

HANA: Yes, I can imagine. Things were like that . . . in those days singing was not considered proper for nice . . . I mean, only for women in the profess . . .

MURATA: We better get home, Mama.

HANA: Yes, yes. What a shame you couldn't continue with it.

EMIKO: In the city I did do some classics: the dance, and the koto, and the flower, and of course, the tea. (She makes the gestures for the disciplines.) All those. Even some singing. Classics, of course.

HANA: (politely) Of course.

EMIKO: All of it is so disciplined . . . so disciplined. I was almost a *natori*.

HANA: How nice!

EMIKO: But everything changed.

HANA: Oh!

EMIKO: I was sent here to America. (She glares at OKA.)

HANA: Oh, too bad. I mean, too bad about your *natori*.

MURATA: (loudly to OKA) So did you see Nagata-san today?

OKA: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MURATA: What did he say? Is he interested?

OKA: Yeah. Yeah. He's interested.

MURATA: He likes the horse, eh?

OKA: Ah . . . yeah.

MURATA: I knew he'd like him. I'd buy him myself if I had the money.

OKA: Well, I have to take him over tomorrow. He'll decide then.

MURATA: He'll buy. He'll buy. You'd better go straight over to the ticket agent and get that ticket. Before you (ha-ha) spend the money.

OKA: (ha-ha) Yeah.

HANA: It'll be so nice when Kiyoko-san comes to join you. I know you're looking forward to it.

EMIKO: (confused) Oh . . . oh . . .

HANA: Masako is so happy. It'll be good for her too.

EMIKO: I had more freedom in the city. I lived with an aunt and she let me . . . she wasn't so strict.

(MURATA and MASAKO have their gear together and are ready to leave.)

MURATA: Good luck on the horse tomorrow.

OKA: Yeah.

HANA: (bowing) Many, many thanks.

OKA: Thanks for the sake.

HANA: (bowing again) Good night, Emiko-san. We'll see you again soon. We'll bring the records too.

EMIKO: (softly) Those songs. Those very songs.

MURATA: Let's go, Mama.

(The MURATAS pull away. Light follows them and grows dark on the OKAS. The MURATAS begin walking home.)

HANA: That was uncomfortable.

MASAKO: What's the matter with . . .

HANA: Shhh!

MURATA: I guess Oka has his problems.

MASAKO: Is she really *kitchigai*?

HANA: Of course not. She's not crazy. Don't say that word.

MASAKO: I heard Mr. Oka call her that.

HANA: He called her that?

MASAKO: I . . . I think so.

HANA: You heard wrong, Masako. Emiko-san isn't crazy. She just likes her drinks. She had too much to drink tonight.

MASAKO: Oh.

HANA: She can't adjust to this life. She can't get over the good times she had in Japan. Well, it's not easy. But one has to know when to bend . . . like the bamboo. When the winds blow, bamboo bends. You bend or crack. Remember that, Masako.

MURATA: (wryly) Bend, eh? Remember that, Mama.

HANA: (softly) You don't know. It isn't ever easy.

MASAKO: Do you want to go back to Japan, Mama?

HANA: Everyone does.

MASAKO: Do you, Papa?

MURATA: I'll have to make some money first.

MASAKO: I don't. Not me. Not Kiyoko.

HANA: After Kiyoko-san comes, Emiko will have company and things will straighten out. She has nothing to live on but memories. She doesn't have any friends. At least I have my friends at church. At least I have that. She must get awful lonely. . . .

MASAKO: I know that. She tried to make friends with me.

HANA: She did? What did she say?

MASAKO: Well, sort of . . .

HANA: What did she say?

MASAKO: She didn't say anything. I just felt it. Maybe you should be her friend, Mama.

MURATA: Poor woman. We could have stayed longer.

HANA: But you wanted to leave. I tried to be friendly. You saw that. It's not easy to talk to Emiko. She either closes up, you can't pry a word from her, or else she goes on and on. All that . . . that . . . about the koto and tea and the flower . . . I mean, what am I supposed to say? She's so unpredictable. And the drinking . . .

MURATA: All right, all right, Mama.

MASAKO: Did you see her black eye?

HANA: (calming down) She probably hurt herself. She wasn't very steady.

MASAKO: Oh, no. Mr. Oka hit her.

HANA: I don't think so.

MASAKO: He hit her. I saw him.

HANA: You saw? Papa, do you hear that? She saw them. That does it. We're not going there again.

MURATA: Aw . . . Oka wouldn't do that. Not in front of a kid.

MASAKO: Well, they didn't do it in front of me. They were in the house.

MURATA: You see?

HANA: That's all right. You just have to fix the bathhouse. Either that or we're going to

bathe at home . . . in a bucket, if we have to. We're not going . . . we'll bathe at home.

(MURATA mutters to himself.)

HANA: What?

MURATA: I said all right, it's the bucket then. I'll get to it when I can.

(HANA passes MURATA and walks ahead.)

Scene 3

The same evening. The exterior of the Oka house. The MURATAS have just left. EMIKO sits on the bench, her back to OKA. OKA, still standing, looks at her contemptuously as she pours herself a drink.

OKA: Nothing more disgusting than a drunk woman.

(EMIKO ignores him.)

OKA: (continuing) You made a fool of yourself. You made a fool of *me*!

EMIKO: One can only make a fool of one's self.

OKA: You learn that in the fancy schools, eh?

(EMIKO examines the pattern of her cup.)

OKA: (continuing) Eh? Ehhh? (pause) Answer me! (EMIKO ignores him.)

OKA: (continuing) I'm talking to you. Answer me! (threatening) You don't get away with that. You think you're so fine. . . .

(EMIKO looks off at the horizon. OKA roughly turns her around.)

OKA: (continuing) When I talk, you listen! (EMIKO turns away again. OKA pulls the cup from her hand.)

OKA: (continuing) Goddammit! What'd you think my friends think of you? What kind of ass they think I am?

(He grabs her shoulders.)

EMIKO: Don't touch me. Don't touch (me) . . .

OKA: Who the hell you think you are? "Don't touch me, don't touch me." Who the hell! High and mighty, eh? Too good for me, eh? Don't put on the act for me. I know who you are.