD - NIGHT

6

Gallimard is completely lost now in a far-off dream, even as the audience around him grows increasingly fidgety.

ONSTAGE, Song kneels once more on the tatami mat, feet tucked under her haunches. Even as her face contorts in the pain that so resembles pleasure, Gallimard's eyes take in the signs of her sexuality - the curve of her buttocks, the girlish swell of her breasts above the obi-sash.

She unveils a shiny dagger from its scabbard.

Gallimard might have guessed how it would end, but he can't help gasping.

Song gasps also, upon touching the blade, as if from some unexpected pleasure. As her lacquered fingernail runs against the cold metal, she sings the inscription carved there.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONT'D

6

BUTTERFLY

"Con onore muore/ chi non puo
serbar/ vita con onore"

Gallimard mouths softly his own translation of the Italian.

GALLIMARD

"Death with honour/ Is better
than life/ Life with dishonour"

Ever so slowly, as if it were the greatest violation of her modesty, she lowers the neckline of her kimono, just enough to bare the top of her shoulders.

This completely knocks Gallimard out. The Japanese say the most erotic part of a woman is the nape of her neck. All he knows is that never in his life has such a tiny unveiling of flesh excited him so.

Song puts the tip of the sword against the base of her powder-white neck. Her free hand reaches back, to the chopstick-like needle that holds her bun in place.

As she mimes pushing the blade into her neck, she pulls the dowel from her hair. It cascades down over her shoulders like a jet-black mane.

Gallimard's mouth goes completely dry in a swirl of passion.

It feels like the next second that she is curtseying, hair loose, head tossed back, to the applause of a polite audience.

Gallimard alone claps wildly, a lump in his throat. Frau Baden looks at him askance. The experience has left him completely drained.

7 INT. JOHANSENS' HOME. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

7

Gallimard pauses before a dark wooden door, not knowing whether to wait or run. He can't help but overhear passing conversations.

WOMAN

She was very pretty, yes, but she
simply had no voice ...

Gallimard's eyes flash anger at the back of the critic's head. O.C., a doorknob turns. Before he knows it, Song herself appears in the doorway of a bathroom.

SONG

(after a pause)
Excuse me. Monsieur...

(CONTINUED)

7 CONT'D

7

GALLIMARD

Oh! Gallimard. Mademoiselle...?
A beautiful...

She smiles, grateful for the compliment.

SONG

Thank you. Song Liling.

GALLIMARD

A beautiful performance.

SONG

Oh, please. You make me blush.
I am no opera singer at all.

GALLIMARD

I've actually never seen
"Butterfly" before.

SONG

Really?

GALLIMARD

The story...

SONG

Ridiculous.

GALLIMARD

It's wonderful, but...

SONG

Oh... you like it?

GALLIMARD

I... what I meant is, the most
remarkable thing was your
performance. I'm so used to
thinking of opera singers as huge
women in so much bad make-up.

SONG

Bad make-up is not unique to the
West.

She floats past him, towards the breeze from an open window.
He follows, eyes only for her.

GALLIMARD

But I'm sure they could never be
as convincing as you.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONT'D (2)

7

SONG

Convincing? Me?

She smiles at him. He's left breathless.

SONG

As a Japanese woman? The Japanese used hundreds of our people for medical experiments during the war, you know. But I gather such an irony is lost on you.

GALLIMARD

No! I meant to say, you made me see the beauty of the story.

SONG

Really?

GALLIMARD

Of her death. It's a... a pure sacrifice. He's unworthy, but what can she do? She loves him... so much. It's a very beautiful story.

SONG

Well, yes, to a Westerner.

GALLIMARD

Excuse me?

SONG

It's one of your favorite fantasies, isn't it? The submissive Oriental woman and the cruel white man.

GALLIMARD

Well, I didn't quite mean...

SONG

Consider it this way: what would you say if a blonde homecoming queen fell in love with a short Japanese businessman? He treats her cruelly, then goes home for three years, during which time she prays to his picture and turns down marriage from a young Kennedy.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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9.

7 CONT'D (3)

7

SONG (Cont'd)

Then, when she learns he has
remarried, she kills herself.
Now, I believe you would consider
this girl to be a deranged idiot,
correct? But because it's an
Oriental who kills herself for a
Westerner - ah! - you find it
beautiful.

Silence. Gallimard steps back.

GALLIMARD

Yes... well, I... see your point.

SONG

I've performed Butterfly... as a
lark. But if you wish to see
some real theatre, Monsieur -
Gallimard? - come to the Peking
Opera sometime. Further your
education.

*

Song flips open her fan and heads into a parlour, where she's
approached by polite spectators.

Gallimard remains on the stairs, frozen with defeat and
humiliation.

8 INT. GALLIMARD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

8

Gallimard stands before a full-length mirror, peevishly tugging
off his bowtie. His apartment is the height of luxury by
Chinese standards, yet to Western eyes little more than a
glorified dormroom. A few family heirlooms and European
reproductions help disguise the cinderblock walls.

GALLIMARD

The Chinese are an incredibly
arrogant people!

His wife, JEANNE, sits up in bed, nursing a cold. She flips
through a well-worn treasure in these parts - a genuine French
fashion magazine. She is attractive without being gorgeous,
wears her 38 years easily, and floats through life with a
forced gaiety.

JEANNE

They warned us about that in
Paris, remember?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONT'D

8

GALLIMARD

Even Parisians consider them
arrogant. That's a switch.

JEANNE

There's no use fussing about it.
Whenever I see one of those
natives blowing his nose onto the
pavement, I remember: "East is
east, west is west, and never the
twain shall meet." Then, I feel
much better.

(she blows her nose
into a tissue)

So tell me, did you get a chance
to meet Lars Hammer's new wife?
I hear she's the one really
running that embassy these days.
And they say she's not even very
pretty.

GALLIMARD

No, I'm sorry. I left early.

JEANNE

Oh, dear! Are you coming down
with this cold, too?

GALLIMARD

No, it's... nothing. Silly.
It's just that I met, I suppose,
the Chinese equivalent of a diva.
She's a singer in the Chinese
opera.

JEANNE

Oh, yes, the Peking Opera, where
they sing like cats wailing.
Actually, it's a funny thing
about Chinese - it sounds more
like singing when they're just
speaking normally.

Gallimard retires to the bathroom, undresses there.

GALLIMARD

She sang the death scene from
"Madama Butterfly." Would you
believe, the Chinese hate it?

JEANNE

She hated it, but she performed
it anyway?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONT'D (2)

8

GALLIMARD

They hate it because the white
man gets the girl. Sour grapes,
if you ask me.

JEANNE

Politics again. Why can't they
just hear it as a piece of
beautiful music?

She begins humming the "Un Bel Di" aria. Looking in the
bathroom mirror, he sees her free hand improvising delicate
"Oriental" movements. Gallimard winces - this seems a travesty
of his memory.

9 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY LIBRARY -- DAY

9

Supporting himself on a rickety stepladder, Gallimard runs down
a shelf of boxed phonograph recordings until he pulls out a set
of "Madama Butterfly."

HOLD on the album cover art: a tiny geisha girl looking up
adoringly at her American lieutenant.

10 EXT. YAN DAI XIE JIE STREET - NIGHT

10

The "Un Bel Di" aria plays as a hunched-over figure hugs the
shadows of the poorly-lit street. His trenchcoat collar is up,
hat brim down. This plus his speed are sufficient to deter the
curious.

Gallimard peers down an alleyway, where an OLD MAN stands
repairing a bicycle tube on a wooden stump. Gallimard tries to
match the street numbers to the ideographs on his scrap of
paper.

GALLIMARD

Um, excuse me, this... this
address... Theatre... you know,
opera?

(mimes singing)

Aaaah! Aaaah!

The old man's face breaks into a broad smile. He points to
Gallimard's paper, then gestures down the street.

GALLIMARD

Yes, I see... thank you. Thank
you very much.

Gallimard thinks to bow, then turns and enters a dark arcade.

PINK

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12.

- 11 EXT. QINGLE THEATRE. ARCADE - NIGHT 11
Men and women stream in and out of an entrance no more glamorous than your average stage door. Gallimard hesitates a beat, then enters the theatre.
- 12 INT. QINGLE THEATRE - NIGHT 12
His eyes fill with wonder as he finds a seat.
Onstage an incredibly exotic woman is being ushered into view by six only slightly less magnificent serving women. Gallimard can only just recognize the face of Song Liling beneath the make-up which rivals the wings of a butterfly for richness and beauty.
The opera is Drunken Beauty, the story of an out-of-favour concubine who is desperately clinging to her lord's affection.
Song is like a creature from another, more beautiful world as Gallimard watches, enraptured.
The faces around him: wrinkled old men, cob pipes, toothless crones, pudgy-faced children. He has been transported back to the ancient Orient.
- 13 INT. QINGLE THEATRE - NIGHT 13
A SERIES OF DISSOLVES showing different moments from Song's performance and Gallimard's enthusiastic reactions to them.
- 14 INT. COMMUNAL BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 14
Gallimard makes his way backstage through the main, communal dressing room which is bustling with the theatrical energy and colour of the three or four operas which have been performed tonight.
Acrobats in animal-face make-up smoke cigarettes as beautiful maidens carefully remove their bejewelled headgear. The mechanics of an enchanted forest.
Gallimard seeks but does not find Song - until he spots her beckoning from behind a small door at the end of the communal dressing room.
- 15 INT. SONG'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 15
Gallimard enters this smaller room which serves as the dressing room of the four stars of the evening, chief of whom is Song.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONT'D

15

The space is divided into cubicles by white sheets which hang from ceiling rods. From one peeks the still-headdressed face of Song.

GALLIMARD

You knew I was in the audience.

SONG

It was easy to spot you. How often does a man in my audience wear a tie?

Gallimard sees his tie exposed, reacts as if his fly were open. At that moment, Song's naked arm LEAPS out from behind the curtain, strokes his tie sensuously, then retreats behind the curtain.

SONG (O.C.)

So - you are an adventurous imperialist?

GALLIMARD

I guess I was finally ready to... further my education.

Gallimard unbuttons his coat as half-dressed actors and novices with buckets of boiling water traipse in and out the door.

SONG (O.C.)

It took you three weeks. Why?

Gallimard sees the silhouette of Song stripped, then washed with water, by a dutiful dresser.

GALLIMARD

I... I've been busy.

SONG (O.C.)

Well, education has always been under-valued in the West, hasn't it?

The sound of water dripping down her body.

GALLIMARD

I... don't think that's true.

SONG (O.C.)

No, you wouldn't. You're a Westerner. How can you objectively judge your own values?

(CONTINUED)

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14.

15 CONT'D (2)

15

GALLIMARD

I think it's possible to achieve
some distance.

SONG (O.C.)

Do you?

She pops her head out from behind the curtain, water dripping
from her long black hair, Chinese cigarette in hand.

SONG

Be a gentleman, will you, and
light my cigarette?

GALLIMARD

I... I don't smoke.

SONG

Your loss. Had you lit my
cigarette, I might've blown smoke
rings around you.

With a wink, she retreats behind the curtain.

16 EXT. GUOZIJIAN STREET - NIGHT

16

Song, a Mongolian fur wrap hugging her despite the warmth of
the night air, floats like a princess with her foreign escort.
Gallimard strolls rakishly with his coat open. They are a
nostalgic flash of decadent glamour, passing through the older
sections of town.

SONG

Oh, how I wish there were even a
tiny cafe to sit in. With
espressos, and men in tuxedos,
and bad expatriate jazz.

GALLIMARD

If my memory serves me correctly,
you wouldn't have even been
allowed into a club like that
before the Revolution.

SONG

Your memory serves you poorly, M.
Gallimard. True, there were
signs reading "No dogs and
Chinamen." But a woman,
especially a delicate Oriental
woman... she always went where
she pleased.

(more)

*

(CONTINUED)

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15.

16 CONT'D

16

SONG (Cont'd)

Could you imagine it otherwise?
Clubs in China filled with pasty,
big-thighed white women, while
thousands of slender lotus
blossoms waited just outside the
door? Never. The clubs would
have been empty.

(beat)

The Oriental woman has always
held a certain fascination for
you Caucasian men, is that not
true?

*

GALLIMARD

Yes. But that fascination is
imperialist, or so you tell me.

SONG

Yes, it is always imperialist.
But sometimes... sometimes, it is
also mutual.

17 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. GUOZIJIAN HUTONG - NIGHT

17

They stop before the ideograph-crested gates of a tiled
courtyard, enclosed in the old Chinese style. Drooping bamboo
plants cast shadows upon them.

SONG

Oh, this is my home.

She pulls on the peeling brass-plated rings, and the heavy
wooden gates open with a creak.

GALLIMARD

But, I didn't even...

SONG

Thank you. Come another time and
we will continue the process of
education.

Like a kitten, she's hopped inside and shut the fortress doors
behind her.

Gallimard steps back, catching his breath, holding his head.

GALLIMARD

What was that?!

Only now does he realize he's lost - alone on a dark street in
the bowels of Beijing. He walks down the street.

18 EXT. HOUHAI LAKE. BRIDGE - NIGHT

18

Gallimard emerges from a maze of small streets to find himself in a square near a bridge at the south end of Houhai Lake. The only one in sight is a BESPECTACLED MAN with a flashlight and a net at the end of a pole who is catching dragonflies which have just hatched out above the lake's waterline.

Gallimard approaches reverently. The man, middle-aged, t-shirt and shorts, begins to speak to Gallimard in friendly tones. Encouraged, Gallimard comes closer. The man places several dragonflies on his hand, offering them to him.

The creatures are in the process of transforming from squat, ugly underwater nymphs into majestic, diaphanous flying dragons. Gallimard is totally immersed in reverie.

Suddenly, a tiny, creaky bell begins to chime right beside him. From out of the darkness emerges an old man, all bones, on a pedicab.

Gallimard pinches himself as the DRIVER stops before him. Despite the dragonflies on his hand, the Frenchman manages to pull from his wallet a business card, half printed in Chinese. The PEDICAB DRIVER maintains an unintelligible running commentary as Gallimard settles into the rickshaw.

Gallimard nods to the dragonfly man, who smiles and nods back, pleased that his gift will not be rejected.

As the pedicab pulls away, Gallimard leans back into the tattered seat. The dragonflies cling more tightly to his knuckles in the breeze. Gallimard smiles: this is a life from dreams.

19 EXT. GUOZIJIAN STREET - NIGHT

19

A single rickshaw pedals past the facades of Old China.

20 INT. GALLIMARDS' BEDROOM - DAY

20

Gallimard's head upon a pillow. He opens his eyes as sun streams in.

He rubs his eyes, shaking the sleep from his brain.

GALLIMARD
I had the most amazing dream...

Jeanne hangs up his coat from the previous evening.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONT'D

20

JEANNE

I'm surprised you had time to
dream at all. When did you get
in last night, anyway?

Gallimard looks down: he's fallen asleep fully clothed from the
previous evening. It wasn't a dream at all.

GALLIMARD

I went to... to the Koenig's
house. You know what it's like
when they get in a new shipment
of beer.

(he smiles)

Believe me, my head is still
spinning. I'll think twice
before I go back there again.

21 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. GUOZIJIAN HUTONG - NIGHT

21

Gallimard is about to rap on the gate, when -

It opens. SHU FANG, a middle-aged servant woman, stands with
hands folded. There follows an awkward silence.

GALLIMARD

Hello.

(beat)

Hel-lo. Me come for...

Shu Fang cuts him off with a command, disappears into the
courtyard. Gallimard follows as if entering a shrine.

22 INT. SONG'S HOUSE. COURTYARD - NIGHT

22

This is the way Chinese have lived for centuries - carved
doorframes, smoke from a wood-burning stove.

23 INT. SONG'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

23

Gentle lanterns illuminate a low ebony table, Chinese screens,
a single Sung vase, a wall-hanging of mist-shrouded mountains -
all lit with Western aplomb.

SONG (O.C.)

I'll be out in an instant. Ask
the servant for anything you
want.

(CONTINUED)

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18.

23 CONT'D

23

But Shu Fang has vanished. Gallimard picks up a framed b-&-w photograph of a Chinese man in his prime with the bearing and full sleeves of a Mandarin. He studies it closely, as -

SONG

That is my father.

Gallimard whirls around.

*

SONG

It is very good that he did not live to see the revolution. They would, no doubt, have made him kneel on broken glass. Not that he didn't deserve such a punishment. But he was my father. I would've hated to see it happen.

GALLIMARD

(bows)

I'm very honoured that you've allowed me to visit your home.

SONG

(curtseys)

Thank you. Oh! Haven't you been poured any tea?

GALLIMARD

I'm really not...

SONG

(to O.C.)

Shu Fang! Cha! Kwai-dyar!

(to Gallimard)

I'm sorry. You want everything to be perfect...

GALLIMARD

Please.

SONG

...and before the evening even begins...

GALLIMARD

I'm really not thirsty.

SONG

...it's ruined.

(CONTINUED)

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19.

23 CONT'D (2)

23

GALLIMARD
(sharply)
Mlle. Song!

Song sits on the floor.

SONG
I'm sorry. I promise not to
apologize for anything else
tonight, is that correct?

GALLIMARD
Very correct.

*

Shu Fang emerges with a tea tray and attempts to pour.

SONG
No! I'll pour it myself for the
gentleman.

Shu Fang exits with hulking steps. Song curls at Gallimard's
feet.

SONG
I... I don't even know why I
invited you here.
(beat)
There is an element of danger to
your presence. You must know
that.

GALLIMARD
It doesn't concern me.

*

SONG
It doesn't concern me either.
No... well, perhaps... perhaps
I am slightly afraid of scandal.

GALLIMARD
What are we doing that's
scandalous?

SONG
I'm entertaining you. In my
parlour.

GALLIMARD
Where I come from that would
hardly constitute...

(CONTINUED)

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20.

23 CONT'D (3)

23

SONG

You come from France. France is
a country living in the modern
era. Perhaps even ahead of it.
China is a nation whose soul is
firmly rooted two thousand years
in the past. What I do, even
pouring the tea for you now, it
has... implications.

*

Song is shaking as she hands Gallimard tea. He takes both the
teacup and her hand.

SONG

Don't.

*

*

Song leaps to her feet and dashes like a frightened deer to the
hall doorway, where she remains with her back to him,
trembling.

SONG

Please... go...

Gallimard approaches her slowly.

GALLIMARD

I don't see why.

SONG

I feel... I am not myself.

GALLIMARD

You're nervous.

SONG

Please. Try as I might to be
modern, to hold a Westerner's
strong face up to my own... in
the end, I fail.

*

*

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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21.

23 CONT'D (4)

23

SONG (Cont'd)

A small, frightened heart beats
too quickly and gives me away.

*

Gallimard starts to embrace her. She whimpers softly.

GALLIMARD

What are you afraid of?
Certainly not me, I hope.

*

He runs his finger down her cheek, towards the neckline of her dress. She is overcome with shameful longing.

SONG

M. Gallimard, I've never...
(she swings around,
finds her body against
his)
...never invited a man to my home
before. The forwardness of my
actions makes my skin burn.
Please... go now.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

GALLIMARD

If I go now... what assurance do
you have that I'll ever return?

SONG

You... are cruel!

*

As his finger starts beneath her dress, she utters a soft cry -
of fear or passion - and flees down the dark hallway.

GALLIMARD

What do you expect? I'm a
foreign devil.

Gallimard kisses the tip of his finger, and turns towards the door, beaming.

24 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICES - NIGHT

24

The usual row of desks, empty at this late hour. Only Gallimard's cubicle is lit. He pores over ledger sheets with gusto, whistling an aria from the opera.

ON the ledger sheet, as he circles an entry in red.

JEANNE (O.C.)

Rene?

He looks through the glass window into the cavernous chamber and sees Jeanne. In a modest cocktail dress, she smiles contentedly, any doubts as to her husband's late-night whereabouts put to rest.

JEANNE

You're working late. Shall we skip the Frischs' party?

25 INT. FRISCHS' HOME - NIGHT

25

In a gussied-up rowhouse, a Chinese student bangs out 40's dance tunes on an upright piano. Jeanne and others feign attention as a PORTLY DIPLOMAT expresses a common Continental view.

PORTLY DIPLOMAT

The Chinese masses have accepted Communism - they're used to serving their warlords. But, of course, it would never work in Europe.

A group of French intelligence officers - macho cowboys of the service - sprawl around a table. Like leering schoolboys, they are not-so-subtly admiring the endowments of FRAU BADEN - 50's and well-preserved, and sporting a knockout figure proudly displayed beneath a see-through blouse.

BERTRAND

(to Alain)

Don't waste your time. That woman's built like the Forbidden City - everyone can look, but no one gets inside.

The group breaks up. The SCRAPE of a chair on the floor, as Gallimard straddles it. Everyone immediately clams up.

GALLIMARD

Gentlemen, am I disturbing something?

They look at one another. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

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23.

25 CONT'D

25

ALAIN

Listen, we have to say we're not at all pleased with the way you've been sending back our expenses for further documentation.

GALLIMARD

Well, I'm sorry to hear that, because I've just found two more questionable items tonight.

BERTRAND

(quietly menacing)

Just what are you trying to prove?

GALLIMARD

I don't see that there's anything to prove. I've got a job to do. If you thought I was going to ignore your indiscretions forever - well, I'm afraid you were mistaken.

BERTRAND

(low growl)

Listen to me - you're nobody. Worse than nobody. If you're not careful, we'll break your pencils in half.

Faced with the taunting laughter of a half-dozen angry eyes, Gallimard shudders for a moment. But Puccini floats into his mind, and the knowledge that he's adored by a beautiful woman fortifies him.

26 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. BACK STAIRWELL - DAY

* 26

M. FAURE, a paunchy white-haired superior of the old school, sputters in rage and disbelief at the impudence of the slim man before him.

GALLIMARD

I'm very sorry, M. Faure, but the figures for Intelligence simply do not add up - particularly in your case. I have no choice but to order a net-worth audit of your assets.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONT'D

26

FAURE

Listen here, young man... this
type of thing is... simply not
done!

GALLIMARD

Well, it's painfully clear to me
that this should've been done
years ago.

Gallimard flips casually through the file folders in his arms.
CLOSE on the papers - amidst the endless ledgers, we find two
envelopes of exquisite rice paper, addressed to "M. Rene
Gallimard" in sensuous feminine brush-strokes. Gallimard keeps
one finger on the letters, like a magical touchstone.

27 INT. SONG'S DRESSING ROOM. GALLIMARD'S FANTASY - NIGHT

27

In Gallimard's fantasy, Song writes before her mirror. A large
group of colleagues waits for her at the cloth door, but she
shuns them.

SONG (V.O.)

"Did we fight? I do not know.
Is the opera no longer of
interest to you? Please come -
my audiences miss the white devil
in their midst."

She folds the letter in half, seals it with a kiss.

28 INT. SONG'S BEDROOM. GALLIMARD'S FANTASY - NIGHT

28

A HAND places a second letter on a wooden bedstand. Full, red
lips blow out a flickering candle.

SONG (V.O.)

"It has been six weeks since last
we met."

Looking down on her bed as she lies on her back, legs parted
beneath a disheveled sheer kimono. Breezes flutter through an
open window.

SONG (V.O.)

"Is this your practice? To leave
friends in the lurch?"

One of her hands reluctantly creeps its way beneath her kimono,
towards her breast.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONT'D

28

SONG (V.O.)

"Sometimes, I hate you.
Sometimes, I hate myself. But
always, I miss you."

29 INT. SONG'S DRESSING ROOM. GALLIMARD'S FANTASY - NIGHT

29

Now she sits at her dressing-room mirror, flings her long black hair about in a hysterical snit. She is more beautiful when she's angry.

SONG

"Your rudeness is beyond belief.
Don't bother to call. I'll have
you turned away at the door."

30 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. ACCOUNTANTS' OFFICES - DAY

30

Like a conquering hero, Gallimard bursts through the double-doors into the dingy dungeon. The other accountants regard him with that strange mixture of awe and fear that oppressed people feel when one of their own stands up to challenge the system.

As he heads for his office, others hand him memos, notes, ledgers, reports - he is high on all this regard.

He sits at his desk, now piled high with papers - a far cry from the tidy, delicately-arranged workstation he had kept before. Valere rushes in.

VALERE

Rene! I think we've located the
diversion of...!

Gallimard raises his hand imperially.

GALLIMARD

Wait.

(beat)

First things first.

Boldly, he removes a third brush-stroked letter from his breast pocket, as if daring Valere to inquire.

GALLIMARD

I haven't read my mail yet.

He slits it with a jade letter-opener.

SONG (V.O.)

"I am out of words. I can hide
behind dignity no longer."

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26.

31 OMIT

* 31

32 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE - DAY

32

Back to Gallimard, who sits with feet propped up on the desk, his head thrown back in a full, throaty laugh, revelling in his own power. Gallimard touches the letter to his lips, then waves to Valere.

GALLIMARD
Now, Valere. Come.

33 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY HALLWAYS - DAY

33

An argument between Gallimard and the aggressive intelligence officer Bertrand has elevated into a fiery exchange in the halls.

GALLIMARD
If you're so certain I'm
overstepping my bounds, then
fine! Take it up with Ambassador
Toulon, for all I care!

Bertrand's white-hot eyes cool to a smug smile.

BERTRAND
Funny - I already have.
(whispers)
The closest you'll ever come to
China again is inspecting egg
rolls for the Paris Health Board.

Bertrand marches away without even a look back. Gallimard keeps up a brave front, even as he's suddenly assailed by a wave of doubt.

Gallimard turns towards the rear staircase, just as the Ambassador's executive assistant, JACK, steps into his path.

JACK
Gallimard! There you are! The
Ambassador's been trying to
locate you for the past half-
hour.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONT'D

33

GALLIMARD
The... Ambassador?
(glances at his watch)
Now?

34 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. TOULON'S OFFICE - DAY

34

The doors latch tight as a prison as AMBASSADOR TOULON, grey and dangerous, crosses the room towards the waiting Gallimard.

TOULON
Look, Gallimard - there's not much to say. I've liked you from the day you arrived. You were no leader, but you were tidy and efficient.

GALLIMARD
Thank you, sir.

TOULON
Don't jump the gun. But over these past few months, I don't know how it's happened, you've become this new, aggressive confident... thing. The reports I've been getting on you...
(pause)
What on earth is making you act this way?

Gallimard is tempted to mock himself. Instead -

GALLIMARD
I take my job seriously, sir. I... care about the Chinese people. I think we have to set... a good example for them... of a Western democracy in action...

He's sure he's somehow really blown it now. Toulon pours himself a brandy.

TOULON
Well! Well.
(reflective)
You see, our needs here in China are changing. It's still an embarrassment that we lost Indochina.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONT'D

34

TOULON (Cont'd)
We're going to be doing a lot
more information-gathering in the
future. Some people... are just
going to have to go.
(back to Gallimard)
It's nothing personal. Want to
know a secret? Vice-Consul LeBon
is being transferred.

Gallimard sees his career pass before his eyes.

TOULON
As is most of his department.

GALLIMARD
Sir, please - I just want to stay
in China.

TOULON
But not you.

GALLIMARD
What?

Toulon sits down, regards his underling with amusement.

TOULON
Scared you? I think I did.
Cheer up, Gallimard - I want you
to replace LeBon as Vice-Consul.

GALLIMARD
You... Yes, well, thank you, sir.
I accept with great humility.

TOULON
Humility won't be part of the
job. I need a new man to co-
ordinate a re-vamped intelligence
division. Paris is demanding
something more than the same old
photos of Chinese cadres screwing
peasant girls in the rice
paddies, and if anyone can shake
those boys up, it's you.
(chuckles)
You already have.
(shakes hands)
So - Gallimard. Congratulations.

On Gallimard, whose world is spinning around him.

35 INT. SONG'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

35

Powerful BANGING on the door, as Shu Fang stumbles through the darkened hall holding only a candlestick. The second she undoes the heavy metal latch, the door BURSTS open, and Gallimard TEARS through the room, crashing past shadows of Oriental objects d'art.

He stops cold in the doorway. Song, clad in a sheer white negligee, struggles to retain her dignity by the glow of a gas lantern.

SONG

Are you crazy? To come here at this hour? After... after eight weeks?

GALLIMARD

Mlle. Song!

SONG

You bang on my door? Scare my servants? Scandalize the neighbors?

GALLIMARD

I've been promoted! To Vice-Consul!

Song sits down, looks away.

SONG

And what is that supposed to mean to me?

GALLIMARD

I've come tonight for an answer: Are you my Butterfly?

SONG

What are you saying? I can't believe it!

GALLIMARD

Are you my Butterfly?

SONG

Don't you know already?

GALLIMARD

I want you to say it.

SONG

I don't want to say it!

(CONTINUED)

35 CONT'D

35

GALLIMARD

I do know one thing - in the
letter I received today -
(he produces it)
"I have already given you my
shame."

SONG

(covering her ears)
Don't! It's enough that I even
wrote it!

GALLIMARD

Well, then, if that's all true...

SONG

I shouldn't have it splashed
across my face!

GALLIMARD

...what is one more short answer?

SONG

I don't want to!

GALLIMARD

ARE YOU MY BUTTERFLY?

She lowers herself to a kneeling position on the floor, trying
to hide her emotions. He begins to touch her hair.

GALLIMARD

I want honesty. There should be
nothing false between us. No
false pride.

SONG

Yes I am. I am your Butterfly.

Gallimard lowers himself until he's looking into her eyes.

GALLIMARD

Then let me be honest with you.
It is because of you that I was
promoted tonight. You have
changed my life forever. My
little Butterfly, there should be
no more secrets - I love you.

He starts to kiss her roughly. She resists slightly.

SONG

No... no... gently. Please, I've
never...

(CONTINUED)

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31.

35 CONT'D (2)

35

GALLIMARD

Never?

SONG

I've tried to appear experienced,
but the truth is... no.

GALLIMARD

Then we will go very, very
slowly.

He starts to lower the straps on her negligee. She panics.

SONG

No... let me keep my clothes.
Please... it all frightens me.
Modesty is... so important to
Chinese...

*
*

GALLIMARD

My poor little treasure.
(he cradles her like a
child)
I don't want to be cruel. I want
to teach you... gently.

She brings up her tiny hands, gently strokes his face.

SONG

Know now that we embark on the
most forbidden of loves.
(she whispers in his
ear)
I am so afraid of my destiny.

GALLIMARD

There is no destiny, except the
one we make for ourselves.

He pulls back her long hair, kisses her on the lips. She gasps
and moans.

SONG

I am your concubine... your
devoted slave...

*

Gallimard can't believe her naked declaration of submission.
He doesn't know whether to laugh or cry tears of joy.

GALLIMARD

Talk like that is... it's
barbaric!

(CONTINUED)

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32.

35 CONT'D (3)

35

SONG

You think, because we live in
houses with electricity, that
we're suddenly Westerners? The
Chinese are an ancient people, we
cling to the old ways of life...
and love.

(rests her cheek
against his body)

Though inexperienced, I am not...
ignorant. They teach us things,
our mothers, about pleasing a
man.

36 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. GUOZIJIAN HUTONG - DAWN

36

The morning sky an impossibly wild palate of colour.

Gallimard is crying as he leaves.

37 OMITTED

* 37

38 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. VICE-CONSUL GALLIMARD'S OFFICE - DAY

* 38

In his new office, entirely Asian in style, the newly-installed
Vice-Consul addresses the intelligence department, among whom
are many of his former enemies' faces.

GALLIMARD

Clearly, I have a great deal to
learn. Should you refuse to help
me learn it, of course, we'll be
constantly at odds with one
another. But I ask you, please,
to keep one thing in mind: our
world is changing. We French
lost our war in Indochina because
we never took the time to learn
about the people we sought to
lead. It is natural, then, even
correct, that they should resent
us. How could they do otherwise,
when we refused to treat them
like fellow human beings?

39 EXT. BEIJING COUNTRYSIDE. ROAD TO JINSHANLING - DAY

39

Two bicycles clatter down a road surrounded by mountains and rice paddies.

Song rides one, looking like a schoolgirl. Her bicycle has a picnic basket and blankets tied to its fender. The Mao-suited man beside her is none other than Gallimard.

40 EXT. GREAT WALL. JINSHANLING - DAY

40

The ancient wall is overwhelming, timeless, silent. The mountains over which it crawls are sharp-edged and wild. In its shadow, Gallimard and Song have a picnic.

SONG

Rene, there is a mystery you must clarify for me.

*
*

GALLIMARD

What mystery?

*

SONG

With your pick of Western women, why did you choose a poor Chinese with a chest like a boy?

*
*
*

GALLIMARD

No. Not a boy. Like a girl. An innocent schoolgirl waiting for her lessons.

Her eyes light up.

SONG

Will you really? Take me for your pupil? Teach me what you know? There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "To waste teaching on girls is like tossing rice into the wind." The Chinese men - they keep women down.

GALLIMARD

Even in the "New Society?"

SONG

In the "New Society," we are all kept ignorant equally. That's one of the exciting things about loving a Western man. I know you are not threatened by your slave's education.

GALLIMARD

Certainly not. Particularly when my slave also has much to teach me.

*

41 EXT. GREAT WALL. JINSHANLING. WATCHTOWER - DAY

41

We move in on a magnificent brick watchtower perched on a spectacular section of the Great Wall. From inside the watchtower we hear voices.

42 INT. GREAT WALL. JINSHANLING. WATCHTOWER - DAY

42

Gallimard lies on his back on blankets as Song, kneeling above him, draws her long hair over his half-naked body.

SONG

In the ancient and forbidden Jou
Pu Tuan, the Before Midnight
Scholar declares, "It is the body
of man in which woman rejoices."

On Song, as she suckles each of his toes with her full red lips.

SONG

"Like an obedient daughter gazing
up at her mighty father, she is
modest with her own form,
regarding it with the proper
weakness and shame. From his
power alone flows all her
pleasure."

On Gallimard's face, eyes closed, passive, enjoying an erotic mix he never dreamed possible.

SONG

For what does Master Confucius
say? "Only one who has sinned
can become a saint."

43 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. TOULON'S OFFICE - DAY

43

On Toulon, an imperious expression on his face.

TOULON

Tomorrow afternoon, at 1700
hours, we will detonate six atom
bombs over the Forbidden City.

On a French TECHNICIAN sweeping the office for bugs. The technician removes a small metal disc from behind a picture frame.

TECHNICIAN

That's the last of the bugs, sir.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONT'D

43

Reveal Toulon and Gallimard sitting around coffee table, cracking themselves up.

TOULON

That should give those Reds a thing or two to worry about.

The technician exits. Toulon pours two brandies into large snifters.

TOULON

You remember the Americans, don't you? It seems, since they don't have an embassy here, they're asking us to be their eyes and ears. Say Jack Kennedy signed an order to bomb North Vietnam, Laos. How do you think the Chinese would react?

ON Gallimard, who is put on the spot for the first important pronouncement of his career.

GALLIMARD

Well, I think the Chinese will squawk. But in their hearts, they don't even like Ho Chih Minh.

TOULON

Uh-huh...

GALLIMARD

(warming to subject)
Deep inside, they're attracted to us, they find our ways... exciting. But they won't admit it at first. Eventually, however, Orientals will always submit to a greater force. If the Americans demonstrate the will to win, the Vietnamese - mark my words - will welcome them into a mutually beneficial union.

Toulon regards Gallimard for a long moment.

TOULON

You really believe that?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTD'D (2)

43

GALLIMARD

Sir! With all due respect, you don't really believe those little men could've beaten us without our unconscious consent, do you?

TOULON

There are fewer things I understand than I care to admit. That's why I have men like you.
(pats Rene on back)
I'll note your opinions in my report. The Americans always love to hear how "welcome" they are.

44 INT. SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

44

CU photo of Anna May Wong in an old American movie magazine. The movie still is from Shanghai Express.

Song reclines on a chaise, staring at the photo. She arranges her own cheong sam to more perfectly duplicate the photo. She has been sifting through the pages of American and pre-revolutionary Chinese movie magazines.

44A EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. COURTYARD - NIGHT

* 44A

Shu Fang is just about to enter the living room with a stack of magazines when an ominous figure - COMRADE CHIN - steps out of the darkness and gently but firmly takes the stack from her. Chin is a middle-aged woman with a very hard and sinister look. Shu Fang obviously knows who this person is, because she bows and quickly disappears.

*
*
*
*
*
*

44B INT. SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

* 44B

When she hears what she thinks is Shu Fang entering the room with more magazines, Song waves imperially.

*
*

SONG

Oh, good. Just set them down on the table, will you?

The entire stack of magazines comes crashing down onto the floor in front of Song. Awakened rudely from her dream, Song starts, looks up and reacts with cold fear when she sees that it is Chin who has entered the room.

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

44B CONT'D

44B

SONG
Comrade Chin...!

Song scrambles to the ground, goes after the magazines.

SONG
Forgive me. I was...carried away.

A second before Song's hands reach the stack, Chin KICKS it with the toe of her shoe, scattering them across the floor.

CHIN
Trash. Decadent trash.

As Song crawls to recover the periodicals, Chin goes to the chaise, pulls out a notepad. Song takes this as her cue as she gathers the forbidden symbols of Western glamour.

SONG
He's begun...to tell me about
Vietnam. The Americans plan to
increase troop strength to 170,000
soldiers with 120,000 militia and
11,000 advisors.

On Chin, who regards Song on all fours, clearly repulsed by her sexy contours.

CHIN
(indicates magazines)
Don't you understand how
degrading these images are to
women? And why do you have to
behave this way when he's not
even here?

*

*

Like a trained socialist dog, Song snaps to attention.

SONG
Comrade, in order to better serve
the Great Proletarian State, I
practice my deception as often as
possible! I despise this
costume, yet, for the sake of the
Great Helmsman, I will endure it
along with all other bourgeois
Western perversions!

(CONTINUED)

44B CONT'D (2)

44B

CHIN

(shakes her notepad)

I'm not convinced that this will
be enough to redeem you in the
eyes of the Party.

*
*
*
*

Song looks down at a magazine cover - a Chinese glamour-queen
from the 20's attired in diamonds, waving from the window of an
immaculate Bentley.

Her eyes betray desperate longing for a world which seems the
ultimate paradise beside her own.

SONG

I am trying my best to become
somebody else.

*

45 INT. SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

45

A series of cuts - adolescent-like gropings in the dark zooming
by in great confusion - the experience of intercourse by a man
whose knowledge is only average for his day.

(CONTINUED)

(CONTINUED)

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38.

45 CONT'D

45

Gritting her teeth, Song falls face-first onto a silk-sheeted mattress; his naked body towers above; his face, falling onto her hair; his hands, hiking up her tight cheong sam skirt; their hands, frantically pulling down her panties just enough to uncover her round ass; her hand, snaking to guide him; his face, gasping as he thrusts; her feet, toes clenching; his body, shaking spasmodically at the peak of his excitement; her face, bobbing up and down on the mattress, mouth screaming for release; his cry, mingling with hers; then -

Silence. His hand reaches for the lightswitch.

Wrapped in a kimono, feeling sated, he lights a cigarette while stroking her hair.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly. Did I... hurt you?
I didn't mean to be so rough. I
promise, the second time...

She turns towards him, her cheeks flushed as she straightens her skirt.

SONG

At the height of it, I was
terrified I'd be torn apart.

She lays her face worshipfully on his loins.

He is almost tearful with power and gratitude.

*

SONG

Look, master - blood.

On the inside of her thighs - a tiny rivulet of blood trickles down from beneath her dress.

She takes his index finger, wipes up a spot of it. She proudly displays the proof of her virginity.

She puts his finger to her lips, sucks the blood like a candy cane.

46 EXT. JOHANSENS' COURTYARD - NIGHT

46

Where he first saw her perform "Madama Butterfly." We join a ceremony among the expatriate community, from Gallimard's view. He and Toulon stand before a distinguished black-tie gathering.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONT'D

46

TOULON

... if not for the insights of our Vice-Consul, the Americans might have lost Vietnam, and the entire nation might be Communist today. I think we owe him our thanks for redeeming the honor of all the West!

Diplomats applaud raucously, demand a speech. With a great show of embarrassment, he comes forward.

GALLIMARD

I'd like to give credit where credit's due ...

He claps his hands. From nowhere, the shrill atonal blaring of Chinese horns and cacophonous gongs. Members of the crowd part like the Red Sea, as -

The figure of Song advances from the interior of the house, bedecked with jewels and a Peking Opera gown of intricate embroidery. Taking tiny steps towards the proud Gallimard, she presents herself as the most precious of concubines.

He takes her hand as she steps towards him. The crowd gasps, scandalized. Above the banging of Mandarin fanfare -

GALLIMARD

Allow me to present... the woman I love... and my true bride!

On Gallimard's face. His eyes dart nervously. Suddenly, Jeanne breaks from the crowd and approaches him. She is a Fury, hideously angry, but when she speaks, her voice is curiously tender, even concerned...

JEANNE

Rene? Rene?

47 INT. GALLIMARD'S FLAT - NIGHT

47

Jeanne's voice awakens him from his idyllic dream. He's fallen asleep at his study desk, among stacks of communiques and volumes on Vietnamese history. Maps of Vietnam and China are pinned to the wall behind him.

An irritatingly perky Jeanne enters, perches on the corner of the table with a coyness not befitting her years.

JEANNE

Rene, I visited Dr. Bolleart this morning.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONT'D

47

GALLIMARD
What - are you ill?

JEANNE
No, I thought it was time to ask
him - that question we've been
discussing.

Gallimard looks at Jeanne as if she's out of her mind.

GALLIMARD
What did you do that for? I told
you, it's only a matter of time!
We just have to keep trying.

JEANNE
It's getting a bit ridiculous,
don't you think? Margueritte
LaRouche, Marie Toussand -
Isabelle Colon's children are
already twelve and fourteen, do
you believe that? They all say,
"Jeanne, time is running out."
Don't you and Rene want a child?"

Gallimard tries to hide his face in his maps, but they provide
little cover.

JEANNE
Now, listen - Dr. Bolleart says
there's nothing wrong with me.
He'd like you to go in and take
some tests.

(presses an appointment
card into his palm)
Stress, tension - it could be
anything, really. With all your
newfound responsibilities, you
need to spend some time coming
back down to earth.

On Rene's reaction: he can't imagine anything less appealing.

48 INT. SONG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

48

GALLIMARD (O.C.)
I'm a modern man, Butterfly, and
yet I don't want to go.

We are close on Dr. Bolleart's appointment card. Song kneels
beside him, dipping pieces of dim sum into sauce before feeding
him with long chopsticks.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONT'D

48

GALLIMARD

It's the same old voodoo. I feel
like God himself is laughing at
me if I can't produce a child.

SONG

Why at you? Why not at your
wife?

GALLIMARD

Laughing at both of us? Is that
better?

Song rests the chopsticks on an ivory holder.

SONG

May I speak freely, my lord?

Gallimard can't help but smile at her use of these terms. Song
blushes at her own boldness.

SONG

It's just that - you men of the
West - you're obsessed by this
odd desire for men and women to
be equal. Much of this is
admirable, of course. But it can
be taken too far. Your wife
can't give you a child, and
you're going to the doctor?

GALLIMARD

Well, she's already gone, you
see.

SONG

And because that incompetent
can't find the defect, you now
have to subject yourself to him?
It's unnatural!

GALLIMARD

And what is the natural solution?

SONG

In Imperial China, when a man
found one wife inadequate, he
turned to another... to give him
his son.

Gallimard looks at Song, disbelief mingled with hope.

GALLIMARD

You want to have my child?

(CONTINUED)

48 CONT'D (2)

48

SONG

I thought you'd never ask.

GALLIMARD

But... the theatre, your career.

SONG

You are my career now, my entire life!

GALLIMARD

But I can't... marry you, not yet.

SONG

Please. I'm not asking you to be my husband. But I am already your wife.

(she kneels before him)

Promise me you won't go to this doctor. Who is this Western quack to set himself as judge over the one I love?

Still on her knees, she bows deeply before him.

SONG

I know who is a man, and who is not.

49 EXT. GUOZIJIAN STREET - NIGHT

49

A "RED FLAG" LIMOUSINE - the Chinese equivalent of a Cadillac - starts off, tinted windows rising, as a single piece of litter is tossed out the window.

We follow the litter as it falls onto the dirt road - Dr. Bolleart's appointment card.

50 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. TOULON'S OFFICE - DAY

50

Toulon paces with a drink as Gallimard watches, a serious but somehow smug expression in his face.

TOULON

No, no. I just don't see how the Vietnamese can stand up to American firepower.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONT'D

50

GALLIMARD

But you're missing the point entirely. It'll never come to that. Orientals want to be associated with whomever displays the most strength and power. You live with the Chinese, sir. Do you think they like Communism?

TOULON

I live in China, not with the Chinese.

(pause)

You live with the Chinese.

GALLIMARD

Excuse me?

TOULON

Oh, I can't keep a secret.

He sits behind his desk.

GALLIMARD

What are you saying?

TOULON

Gallimard! Please! Use the staff car to transport yourself to liaisons - that's what it's there for - but don't look so surprised when we come clamouring for the juicy details!

(pause)

So, you're keeping a native mistress, eh? I'm sure she must be gorgeous.

GALLIMARD

(false modesty)

Well...

TOULON

I'm impressed. You had the stamina to go out into the streets and hunt one down. Some of us have to be content with the wives of the diplomatic community.

GALLIMARD

I do feel... fortunate.

Toulon leans back in his chair, lights a cigar.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONT'D (2)

50

TOULON

I have no doubt. Use her to the full extent of your ability, Rene - for research as well as pleasure. But, of course, you must never come to take her too seriously.

On Gallimard, as he realizes the gulf between his dreams and reality.

GALLIMARD

Oh - of course not. She's just... she's a geisha to me.

TOULON

Of course she is. You're a smart young man. You'd never throw away your future by forgetting who you are for the sake of some piece of yellow meat, no matter how... tasty it might be.

It's as if Toulon is testing Gallimard, who wants terribly to strike his superior for that remark, but -

GALLIMARD

Well, it's as though I were that American sailor - Pinkerton - yes, Pinkerton from "Madama Butterfly." This geisha girl - she adores me, but I... well, of course, I realize she's just... convenient.

Toulon rises, pats Gallimard on the back, evidently satisfied with this answer.

TOULON

We were worried about you, Gallimard. We thought you were the only one here without a secret. And now you've gone out and topped us all!

Toulon leads Gallimard to the door.

GALLIMARD

This... uh... secret of mine. Is it widely known?

(CONTINUED)

50 CONT'D (3)

50

TOULON

It's only widely known within
this embassy, where nobody talks
because everybody is guilty.
Welcome to the club, Rene.

Gallimard smiles a not-very-enthusiastic smile.

51 INT. IRANIAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

51

The "Iranian Frank Sinatra" belts out "My Way" in Farsi.
Gallimard is holding court with eager sycophants. He is also
quite drunk.

GALLIMARD

So, I tell the Americans, Diem
must go. The U.S. wants to be
respected by the Vietnamese, yet
they're propping up this nobody
seminarian as its president? A
man whose claim to fame is his
sister-in-law who imposes
fanatical moral order campaigns?
Oriental women - when they're
good, they're very, very good,
but when they're bad, they're
Christians.

Laughter all around. Gallimard takes the opportunity to
circulate towards the bar.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

Still playing the missionary, are
you, Gallimard?

FRAU BADEN, she of the well-preserved figure, waits there with
eyes only for him.

BADEN

Or are there other positions that
interest you as well?

Gallimard gulps as he regards her.

52 EXT. FRIENDSHIP HOTEL - NIGHT

52

Establishing shot of this foreigners-only hotel complete with
traditional Chinese facade.

53 INT. FRIENDSHIP HOTEL. BATHROOM - NIGHT

53

Gallimard, still fully clothed, has locked himself in, attempting to brush his teeth with his index finger.

BADEN (O.C.)
You seem awfully shy, Gallimard.
Don't tell me this is the first
time you've done this.

GALLIMARD
You might call it my first extra-
extra-marital affair.

54 INT. FRIENDSHIP HOTEL. BEDROOM - NIGHT

54

Gallimard emerges from the bathroom, still fully clothed.

GALLIMARD
Listen, I ordered a bottle of
wine from room service. I
think...

Baden sits on the edge of the bed stark naked, legs spread akimbo in a particularly brazen and masculine fashion. The lights are too bright, her manner too harsh, completely devoid of shame or mystery.

BADEN
Haven't we had enough to drink
tonight?

GALLIMARD
You look... just like I thought
you would under your clothes...

BADEN
What did you expect? So come and
get it.
(he reaches for the
light)
Oh, c'mon. I'm not a teenager,
you know. I like to see what I'm
doing.

55 INT. TOULON'S HOME - NIGHT

55

An intimate dinner for just the Toulons and Gallimards has ended, and Mme. Toulon heads with Jeanne for the sitting room. Toulon takes Gallimard aside.

TOULON
(mysteriously)
They're killing him.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONT'D

55

GALLIMARD

Who? I'm sorry. What?

TOULON

It's something you've wanted for a long time, Rene.

GALLIMARD

Something I've wanted..?

TOULON

The U.S. has decided to allow the Vietnamese generals to stage a coup and assassinate President Diem.

Gallimard gulps, his eyes light up.

GALLIMARD

I think that's a very wise move.

TOULON

It's what you've been advocating.

GALLIMARD

Frankly, I consider this a vindication.

TOULON

Not necessarily. Of course, if the Americans defeat the Communists, then you'll be a hero. But if you're wrong, then your opinions won't be worth a pig's ear. You see, sometimes it's easier when they don't listen to you.

GALLIMARD

But they're your opinions too, aren't they, sir?

TOULON

Personally, yes. But my opinions aren't on that report.

Toulon leaves Gallimard gasping, as he heads for the den.

TOULON

(to ladies)

Now, who wants coffee? Beans smuggled in from Hawaii.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONT'D (2)

55

ON Gallimard, whose heart is torn with fear and feelings of betrayal.

56 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. GUOZIJIAN HUTONG - NIGHT

56

Gallimard has been pounding on the door and getting no response. Finally it CREAKS open. Shu Fang's eyes peek out from behind, screaming at him to go away.

Her impudence makes him see red. With a grunt, he CRASHES into the flat.

57 INT. SONG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

57

All lights are off. He stumbles through, knocking over artwork in the shadows. Shu Fang attempts to blockade his entrance to the living room.

SHU FANG

No see! No good! No! No!

He didn't even know she could speak English. He barrels - into the tea room.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly?!

Shafts of moonlight slit the darkness. Furniture in disarray. A small figure huddles beneath an embroidered white silk sheet - attempting to sneak across the floor.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly!

He TACKLES the silken ghost, feels her trembling, hears her terrified whisper -

SONG

No... not like this... please...
have mercy ...

Violently, he TUGS the cloth away. The figure beneath it hides its face. Gallimard grabs an arm - they struggle -

He PULLS down her arm. Into the moonlight emerges - her beautiful face, all the more radiant for her fear and tears. After all these weeks apart, she takes his breath away. Then he notices her red cheeks, her head swooning -

GALLIMARD

You've been drinking?

(CONTINUED)

57 CONT'D

57

She sobers up with shame.

SONG

Rene... it's been more than six weeks since you visited me last.

GALLIMARD

(hard again)

What of it?! There's been a lot going on in the world. You don't expect me to give up my career for your sake, do you?

SONG

(shocked)

Of course not! I am your slave, I do not expect...

GALLIMARD

"Slave?" You toss words like that around as if you really mean them.

SONG

Rene! I do! Why are you...?

GALLIMARD

Really? So what would you say if your "master" - if your "lord" - had spent some time over the past few weeks doing something... something you wouldn't like at all?

A silence falls between them; the implications are clear. Gallimard hunts for signs he's wounded her.

GALLIMARD

What do you think of me now?

SONG

I think... you are a man. It is a completely natural thing.

(pause)

Only please... when you're done, come back to me.

He's stymied for a moment by her complete acceptance.

GALLIMARD

Nothing shakes you, does it? All right, then. Let's just test this obedience of yours.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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50.

57 CONT'D (2)

57

GALLIMARD (Cont'd)
Yes, I'm a man - and I want to
see you naked.

From her terror, he knows he's finally drawn blood.

SONG
But... I thought you understood
my modesty! I thought you
respected my shame!

GALLIMARD
I believe you gave me your shame
ages ago!

*

SONG
Yes, and it is just like a white
devil to use it against me!

GALLIMARD
"White devil?" A moment ago, I
was your lord and master! So -
even your obedience has its
limits, is that it?

SONG
Rene - what - why are you
treating me this way?

GALLIMARD
Because all this nonsense of
yours... about my faithfulness,
my goodness to you... I'm not the
man you think I am!

He tosses a vase across the room; it shatters. Song collapses
against a wall, weeping and trembling.

SONG
I... understand the ways of men.
Even the softest skin... becomes
like leather to a man who's
touched it too often. I confess,
I don't know how to stop it. I
don't know how to change my body
into the body of another.

*

*

She stumbles to the chaise, lays herself on her back, silken
limbs dangling helplessly.

(CONTINUED)

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51.

57 CONT'D (3)

57

SONG

So, come. Strip me. And know
that my love is enough, that I
submit. Submit to the most
horrible fate you can give me.

Gallimard stumbles towards her, world spinning wildly.

SONG

Our love. In your hands. I'm
helpless before you.

*

As he towers over her like a giant, she closes her eyes tightly, her little body shaking uncontrollably with sobs. She looks like an innocent child awaiting her molester.

ON Gallimard: he's not a child molester, his streak of sadism does not run this deep. He drops to his knees. His hands wander just above the contours of her quivering body, lost. His expression turns to one of pain as rage transmutes to love, and he feels the terrible weight of his own guilt.

His hands fly away from Song's body onto his own face, as his tears begin to flow.

GALLIMARD

What am I doing...?

Her face, still bracing for attack, whispers the words -

SONG

I'm pregnant.

ON Gallimard, as they sink in.

SONG

Rene, I'm pregnant.

She's suddenly all he's ever wanted from life.

SONG

I'm pregnant.

He throws his arms around her, weeping into her belly, clutching her as a child does his mother.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly - forgive me...

Then, she's cradling his head, comforting him.

GALLIMARD

I've - betrayed you - in so many
ways.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONT'D (4)

57

SONG

No - no, you haven't... you've
tried so hard to be good...

GALLIMARD

No! I listened to voices... bad
voices... telling me to treat you
as less than you are...

SONG

Sssh, sssh - that's all right.
It's all over now.

GALLIMARD

No more Pinkerton - Pinkerton is
vanished from my heart ...

SONG

Of course he is. He's all gone
away.

GALLIMARD

I just want to save you, to
rescue you, to love you...

SONG

You have. Tonight, my beautiful
master - believe me, you've saved
my life...

He gazes through his tears like a little boy.

GALLIMARD

Have I really? Oh my god - I'm
so happy.

(It hits him)

My child!

SONG

Your child...

He showers her belly with kisses.

58 INT. XIZHIMEN RAILROAD STATION. TICKET COUNTER - DAY

58

Gallimard buys a ticket for Song at the ticket counter. The
waiting room is very crowded and every move is a struggle.

59 EXT. XIZHIMEN RAILROAD STATION. FIRST PLATFORM - DAY

59

An ancient steam locomotive belches smoke, as too many Chinese peasants try to squeeze too much luggage onto too few cars. Gallimard shepherds Song through the crowd.

60 INT. TRAIN. PASSENGER CAR - DAY

60

Gallimard settles Song into her seat with the nervousness of a father-to-be. She looks tired, though not at all heavy.

He looks into her eyes and can't help himself:

GALLIMARD

One last time - can't I come with you?

SONG

Please - don't force me to be disobedient in our last moments. Now, go. Dream of me. And of your son.

GALLIMARD

I told you, I'll be perfectly happy with a daughter.

The WHISTLE blows. Impulsively, Gallimard makes a move to kiss her deeply on the lips, but - mindful of the throng around them - she turns away, tears in her eyes.

SONG

I'm certain - it will be a son. I want to give you... the best that I can.

61 EXT. XIZHIMEN RAILROAD STATIONHOUSE - DAY

61

Gallimard leaves the stationhouse and walks to his gleaming Red Flag staff car, driver at attention. He pauses for a moment, takes in the car, the driver, the departing train, the quaint stationhouse hung with red "Thoughts of Mao" banners - the entire wonderful sweep of his life.

62 EXT. RESORT AT SUMMER PALACE ISLAND - DAY

62

Normally reserved only for high party officials. Song sits in a robe on a balcony overlooking beautiful Kunming Lake - legs crossed most un-demurely, savouring foreign cigarettes. As Comrade * Chin takes notes in her drab Mao suit, it's clear that Song's * become extremely important to the state, and knows it.

(CONTINUED)

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54.

62 CONT'D

62

SONG

I need a baby. A Chinese baby
with blonde hair.

CHIN

This is wonderful talk! You
really are mad. Trading babies -
the Ministry will never approve
such a...

*
*

SONG

Fine. You tell the Ministry we
can no longer provide them with
any more information on American
troop movements in Vietnam.

(stares at her,
taunting)

I've done my best. Tell them you
personally have decided the
Revolution is not worth any more
sacrifice. I'll wait here.

Chin is powerless to defend herself and heads for the pebbled
pathway.

CHIN

We will struggle with this in
committee.

Song regards her crude, masculine swagger.

SONG

Comrade? Why, in the Peking
Opera, are women's roles
traditionally played by men?

CHIN

I don't know. Most probably, a
remnant of the reactionary and
patriarchal social structure
which has caused so much...

*
*
*

SONG

No. It's because only a man
knows how a woman is supposed to
act.

Song stretches like a cat, lets her long legs slip out from
under her robe, as she looks Chin up and down.

Chin, humiliated but helpless, storms away down the pathway.

Basking in the sun, Song allows herself a smile - she, too, is
finally living her most wonderful life.

63 EXT. BEIJING PARK - NIGHT

63

Gallimard rides a bicycle through a park. A Chinese pick-up truck blasts past him with a colourful, glittering load piled high in its open bed, a dozen Red Guards precariously hanging off the truck as it swerves along the path. Curious, Gallimard steps up his pace to keep the truck in sight.

The truck skids to a halt under a huge ceremonial arch, underneath which about two hundred Red Guards - headbands, armbands, red banners - have already gathered, chanting Maoist slogans and holding up the little red book in their right hands. When the truck stops, the Red Guards swarm all over it and unload what we have only dimly glimpsed before - hundreds of Peking Opera costumes and props, all brightly-coloured, bourgeois and doomed.

Gallimard arrives on the scene just as a torch is lit to the pile of costumes under the arch. An excited roar goes up from the Red Guards as the costumes burst into flame and begin to shrivel. The Red Guards intensify their chanting with hypnotic, fundamentalist fervour.

Gallimard backs away warily into the shadows, his gaze betraying worry beyond words for his missing love.

64 EXT. QINGLE THEATRE. ARCADE - NIGHT

64

Gallimard parks his bicycle and enters the theatre.

65 INT. QINGLE THEATRE - NIGHT

65

The theatre is packed, red banners bearing the thoughts of Mao hang everywhere. Gallimard works his way through the crowd until he can see the stage.

A production of the revolutionary opera SHIA JIA BANG is nearing its stirring conclusion. Characters from the stock repertoire of the Revolution are in full swing on the stage - the brave Chinese peasant girl, the daring People's Liberation Army officer, the slimy, cartoon-like Japanese commanding officer.

Their costumes are dull and predictable, their music and singing a bizarre mixture of classic Peking Opera and revolutionary sloganeering.

Gallimard shakes his head in despair. All his connections with Song are being brutally severed.

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56.

66 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. TOULON'S OFFICE - DAY

66

At his conference table, Toulon reads a report to a group of department heads, among whom is an increasingly unhappy Gallimard.

TOULON

In short, gentlemen, the report stresses that...

(reads)

"...the Red Guard has emerged as a genuinely potent reactionary political force which will seize upon any excuse to justify the expulsion of all foreigners from China. It is therefore incumbent upon all Western diplomatic personnel to maintain the lowest possible profile..." Gachot - that means no more dim sum in Fuxingmen District...

Knowing laughter around the table. Gachot blushes. Toulon flashes Gallimard a raised eyebrow as if to say, "You too, Gallimard. You too."

67 EXT. GALLIMARD'S APARTMENT BLOCK. QIJIAYUAN DISTRICT - NIGHT

67

Gallimard wearily walks his bicycle to its parking spot outside his apartment block entrance. As he locks the bicycle and enters the building, he is eyed by two Red Guards who are sitting near the entranceway.

*
*

67A OMIT

67A *

68 INT. GALLIMARD'S APARTMENT BLOCK. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

68

Gallimard begins to mount the depressing, concrete-block stairs - the tiny elevator stands open, abandoned as usual, telephone on stool but no operator in sight.

Suddenly, he hears the gentle mewing of a newborn child.

SONG (O.C.)

Rene...

*

He turns the corner and sees Song, sitting on a step, cradling a tiny baby in swaddling clothes.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly!

*

SONG

I promised you a son. You see?

*

He sees the child - Asian features, light brown hair.

*

(CONTINUED)

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57.

68 CONT'D

68

GALLIMARD

Oh my god...

(takes child, kisses

Song)

He's so beautiful... I can't
believe you're here. You were
gone so long...

*
*
*

SONG

I know, I know...

GALLIMARD

(holds her)

My poor Butterfly, what you've
endured for me. I've thought
about this over and over while
you've been away. I swore to
God, if you would only just
return safely, I'd never let you
go again. I want you to marry
me. I want us to live
together... I want to take you
back to Paris...

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

SONG

Rene, Rene...

(kisses him tenderly)

I can't marry you.

*
*
*

He pulls back, aghast.

*

GALLIMARD

But why? I'll divorce my wife,
I can arrange for us to get away
from here...

*
*
*

O.C., a LAUGH and footsteps. The two Red Guards we saw outside
appear on the landing. They look about fifteen and are
strangely androgynous. They carry no weapons and are smiling.
Despite this, Song blanches with fear.

*
*

SONG

I'm so sorry... I had to beg them
to give me even a few moments.

*
*

GALLIMARD

(pained disbelief)

No, no...

*

(CONTINUED)

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58./59.

68 CONT'D (2)

68

The baby starts to cry. Their moment of bliss is over. Song gently takes the child away.

*
*

SONG

Promise me you will never forget
me, never forget...
(indicates baby)
...what our love has brought to
life.

*
*
*
*
*

Gallimard is too choked up to answer. Song rises to her feet and walks over to the Red Guards. Gallimard can't believe it.

*
*

GALLIMARD

(barely audible)

My son... my son!

*

SONG

Rene, whatever happens, please
believe me - the days I spent
with you... were the only days
I've ever truly existed.

*
*
*
*

Then she's gone, escorted by the Red Guards. Gallimard is devastated.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly! Butterfly!

He falls to his knees amidst the ruins of his life, weeping bitterly. For the first time, he realizes how lost he's always been.

69 OMIT

69 *

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60.

70 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. OUTSIDE GALLIMARD'S OFFICE - DAY

70

Gallimard walks towards his office, confusion mounting. The intelligence officers who have always resented him are sporting smug and cocky grins.

BERTRAND

Back to the ledger books...

*

71 INT. FRENCH EMBASSY. VICE-CONSUL GALLIMARD'S OFFICE - DAY

71

A broken Gallimard hunched over in one of his bamboo chairs.

TOULON

It's nothing personal.

GALLIMARD

I'm being sent home because I was wrong about the American war?

TOULON

Of course not. We don't care about the Americans, we care about your mind, the quality of your analysis. OK, you said China would open up to Western trade. The only thing they're likely to trade out there are Western heads. And yes, you said the Americans would succeed in Vietnam. You were kidding, right?

The dull stare in Rene's eyes shows he's slowly fading away.

72 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. GUOZIJIAN HUTONG - DUSK

72

Gallimard wanders like a tattered ghost to the familiar courtyard gates.

GALLIMARD

Butterfly, forgive me ...

Gallimard knocks as gingerly as possible. To his surprise, the door POPS OPEN - it is unlocked.

His shaking hands push open the creaking gate.

73 EXT. SONG'S HOUSE. COURTYARD - DUSK

73

GALLIMARD
Butterfly?

Gallimard is shocked by what he sees. Several rough small brick cubicles have been erected in the courtyard to turn the place into a communal dwelling for five large families.

Laundry flaps on haphazardly strung lines, cooking is happening on small fires everywhere, children brandishing caged birds run amok.

The courtyard has become a series of tiny hutongs - alleyways - crowding up against the exterior walls.

Gallimard finds his way to what was Song's living room and opens the door.

74 INT. SONG'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

74

The entire room has been stripped and altered as though Song had never existed. Where once sat tasteful Oriental splendour is now packed the living utensils of a extended Asian family.

Sitting around a steaming pot is that family - three generations - who stare back at Gallimard, equally perplexed.

75 EXT. FROZEN PLAIN. CHAMDO PROVINCE. EASTERN TIBET - DAY

75

White sleet spews across a rocky plain. PAN across the endless wasteland until we discover a barbed-wire ringed RE-EDUCATION CAMP - nothing more than a few poorly-built shacks on a couple of acres.

76 EXT. CHAMDO RE-EDUCATION CAMP #5 - DAY

76

The Chinese gulag - a few dozen Mao-suited PRISONERS huddle together, attempting to hoe this rocky frozen soil. In sub-zero temperatures, they wear at best ratty cloth coats. CLOSE on one of the labourers, head down. As a GUNSHOT rings out from an unidentifiable source, Song looks up. She is hardened from strain and attired in the most asexual Mao suit. Her eyes are far away, as if her imagination and memories alone keep her sane.

Looking up at the cold sun, she imagines places far away.

DISSOLVE TO:

77 EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT. PARIS - NIGHT

77

A breathtaking establishing shot of Paris, night, 1968.

78 INT. PARIS BRASSERIE - NIGHT

78

Gallimard sits at the bar, having buttonholed a DRUNK in search of a free cocktail.

GALLIMARD

In China, I was different from
all other men.

DRUNK

Well, sure. You were white.

GALLIMARD

I felt touched. Did I tell you?
She was the most beautiful... do
you know how difficult it is...

DRUNK

One more round, please.

GALLIMARD

...how difficult it is to find a
woman who really, passionately...
listens?

O.C., a powerful EXPLOSION in the distance rattles glasses.
Then the sound of chanting, marching, sirens, screams, panic.

Curious patrons RUSH for the door, Gallimard's Drunk among
them.

DRUNK

Goddamn it! Must be those
fucking students again!

79 EXT. RUE DE VAUGIRARD - NIGHT

79

Gallimard and the Drunk push through a mesmerized crowd. Far
down the street, a wild crowd gathers around an overturned car
in flames. Backlit by the fire, STUDENTS approach the
brasserie carrying placards, fists raised.

From the other direction, a battalion of RIOT POLICE, plastic
shields and rifles, march to meet the protesters. Behind the
police are large fire trucks with their water hoses uncoiled
and ready.

Some of the crowd, realizing they're caught in the middle,
scatter wildly. But Gallimard remains frozen to the spot.

(CONTINUED)

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63.

79 CONT'D

79

As students draw nearer, he makes out - placards of Mao, posters of the Little Red Book, maps of China and Vietnam, even bi-lingual banners in French and Chinese. They look like the Chinese Red Guards, but they have white faces.

On Gallimard's face: this does not compute. Meanwhile, the students advance - the riot police advance -

On a firehose as it GUSHES with the force of a tidal wave across the blue night.

80 INT. GALLIMARD'S PARIS FLAT - NIGHT

80

Jeanne is dripping water onto a hardwood floor.

JEANNE

I tried to shout - to tell them
I was the wife of a diplomat -
but you know how it is...

Gallimard has pulled all of Jeanne's furniture to the walls, and sits on a bare floor with zen detachment.

JEANNE

A few short years we're gone, and
the whole country goes to hell.
(she pours herself a
stiff one)

Father dead... our old friends
eat in restaurants we can no
longer afford. Is this even a
life?!

Though he tries not to listen, her words cause him great pain.

JEANNE

We were great once, weren't we?
You - so busy, so important -
working so late I could've
strangled you. And me, the
perfect hostess behind the cold,
powerful man...

(she kneels beside him)
Why can't we do it again? Why
must you stay here, with the
incense burning? You know
something, I hate incense! It
smells so sickly sweet!

GALLIMARD

Well, I hate the French. Who
just smell - period.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONT'D

80

JEANNE

And the Chinese were better?
They blew their noses in the
streets! Don't you remember?

GALLIMARD

Jeanne, please...

JEANNE

It wasn't the Chinese who made
you great! It was us!

GALLIMARD

You don't understand...

JEANNE

I understand plenty! I
understand that you were once the
perfect husband...!

GALLIMARD

Oh, god...

JEANNE

And you've let it slip away.
You've...

GALLIMARD

Jeanne, I've had a mistress! For
four years!

Silence.

JEANNE

You're determined to destroy us,
aren't you?

GALLIMARD

Did you hear me?

She springs to her feet, paces as if to regain control.

JEANNE

Of course I heard you! Don't
patronize me on top of everything
else. I will not be spoken to
like some kind of madwoman,
especially by someone whose own
sanity is hanging by a thread.

(pause)

I try to speak to you of your own
good, and you're determined to
hurt me.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

80 CONT'D (2)

80

JEANNE (Cont'd)
You don't want to see the truth.
You wipe out all the goodness of
those China years, dredging up
the ancient details of some
pathetic dalliance...

GALLIMARD
I still love her!

Jeanne FLINGS her glass against the wall, shattering it.

JEANNE
We're not talking about her!
We're talking about us!

GALLIMARD
Jeanne, I want a divorce.

Jeanne's pacing grows more frantic.

JEANNE
How do I know this story of yours
is even true?

GALLIMARD
She was responsible for
everything... everything that
happened to me.

JEANNE
I was there! I knew!

GALLIMARD
I want to marry her.

JEANNE
She's here?!

GALLIMARD
No... she's in China.

Gallimard rises unsteadily to his feet, towards the door.

JEANNE
You want to leave me? For
someone who's not here? You're
obviously mad! Some Chinese
prostitute is your great love?
I was there! You can believe
anything, if you want to, need to
badly enough!

Gallimard stands in the doorway for an unsteady moment.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONT'D (3)

80

GALLIMARD
Why can't anyone understand?
That in China I once loved, and
was loved by... the Perfect
Woman.

HOLD on Jeanne, as the study door SLAMS shut behind him.

JEANNE
(to herself)
In China... I was happy. Going
on your arm to the embassy ball.
Visiting your office and the
guards saying, "Good morning,
good morning, Madame Gallimard."
The pretense... was very good
indeed.

Her eyes are cold. We hear Puccini...

81 EXT. PARIS OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

81

Gallimard, dazed and unshaven, stands before the golden shrine
where a crowd is arriving for a night of diversion.

82 INT. PARIS OPERA LOBBY - NIGHT

82

He makes his way through the dolled-up women and stuffy men
talking about nothing. It makes him incredibly sad, angry if
he had more strength: they are interlopers at his altar.

83 INT. PARIS OPERA. THE GODS - NIGHT

83

He sits transfixed in the gods, "Un Bel Di" swells.
Onstage, Cio-Cio-San floats across an elaborate set.

On Gallimard's eyes: the lyrics take on new meaning for him.

GALLIMARD (V.O.)
"One fine day I'll see/ "A puff
of smoke rising"

84 INT. PARIS OPERA STAGE - NIGHT

84

In Gallimard's fantasy, Song is onstage in her Peking Opera
outfit from Drunken Beauty, playing the role of Cio-Cio-San,
singing with passion and special intimacy...

(CONTINUED)

84 CONT'D

84

GALLIMARD (V.O.)
"On the horizon, in the distance,
from the sea/ The ship will
appear, the perfect white ship
will sail into the harbour/
Thundering out its arrival. You
see? She's returned!/ I won't go
down to meet her..."

85 INT. GALLIMARD'S PARIS FLAT - NIGHT

85

Since the divorce, he's decorated the flat sparsely, but in a completely Asian style. He reclines across his futon, holding a bottle of cheap sake and drunkenly calling out the words of the performance.

GALLIMARD
"No, not I! I shall sit at the
top of the hill - and wait!/ I
don't mind waiting - no matter
how long it may take!"

Now Gallimard dances drunkenly about the room.

GALLIMARD
"No matter how long! So all you
doubters, keep your fears to
yourself!"

O.C., we hear footsteps on the balcony just outside the window.

GALLIMARD
"I will wait for her with
unshakable faith!"

At the door, a timid knocking. Gallimard looks to the door, afraid he's crossed the line between fantasy and reality. He turns down the volume on his phonograph.

Another knock, stronger. He moves slowly towards the door which looms before him like some test of his faith. He touches the doorknob, and dares -

GALLIMARD
Butterfly ...?

86 EXT. GALLIMARD'S PARIS FLAT. BALCONY - NIGHT

86

He opens the door. There is no one there. Gallimard is perplexed. Then...

(CONTINUED)

86 CONT'D

86

Rene? SONG (O.C.)

Out of the shadows emerges the real Song, exhausted from her journey and from the years, carrying one small suitcase and a shoulder bag, older, yes, but somehow even more beautiful.

SONG
Forgive me. After all these years... I have no right even to hope... that you might...

His hand touches her cheek. She looks up. Their eyes meet and all doubt passes away.

SONG
...remember?

GALLIMARD
I never doubted you would return.

SONG
But... where's your wife?

GALLIMARD
She's in my arms. She's in my arms at last.

No music, just the street outside as Gallimard sweeps her into his arms and they share a long, hungry kiss.

87 EXT. PARIS. 1972. VARIOUS STREETS - DAY

87

We track a motor scooter courier zipping through the streets of Paris.

88 EXT. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PARIS - DAY

88

We TRACK the same motor scooter zipping up to the front gate.

A man gets off and removes his goggles - it's Gallimard, courier's pouch dangling from his shoulder. He sprints jauntily up the steps.

89 INT. MFA. RECEPTIONIST'S DESK. INTELLIGENCE DIVISION - DAY

89

Through a glass divider, we see Gallimard in front of a receptionist's desk. A door opens and a power-suited DIPLOMAT hands him an envelope.

CLOSE on Gallimard's hands, as he takes the sealed pouch.

(CONTINUED)

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69.

89 CONT'D

89

PULL BACK to reveal three balding men observing this transaction, one of whom is DST Agent ETANCELIN, 50's and seen it all.

90 EXT. GALLIMARD'S PARIS FLAT. STREET/COURTYARD - DAY

90

Gallimard enters his courtyard, gets off his scooter, parks it, and - diplomatic pouch under his arm - sprints up the stairs to his flat.

Several men emerge from the shadows. They are watching Gallimard intently. One of them, ETANCELIN, glances at his watch.

91 EXT. GALLIMARD'S PARIS FLAT. COURTYARD - DAY

91

Five minutes later, Gallimard scampers down the steps of his building, pouch once again under his arm.

As he approaches his scooter, the three DST agents close in. Etancelin opens his coat and produces a badge.

Gallimard freezes in his tracks, but he knows it's too late.

ETANCELIN

M. Gallimard, I am Henri
Etancelin of Domestic
Intelligence. Will you please
come with us?

92 EXT. DST HEADQUARTERS - DAY

92

A barrage of exploding flashbulbs. DST agents and Etancelin desperately attempt to squeeze Gallimard through a pack of voracious journalists.

ETANCELIN

Who's responsible? Fucking press
leaks!

Gallimard is drowning in flashbulbs, but makes out some voices.

REPORTERS

"When did you learn...?" "Are you
a homosexual?" "...was a man?"
"...really expect us to believe?"
"...was a man?" "...a man?"

Gallimard winces in pain - his brain is turning inside his skull.

(CONTINUED)

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70.

92 CONT'D

92

On Gallimard's back, as he makes it to the door, and some wiseacre jumps into the frame.

WISE GUY
Hey, Gallimard - "Vive la
difference!"

92A INT. DST CORRIDOR - NIGHT

* 92A

GUARDS lead Gallimard along a corridor towards a steel-
reinforced doorway.

*
*

93 INT. DST INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

93

A harsh white light dangles from the ceiling.

ETANCELIN
Let's go over this again - for
the past four years, you've made
photographs of classified
documents, which photographs
your... companion, M. Song, then
delivered to the Chinese embassy.
(pause)
It will go much easier on you if
you confess now. We might even
be able to reduce your sentence
in exchange for your testimony
against M. Song.

Gallimard is eerily calm; he has sealed an important part of
himself off from the world.

GALLIMARD
Testify... against her? Please,
have you people no conception of
honour? I used to run an
intelligence department myself,
you know, and I never stooped to
manufacturing absurd lies solely
designed to come between a man
and the mother of his son.

Etancelin wipes his face with his hand - this goes beyond even
his experience.

ETANCELIN
M. Gallimard - this notion of
your having a son. It's an
impossibility. You have no son.

GALLIMARD
He was born out of wedlock!

(CONTINUED)

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71. - 73. *

93 CONT'D

93

ETANCELIN

Far out of wedlock.

(beat)

Sorry. M. Song is not the mother - nor the father - of anything or anybody. In fact, M. Song is not even a woman, do you understand that?

Gallimard just bursts into laughter .

GALLIMARD

That is the most ridiculous strategy I've ever heard! My god, the quality of espionage really has faltered in the years I've been away. Do you realize I've been her lover for almost eight years now?

ETANCELIN

Yes... we know...

GALLIMARD

And now, you try to tell me she's...? While you're at it, well... I suppose we're all women in this room, is that your game?

Etancelin, frustrated, slams his fist on the table.

ETANCELIN

Did you or did you not know that you were spying against France?!

Gallimard fiddles with his fingers, as if smoking an imaginary cigarette. He looks off onto some far-off horizon in his mind.

GALLIMARD

She's the mother of my son... who's still in China. We did what we had to, to protect our son.

Etancelin regards the prisoner with a mixture of anger and pity.

94
thru
99

OMITTED

* 94
* thru
* 99

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74.

100 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

100

The docket -- Song is brought in from one side of the frame, Gallimard from the other. Gallimard takes only the slightest of sidelong glances towards his manly co-defendant, while Song looks straight ahead, revealing nothing.

101 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

101

Song sits in the witness box, looking rather pleased with himself, as the Prosecuting Attorney, M. RICARD, interrogates him.

SONG

That was 1970, when I arrived in Paris. For the next two years, yes, I lived a very comfy life.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

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75.

101 CONT'D

101

SONG (Cont'd)

I did some demonstrations around the country as part of my "cultural exchange" cover.

RICARD

And the spying?

SONG

Not much at first. Rene had lost all his high-level contacts. Chinese intelligence wasn't too happy with parking ticket statistics.

Laughter in the courtroom.

SONG

Finally, at my urging, Rene got a job as a courier carrying sensitive government documents.

*
*

RICARD

Did he understand what you planned to do with these documents?

SONG

I told him that the Chinese were holding our son and expected a few favours before we would be allowed to see him. He cried and said nothing, and then one day, he returned with his first diplomatic pouch. In his own small way, Rene was the perfect father.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Their eyes meet. The Chinese spy looks on the Frenchman coolly, while Gallimard appears in his dazed way to be searching for some answer.

Ricard steps down.

RICARD

Your witness.

The Defense Attorney, M. JAVRON, tough and wiry, rises from his seat beside Gallimard.

JAVRON

The prosecution claims M. Gallimard was fully aware of the implications of his espionage activities. Is this your opinion, M. Song?

(CONTINUED)

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76.

101 CONT'D (2)

101

SONG

I have no opinions.

JAVRON

Let's approach the matter from a different angle. Was M. Gallimard aware of other aspects of your relationship? Say, the fact that... you are a man?

Song shifts in his chair; this, he finds interesting.

SONG

Well, he never saw me completely naked. Ever.

JAVRON

But surely, he must've - how shall I put this -?

SONG

Put it however you like. I'm not shy. In all our years together, Rene never explored my body, never penetrated me, although I made him think he did.

JAVRON

M. Song, please...! In all your years together, he never even...?

SONG

For Rene, sex was an abstract ideal, a disembodied concept - something close to divine love, possibly. So naturally, he was very responsive to my "ancient Oriental ways of love," all of which I invented myself - just for him.

JUDGE

You haven't really answered the question: did he know you were a man?

SONG

You know, your honour... I never asked.

Humiliating laughter washes across the courtroom. But Gallimard is still searching, trying to make sense of it all, to regain some contact with his life's lost love.

102 EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

102

Lining the route with their floodlights, reporters watch Song and Gallimard as they're led to a waiting paddywagon.

Before they're tossed in, the MARSHALS pause to remove their handcuffs.

MARSHALL

Let's not have any fooling around
in there, all right?

Smiling at his own joke, he closes and bolts the doors. The paddywagon moves out under the glare of cameras.

103 INT. PADDYWAGON - NIGHT

103

They sit beside one another, bouncing along the road. Song looks straight ahead, as he did in the docket; Gallimard looks at him with the same pleading eyes, until finally -

SONG

What do you want from me?

Gallimard is stunned by a response after all this time. He doesn't know where to begin.

GALLIMARD

I - I... Are you my Butterfly?

All Song can do is laugh. He looks at his partner with a glimpse of nostalgic affection.

SONG

It doesn't matter how rotten I
treat you - you still adore me,
don't you?

He reaches out to touch Gallimard's cheek, who turns away, repulsed. Song rises to the challenge.

SONG

Oh, oh, oh... don't be like that.
Not when you've finally come back
to this place.

GALLIMARD

What place?

Song rises to his feet, years of acrobatic training allowing him to balance, even in this van.

SONG

This theatre in China, where we
met so many years ago.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONT'D

103

Song executes a simple opera move. Gallimard is horrified; Song sees the memories and music flooding into Gallimard's heart.

SONG

Yes, that's it. The place where
you gave me your heart.

GALLIMARD

(fighting)

That was... a long time ago.

SONG

Be honest with me. What's
another bit of flattery when
you've already given me eight
years worth?

(he dances)

C'mon - admit it. You still want
me. Even in slacks and a very
tasteful tie.

GALLIMARD

I don't see what the point is -

SONG

You don't? Well, maybe, just
maybe, Rene - I want you.

104 EXT. PARIS STREETS - NIGHT

104

The paddywagon speeds through the Paris night.

105 INT. PADDYWAGON - NIGHT

105

Song kneels on the floor at Gallimard's feet, head bent
submissively. Gallimard doesn't move.

GALLIMARD

You do?

SONG

Then again, maybe I'm just
playing with you - how can you
tell?

(turns into a woman)

"How I wish there were even a
tiny cafe to sit in, with
espressos, and men in tuxedos,
and bad expatriate jazz." Now,
you want to kiss me -

(CONTINUED)

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79.

105 CONT'D

105

Gallimard's POV: The masculine face of Song twisted into the grotesque grimace of a taunting bully.

SONG
- don't you?

*

Gallimard cowers in the corner as the van LURCHES into a sharp turn. He holds his hands before him, as if to ward off anything Song may toss in his direction.

GALLIMARD
(revulsed)
You're nothing - nothing like my
Butterfly! You could never ever
be!

Song feigns hurt. He reclines on the bench opposite Gallimard, his natural grace allowing him to be oblivious of the movement of the vehicle.

SONG
Are you so sure? Come here - my
little one.

GALLIMARD
I'm not your little one!

SONG
My mistake. It is I who am your
little one, correct?

He starts to remove his clothes.

GALLIMARD
What - what are you doing?

SONG
Helping you to see through my
act.

GALLIMARD
Stop that! I don't want to! I
don't....!

*

His words are cut short by Song, who's removed his coat, suspenders, tie, and footwear.

106 EXT. PARIS STREETS - NIGHT

106

The paddywagon speeds through the Paris night.

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80/81.

107 INT. PADDYWAGON - NIGHT

107

GALLIMARD
I order you to stop!

SONG
To what? To strip? That's just
what I'm...

Gallimard lunges towards Song, who easily sidesteps him,
leaving the Frenchman sprawled out on the floor.

GALLIMARD
No! Stop! I want you...

SONG
(avoiding him)
You want me?

GALLIMARD
To stop!

Song towers above the crawling Gallimard - now down to his
briefs.

The van LURCHES violently, Gallimard is slapped against the
side - as Song drops his shorts.

On the naked backside of Song. Behind him, a crouched-over
Gallimard lowers the hands from his open eyes. Small, sobbing
sounds erupt from his throat. The van is momentarily at rest.
Slowly, we and Song realize that what we took to be sobbing is
actually laughter.

GALLIMARD
Oh, god! What an idiot! Of
course! Look at you! You're a
man!

Gallimard roars laughter. Song, for the first time, feels
naked. The van lurches forward, and the acrobat stumbles.

SONG
I fail to see what's so funny!

GALLIMARD
"You fail to see..." I mean, you
never did have much of a sense of
humor, did you? Well, I think
it's ridiculously funny that I've
wasted so much time on just a
man!

SONG
I'm not just a man.

(CONTINUED)

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82.

107 CONT'D

107

With one hand, Song covers Gallimard's eyes; with the other, he draws Rene's hand like a blind man, over his face. Gallimard is tempted to melt back into his old self.

GALLIMARD

This skin I remember. The curve of her face, the softness of her cheek...

SONG

I'm your Butterfly. Under the robes, beneath everything, it was always me. Now, open your eyes and admit it - you adore me.

He removes his hands from Gallimard's eyes. Suddenly, Rene GRABS Song's hand, twists the arm angrily. Song cries out.

GALLIMARD

You, who knew every contour of my desires - how could you, of all people, have made such a mistake?

SONG

What?

(CONTINUED)

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83.

107 CONT'D (2)

107

GALLIMARD

You've just shown me your true
self - when all I loved was the
lie. A perfect lie, which you
let slip to the ground - and now,
it's old and soiled.

*

Gallimard tosses Song's arm away with contempt.

SONG

(genuinely hurt)
You never really loved me?

GALLIMARD

I'm a man who loved a woman
created by a man. And anything
else - simply falls short.

Song is crouched on the cold metal floor of the van, naked and
pathetic. For the first time, it is Gallimard who regards the
Chinese man with contempt.

108 EXT. FRENCH PRISON - DAY

108

Establishing shot of a French prison, which is a strange
cylindrical shape and is isolated in the countryside.

109 INT. PRISON - DAY

109

A man in prison garb - the MAIL TRUSTEE - pushes a rusty cart
with a canvas bag along the curved prison corridor. Cell doors
line the inside wall, barred windows line the outside wall.

Unshaven ruffians peer through their bars with toothless
delight. They are waiting for their mail.

One of the inmates receives his mail and surreptitiously passes
an ITEM to the MAIL TRUSTEE, who is an inmate entrusted with
delivering mail cell to cell from the mail cart.

We FOLLOW the item. We now see it's a chunk of white
foundation, which is dropped into a corner of the mail bag.

110 INT. PRISON. KITCHEN - DAY

110

In the kitchen, a TRANSVESTITE INMATE hands a mascara brush to
the MAIL TRUSTEE.

111 INT. PRISON. SHOE FACTORY - DAY

111

In the prison shoe factory a tube of eyeliner is being passed along to the MAIL TRUSTEE.

112 INT. PRISON. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

112

CLOSE on another item being unearthed from its hiding place behind a dryer in the laundry room - a tattered black wig, sixties page-boy style - just in time to be handed over to the MAIL TRUSTEE.

113 EXT. GALLIMARD'S CELL - NIGHT

113

Now we follow the MAIL TRUSTEE along another curved corridor lined with cells. He stops at GALLIMARD'S CELL and delivers to him, out of his mail cart, not only a letter or two, but an old manila envelope containing all the theatrical items he has been collecting since we first saw him.

Gallimard steps up to the bars, hair cropped close, prison greys. He reaches for the envelope with a delighted gleam in his eyes, and wordlessly hands the Mail Trustee a small carton of Gitanes cigarettes in return.

MAIL TRUSTEE

Big performance for you tonight
at the Easter concert, eh,
Gallimard?

GALLIMARD

The biggest of my entire career.

The mail trustee snorts with amusement and carries on down the corridor.

114 EXT. PARIS AIRPORT - NIGHT

114

Song, clad in his fine Italian suit, is handed over on the tarmac by French security to a group of Chinese who stand patiently beside a waiting CAAC Airliner.

115 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

115

A simple platform stage has been erected in a central area of the prison. Overlooking the stage is a balcony lined with barred cells, and in front of it have been set up two hundred or so folding chairs.

Decorations suggest that this is an Easter-time concert put on by prisoners for each other.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONT'D

115

It is obviously a popular entertainment because every chair and every standing-room space is occupied.

When a spotlight illuminates Gallimard centre-stage, there is a peculiar and special sense of anticipation rippling through the audience. The few guards who are visible seem oblivious to this ripple.

On the stage with Gallimard is a straw mat, and on the mat the foundation and mascara, eyeliner, wig and lipstick are organized like relics of some sacrament. There is also a portable tape recorder.

GALLIMARD

You know me, yes? Why? Because
I'm a celebrity. I make people
laugh!

ON the rough faces - heckling like the peanut gallery at a music hall.

GALLIMARD

But, really, if they understood,
they wouldn't laugh at all.
Quite the contrary. No, even men
like you, you should be
scratching at my door, begging to
learn my secrets. For I, Rene
Gallimard, I have known, and been
loved by, quite simply, the
Perfect Woman.

(cries of derision)

Now, to you, I will prove my love
was not in vain - by returning to
the world of fantasy where I
first met her.

He presses the play button on the portable tape recorder. "Un Bel Di" drifts through the prison.

PRISONERS cease their ruckus for an instant, soothed by the music.

Gallimard assembles the make-up items, kneeling before them. He reaches into the shadows and produces a kimono, hand-stitched in his spare moments out of scrap prison cloth, a pathetic replica.

(CONTINUED)

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86.

115 CONT'D (2)

115

GALLIMARD

There is a vision of the Orient
that I have - of slender women in
cheong sams and kimonos who die
for the love of unworthy foreign
devils. Who are born and raised
to be perfect women. Who take
whatever punishment we give them,
and bounce back, strengthened by
love, unconditionally.

Gallimard kneels beside his make-up with the steely
determination of a samurai warrior.

GALLIMARD

It is a vision that has become my
life.

He picks up the make-up sponge, SLASHES white foundation across
his face. The prisoners cheer - the show has finally begun.

116 INT. CAAC AIRLINER - NIGHT

116

Song is accompanied down the aisle of the airliner and shown to
a window seat by his Chinese escorts, who sit next to him.

117 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

117

CUTS of Gallimard's face as he makes up, recalling the other
transformations we've seen: fine line of the eyebrow pencil,
shiny red lip gloss, red painted nails.

GALLIMARD

In public, I have continued to
deny that Song Liling is a man.
But alone, in my cell, I have
long since faced the truth.

The prisoner's heckling begins to fade. The strangeness of his
ritual begins to affect even them.

GALLIMARD

And the truth demands a
sacrifice. For mistakes made
over the course of a lifetime.
My mistakes are simple and
absolute. The man I loved was a
cad, a bounder. He deserved
nothing more than a kick in the
behind, and instead I gave him...
all my love. Yes! Love! Why
not admit it all?

(CONTINUED)

117 CONT'D

117

The folds of his kimono, as the imitation brocade is unfurled, lifted, tied, fastened.

GALLIMARD

That was my undoing, wasn't it?
Love warped my judgment, blinded
my eyes, rearranged the very
lines on my face - until I could
look in the mirror -

CLOSE on the kimono-sleeved HANDS as they bring the matted wig down onto a slightly-balding head.

GALLIMARD (O.C.)

- and see nothing but - a woman.

Gallimard rises slowly, head bowed so we still can't quite make out his features, spreads his wings in butterfly form.

GALLIMARD

I have a vision of the Orient.
That deep within her almond eyes
there are still women, women
willing to sacrifice themselves
for the love of a man. Even a
man whose love is completely
without worth. "Death with
honour/ Is better than life/ Life
with dishonour."

118 INT. PRISON. UPPER GALLERY - NIGHT

118

Another item is passed from inmate to inmate - it GLEAMS as it catches the light.

GALLIMARD

The love of a Butterfly can
withstand many things.
Unfaithfulness, loss, even
abandonment.

119 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

119

The gleaming object is passed by inmates into Gallimard's hand. Gallimard kneels on the stage, in a seppuku-position. From behind, we see him place the object against the base of his throat.

GALLIMARD

But how can it face the one sin
that implies all others?
(more)

(CONTINUED)

119 CONT'D

119

GALLIMARD (Cont'd)
The devastating knowledge that,
underneath it all, the object of
her love was nothing less, and
nothing more than... a man. So,
I have found her at last... in
a prison far from Beijing.

120 INT. PRISON. VARIOUS - NIGHT

120

Prisoners respectfully bite their lips, bow their heads. The Transvestite crosses herself.

121 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

121

GALLIMARD
My name is Rene Gallimard! Also
known as - Madame Butterfly.

She thrusts the dagger through the base of her throat. Puccini EXPLODES around her, the cheers of an invisible audience.

A jagged piece of glass cuts through Gallimard's throat with a terrible ripping sound. Blood splatters the mirror, the stage, the nearest inmates..

122 INT. PRISON. VARIOUS - NIGHT

122

The prisoners slowly break through their momentary reverence with new bursts of raucousness.

123 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

123

On stage, from above, we see that Gallimard has fallen face-first into his own blood. His body writhes in the final stages of death.

O.C., the loud CLANGING of doors opened, floodlights snapped on, GUARDS shuffling.

VOICES (O.C.)
What's the problem? What the
hell is...?!

124 INT. CAAC AIRLINER - NIGHT

124

Engines grow LOUDER as the plane LIFTS OFF. Song is looking around at the mostly-Chinese faces and voices around him.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONT'D

124

After all these years, they seem unfamiliar; he feels like a foreigner among his own people.

HOLD on Song's face, as the last vestige of his confidence gives way to a horrible despair.

SONG

Oh, my god...

125 INT. PRISON. STAGE - NIGHT

125

His body is rolled onto its back by PRISON OFFICIALS. This is the first time we've really seen his Butterfly face clearly, and it is the antithesis of glamour. His make-up is poorly applied and runny, his wig ridiculous, his kimono filthy with dirt and fresh blood. His clown-like face is frozen in a deathly grimace.

GUARD (O.C.)

Oh my god ...

126 INT. CAAC AIRLINER - NIGHT

126

A single tear runs down Song's cheek. He gazes out the window at Paris, receding rapidly beyond the cover of clouds.

SONG

Butterfly? Butterfly?

An echo of the opera in the far-away distance.

THE END