



RAN

Screenplay by
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Based on "King Lear" by William Shakespeare

Translated by
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FADE IN

1 EXTERIOR - GRASSLAND - GRAND HUNT - DAY

Across the field echoes the tumult - a mixture of the sounds of the gongs, drums, and conch horns of the beaters and the barking of dogs.

A mass of mounted Samurai, dressed for hunting, are galloping through the tall summer grass, which waves wildly as they storm by. They are wearing rush hats, deerskin hunting wear, and leather arm protectors, and are carrying quivers on their backs.

The Samurai in the lead, old but tough, draws his bow, aiming at the prey. His long white hair and beard billow in the wind; his hawkish eyes shine in his tanned face - the magnificent vision of a great warrior who has survived hundreds of battles. This is the Great Lord, Hidetora Ichimonji.

2 EXTERIOR - PLATEAU - DAY

A three-forked road - two forks split to right and left toward the mountains on the edge of the plateau, the other to the great expanse of the plain below. By the three roads are three camps, each with a different family crest indicating the owner on the bunting. Stationed by the respective camps are retainers and beaters. The horses graze, their bodies gleaming with sweat.

3 EXTERIOR - ICHIMONJI CAMP - DAY

The family crest of Ichimonji, a figure meaning "one," is on the bunting.

4 EXTERIOR - INCHIMONJI CAMP - DAY

A circle of lords and retainers seated comfortably around saké and food, enjoying the feast. In the center, Hidetora Ichimonji. On his left, accompanied by their respective retainers, are the lords Fujimaki and Ayabe. On his right are Taro Takatora, who is Hidetora's first son and heir; Jiro Masatora, his second son; and Saburo Naotora, his third son. Facing Hidetora are his chief retainers, Tango and Ikoma.

AYABE

First, a drink of congratulations to Lord Ichimonji, who performed the feat of the day at the grand hunt when his arrow killed the great boar.

FUJIMAKI

All at once it was in front of me. My horse gave a leap, and I lost my chance to grab an arrow. I was dismounted.

TARO

Father, shall we cook the boar here?

HIDETORA

That was an old boar. Its meat is tough; it stinks - hardly edible. Would you like to eat old Hidetora?
(Glares at Fujimaki and Ayabe)

FUJIMAKI

No one would, if he could, no matter what. Therefore, I accompanied you today on the hunt in order to deepen our friendship.

AYABE

That is correct. And I, too, would like to strengthen the bond between the houses of Ichimonji and Ayabe, through the marriage of my daughter to your son Saburo.

FUJIMAKI

Wait. I have the same desire. Lord Ichimonji, today is a good opportunity. Please give us your answer. Whom will you choose for Lord Saburo's bride, my daughter or Lord Ayabe's?

HIDETORA

It is a difficult choice... two daughters for one lord. If only my second son, Jiro, were not already married.

Fujimaki and Ayabe, their hostility to each other obvious, silently drink.

Hidetora breaks the silence, calling a servant-entertainer, the equivalent of the fool in a medieval European court.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Kyoami, serve us some
entertainment.

A man called Kyoami with a shaved head and wearing strange clothes, who had been waiting at the far end, steps up, makes a quick bow, and begins to dance as he sings.

KYOAMI

(Sings)

What is that
That has come
Hopping over here
From yonder mountain
Pricking up one-
Two long ears?
-A hare!

His imitation of a hare is amusing enough to win unanimous applause and laughter from the entire party, except for Saburo, who is seated next to Jiro and who does not even smile.

SABURO

I say, Kyoami. You said a hare. But
you meant two?

KYOAMI

What?

SABURO

Two, eh?
(Regards Fujimaki and
Ayabe)
Then came hopping over from beyond
those two mountains to be eaten by
my father.

TARO

Saburo, watch your tongue!

JIRO

Do not say such idiotic things!

Taro and Jiro glance up at their father, Hidetora, for his reaction. Hidetora is bent over the cup in his hand. A careful look reveals that he has fallen asleep. The cup falls. The entire party, shocked, stares at Hidetora.

FUJIMAKI
 The Great Lord looks tired.
 (Regards Ayabe)
 We, too, should withdraw and wait
 until he awakes.

Ayabe rises as he glowers at Saburo, then sweeps the bunting aside and goes out.

Fujimaki stares at Saburo, who has assumed a posture of composure, then quietly raises the bunting and exits.

Taro and Jiro follow them out.

TARO
 (Quietly)
 It is a feigned sleep. After
 Saburo's insults, the only way he
 could save the situation was to
 pretend to have fallen asleep.

Tango and Ikoma exchange worried glances, then regard the old lord. Hidetora is quiet, sound asleep.

Seeing his father sleeping in the midsummer sun, Saburo breaks off a branch of early bush clover to provide shade for him.

5 EXTERIOR - SKY - COLUMNS OF CLOUDS - DAY

The clouds climb up magnificently into the blue sky, one side shining brilliantly in the afternoon sun.

6 EXTERIOR - ICHIMONJI CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

Taro, Jiro, and Ikoma greet Tango, who has been looking into the are surrounded with bunting, where Hidetora is sleeping.

TARO
 Is he still asleep?

TANGO
 Yes, snug and sound.

JIRO
 It has never happened before. He
 was merely hunting. He never looked
 tired before, even after he had
 captured a domain.

TARO

The sun is in the west. Wake him up. We have the lords Fujimaki and Ayabe as our guests.

Saburo, who had been sleeping in the grass, abruptly awakes and yawns.

SABURO

It you are going to worry about something, worry about father. He is not snoring loudly today. That is strange.

He looks over at the bunting. Taro, Jiro, Tango, and Ikoma follow his glance.

The bunting begins to sway. Sweeping it open, Hidetora staggers out, almost expressionless, vacantly gazing into space. His bearing gradually reveals the emaciation of old age - the vigor he showed at the hunt has vanished; there is not even the least trace of it; he is like a different man.

Taro and the others look at each other, then run to him.

TARO

Father, what is the matter with you?

JIRO

Are you ill?

HIDETORA

Be quiet.

(Pause)

I had a dream... a dream of a wilderness. A wilderness... no matter how far I went I saw no one. I shouted and screamed, but no one answered. And then this cool summer breeze cut into me like a blast of autumn wind - and I woke up.

Everyone is listening silently, amazed at the seriousness in his tone.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

When I awoke... I was alone. Alone... all by myself. The thought almost suffocated me. I felt a shudder run through me. I jumped to my feet and left the place... Ridiculous! Taro's voice brought me back to myself.

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

There in front of my eyes were my dear children... Taro, Jiro, and Saburo.

He looks tenderly at his three sons.

SABURO

Father, this is the first time that I see you like this.

TARO

Saburo, hold your tongue! Are you not grateful for the way he feels about us? He trusts us.

SABURO

But I cannot believe what he has just said, because we are not allowed to do anything except on orders from our father. Do you think we are trusted the way things are?

HIDETORA

All right. I have been thinking of this for a long time. I shall tell you my decision. The place is right. The time is right. The lords Fujimaki and Ayabe, who wish to marry their daughters to Saburo, are here with us. Someone, escort the two lords here!

7 EXTERIOR - SKY - RAINHEADS - SUNSET

The tops of the clouds have turned dark. In the distance there are signs of a storm - the rumble of distant thunder.

8 EXTERIOR - PLATEAU - SUNSET

The vast plain below is illuminated by the slanting rays of the setting sun, throwing up silhouettes of the large, medium, and small castles. Hidetora sits on a camp stool against that background. He begins to speak to the men around him: Taro, Jiro, Saburo, Fujimaki, Ayabe, Tango, Ikoma, and the other main retainers. There is almost nothing in his appearance of the earlier emaciation, and there is a tone of confidence in his voice.

HIDETORA

I, Hidetora Ichimonji...

(Points to the small
castle in the distance)

...was born in that small castle.
At that time this plain of Unno was
the scene of fighting, a struggle
among countless lords. When I was
seventeen, I raised my flag over
that castle. I fought hard for
fifty-odd years... and at last I
conquered this plain and raised the
Ichimonji standard over that castle
there...

(Points to the massive
castle on one side of the
plain)

And after that I have spent the
years crossing swords and spears
with these two lords. The time has
come when we are finally able to
put the steeds of war to rest. But
I am already seventy...

He sighs and drops his shoulders, but then suddenly
straightens up and looks sharply around the group.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

I, Hidetora, hereby hand the
headship of the house to my eldest
son, Taro.

The retainers, who had been listening intently, show surprise
and consternation. Tango and Ikoma exchange glances. The
former moves forward on his knees, gazing at Hidetora.

TANGO

My lord, we do not understand. It
is so sudden...

HIDETORA

No. It is something I have long
thought about: someday the time
will come when I retire and let the
young men take care of my domains.
Listen, men. Now is the time! Let
me restate it to all of you. From
now on, Taro is the head of the
House of Ichimonji, the lord of the
land. I will move from the castle
keep to the outworks.

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

I will keep thirty retainers by my side as well as the title and forms of lordship, but administration of the land and sovereignty over the steeds of war will all go to Taro. Obey well my orders, all of you!

All the retainers are dumbfounded. The faces of Tango, Ikoma, and the other chief vassals express misgivings over Hidetora's proclamation. Fujimaki and Ayabe also cannot help looking at each other.

JIRO

(Dissatisfied)

I will obey. But would you kindly give Saburo and me your instructions for our future?

Hidetora looks at Jiro with a fleeting expression, as if he had been caught in a lie.

HIDETORA

You, Jiro and Saburo, are to defend the Second and Third Castles, and assist Taro, who will be in the First Castle. I will be your guest, sometimes at the First Castle, sometimes at the Second and the Third, enjoying my remaining years.

SABURO

(Muttering)

Oh, pity the old!

His words sound crude and heartless, but behind the seeming heartlessness there is love.

TARO

(Goes forward, speaks humbly)

I would like to speak. Your honorable command concerning the inheritance of headship of the house is most appreciated, but I beg you to reconsider.

HIDETORA

Why?

TARO

Though I am your eldest son, to rule this land in your place is too great a task for me.

(MORE)

TARO (CONT'D)

I have always prayed to the god of war that my father might live to a hundred years, even if it meant the shortening of my own life.

SABURO

Taro is surely talented at speeches. I could never know how to use such sweet words. It is embarrassing to listen to him.

HIDETORA

You are perverse! Are you saying that Taro is trying to flatter me?

Saburo is about to speak.

JIRO

(Interrupting)

Father, pay no attention to Saburo. I feel the same way as Taro; we long to be safe in our father's arms. But the time has come for us, in order to make your remaining years peaceful, to stand in the thick of the world's arrows.

HIDETORA

Well said, Jiro. Bring me that quiver.

He takes three arrows from the quiver and hands one each to Taro, Jiro, and Saburo.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Can you break these?

The three brothers accept the arrows with a dubious look, then break the arrows with a snap.

The father watches them, then hands them three arrows more.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Now bundle these and try to break them.

None of the three can break them. Hidetora watches them.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

A single arrow can easily be broken. But three arrows in a bundle cannot.

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Even if mishap befalls Taro and he cannot defend himself alone, if you put your strength together, both the House of Ichimonji and this land will stay secure.

Saburo places the three arrows against his knee and shatters them.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

(White with rage)

You perverse brat! Are you still pulling your tricks on me?

SABURO

You are the one who is acting foolishly, speaking such nonsense.

HIDETORA

What do you mean, nonsense?

SABURO

You are. Either you are senile or you are mad.

HIDETORA

Silence! How dare you speak like that to you father? What have I said that is mad? What have I said that is senile nonsense?

SABURO

I will tell you. First, just what do you think this world is? This is a world where men's evil, cruel instincts are exposed, where you cannot live unless you throw aside your humanity and all noble feelings!

HIDETORA

I am well aware of that.

SABURO

I suppose you are. You have spilled so much human blood you cannot measure it. You have lived without mercy or pity. But Father, we, too, are children of this degraded age of strife; you do not know what we may be thinking - "my dear children," you think. To me, Father, you are none other than a madman - a senile old madman.

HIDETORA

(Choked, threateningly)

All right. Then you are saying that someday, according to the circumstances, you may regard me as no longer your parent and might betray me?

SABURO

You are being foolish again. No betrayer ever tells you he is going to betray you.

HIDETORA

Then you are saying that Taro and Jiro have treason in their minds?

JIRO

Maybe he does not want you, Taro, to inherit the lordship.

TARO

Saburo, are you trying to slander me for that purpose? Even if you are my brother, if you go too far, I must punish you.

SABURO

Father, your warning about the three arrows seems to have been wasted already. At this rate it will not be long before we are fighting each other, washing blood with blood.

HIDETORA

What is this? It is outrageous! Do you intend to disregard your father's will and wishes? All right. If you insist that there are no parents or children in today's world, then, just as you wish, I cut the bond of parent and child between us. From now on you are a complete stranger to me. Out of my sight! Be gone!

TANGO

What are you saying, my lord?

HIDETORA

Quiet, Tango. It was my mistake to have loved Saburo more than anyone else, and so I spoiled him.

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

I am the one who raised him as arrogant and impudent. It is too late for regrets. Rotten flesh has to be cut off, even if it is your own.

TANGO

Please wait. What Master Saburo said was blunt and could even be thought rude, but those were just the frank words that came from an honest character. If you listen carefully, he is telling the truth, and is not in error.

HIDETORA

Silence!
(Flashes his sword)

TANGO

Are you mad, my lord? As your aides, it is our duty to tell you what we think. I, Tango, shall not withdraw one step just because you wave your sword at me now. Please withdraw your exceedingly rash decision at once.

HIDETORA

I told you to be silent!

TANGO

I will not!

HIDETORA

You are rude! Your impudence matches Saburo's. I can permit it no longer. Both of you, be gone!

Fujimaki, Ayabe, and the retainers gaze in astonishment, speechless, at the argument between father and son, lord and vassal.

9 EXTERIOR - SKY - THUNDERHEADS - SUNSET

About to dissolve into rain, the clouds trail over the setting sun. The sun is an ominous red.

10 EXTERIOR - PLATEAU - SUNSET

Saburo is lying down, the pampas grass for his bedding and his arm for a pillow. Tango is crouching beside him. Two horses are grazing.

 SABURO
 (Mumbles disconnectedly)
 What troubles!

 TANGO
 Well, what are you going to do,
 Master Saburo?

 SABURO
 Not me. The one in trouble is my
 father. It pains me to think where
 he is heading for. Tango, you are a
 fool.

 TANGO
 Why am I a fool?

 SABURO
 For defending me and being thrown
 out with me. It was a mistake for
 you to leave my father's side, no
 matter what.

Over track, we hear dashing hoofbeats. Saburo and Tango are listening.

 TANGO
 I cannot believe it. They seem to
 have sent someone after us.

The two of them jump onto their horses and race away at full gallop. Five horsemen chase them.

Chased, Saburo and Tango reach the top of a cliff, reluctantly stop their horses, and turn around, their hands on the hilts of their swords.

The chasers are Fujimaki and his retainers.

 FUJIMAKI
 Why do you run away, my son-in-law?

 SABURO
 (Reacts, stares at him)
 Son-in-law? Me?

FUJIMAKI

(Dismounts)

I am a hasty man. Please listen to me. Lord Saburo, you have become the object of your father's rage and have been exiled from your land. Lord Ayabe and I have seen and heard what happened from the start. To you, young lord, who are now an exile and no different from a beggar... no, excuse my rudeness. What I mean to say is that... well, I cannot put it very well.

(Frustrated)

SABURO

(Laughs, dismounts)

It does not matter. To me, no different from a beggar...

FUJIMAKI

I thought that to you, as you are, I would not give my daughter in marriage.

SABURO

I should suppose not.

FUJIMAKI

Wait a minute. That is what Lord Ayabe thought, too, and he decided against the marriage. I, too, had withdrawn my proposal. But as I was returning to my land I kept on thinking how wonderfully you had acted. I liked you more and more. How could I let such a young lord go? I will take him for my son-in-law, I thought, and turned back. In the meantime you had run away. Would you dislike to become my son-in-law?

SABURO

Whether I would dislike it or not...

FUJIMAKI

Well, first come to my land and think it over seriously. Tango, you, too, are splendid. You are a man of will. I need you, too. Will you come with us?

TANGO

I am truly grateful for your kindness, but I cannot.

(Bows to Fujimaki, turns to Saburo)

No matter what guises I may have to assume, I will never leave the Great Lord.

(Whips horse, gallops away)

11 EXTERIOR - MOUNTAIN SKYLINE - NIGHT

The moon comes out.

12 EXTERIOR - PAMPAS GRASS FIELD - NIGHT

Pampas leaves glimmer in moonlight. The moon is golden, and so are the pampas leaves. On the field, the silhouettes of Hidetora's ranks returning to his castle from the grand hunt. Hidetora rides, swaying, his head dropped; he is drowsy. Taro and Jiro, watching Hidetora on his horse from behind, are talking in low voices, carefully looking around.

TARO

What do you think of Father today?

JIRO

I cannot say it out loud, but he was not normal.

TARO

I suppose old age is getting the better of him.

JIRO

He has never been able to see himself objectively. Growing old has made his temper even worse, and he cannot distinguish things anymore.

TARO

He has always been able to do just what he wanted, and so he has become rigid in his selfishness. Yet his capriciousness is really too much for me.

JIRO

(Grins)

Thanks to his capriciousness, this land has fallen into your hands. Above all, it is essential for us to contrive a way to prevent his capriciousness from taking the land back again.

TARO

Hmm... help me, then.

Hidetora, who seemed to be asleep, suddenly squares his broad shoulders, looks straight ahead, and gives a command in a loud voice.

HIDETORA

Men, light the torches!

TARO

Father, we do not need torches in this moonlight.

HIDETORA

Idiot! We are going into the forest. On a moonlit night the forest is even darker.

Taro says nothing. Jiro looks coolly at Taro.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

13 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DAY

The massive castle is impressive.

14 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DAY

Two streams of servants and soldiers, carrying numerous women's articles, pass each other. Among them are chambermaids carrying hand-boxes and tiny cases. They stop. Taro's wife, Lady Kaede, followed by her maids, stops as her procession comes to a standstill.

KAEDE

What is going on?

She seems hot-tempered, and knits her brows.

From the front of the line an old woman comes over with quick, small steps, and, kneeling, explains.

OLD WOMAN

Lord Hidetora's mistresses are moving from the castle keep to the outworks, and they will not get out of the way for my lady's procession.

KAEDE

How rude! I am now the lady of this castle. How dare they block my path!

The old woman scurries away.

15 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - OUTWORKS - DAY

Hidetora is looking out the window.

16 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Hidetora's mistresses stand to one side and kneel as they let Lady Kaede's procession pass by.

17 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - OUTWORKS - DAY

HIDETORA

Why are my women kneeling to Taro's women? It is outrageous!

Ikoma, who has been waiting on him at his side, appears annoyed.

IKOMA

How can you say that? Since you have given possession of the castle to Lord Taro, it is only natural.

Hidetora suddenly closes the window. Then, suddenly, we hear a singing voice.

VOICE

(Singing)

He gives away his house.
He gives away his fields...

Hidetora looks away.

From the corner of the room Kyoami comes out singing and dancing in the same strange costume he previously wore.

KYOAMI

(Singing)

Our village chief is good-natured.
He will end up a scarecrow in the paddy.

HIDETORA

(Turns angrily)

Are you trying to call me a fool?

KYOAMI

God forbid! The fool is me...

(Points to himself)

...here to curry your favor, you
illustrious laughingstock... I am a
fool. Buy you, my lord...

(Points to Hidetora)

...are another. You have lost all
you have gained!

He dashes away, gesturing like an idiot.

18 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Taro and Lady Kaede, his wife.

KAEDE

How truly auspicious it is that you
have ascended to the headship of
the House of Ichimonji.

TARO

(His whole face smiling)

Kaede...

(Stands up, looks out
window)

How many times have I looked out
from here on the landscape? And...
now that it is mine, this landscape
looks entirely different.

Kaede, ignoring Taro's deep emotion, looks at the upper platform. There are no furnishings on it; it looks bare.

KAEDE

I am sure the standard was
displayed there.

TARO

(Nods)

Father's standard and his armor and helmet were displayed there.

KAEDE

Well, where are they?

TARO

(Casually)

I just handed them to Father's bearers.

Kaede tightly knits her brows.

KYOAMI

I do not care about the armor, but the standard... My lord. That standard is supposed to be with the head of the Hoes of Ichimonji.

Taro's face reveals a slightly troubled expression.

TARO

But Father said that he would keep the title and forms of lordship...

KAEDE

Without the forms you are just a shadow.

TARO

What do you mean? Father definitely said that the headship would go to me.

KAEDE

Then behave like it.

She rises and shouts down from the top of the staircase.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Somebody! Bring the standard here. Bring the standard back here. It is our lord's order.

VOICE

Yes, my lady!

The voice is followed by hasty footsteps.

Taro stands in blank amazement.

Kaede, seeing him from the corner of her eye, crosses to the window and gazes out, calm and composed.

19 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

A group of people, packed in the narrow passage between the castle battlement and the stone wall, jostle each other in unusual excitement. Swaying in the waves of men is the large Ichimonji standard.

Hidetora's and Taro's retainers are struggling for the red banner displaying a golden character that means "one."

VOICE 1

What do you think you are doing?

VOICE 2

Take it back to the keep!

VOICE 3

The Ichimonji standard belongs to the Great Lord!

VOICE 4

It is the head of the house's standard, and Lord Taro is the head of the Ichimonji House now!

VOICE 5

Do not let them have it! Do not let them have it!

VOICE 6

Give it to us!

With a great shout, they whirl about and struggle furiously, sending up dust. The whirl of dust surrounds the golden character on the banner.

Kyoami, who has been watching from a nearby tower, dances, singing in a loud voice.

KYOAMI

(Sings)

That lord is a gourd in the wind,
Tottering this way, tottering that...

One of Taro's retainers looks up at him and runs up the tower.

KYOAMI (CONT'D)

(Continues)

Tottering this way, tottering that.
(MORE)

KYOAMI (CONT'D)

A gourd we will hang from the keep.
Wouldn't that be amusing?

Reaching the top of the tower, Taro's retainer grabs Kyoami by the collar.

RETAINER

You insolent bastard! I will give
you this!

He tries to push Kyoami off the tower.

At that moment, an arrow, its feathers whistling, flies into the retainer's chest. He groans and falls down the stone wall. Shocked, Kyoami falls back and lands on his buttocks. Hidetora's retainers and Taro's are startled for an instant, then look around to see where the arrow came from.

20 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - OUTWORKS - DAY

Hidetora standing on the upper story, his foot on the windowsill, one of his sleeves rolled up, holding a bow in his other hand. He has the fierce bearing of a ferocious warrior.

21 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Taro's retainers, frightened, run away. Behind them remains the corpse, fallen from the tower, its neck broken.

22 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - OUTWORKS - SQUARE - NIGHT

The Ichimonji standard hangs at the entrance to the castle outworks. In the square beneath the stone steps, bonfires are quickly lighted. Hidetora and his attendants and retainers, are holding a banquet. The retainers are singing in chorus with Kyoami, who dances as he sings.

RETAINERS

(Singing)

That lord is a gourd in the wind...

Hidetora is drinking, watching them sing. Suddenly we hear a loud voice.

VOICE

Who is there?

Kyoami shrinks behind Hidetora.

Taro's attendant, Ogura, is being questioned by a guard.

OGURA

I am a messenger from the keep.

GUARD

Pass.

22A ANOTHER ANGLE

Ogura goes into the square and kneels before Hidetora.

OGURA

I beg to speak. Lord Taro Takatora is holding a family gathering to drink in celebration of the transference of the headship of the house. Therefore, he requests the presence of his father.

HIDETORA

Humph! It seems he is summoning me.

Hidetora angrily gets to his feet.

OGURA

Lord Ikoma, you are invited, too.

23 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - NIGHT

The donjon seems to float above the bonfires. Lights flicker in the windows.

24 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

Taro and Kaede are sitting side by side, illuminated by candlelight, their backs to the alcove. That means they are superior to any other in the room. Before them are saké and dishes of food, and at a distance, a round straw mat, which is a lower seat.

Hidetora rises from the stairs and looks around.

HIDETORA

I heard this was a family celebration. But is it just us?

TARO

Yes.

Ikoma and Ogura come up and sit side by side behind Hidetora.

KAEDE

Please have a seat.

HIDETORA

Am I to take the lower seat? Who do you think I am?

KAEDE

You are my husband's honorable father.

HIDETORA

Is that all? What happened to the Great Lord? Is he dead?

TARO

Please do not joke.

HIDETORA

I am not joking. As I remember, I said I would keep the title and forms of the Great Lord. You must not forget it.

TARO

We have not forgotten it. It is you, Father, who have forgotten that you gave the headship of the house to me.

HIDETORA

What do you mean? I handed you this castle keep, moved down to the outworks, and even set a limit on the number of my retainers.

TARO

They may be few in number, but their actions are intolerable. What does that song mean?

The comic song is heard again, sung by Hidetora's drunken retainers.

VOICES

(Singing)

The gourd in the wind
Tottering this way, tottering that.
Let us hang this gourd
From the castle keep.
Wouldn't that be amusing?

Then a burst of jeering voices.

TARO

Father, with this going on, how can I exercise authority over my men?

HIDETORA

They are rough warriors. They do not understand etiquette and politeness. Sometimes they sing comic songs.

TARO

Even with comic songs there are limits. It was not unreasonable that one of my retainers rebuked the idiot whose song was clearly making fun of me. But of all things, you shot that retainer of mine. That I cannot overlook. No, I can close my eyes to what happened today, but I want you to pledge firmly that such a thing will never happen again.

He looks at Kaede. She takes the thick ceremonial paper that has been placed on the wooden stand table beneath the scroll of Hachiman, the god of war, in the alcove, and hands it to Hidetora.

TARO (CONT'D)

I would like you to sign this and seal it with your blood.

Hidetora roughly opens the ceremonial paper. When he has glanced over it, he turns to glare, full of menace, at Taro, then throws it in from of Ikoma.

HIDETORA

This is so absurd that I do not know what to say. Read it.

Ikoma picks up the paper and reads it.

IKOMA

(Reading)

A PLEDGE IN WRITING

Clause 1. I transfer to Taro Takatora the headship of the House of Ichimonji.

Clause 2. Therefore, Taro Takatora is now the head of the House of Ichimonji.

(MORE)

IKOMA (CONT'D)

Clause 3. Hereafter, I, though the father of Taro Takatora, shall submit myself to his authority and shall not act contrary to it. I shall not be guilty of deceit with respect to any of the above clauses. I pledge the above upon any and every god on this land.

HIDETORA

Well, do you think I can affix my signature to such a stupid document and seal it in blood?

IKOMA

You were the one who originally suggested this in the presence of the lords Fujimaki and Ayabe. Why does this document bother you now?

Ogura immediately puts before Hidetora an inkstone and a brush. It seems that all has been meticulously planned and prepared in advance.

Hidetora is instantly cornered. After a moment's hesitation, he indignantly signs the pledge and seals it with his blood. He throws the paper at Taro.

HIDETORA

Are you my son?

TARO

What are you saying?

HIDETORA

Is this a child's attitude toward his parent?

(Glares at Kaede, who is silent and expressionless)

The hen makes the rooster cry.

He springs to his feet, kicking over the bottles of saké and food that have been prepared.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

I will not stay in this castle. I have another son.

He runs down the stairs, stamping loudly. Ikoma rises to follow him.

KAEDE

(To Ikoma)

Well done. Thank you.

Ikoma bows and exits. Taro watches him go. His pale face exudes a sense of guilt, a feeling that has yet to be stilled.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
(Still seated)
How I have longed for this day!

Taro looks at his wife, surprised.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
I was born and bred in this castle, which used to belong to my father. Then I left it to marry you. My father and brothers, all unaware because of our marriage, were murdered by your father, Hidetora. Then I was brought back to this castle, which was seized from my family... I have waited for this day ever since.

Taro looks at Kaede, horrified. She is quiet for a while, then slowly looks around the room.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
This is the room where my mother committed suicide.

Her glance frozen, her eyes shining strangely, she is quite still. Madness rises from her beautiful immobility. Taro stares at her.

FADE OUT

25-26 OMITTED

FADE IN

27 EXTERIOR - VIEW OF SECOND CASTLE - LATE AFTERNOON

Although the Second Castle is smaller in scale than the First, its black structure gives a feeling of warlike ferocity.

28 INTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - DONJON - ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Thick pillars and crossbeams run vertically and horizontally, crisscrossing, making the interior dim, though outside it is still daytime. The weapons lined against the wooden wall give a sense of warlike brutality.

Surrounding Jiro, who is reading a letter, are his three confidants: Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma.

JIRO

My father is on his way here. He was politely thrown out of the First Castle.

The three confidants exchange glances.

JIRO (CONT'D)

My brother's letter says that it is dangerous to let our selfish father in the castle. That is not all. It also says that Ikoma, his aide, understands my brother's intentions.

He hands the letter to Kurogane, who peruses it.

KUROGANE

Hmm... Lord Taro's unusual severity is almost unbelievable. By the way, my lord, why are you sitting there quietly doing nothing?

NAGANUMA

Exactly. You are the one who should be following in the footsteps of the Great Lord and assuming the burden of ruling this land. Lord Taro does not have that ability.

SHIRANE

If I were you, I should stake my whole life on this chance.

Kurogane and Naganuma nod slowly. A faint smile comes to Jiro's lips as he watches the three. His face is uncannily gentle, like a woman's.

JIRO

Then all of you are willing to stake your lives with mine?

SHIRANE

Just as you say.

NAGANUMA

The hunting dogs will not follow their master if he lets the game go.

KUROGANE

If you are not fleet, then you are our game.

JIRO

How the dogs howl!

Lord and vassals exchange words without restraint, as though equals; in their manner can be felt the bonds that tightly link them.

JIRO (CONT'D)

It has always bothered me as well. Why should I have to spend my life groveling at my elder brother's feet just because I was born twelve months later? I will kick off these shackles.

SHIRANE

Right, my lord. Splendid...

JIRO

Save your breath! Listen carefully. My brother is no problem. But his wife, Lady Kaede, is.

KUROGANE

That is true. She should be perfect for you. Why not steal her from him?

JIRO

Do not be so direct. But before that there is also my father. He may have retired, but he took thirty retainers with him - every one of them a brave warrior... a match for a thousand. He will soon come here with those brave warriors. What shall we do?

The three aides shout almost unanimously.

KUROGANE

It is not wise to let him in.

29 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - GATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Hidetora rides onto the huge gate, Ikoma and the other retainers as well as concubines and women attendants following.

HIDETORA

It is Hidetora. Let us pass!

His loud voice is overwhelming, not belying his magnificent look. A guard peeks out a loophole, then hastily retracts his head. The castle gate opens.

30 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON

On the outside is a small gate, on the inside a large one. The large gate is called the front gate, and the small gate facing the outside is called the castle gate. Though smaller than the front gate, the castle gate is not really small.

The guards prostrate themselves. Hidetora rides in. Ikoma is beside him, followed by his retainers and servants, all dirty with dust and sweat, as well as his fatigued concubines and attendants. Their state of exhaustion tells of their miserable travel across the field in the blazing summer sun.

The great doors of the front gate open for Hidetora. He rides in, passing by the kneeling guards.

HIDETORA

(To chief guard)

The women are tired. Let them rest in the shade and give them water.

(Pause)

I will see Sué first.

(Pause)

Tell Jiro that I will see him later.

(Turns to passage)

31 INTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - PRAYER HALL - SUNSET

A tiny cottage standing in solitude within the grandiose castle grounds. Hidetora comes and calls inside the cottage.

HIDETORA

Sué! Sué!

There is no answer. Hidetora opens the door to the cottage. There is no one inside. On the little altar, a portrait of the Amitabha. Inside the dim room, it is a shining golden figure.

32 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - HIGH STONE WALL - SUNSET

A stone wall soaring in the lingering light, describing an arc like the gradient of a Japanese fan. Above it, the figure of a woman standing in a long robe of wadded silk, and kneeling behind her the tiny figures of an old woman and a chambermaid.

33 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - TOP OF STONE WALL - SUNSET

Lady Sué, her hands together holding a rosary, is praying to the western sky, where the setting sun is giving off its last shafts of light.

SUÉ

Hail the Western Paradise, to the
Amitabha in thirty-six trillion
identical manifestations.

HIDETORA

Oh, just as I thought, you are here.
(Approaches)

The old woman and the chambermaid, seeing Hidetora, prostrate themselves as though frightened.

SUÉ

(Regards Hidetora)
Father-in-law...

She is about to prostrate herself, but Hidetora takes her hand.

HIDETORA

No ceremony. It has been a long
time. Let me see your face.
(Looks at her tenderly as
if at his own child)
You always have a sad face... Every
time I see you it pains me.

She tries to smile.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

That is even more heartbreaking.

He turns his eyes away, but then looks sharply at her, firmly takes her by the shoulders, and shakes her.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

It was I, Hidetora, who burned your
castle with your father and mother
and your family in it.

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Why do you look at me like that?
Rather glare at me with hatred. It
would make me feel easier.

But she continues gazing gently at Hidetora. He lets his
hands drop weakly from her shoulders.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Circumstances forced me to burn
that castle... If your father had
just opened the castle to me and
had lowered his head to me, I would
not have burned it, and your father
and mother would not have died...
No, there is no use in talking
about it now. Go on, hate me!

SUÉ

I do not hate you. Everything has
been preordained in our previous
lives... All things are the heart
of the Buddha...

HIDETORA

The Buddha again? There are no
Buddhas in today's world. This is a
degraded age, when the Buddha's
guardians, Bonten and Taishaku,
have been routed by raging Asuras.
It is not a world where we can rely
on the Buddha's compassion.

Sué looks up sadly at Hidetora. He looks down on her with
pity.

Jiro and Naganuma come running up the stone steps.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

(Seeing them)

Is that you, Jiro? Son, I am going
to be a guest in your castle.
Jiro... I am disappointed in Taro.
I can no longer consider him my
child. You, too, are not to think
of him as your brother. Listen to
what happened...

JIRO

(Interrupting)

Father, I already know what
happened from my brother's letter.

HIDETORA

You received a letter from Taro?

JIRO

According to his letter, your retainers were rough and wild beyond toleration. He wrote that I should greet you with a son's proper courtesy, but not to let your retainers into my castle.

HIDETORA

What? You think I am going to come into the castle all alone, leaving my followers to rot outside?

JIRO

Lord Taro is the head of the House of Ichimonji, and I have no choice but to obey his instructions.

Hidetora is shocked, speechless, his body shaking with violent rage.

JIRO (CONT'D)

If you think that is unreasonable, it might be best for you to go apologize to my elder brother and go back to the First Castle.

HIDETORA

Apologize to Taro and go back to the First Castle?

He forgets his dignity and lets out a sorrowful cry.

Sué stands there watching the two of them with tears in her eyes. Is it the golden western sky illuminating her figure that gives her the very appearance of a weeping Buddha?

Then we hear a burst of unusual sounds and shouts.

34 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - FRONT GATE - SUNSET

The garrison are driving Hidetora's retainers out of the gate, levelling their spears.

RETAINERS

What are you doing? You did not give us water, and now you do this to us? Outrageous! If the Great Lord hears about this, you will be severely punished!

Outside the gate is a group of concubines and women trembling in fear, gazing at the unbelievable happening.

Kyoami is sitting alone, apart from the women, a hand on his cheek, observing calmly.

Standing behind the retainers, Ikoma shouts.

IKOMA

Lord Kurogane! Lord Shirane! Just what is this treatment?

Kurogane and Shirane ignore him, sneering, standing behind the garrison.

35 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - PASSAGE - SUNSET

Hidetora, Jiro, and Naganuma come running.

36 EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - FRONT GATE - SUNSET

The garrison push Hidetora's retainers brutally out of the gate and close the doors. But the doors begins to open again, banged and pushed hard by the retainers outside. The guards push them back and bar the doors. Kurogane steps forward and calls out.

KUROGANE

Lord Ikoma! Lord Ikoma! An order from the Great Lord!

Hidetora, who has come running with Jiro and Naganuma, stops to listen.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

"Today we have come so suddenly that the castle has to make preparation for us. Wait quietly outside until is it ready." These are the Great Lord's instructions.

Hidetora looks sharply at Jiro. Jiro prepares for his father's furious reproach. But contrary to his anticipation, Hidetora is calmly gazing at Jiro with profound sadness in his eyes. Jiro looks down to avoid his gaze.

HIDETORA

This is enough. I understand.
(Calmly, as if groaning)
You are not in the least different from Taro. You, too, want to get rid of me.

JIRO

Not at all. I would have been delighted to welcome you if you had come alone.

HIDETORA

Humph! You know that I could not do that.

JIRO

Father, if you are retired and intend to depend on your sons, there should be no need for retainers.

HIDETORA

Only the birds and the beasts can live by themselves. No more excuses!

He straightens himself and shouts.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Open the gate!

The soldiers are immobile, gazing aghast at the old lord. Hidetora gives a sharp surveying look over them.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Why do you hesitate? I said to open the gate, not for my retainers to enter, but for me to exit. Open the gate!

Overwhelmed by his strong voice, the soldiers hurriedly open the gate. Hidetora strides through the gate, stops, and looks back fiercely at Jiro.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

Close the doors! I shall not see you again!

Jiro is immobile, scared. Kurogane urges the guards to close the doors.

37

EXTERIOR - SECOND CASTLE - OUTSIDE FRONT GATE - SUNSET

Hidetora stands in front of the closed front gate, his body full of fury and strength like an angry god of war. He looks around; his retainers and women are worriedly gazing at him. Suddenly he bursts into a hysterical laugh; then, as if enervated, he staggers. Kyoami hurriedly runs up to hold him.

38 EXTERIOR - FIELD - DAY

A hot, calm summer day. There seems to be no living thing in the field in the sun. The Ichimonji standard hangs loosely without a breeze.

Hidetora's concubines are lying in the shade of a few trees, covering their faces with the sleeves of their beautiful garments. The retainers are sleeping like logs, half naked.

Hidetora, still in possession of the air of a great lord, is seated on a stool, gazing into space, face contorted painfully. Ikoma, seated behind him, looks up at him searchingly.

Some retainers gallop in. They dismount and kowtow to Hidetora.

FIRST RETAINER

There is no one in the village.

SECOND RETAINER

Except for this deserted old man...

One of the retainers pulls down a gaunt old farmer who has been clinging to the horse. The old man collapses to the ground, timidly looking at Hidetora, trembling in fear.

THIRD RETAINER

No rice bales in the granaries; not a grain of rice in the houses.

SECOND RETAINER

The farmers must have fled to the mountains with the rice to avoid us.

Hidetora seems to be listening to their report but is obviously preoccupied with other thoughts. He nods absently, not realizing what is happening. The retainers withdraw, disappointed, dragging the old man away.

IKOMA

My lord... we have no other way than to go to the Third Castle. It was there you first raised your flag. Go there and once again...

HIDETORA

(Stares at Ikoma,
interrupting)

Idiot!

(MORE)

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

If I could do that, I would not have stayed hungry and tired like this, wandering aimlessly like a beast. Just think. Will the Third Castle garrison welcome the one who banished their master?

Ikoma does not answer. Kyoami, crouching beside Hidetora, regards Ikoma and shrugs his shoulders. Hidetora returns his gaze into space.

39-51 OMITTED

52 EXTERIOR - VIEW OF THIRD CASTLE - DAY

This is a mountain castle. It rises resolutely in front of a rigid mountain, at the top of a steep slope. It is even smaller than the Second Castle, but the marks of recent repair and enlargement are still new. With white tiers added onto the old wooden frame, the castle looks like the awe-inspiring figure of a young Samurai wearing white armor.

53 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - DAY

Ogura, stately in noble headgear and courtly robes, comes riding up, leading Taro's retainers, and shouts into the castle.

OGURA

By the order of Lord Taro Takatora, head of the House of Ichimonji, I, Ogura, have come to take possession of this castle. Open the gate!

A dead silence within the castle.

OGURA (CONT'D)

Although we fully understand the wholehearted devotion of the garrison whose master, Saburo Naotora, has become an exile, open the gate and let us in in peace. Then you will be accepted as Lord Taro's retainers with your present positions and allowances.

There is no answer from inside the castle.

OGURA (CONT'D)

Open the gate! Open the gate!

The great doors slowly open to the left and right, revealing a crowd of Samurai in the castle square, either on horseback or on foot, in their armor and helmets, spears and bows in hand.

Ogura and Taro's retainers gasp in surprise, then hurriedly prepare for combat. But the soldiers inside the castle merely form ranks.

The mounted men in front spur their horses to a trot and come out quietly. The bearded Samurai, Hatakeyama, is in the lead.

HATAKEYAMA

(To Ogura)

Without Master Saburo this castle means nothing to us. We are in accord. Our only way is to follow Master Saburo and die for him. We hear he is in the Fujimaki domains. We are proceeding there. Out of our way, if you please!

The soldiers of the Third Castle imposingly depart in formation, glaring contemptuously at Ogura and Taro's retainers as they go.

54 OMITTED

55 EXTERIOR - FIELD - DAY

Tango, disguised as a hunter, comes leading a horse. The retainers rise from the grass. Their grazing horses neigh, lifting their heads.

RETAINERS

Lord Hirayama!

They sit formally with respect. Tango lets the retainers take care of his horse, which is carrying a load of food.

TANGO

Rice. Bean paste and pickled plums, too.

(Sits, bows to Hidetora, who is a short distance away)

I, Tango Hirayama, have followed you in this guise, observing what was happening to you, my lord. You have suffered so much that I could no longer remain in the shadows.

(MORE)

TANGO (CONT'D)

Although I have been banished, I would be pleased if you would accept my service.

HIDETORA

(Reacts, stands up)
Oh, it is you, Tango!

Ikoma casts a scheming glance at Hidetora, then calls to the retainers, who are cheerfully unloading the horse Tango has brought. The gift quickly changes their gloomy mood.

IKOMA

Wait! We cannot accept food without good reason. Even if it means starving, Samurai cannot accept charity from farmers.

Hearing this, Hidetora's rage is rekindled.

HIDETORA

Exactly! The farmers should not have done this! Burn the villages! All of them!

Tango rushes to Hidetora.

TANGO

My lord! Wait! The farmers are not to blame. They could not ignore Lord Taro's orders, so they evacuated their villages to avoid you.

HIDETORA

What did that damned Taro say?

TANGO

He issued a proclamation that the Great Lord was banished and that anyone who helped him would be punished with death.

Shocked, Hidetora gapes and collapses to the stool. The retainers and concubines are speechless as they gaze at their once-powerful lord. Summer cicadas chirp in the otherwise quiet field. After what seems an eternity to Tango, Hidetora turns to him.

HIDETORA

Only now have your admonitions been brought to me.

TANGO

Thank you, my lord.

HIDETORA

Laugh, Tango! Look what has become of Hidetora! The poor old man, betrayed by his children, thrown out of his two castles, has no place to go!

TANGO

My lord! You do have a place to go! Master Saburo has found a place with Lord Fujimaki, who wishes him to be his son-in-law. You should go to him.

HIDETORA

How should I? You tell me, with what kind of face can I go to Saburo?

TANGO

(Even more strongly)

Great Lord! Listen carefully. Master Saburo thinks of nothing but his father's welfare. It is because of him that I have disguised myself like this so that I could be by your side. It is all because of his orders that I protect you.

These words have a deeply moving effect on Hidetora. His face twists in spite of himself. Torn between joy and shame, the stern face of a great general disappears, giving way to the face of a frail old father.

One of Hidetora's retainers gallops up.

RETAINER

I beg to speak. All the soldiers of the Third Castle have surrendered the castle to Lord Ogura. They formed ranks and left for the Fujimaki domains.

HIDETORA

What!

IKOMA

Now you see what Fujimaki's intentions are.

(MORE)

IKOMA (CONT'D)

First he takes Saburo as a son-in-law, then he takes his soldiers, and then he will take you, my lord, so that the House of Ichimonji will split and fight each other. He will be able to capture this land without soiling his hands.

TANGO

What are you saying? Lord Fujimaki is not a man like that.

IKOMA

(Ignores Tango)

My lord, let us go to the Third Castle immediately!

Hidetora springs to his feet.

TANGO

My lord!

He grabs Hidetora's sleeve.

HIDETORA

(Pushes his hand away)

Do not tell me what to do in this emergency, you exile! Men! First, we go into the Third Castle!

RETAINER

The Third Castle has been occupied by Lord Ogura and his troop.

IKOMA

It does not matter. Ogura will understand.

Kyoami, who has been crouching, suddenly looks up and sniffs.

KYOAMI

It stinks. It is the smell of rotten guts.

Ikoma looks back at him sharply. Kyoami shrugs his shoulders and crouches again. Hidetora watches them, perplexed.

IKOMA

My lord. Ogura's troops are powerless. We can beat them if necessary.

Tango begins to speak but is interrupted.

HIDETORA

Get my horse!

A retainer comes running with a horse. Hidetora hastily mounts it. Tango has no chance to speak.

KYOAMI

Go quickly. Heaven is far away, but
Hell is not.

Hidetora turns sharply to Kyoami. The next moment, with a fierce glare, he strikes Kyoami in the face with his whip.

HIDETORA

You cur! Do not come if you are
afraid! Die!

During all this, while Hidetora, Tango, and Ikoma argue, the retainers and ladies-in-waiting are so shocked by the sudden turn of events that they stand there gaping.

56 EXTERIOR - SAME FIELD - LATER - DAY

The same scene as before, but gloomy now, with clouds hanging over it. Also, the summer grass, crushed and broken under the feet of Hidetora's men, gives the feeling that one is looking at the traces of man's evil-doing, the mood of a pestilence. On it are two unmoving shadows - those of Tango and Kyoami, a fresh welt on his face, tears running down over it. Tango looks dolefully at Kyoami.

TANGO

We were sincere and spoke the
truth.

Kyoami, sobbing, turns up his face like a crying child.

57 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - CASTLE GATE - DAY

Hidetora and his party are entering the castle. Ikoma and Ogura are on their knees waiting beside the gate. After the party passes, the great doors close, squeaking ominously.

58 OMITTED

59 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - ROOM - DAY

Hidetora, who has been in his bed with his concubine sleeping beside him, sits up when he hears hasty footsteps and shouting voices.

VOICE

Great Lord! Great Lord! An emergency!

HIDETORA

What is it?

VOICE

A large army has surrounded the castle!

HIDETORA

(Leaps up)

What! Is it Fujimaki?

VOICE

No, it is Lord Taro at the front and Lord Jiro at the rear.

Hidetora stares in blank amazement for a moment, then runs out of the room with a speed that belies his age. The half-naked woman left on the bed looks shamefully unkempt.

60 OMITTED

61 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - MORNING

The Ichimonji standard and Hidetora's armor are displayed in a corner.

Hidetora hurriedly comes up the stairs, runs to the window on one side, opens it, and looks out.

62 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - HIGH SHOT - MORNING

Soldiers clamoring outside the castle; flashes of fire spew from the gun muzzles of the riflers in the front row. Then the resounding roar of rifle shots.

63 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - MORNING

Hidetora bites his lip and strains to see.

64 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - HIGH SHOT - MORNING

Amid the smoke streaming from the rifles, Taro can be seen on horseback directing the soldiers.

65 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - MORNING

Hidetora fiercely shakes his head as if it were a nightmare, looks down again, then, turning around in terrified amazement, opens the window on the other side and looks down.

66 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - REAR GATE - HIGH SHOT - MORNING

Here, too, soldiers are clamoring. With the shooting attack of the riflers, the spear brigade rushes for the gate, at the head of the ranks, mounted, is Jiro.

67 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - MORNING

Hidetora, swaying, pulls back and calls down the stairs.

HIDETORA

Is someone there? Call Ikoma! Where
is Ogura?

Below the stairs, a retainer, hurriedly putting on his armor, appears.

RETAINER

Both have abandoned the castle and
run to the enemy position! Great
Lord! This is the end!

Hidetora, his strength drained from his body, slips and tumbles down the stairs like a dead man falling into Hell.

A terrible scroll of Hell is shown depicting the fall of the castle. There are no real sounds as the scroll unfolds like a daytime nightmare. It is a scene of human evildoing, the way of the demonic Asura, as seen by a Buddha in tears.

The music superimposed on these pictures is, like the Buddha's heart, measured in beats of profound anguish, the chanting of a melody full of sorrow that begins like sobbing and rises gradually as it is repeated, like karmic cycles, then finally sounds like the wailing of countless Buddhas.

68 OMITTED

69 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - BATTLEMENT - DAY

A retainer hurled into the air by an explosion is thrown down and dies.

70 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Black smoke sweeping the ground; a cloud of dust. A retainer, his hair still disheveled from sleep, screams something and staggers left and right with a weird slowness like someone running in a dream.

71 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - STABLES - DAY

Horses run madly out of the stables that have fallen in the explosion.

72 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - ROOM - DAY

Women in pandemonium - a whirl of voluptuous colors: red, blue, yellow, violet, and pink.

73 EXTERIOR - SKY - DAY

The sun appears from between the low-hanging clouds. Black smoke blocks the abnormal color and light of the sun.

74 TONGUES OF RED FLAME AMID THE BLACK SMOKE

75 A SNAKE CRAWLING OUT OF A HOLE IN THE STONE WALL

76 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - DAY

Retainers open the great doors on orders from Ogura - all have the appearances of screaming demons.

The spear-carriers' brigade and the riflers' brigade rush at the castle like an avalanche. The corpses of Hidetora's retainers are trampled underfoot by them, spurting out blood. The glitter of spears and swords; black smoke and dust enwrap the swaying flagpole.

77 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - REAR GATE - DAY

Ikoma is standing with the great gate opened behind him. He has a demon's expression as he screams something. The men of the riflers' brigade that has pushed its way in kneel and begin to shoot. Fire and smoke. A forest of spears and bows thrusts ahead through the smoke.

78 A RAIN OF ARROWS FLYING THROUGH THE BLACK SMOKE

79 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

A stream of retainers are running away. Hidetora appears among them, shouting commands in a crazed voice. A man screams as he crawls away to escape, an arrow piercing his leg.

80 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - STABLE - DAY

Black smoke curls around saddles and stirrups of gold lacquerwork, leopardskin saddlecloths, and other colorful war-horse ornaments.

81 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - BATTLEMENT - DAY

Bullets spray dust around the battlement.

82 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - WOODEN WALL - DAY

83 A SERIES OF SHOTS

Sparks of fire in the black smoke, flaming scraps of banners flying about. The crest on the banner - a butterfly with its wings open - looks as if it were writhing.

84 A BLOOD-SMEARED RETAINER, SURROUNDED AND STABBED BY SPEARS AND SWORDS, WRITHES IN AGONY

85 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - ABOVE STONE WALL - DAY

Cornered and stabbed, a retainer falls.

86 ARCHERS' BRIGADE SHOOTING ARROWS IN A VOLLEY

87 A MAN PIERCED WITH ARROWS LIKE A PORCUPINE

88 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - DAY

The cavalry charges. Poles with fluttering bannerets of various colors. Plumes on glittering helmets, the faces underneath like those of evil demons.

- 89 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - REAR GATE - DAY
- The attacking cavalry. Corpses trampled under their horses' hooves. A man running away is bent back, skewered.
- 90 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY
- Among the cavalry racing up the way, a man is running about trying to escape, holding his own severed arm.
- 91 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - CASTLE GATE - DAY
- A man comes running, his whole body splashed with blood and his hair undone and hanging down. He clings to a pillar, then slithers down to the ground. Smearred on the pillar is a bloody handprint and a streak of blood.
- 92 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - STONE STEPS - DAY
- A stream of blood with islands of severed arms and hands.
- 93 GUN MUZZLES SPEWING FIRE
- 94 ARROWS FLYING THROUGH THE FLAMES
- 95 A MAN SHOT IN THE EYE WITH AN ARROW STAGGERS WITH THE ARROW STILL STUCK IN HIS BLOOD-SMEARED FACE
- 96 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - ROOM - DAY
- Foot soldiers fighting over the colorful, voluptuous women's clothes and women's articles. Black smoke creeps in.
- 97 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - GRANARY BELOW THE DONJON - DAY
- Enemy men raping chambermaids. A half-naked chambermaid picks up a fallen sword, stabs herself in the chest, and suddenly falls. The rice bales are covered with blood.
- 98 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DEEP INSIDE THE DONJON - DAY
- The wooden door opens, and Hidetora, bathed in a spray of blood and holding a bloody sword, peers out. The two concubines face each other and stab daggers into each other's hearts. Being who they are, they are not disheveled;

they wear light makeup, have their robes tied at the knees for decency's sake, and are beautifully attired in long dresses. Something in the beautiful way they die touches the heart.

Hidetora watches the scene, standing as if petrified.

99 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - ABOVE STONE WALL - DAY

Women in waiting who have run away jump off, with daggers in their mouths - the sleeves of their voluptuous robes trail as they plunge headfirst.

100 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Here, too, the smoke creeps in. Amid the smoke, the Ichimonji standard and Hidetora's helmet are displayed in a corner. Hidetora runs up the stairs. He goes round and round in the room like a madman.

101 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - BELOW STAIRS - DAY

To this floor Shirane and Naganuma come looking for Hidetora. They are forced by the onslaught of arrows to crouch on the stairs.

102 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - DAY

Taro comes riding up, greeted by his retainers in a frenzy over their victory. He wears armor with pale green braids and a helmet with a plume. This also is the figure of a young general.

103 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - REAR GATE - DAY

Jiro and his army march in. With his grass-green armor and helmet, he has the air of a great warrior.

104 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Taro, mounted, comes with his men up the slope, now piled high with corpses, where the blood runs like a river. He is composed.

Then - a gunshot.

From this point, the track bursts into real sounds: the shouts of soldiers running around, footsteps, hoofbeats, the fluttering of banners and bannerets, the roar of fire.

In the midst of these sounds, Taro clutches at his throat with one hand, blood pouring out between his fingers. He reels around and falls heavily from his horse.

104A INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR

Hidetora runs up the stairs. Obviously he has fought hard. He throws away his broken sword, sits down with a thud, and glares into space, his face full of chagrin and fury.

105 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - BELOW STAIRS - DAY

The top story is defended impregnably. Shirane and Naganuma as well as the Samurai who have come rushing up behind them are showered by the onslaught of arrows coming from the battlements on their left and right. Two of the Samurai who have rushed up the stairs receive arrows in the chest and forearm, and fall back on Shirane and Naganuma.

106 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - REAR GATE - DAY

Jiro, who has been sitting on a stool, stands up

JIRO

What? My elder brother has been killed?

RETAINER

He was shot by a soldier lying in ambush with a rifle near the watchtower on the outworks.

JIRO

Oh...

KUROGANE

Do not grieve, my lord.

Kurogane comes out of the smoke. Jiro starts as he sees Kurogane's cold expression; he casts a hurried glance at the rifle Kurogane is holding.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

Such is a warrior's fortune... yours is better than Master Taro's! You are hereby Lord Jiro Masatora, head of the House of Ichimonji.

Jiro falls into a daze, then regains his senses.

JIRO
What has happened to my father?

RETAINER
He has holed up in the donjon with
the few remaining enemy soldiers.

KUROGANE
I suppose he will commit harakiri.

He casually tosses aside the rifle he has been holding.

106A INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Hidetora, who has been gazing into space, bares his stomach preparing for harakiri and reaches at his waistband for his dagger - but it is gone. Startled, he hastily looks around.

107 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - BELOW STAIRS - DAY

Naganuma, Shirane, and other are forced by the onslaught of arrows to crouch on the stairs. Smoke is already rising here, too; smoke blown up from below is sucked into the donjon stairwell.

We hear a scream:

VOICE
This is the end!

The iron battlement doors open on the right and left, and four retainers come tumbling out.

RETAINERS
My lord, farewell!
Goodbye, my lord!

They stab each other.

107A INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Hidetora is looking for his dagger as desperately as a hunted animal. An honorable death by harakiri means a lot to him. Should he be defeated by a nameless soldier, the shame would be intolerable.

108 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - KEEP - DAY

Jiro, Kurogane, and their men run over. Smoke pours from the donjon windows above, and tongues of flame lick at the wooden walls of the lower stories. From the entrance emerge Naganuma, Shirane, and several Samurai who are running away.

Jiro stops, looks away.

From the donjon entrance comes Hidetora, trailing smoke, which wraps around him. His white hair is bristling, and he is staggering as if treading on air, staring vacantly into space.

Jiro and all the others pull back from the mad Hidetora to let him pass.

109 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - EMPTY MOAT - DAY

The moat is filled with layers of bodies, some still moving.

110 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

The mad Hidetora goes staggering down the slope. Samurai and foot soldiers slide away to open up his path but cannot avert their eyes from him.

111 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - BURNED TOWER - DAY

Black, burned bodies are smoldering.

112 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - SQUARE - DAY

The madman Hidetora walks. Enemy soldiers scramble away and hug the stone walls, letting him pass.

113 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - MOAT - DAY

The moat is filled with corpses instead of water.

114 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - FRONT GATE - DAY

The mad Hidetora comes out staggering. Soldiers make way for him, watching him.

The ranks break, and Jiro appears. Following Jiro are Kurogane, Shirane, Naganuma, Ikoma, and Ogura.

Jiro gazes at Hidetora from behind, then spontaneously runs after him.

KUROGANE

My lord!

Jiro stops as if nailed to the ground and stands there watching his father walk away.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

The die is cast. Do not hesitate. This road you are taking is a way of no return. Once you step out on it, against your conscience, you must keep going straight without hesitation. The road will lead to the headship of the House of Ichimonji. You have no choice.

115 EXTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - DAY

It spews fire.

116 INTERIOR - THIRD CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Hidetora's armor and helmet and the Ichimonji standard amid the hellfire.

117 EXTERIOR - FIELD - DAY

Tango comes racing up on his horse. Sitting in back of him, clinging to Tango, is Kyoami. The horse is running toward the black smoke belching from a valley in the far foothills. A blast of wind.

118 EXTERIOR - DARK SKY - DAY

Black clouds descend like swooping dragons. Then they break into a thousand shreds that race and fly. Rain and lightning strike the earth.

119 EXTERIOR - FIELD - DAY

Tango racing his horse through the typhoon winds, thunder, and rain. Kyoami is clinging to his waist.

120 EXTERIOR - WILDERNESS - STORM - DAY

The very wilderness of insanity. A small shadow wandering in the mad gales, in the downpour, among the thunderclaps and the lightning bolts.

Tango, who has raced over on horseback, looks at the shadow.

TANGO

Who is that?

Kyoami strains his eyes and looks, then moves up and down on the horse in a frenzy.

KYOAMI

Am I dreaming? Oh, Heaven forbid!

TANGO

The Great Lord!

He turns his horse's head, racing after Hidetora at full gallop.

Hidetora's white hair and beard, disheveled in the wind and drenched by the rain, are stuck to his face. His fluttering garments are likewise wrapped around his body. He stands up sharply like a demon god, scowling all around him.

Tango and Kyoami, who have galloped up and jumped off their horse in front of him, are rooted to the ground with fright at his extraordinary appearance.

Hidetora screams at the raging plain.

HIDETORA

I am a messenger from Heaven! This is Heaven's war! Smash the rebels that turn against Heaven! Forward, men, forward!

Tango runs up to him.

TANGO

Great Lord! Have you gone mad?

KYOAMI

(Starts dancing)

Go mad! Go mad! In this mad world it is the sane who are mad!

HIDETORA

Forward! Forward! I am the sun!

KYOAMI

The Great Lord is great indeed!

TANGO

What do you mean?

KYOAMI

If you are going to go mad, it is better to think you are the sun than to think you are a worm.

Tango is silent.

HIDETORA

Forward, men! Have no mercy! This is Heaven's punishment!

Kyoami is dancing himself into a frenzy.

KYOAMI

Bravo! Bravo! Men are beasts! Kill them all and the world will be paradise!

Hidetora suddenly becomes quiet and still, gazing intently on some point in the distance. Kyoami puts his hand in front of Hidetora's eyes and moves it up and down but, failing at one point, suddenly straightens.

HIDETORA

You have come, you have come out with your hatred for Hidetora! Come on, I will give you a taste of destruction!

He is unarmed, but he grabs an invisible sword and takes a fighting stance.

Seeing this, Kyoami sings a parody of a verse from the Noh play *Funa-benket*.

KYOAMI

(Sings)

How strange! On withered fields I see an entire clan destroyed by my hands, each one of them floating up before me.

Hidetora runs madly about, back and forth, left and right, waving his fists. Fighting the ghosts of his enemies who are appearing in front of him, Hidetora displays an expression and bearing that are the extreme of madness.

Tango is, of course, amazed. But even Kyoami wants to shield his eyes as he watches, unable to move.

Hidetora, mad, reaches the limits of his strength and collapses.

Tango, after a moment, pulls himself together and runs over.

TANGO
Great Lord!

He shakes Hidetora as if clinging to him.

TANGO (CONT'D)
Great Lord! Come to your senses!

Hidetora opens his eyes, and, looking for a moment at Tango, who is watching him, he stands.

HIDETORA
Is it you, Tango?

TANGO
(His face lights up)
Yes, my lord!

HIDETORA
(Looks around)
Where am I? It is cold.

He is shivering in the violent wind, the rain slanting across him.

TANGO
Kyoami, rejoice! Our lord has regained his senses!

KYOAMI
That is worse. If he were still mad, he would be spared the memory of what had happened to him.

The wind and rain rage violently.

HIDETORA
(In a sudden groaning voice)
Tango, hear me! I, Hidetora, was attacked by Taro and Jiro!

Tango is dumbfounded.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
Ikoma, too, betrayed me.

Tango is shocked.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
 And then I was so easily defeated.
 Now you may laugh at me, laugh at
 my stupidity! Because of my
 stupidity, my retainers are dead!

The rain strikes Hidetora's face, and the wind lifts his hair. He shouts. The wind and rain are fiercer than ever.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
 These are their tears! Their
 weeping voices!

121 EXTERIOR - VALLEY - DUSK

Autumn has come early to the mountains, and in this valley the autumn flowers mowed down by the storm are scattered about. There is something tragic about the scene, as if a resplendent dress had been discarded.

Tango and Kyoami go along the narrow road through the plain, with Hidetora on the horse.

At the end of the narrow road stands a miserable straw hut, looking as if it were embraced by the mountain. Smoke from the hearth is quietly rising.

Hidetora lies on the horse's back, his face, eyes staring vacantly, helplessly swaying.

Tango stops the horse in front of the straw hut and calls inside the house.

TANGO
 Anybody home?

From inside the house, a delicate voice is heard.

VOICE
 Who is it?

TANGO
 Travelers who have met hardship in
 today's storm. Please let us stay a
 night.

VOICE
 My house is too poor to put anyone
 up...

TANGO

We are not asking for anything special.

VOICE

Because of personal reasons, I do not want to come in contact with anyone.

TANGO

Why? Is it a disease?

VOICE

No.

TANGO

Then please let us in.

VOICE

I am sorry. I cannot...

TANGO

(Irritated)

Listen, the Great Lord of the House of Ichimonji is here!

There is no answer, and the house becomes completely quiet.

TANGO (CONT'D)

We are coming in.

Then, together with Kyoami, he carries Hidetora off the horse, opens the door, and goes into the straw hut.

122 INTERIOR - STRAW HUT - DUSK

A small earthen floor; in the corner of it, a simple washstand. On the other side of the earthen floor, a small room with a mat laid out. It looks as if it might serve as both sitting room and sleeping room. It is already dark inside the hut. In the center of the wooden floor, sitting by the little hearth, a figure with long hair in the style of temple acolytes can be seen in the dim light of the fire.

TANGO

Excuse us for coming in with our shoes on, but our lord was suddenly taken ill...

He steps up on the wooden floor and, together with Kyoami, carries Hidetora over to the hearth and, laying him there, addresses the occupant of the house, seemingly a woman.

TANGO (CONT'D)
(Looks at the occupant)
He is wet. Do you have something to
cover him with?

The occupant stays seated and does not move.

TANGO (CONT'D)
Answer me, woman!

OCCUPANT
Are you talking to me?

TANGO
Yes.

The occupant of the house silently rises and goes to a corner of the room. Tango and Kyoami watch the person suspiciously. The occupant, seen from behind in the dim light, appears to be looking for something.

The occupant rises and comes over, silently handing something over. Tango receives it - it is folded clothing. He opens it, puts it on Hidetora, and stares in surprise. It is a beautiful robe with a colorful design, out of keeping with the humble hut. Tango and Kyoami are amazed and curious as they look at it.

TANGO (CONT'D)
Speak up... woman!

OCCUPANT
I am not a woman.

TANGO
What? It is so dark, I... Bring me
a lamp.

Tango reaches for a stick of lighted firewood in order to take a good look at him, and notices a cane leaning by the side of the hearth.

TANGO (CONT'D)
I am sorry. Is your eyesight poor?

He holds up the stick of firewood. The occupant of the house is illuminated in the light from the burning stick. It is the face of a blind but handsome youth. Kyoami pulls back with a start and looks at Tango.

TANGO

(Shocked, gazes at the youth)

Are you Lady Sué's younger brother... Master Tsurumaru?

TSURUMARU

Yes.

Hidetora sits up, turns his eyes, and stares at the youth. Then, his voice trembling, he mutters with a frightened voice.

HIDETORA

Tsu... Tsurumaru?

TSURUMARU

It has been a long time... Lord Hidetora.

HIDETORA

Do you remember me?

TSURUMARU

How could I forget you? I was just a child, but how could I forget the one who gouged out my eyes in exchange for sparing my life... the day you burned down my father's castle?

Hidetora is trembling.

TSURUMARU (CONT'D)

I tried hard to follow my sister's teachings, to pray to the Buddha and rid myself of hatred. But not one day have I failed to remember, and not one night have I been able to forget and to sleep peacefully.

Hidetora, naturally, and Tango and Kyoami also stare at the blind boy, speechless.

TSURUMARU (CONT'D)

Well, then, I am terribly sorry that I cannot give you a decent welcome, Great Lord. However... fortunately I have a flute that my sister sent to me. I learned to play it when I was a child. I will play it for you and give you, if nothing else, some hospitality of the heart.

The boy takes a flute from the brocade bag beside him.

TSURUMARU (CONT'D)

Now it is my only pleasure. Please listen, and laugh, if you will, at my clumsy art.

Seated before Hidetora, Tango and Kyoami, Tsurumaru plays. The clear sound of the flute expresses Tsurumaru's deep sorrow and lament. It moves Hidetora. The old lord staggers to his feet. He clutches at his chest like a man shot with an arrow. His face twitching, staring at Tsurumaru with starting eyes, he steps back. With trembling lips he tries to say something, but his voice fails him. He opens his mouth wide and lets out a scream that is not a voice, then staggers down to the earthen floor, quickly pushes at the door, and tumbles outside.

TANGO

My lord!

He runs after Hidetora. Kyoami follows.

123 EXTERIOR - STRAW HUT - NIGHT

Hidetora staggers over the field scattered with autumn flowers in the moonlight, as if running from something fearful.

124 EXTERIOR - SKY - NIGHT

The crescent moon.

125 EXTERIOR - SKY - DAY

Impressive thunderheadlike clouds.

126 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

A topknot on a piece of white paper placed on the polished wooden floor.

JIRO

My dear sister-in-law, this was the hair of my deceased brother.

Lady Kaede is in the seat of honor, with Jiro in front of her. Lined up behind her are the chief retainers in armor.

JIRO (CONT'D)

It was my accursed turn of fortune to have to be the one to inform you of the death in battle of my elder brother.

Kaede stares piercingly at Jiro.

KAEDE

(To Ogura beside Jiro)

Ogura... where are the remains of my lord?

Ogura looks at Jiro as if asking for help.

JIRO

In this sweltering heat... the corpse was so unsightly that we had to refrain from placing it on view. We had no choice but to cremate it at the Third Castle and hold an informal funeral at a nearby temple.

KAEDE

Ogura... where are the armor and helmet he was wearing?

Ogura seems to shrink.

JIRO

That is sarcasm, I think. This armor and this helmet I am wearing now are the ones he was wearing. You have not forgotten, have you?

KAEDE

I have not forgotten. But I never thought you could wear his armor and helmet so soon after his death. It is too much for me to notice.

JIRO

I am surprised at you. I thought my deceased brother would be happy to know that his younger brother returned to the castle in his armor. No, it was foolish of me. Forgive me.

(Bows to her, rises)

I am taking off this armor. Somebody, help me.

An attendant runs over and starts taking off his armor.
Taro's retainers become intently still at this.

JIRO (CONT'D)
Sister-in-law... I am about to be
naked.

Kaede quietly rises and goes out.

126A EXTERIOR - SKY - DAY

Impressive clouds soaring.

127 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Jiro is seated in the master's seat, his back to the alcove.
Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are beside him. Ikoma and
Ogura, dressed in casual attire, are seated facing Jiro.

KUROGANE
(to Ikoma and Ogura)
You have worked hard for us on this
occasion of the Ichimonji family
trouble. We appreciate it.

Ikoma and Ogura bow.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)
As a token of our thanks, we have
prepared a humble gift for you.

Two low wooden stands, each with a pile of gold coins, are
placed in front of Ikoma and Ogura.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)
Please accept it.

Ikoma and Ogura bow deeply to Jiro.

JIRO
(Nods)
It is my farewell gift for you.
(Pause)
Goodbye.

Ikoma and Ogura look at him in amazement.

KUROGANE
Lord Jiro is now the head of the
House of Ichimonji.
(MORE)

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

Considering his situation and what you did to your master this time, he thinks it is not very wise to keep you, who committed treason, on his staff. It would be dangerous. His concern is understandable. We have nothing further to say.

(Pause)

Let there be no hard feelings.

Ikoma and Ogura look at each other and start to say something.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

(Interrupting)

Do you understand? Good. Thank you.

Ikoma and Ogura are helpless.

VOICE

(From downstairs)

I beg to speak. Lady Kaede is entering.

Kurogane looks at Jiro, his eyes implying "Watch out!" Jiro nods readily.

KUROGANE

(Calling downstairs)

Send her in.

(To Jiro)

Let us withdraw.

(Rises)

Shirane and Naganuma also rise and follow Kurogane, carrying the money-laden stands. Ikoma and Ogura are too shocked to stand.

Lady Kaede is coming up the stairs. Seeing her, Ogura jumps to his feet, hurriedly follows Shirane and Naganuma, as if fleeing, and descends the stairs. Ikoma, too, has no other course than to follow them.

Lady Kaede sits in front of Jiro, placing Taro's helmet at her side, and bows with both hands on the floor.

KAEDE

Congratulations on your victory.

JIRO

Sister-in-law... you overwhelm me.

KAEDE

I am ashamed of the wretched things
I said before.

JIRO

It does not matter.

KAEDE

I understand your father has gone
mad.

JIRO

I suppose you are satisfied.

KAEDE

Now, what night that mean?

JIRO

Sister-in-law, I spoke bluntly,
hiding nothing in my mind. Forgive
me if I have offended you. But one
would expect you to bear an intense
hatred for my father, as the enemy
of your family. Am I wrong?

KAEDE

(Looking into his eyes)
Then let me talk frankly, too, Lord
Jiro. I dare say you are also
satisfied.

Jiro's eyes return her stare.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

(Looking at him, not to be
stared down)
Lord Jiro, you are now head of the
House of Ichimonji. This helmet,
too, belongs to you.

She slides the helmet at her side toward Jiro. His eyes stray
for an instant to the helmet. At this unguarded moment, Lady
Kaede suddenly jumps on him and pushes him down. She
unsheathes his sword and bends over him, holding it to his
throat.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Lord Jiro! You have driven your
father insane and murdered your
brother, and stolen this realm -
splendid work! But I, Kaede, will
not forgive you! Foe of my husband,
prepare to die!

Her voice is low and thick. Her expression of rage is even more dreadful because of her beauty. Jiro is unable to move, the sword held to the base of his throat.

JIRO

No...

KAEDE

To say that in this situation, how cowardly you are!

She cuts his skin with the tip of the sword. The blood oozes out.

JIRO

(Deathly pale)

It... was not me... who... killed my brother!

KAEDE

Then who was it?

Jiro refuses to say.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Tell me! Who was it?

She again jabs the skin at his throat. Blood oozes out.

JIRO

It... was not me! Kurogane...
Kurogane shot him!

KAEDE

Hold your tongue! You mean you ordered your retainer to do it but cannot take the responsibility? What a general!

She suddenly starts laughing and raises herself off him, then grabs the long sword at Jiro's side and leaps back. Jiro, too, jumps up, pressing his hand to his throat. Kaede, holding the dagger in one hand and the long sword in the other, is laughing. Jiro stares at her with his hand to his throat. When she finally stops laughing, she gazes at him with a faint smile.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

You give in so easily. You are undependable. Now I must speak my mind straightforwardly, Lord Jiro. I could not care less about my husband's death.

Jiro is puzzled.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

But I am worried about what is going to become of me. I do not want to live as a widow, with my hair cut, nor as a nun with my head shaved bald! This was my father's castle, and I do not want to be forced to leave it!

Jiro is overwhelmed by the strength in her voice and expression.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Lord Jiro. Please hear my request. I will not tell anything... your immoral acts of treason, stealing this castle and this realm... nor will my lips ever repeat the cowardly words so unworthy of a master, accusing his vassal in order to save his own life. If I told anyone, this realm would be torn apart. No, I will not...

She casts aside the long sword and with the same hand grabs her long dress and draws it toward her. Then she cuts it to shreds with her dagger.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

But remember, I could destroy it like this! What do you say, Lord Jiro?

Jiro gazes at her, aghast, trembling. Lady Kaede, throwing her dagger away, jumps on him, embraces him, kisses him. They stagger; his foot is caught in the hem of her long dress. They fall, their mouths together. When she pulls her lips away from his, she presses them against the wound in his throat and sucks his blood.

The midsummer sun clearly illuminates the scene. From under her ruined dress her white legs are seen; a toe kicks at Taro's helmet. The orb design on the plume catches a direct ray of sunlight and gleams.

128 EXTERIOR - OUTSIDE FIRST CASTLE - DAY

Ikoma and Ogura on horseback come side by side, depressed. They stop and look up at the castle regretfully.

129 EXTERIOR - CASTLE GATE - TOWER - DAY

Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are watching Ikoma and Ogura leave. Kurogane levels his gun and fires.

130 EXTERIOR - OUTSIDE FIRST CASTLE - DAY

Bullets hit the ground under Ikoma's and Ogura's horses. Dust rises. Ikoma and Ogura, shocked, hastily whip their horses and gallop away.

131 EXTERIOR - CASTLE GATE - DAY

Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are watching the two flee. They burst into laughter.

132 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Thrown aside are the dagger, the long sword, and Taro's helmet on the floor. Jiro is adjusting his clothes. He combs his disheveled hair with his fingers, sits down, breathing heavily, and looks out the window, turning away from Kaede. Kaede is lying with her hair still undone, her clothes disordered. Summer sunlight illuminates the two of them.

The clouds massed in a peak, seen in sections through the windows. Noisy voices of cicadas.

KAEDE

(In a soft voice)

My lord...

Jiro casts an exploring look at Kaede. She is silent, the back of her disheveled figure still turned to him.

JIRO

What is it, sister-in-law?

KAEDE

How cold you are! Calling me sister-in-law after what we have just done.

Jiro is silent.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Now that we have done this, I should be your wife.

In her expression, unseen by Jiro, is a snakelike tenacity that her voice completely belies. Jiro looks at her from behind and sighs.

JIRO

But I already have Sué as my wife.

A tiny moth flutters its wings before her downcast eyes. She quietly stretches out the hand she has placed under her chin and casually crushes it.

KAEDE

Then... am I to be... your mistress?

(In tears)

No, no... You are mine. I will not let anyone else have you.

Jiro edges toward her and places his hand on her shoulder.

JIRO

Do not cry, Kaede. I would never dream of making you a mistress.

KAEDE

But as long as the Lady Sué is there...

JIRO

I can take care of her.

KAEDE

How?

JIRO

I will divorce her.

KAEDE

No! No!

She springs up and grabs him by the chest.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

The way things have turned out, I cannot forgive any woman who has known your touch. I do not want such a woman to live at the same time as I.

Jiro winces. She holds him in her arms and looks directly into his eyes.

133 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - DAY

The burned and crumbled remains of the castle. All that is left are the soaring ramparts, the ruined ramparts, a mountain of lumber burned black. In the passage, overgrown with summer grass, a single horse stands tied to a burned pillar. Beside it, where the burned lumber lies in piles, there are flagstones and stone steps going down in the ground. Smoke rises from below.

134 INTERIOR - REMAINS OF CASTLE - UNDERGROUND STOREROOM - DAY

It looks as if it used to be an armory; the only trace of that past is in the construction of the walls, and the only thing left is the stone flooring. Three beds of grass have been built alongside the wall. In the center of the stone floor is Tango; he has been placing a pot on the stone stove and lighting a fire, and now he rises and goes outside.

135 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF CASTLE - DAY

Tango comes out from the underground storeroom and looks around. What used to be the Samurai runway is now a mere ramp with grass. Hidetora and Kyoami are there. Tango approaches the old lord, bows on his knee, tries to say something to him, but stops and is silent.

Hidetora has completely changed: his eyes are sunken; his wrinkles are deepened; his disheveled white hair and beard stand on end. He is sitting in the deep grass, gazing vacantly.

Kyoami, who had been leaning against the stone wall, weaving grass, presents the strangely shaped hat he has woven to the dispirited Hidetora.

KYOAMI

Your helmet, my lord.

Hidetora accepts it and joyfully puts it on. Tango looks at it, depressed. Kyoami breaks off two lilies at his side and sticks them in Hidetora's hat.

KYOAMI (CONT'D)

This is your plow-shaped plume, my lord. This is even better.

Hidetora smiles joyfully under his helmet of flowers and grass. Tango suddenly rises and goes away. Then he crouches with his back to Kyoami. His shoulders are shaking furiously - he seems to be crying.

KYOAMI (CONT'D)
 (Voice-over)
 Am I in Hell?

Tango turns around to look. Kyoami is gazing intensely in one direction.

KYOAMI (CONT'D)
 Here comes a devil!

Tango follows Kyoami's gaze. Two horsemen, Ikoma and Ogura, are galloping near the ruined castle. When Tango recognizes them, he runs to his horse, jumps on, and races to the rear of the castle ruins along the ruined passage.

136 EXTERIOR - SUMMER FIELD - DAY

Tango comes racing by on horseback.

137 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - REAR - DAY

Ikoma and Ogura galloping. Suddenly surprised by Tango, who has jumped out and is blocking their way, they pull up their mounts.

TANGO
 (Draws his sword)
 Traitors! You came at a good time!
 I will punish you with death for
 the Great Lord!

IKOMA
 (Flinches a moment)
 Wait! Wait! Let me explain.

TANGO
 No excuses! I know the truth. The
 Great Lord told me what you did to
 him.

Ogura looks away, reacts. Ikoma follows his gaze.

137A EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - STONE WALL - DAY

Ikoma, who has been watching Hidetora, suddenly turns his horse and gallops away. Ogura is a moment too late to flee. Tango gallops in, swings his sword at Ogura, and kills him with a single stroke. Then he chases Ikoma.

138 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - STONE WALL - DAY

At the feet of Hidetora, who is standing on the stone wall, Kyoami has been watching the killing, his hand above his eyes; then he jumps up and dances.

139 EXTERIOR - SUMMER FIELD - DAY

Tango chases Ikoma and slashes at him. Ikoma falls, fatally wounded.

TANGO

Die, traitor! You drove our Great Lord mad!

IKOMA

(Sneering, on the verge of death)

His life was spared because he went mad. Jiro murdered his brother. He will kill his father next. If the Great Lord should recover his sanity, he would be killed, too...

(Spits blood, dies)

Tango turns his horse around and goes back.

140 REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Kyoami is running and dancing.

141 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF CASTLE - REAR - DAY

142 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF CASTLE - PASSAGE DAY

Kyoami greets Tango, who has come back, dancing in joy. Tango shouts at Kyoami, his face flushed and dripping with sweat from his fight.

TANGO

Kyoami, Taro was killed by Jiro. We must take the Great Lord to Master Saburo without delay, or he will be in danger.

KYOAMI

We are still here because we cannot do that. That madman is beyond our control.

(MORE)

KYOAMI (CONT'D)

He strongly resists whenever I tell him to go to Master Saburo. Even if I lie to him in order to take him away, he struggles to stay. No wonder. He thinks he cannot face Master Saburo after what he did to him. He becomes sane when he thinks of Master Saburo.

Wearing a grass helmet with a lily as its frontal ornament, Hidetora is happily picking flowers as if he were a child. Tango crosses to him.

TANGO

My lord, this is not a decent place for you. Let us move somewhere else.

Kyoami brings the horse. Hidetora flinches, frightened, staggers back, then runs into the underground storeroom.

143 UNDERGROUND STOREROOM - DAY

Tango and Kyoami run after Hidetora.

TANGO

What a pity! My lord, what do you think of Master Saburo?

Hidetora is crouching in the dusky corner, eyes gleaming in fear.

TANGO (CONT'D)

Kyoami. I must bring Master Saburo here. He may be the only one who can get him out of here. I am going to Master Saburo. I will return immediately with him and his soldiers to take the Great Lord back! Take care of our lord!

KYOAMI

Yes, sir!

Tango withdraws.

144 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Jiro and Kurogane.

KUROGANE

My lord! Lady Kaede has made a fool
of you!

Jiro is embarrassed.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

If you plan to become man and wife
with her, fine. But for Lady Sué to
be killed for that! It is right to
kill someone when you must. But
killing someone unnecessarily! I am
afraid I must decline such a
preposterous command!

Jiro, with nothing to say, keeps gazing out the window.

Lady Kaede, in mourning, rosary in hand, comes up the stairs.
Kurogane bows.

KAEDE

Kurogane. There is salt at the
Second Castle, is there not?

KUROGANE

Yes, there is. Why?

KAEDE

I mean if you bring her head back
without preserving it in salt, in
this heat, we shall have to refrain
from looking at it.

Kurogane is shocked.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

That is too merciless a thing to do
to such a beautiful lady. Since you
are going personally, Kurogane, I
know there will be no error. I
leave the matter to you. Do as you
see fit.

KUROGANE

Yes, my lady.

Jiro quietly watches Lady Kaede.

145 INTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - UNDERGROUND STOREROOM - DAY

Hidetora is asleep. Kyoami, beside him, examines the old
man's haggard face.

KYOAMI

Why am I still serving such a crazy old man? If the rock upon which you are seated starts to roll down a slope, you must jump off. Otherwise you will be crushed together with the rock. Only fools remain on a falling rock.

He stands and starts for the exit.

HIDETORA

Where am I?

Kyoami looks back at him and sighs.

KYOAMI

This is Heaven.
 (Returns to Hidetora,
 helps him lie down again)
 Be a good boy. Go to sleep.
 (Sits beside him)
 Amazing! I think it has been my work since I was a child to rock him to sleep!

FADE OUT

FADE IN

146 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - TOP FLOOR - DAY

The Ichimonji standard; Taro's armor and his helmet with its orb plume and colored braids displayed on the alcove. Jiro and Lady Kaede are making love, in the daytime, in front of the display. All the more appealing is that she is in mourning clothes.

A voice is heard from below the stairs.

VOICE

General Kurogane is here!

Jiro and Lady Kaede are alarmed. They quickly straighten their clothes.

JIRO

Let him in.

Kurogane comes up the stairs, holding in his hand a package wrapped in white figured silk. He lays it by his knees and prostrates himself before Jiro and Lady Kaede.

KUROGANE

I have returned, my lord.

Jiro cannot take his eyes away from the package wrapped in silk by Kurogane's knees, and is silent. Lady Kaede, merely glancing at it, answers for Jiro.

KAEDE

Thank you for your trouble.

KUROGANE

Not at all, my lady. Now then, the article I have brought according to your precise instructions... please have a good look.

He takes the package and presents it to Kaede. Jiro, trembling, looks at it, then turns his eyes to Kurogane with a look of censure. Kurogane, with a look of feigned innocence, is watching Lady Kaede.

KAEDE

(Looking at Jiro from the corner of her eyes)

Well, then, I shall first examine it.

She pulls the package of white silk to her with a casual air that contrasts with Jiro's trembling face. Jiro turns his eyes away.

Kaede unwraps the many layers of the package. As it is unwrapped, salt falls out, then finally a large lump of salt appears. Kaede's long, beautiful fingers brush away the salt. All of a sudden she turns white.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

What is this? Kurogane, your joking has gone too far!

KUROGANE

You do not like it? Did I overlook something?

KAEDE

How dare you?

She thrusts the package aside. The lump of salt breaks open and falls away, and a stone fox's head rolls out. Jiro stares at it in mute amazement, then quickly looks at Kurogane.

KUROGANE

What is this? Lady Sué, whom I killed, must have been a fox in disguise. I have been tricked!

KAEDE

You have joked enough! This is from a fox statue from an Inari shrine!

KUROGANE

Well, this is a crafty fox... After disguising itself as a human, it then turned to stone!

KAEDE

Kurogane! Do you intend to make a fool of me?

KUROGANE

Not at all! There are a lot of foxes around here, and it is said that they often trick men.

(To Jiro)

You, too, my lord, must be careful. Foxes often take the form of a woman in order to work their evil deeds... Far away, in Central Asia, a fox, which disguised itself as the wife of King Pan Tsu, made the king kill a thousand men, and later in China, during the Chou dynasty, there was one who became the queen consort of King Yu and destroyed his country. Here in Japan, the fox served at court as Princess Tamamo and worked even more treachery. It is said that she finally turned into a white fox with nine tails. After that there was no trace of the white fox. It is possible it might have settled down around here. Be careful, my lord, be careful. Excuse me!

Kurogane rattles off his entire swift speech in one breath without stopping, then bows and exits. Kaede and Jiro are left defeated.

KAEDE

(Glares at Jiro)

Lord Jiro! Is this how you respond to my request? How can you conspire with Kurogane to fool me like this?

JIRO
No, Kaede! You are wrong!

KAEDE
I have had enough!

She rises and crosses to the stairs, followed by Jiro.

JIRO
Wait! Kaede. This is Kurogane's...

KAEDE
It is always Kurogane! Is he your
only retainer? He has already acted
the villain, killing Lord Taro. Now
he has played hero, saving Lady
Sué. He is a monster. And you call
him your right arm. What a pity!

Jiro is silent.

KAEDE (CONT'D)
I shall not see you again until I
see Lady Sué's head!

She descends the stairs. Jiro is immobile at the top of the
stairs, straight as a stick.

147-148 OMITTED

149 EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - HILL - DAY

Lady Sué, Tsurumaru, and the old woman are hurrying. The old
woman is in the lead guiding the others, carrying bundles.
Sué is holding Tsurumaru's hand. The blind boy has a cane.

TSURUMARU
(Suddenly stops)
Sister! My flute!

SUÉ
Forget it. We have no time to spare
for a flute. We must hurry.

TSURUMARU
But I have treasured it since I was
a child.

SUE
What shall we do?

OLD WOMAN

You must hurry because, as Kurogane said, we will have someone after us very soon. I will return and get the flute. Will you wait at the remains of the castle?

SUE

But you are old. I will go back for it.

OLD WOMAN

No, my lady. You wanted to see the remains of your family's castle, so we are taking this detour. Hurry there with Master Tsurumaru, and pray for your ruined family. Once in another domain, you will never be able to visit it again.

Sué is silent, filled with emotion.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Well, then...

She hands the bundles to Sué and trudges back along the trail. Sué and Tsurumaru are left alone. The sound of the wind whining through the trees. Sué shudders as if frightened.

SUE

Tsurumaru, let us hurry.

They hasten on their way, hand in hand, up the hill.

SUE (CONT'D)

Tsurumaru! I can see our castle! I mean the remains of the castle!

TSURUMARU

Which way, sister?

SUE

Over there...

She suddenly realizes she should not have said this and gazes at her blind brother in remorse and sorrow, speechless. The remains of Azusa Castle are in the distance.

150-151 OMITTED

152 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Hidetora and Kyoami are ambling along. Hidetora is wandering this way and that, Kyoami following as if he were a nurse taking care of a child. When Hidetora nears the stone wall, Kyoami pulls him back to safety. When Hidetora crouches, Kyoami stops and patiently waits on him. His attitude is kind, but his words are rough, as if he were master and Hidetora his servant.

The passage they are treading is bleak and devastated. The two look as if they were the only survivors of the world's final carnage. And their conversation, too, sounds as if they were in some other world, muttering about human beings and their stupidity.

KYOAMI

Heaven and earth have turned upside down. I was mad and made him laugh before. But now *he* is mad and makes *me* laugh. Come, do not be silent. Say something. You speak of nonsense; I speak of truth. Let us see if our conversation can continue smoothly. Now!

(Shouts)

Old man!

Hidetora, who has been gazing absently at a point in space, reacts and regards Kyoami.

HIDETORA

Where am I?

KYOAMI

A snake's egg is white and beautiful. A bird's egg is spotted and dirty.

HIDETORA

This is a castle. There is a stone wall.

KYOAMI

The little bird deserted the dirty egg and sat on the white one.

HIDETORA

(Looks up at the wall)

Strange.

KYOAMI

A snake emerged from the hatched egg.

HIDETORA
There is nothing on the wall.

KYOAMI
The bird raised the snake, only to
fall prey to it.

HIDETORA
Where am I? Who am I?

KYOAMI
The bird was stupid.

HIDETORA
Saburo! Saburo!

Kyoami looks hopefully at Hidetora.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
Oh, it hurts. I am going mad!

KYOAMI
If a madman goes mad again, will he
become sane?

HIDETORA
I am a worm! Do not crush me!

KYOAMI
You will not be crushed. Miserable
worms are not even worth being
crushed.

HIDETORA
Who are you?

Kyoami, in despair, pushes Hidetora away, crouches, and
starts crying.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
Is someone crying?... Who is
crying?

Kyoami suddenly springs up and shouts.

KYOAMI
All human beings cry when they are
born. They die after they have
cried enough.

Horrified, Hidetora runs away. Kyoami, too, runs after him.

154 EXTERIOR - BOUNDARY - RIVER BANK - DAY

Saburo and Tango, both in armor, ride across the river leading a troop. Jiro's garrison, guarding the boundary, hurriedly retreats.

155 OMITTED

156 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - DAY

A messenger rushes in and kneels in front of Jiro, Kurogane, Naganuma, and Shirane.

MESSENGER

Lord Saburo and his men crossed the boundary river and have taken a position on Hachiman Field.

KUROGANE

I fail to understand. Lord Saburo brought only his own men. What can they possibly do?

Another messenger comes running.

MESSENGER

A message from Lord Saburo!

JIRO

What? What does it say?

MESSENGER

"Saburo has come to receive his father..."

Jiro looks puzzled.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

"...Unless he is interfered with, he will withdraw, taking his father with him in peace." That is his message.

Surprised, not expecting this message, they look at each other.

Yet another messenger rushes in and kneels in front of Jiro and his confidants.

MESSENGER (CONT'D)

Fujimaki's army has advanced to the boundary!

JIRO

What!

157 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Saburo's well-trained and disciplined soldiers are waiting calmly. Their banners and bannerets are azure, waving in the summer breeze.

Saburo, Tango, and Hatakeyama are looking up at the mountain ridge behind them. The ridge is lined with waves of Fujimaki's soldiers and their white banners.

SABURO

That embarrasses me. I told him repeatedly that I do not need his support.

TANGO

You do not have to be embarrassed. Thanks to Lord Fujimaki's demonstration of his possible invasion, the enemy on this Hachiman Field cannot make an aggressive move. It also enables us to rescue the Great Lord from Azusa Field.

SABURO

But this aggressive deployment of his army is not a peaceful way. One wrong move might provoke a war. That embarrasses me.

158 EXTERIOR - BOUNDARY RIVER - DAY

Fujimaki, with his army behind him, turns to an old general beside him.

FUJIMAKI

Am I too hasty?

The general returns a questioning look.

FUJIMAKI (CONT'D)

I was so worried that I brought my army, but I am afraid my son-in-law will be angry with me.

GENERAL

As long as you stay here within the boundary, he has no reason to be angry with you.

159 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DAY

Messengers are galloping this way and that.

MESSENGER

Prepare for war!

Suddenly the castle is thrown into a turmoil.

160 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - DAY

Jiro, Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma.

KUROGANE

My lord. You should not fight now. Send a messenger that you will let Lord Saburo have the Great Lord, and avoid this war!

JIRO

How can I let him have my father? If I did, Saburo, in alliance with him, would soon raise his banners against me, using the excuse that he would punish my men for treason.

KUROGANE

But even if we wanted to give up the Great Lord, we do not know where he is.

Jiro is silent.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

At present, the people of our land are in confusion and distress because of this series of changes in rulership. And Fujimaki and Ayabe are seeking a chance to invade by making use of the confusion. Now is the time for defense, not offense.

VOICE

Reporting! A message from the Lady Kaede to the Lord Jiro!

Jiro looks puzzled.

VOICE (CONT'D)

She says she is expecting the immediate return of the Lord Jiro for the ceremony of congratulations for going to war.

Jiro steals an embarrassed glance at Kurogane.

161 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Saburo's position with azure banners and bannerets. Beyond are a few mounted scouts with red bannerets that indicate they belong to Jiro. They gallop up and down as they observe Saburo's position.

TANGO

All right. The enemy main force will come soon. When they come, we will go through the forest and rescue the Great Lord.

SABURO

Do not be hasty.

162-163 OMITTED

164 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - DAY

Kaede puts the saké server on the floor.

KAEDE

How stupid!

Jiro, at the ceremony of congratulations, is about to drink; he stops and looks at her.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Giving the Great Lord to Lord Saburo means giving him your own head, my lord.

JIRO

I said so, too.

KAEDE

Then why did you alter your opinion? Did Kurogane change your mind again?

JIRO

But... it is not a good time for us to fight.

KAEDE

Good leadership decides who wins. Now you lead. Why be afraid of Fujimaki and Ayabe? This is your chance to beat them and make their domains yours. As leader of the House of Ichimonji, you should have that ambition.

Jiro is overwhelmed by her eloquence.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

In the first place, it was a grievous mistake to have spared the Great Lord even though he had gone mad. Mercy is not necessary for a Samurai.

JIRO

But how can I kill my father when I do not know where he is?

KAEDE

(Laughs)

Lord Saburo knows where he is. He would not want to take a missing man home if he had not known.

Jiro reacts.

KAEDE (CONT'D)

Tell Lord Saburo that he can have his father. Watch carefully how he moves, and if he goes anywhere, tail him. You will find where you father is. Then send assassins to him, and that will end it.

She picks up the saké server and pours Jiro a drink. Jiro holds the cup, aghast.

165 OMITTED

166 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - DAY

Hidetora and Kyoami come walking along.

HIDETORA
 (Stops, looks around)
 I am lost.

KYOAMI
 Human beings are always lost. Human
 beings have walked the same way
 again and again from the earliest
 times. If you prefer not to do it,
 jump from this wall.

Hidetora suddenly jumps. Taken aback, Kyoami looks down from
 the top of the stone wall, then runs down the meandering
 passage as fast as he can.

167 EXTERIOR - EMPTY MOAT AROUND STONE WALL - DAY

Hidetora looks around, bewildered, while seated on a thick
 growth of vines. Kyoami comes running.

KYOAMI
 Great Lord!
 (Clings to Hidetora)

HIDETORA
 (Seemingly transfixed)
 Who is that?

Kyoami finds traces of sanity in his face, reacts, and looks
 back. Lady Sué is standing on the stone wall of what was once
 the donjon of her father's castle.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
 Sué!
 (Runs toward the foot of
 the wall)
 Sué!

Shocked, Lady Sué is immobile on the wall at the sight of the
 ruined lord. Hidetora looks up at her then glances around
 fearfully.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
 These are the remains of Sué's dead
 father's castle, which I destroyed.
 Why am I here?

Tsurumaru appears on the wall.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)
 Tsurumaru!

TSURUMARU

(Listens)

That voice is... Hidetora's!

As he hears the voice, Tsurumaru swings up his cane. His long hair almost bristling with rage, his young and handsome face seems to intensify his wrath and the tragedy he has suffered. Hidetora stares at the blind boy, then staggers back, shouting, trying to flee.

HIDETORA

Forgive me! Forgive me!

KYOAMI

(Surprised; stops
Hidetora)

Great Lord! Do not leave!

With the extraordinary strength of a desperate man, Hidetora pushes him aside and runs away. Kyoami pursues.

168 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - PASSAGE - DAY

Kyoami misses Hidetora in the labyrinth of passages and runs to the underground storeroom.

169 INTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - STOREROOM

Kyoami rushes in. Hidetora is not in sight. He runs out.

169A EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - FRONT GATE - STONE WALL - DAY

Kyoami comes running and looks around. Hidetora is seen running in Azusa Field as Kyoami looks down. Kyoami hurriedly runs after the old lord.

169B EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Jiro's army is taking a position against Saburo's troops. The cavalry churns up clouds of dust, foot soldiers hastening to their posts making more dust. Through the haze, we can see various banners and bannerets on horses and soldiers' backs, in flamboyant colors, as well as the shining tips of spears, moving quickly this way and that.

Out of the crowd and dust emerges a messenger on horseback, moving toward Saburo's position. He dismounts in front of Saburo and kneels, a hand on the ground.

MESSENGER

Lord Jiro's answer is this: "We have no intention of stopping you. Receive the Great Lord and quickly withdraw from our domain."

SABURO

All right.

The messenger bows, mounts, and gallops away.

TANGO

Lord Saburo. Let us go at once to the Great Lord.

SABURO

Not so fast. If we move rashly, they will find out where my father is. It would be dangerous. We had best wait until night.

Hatakeyama looks away and raises his spear to point to the ridge.

HATAKEYAMA

My lord, the Ayabe army is moving in his domain.

SABURO

(Looks at ridge)
Having smelled blood, the vulture is seeking the prey!

169C EXTERIOR - RIDGE IN AYABE REALM - DAY

Ayabe is looking down at the field, his army behind him.

169D EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Jiro, Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are looking up at the Ayabe army on the ridge. Jiro's horse is restless, responding to its master's feelings.

KUROGANE

(Regards Jiro)

My lord, be calm. Now is the time to decide the ruler of this land. You must show your immovable strength and give neither Fujimaki nor Ayabe any opportunity for invasion.

JIRO

(Looks over at Saburo's
position)

He said he came to receive Father,
but he is still quiet. What is he
planning?

169E EXTERIOR - SABURO'S POSITION - DAY

Saburo is gazing at the sun in the western sky.

170 EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - DAY

Lady Sué and Tsurumaru.

SUE

(Gazing at field)

She is late. Even though she is old
and cannot walk fast, she is late.
I will go back and see what
happened.

TSURUMARU

No!

(Gropes for her, takes her
hand)

Do not go! I do not want the flute
anymore.

SUÉ

Are you unable to understand? As if
you were a little child...

TSURUMARU

Sister, I do not want to be alone
again.

SUÉ

I will not be long. I will return
soon.

TSURUMARU

Sister!

171 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Jiro's position and Saburo's facing each other quietly.
Except for the waving of banners and bannerets, there is no
movement on either side.

171A EXTERIOR - SABURO'S POSITION - DAY

A messenger comes galloping up, Kyoami behind him on his horse. He stops in front of Saburo and Tango.

MESSENGER

I found this man in Azusa Field. He was calling the Great Lord, so I brought him here.

TANGO

Kyoami! Where is the Great Lord?

KYOAMI

(Almost falls from the horse)

Forgive me! He has gone! I do not know where he is.

Tango sighs, regards Saburo.

SABURO

Kyoami! You lost him in Azusa Field?

KYOAMI

Yes.

SABURO

We have no choice. We cannot wait until night now.

(Calling)

Hatakeyama!

HATAKEYAMA

(Voice-over)

My lord.

Hatakeyama, the garrison leader, comes galloping up.

SABURO

Tango and I will go to Azusa field with ten men. Take command here. Draw the enemy to your position and never let it go.

171B EXTERIOR - JIRO'S POSITION - DAY

Jiro notices the sudden move in Saburo's position. A small party is moving out.

JIRO

They have started to move. That party led by Saburo is heading for Azusa Field... Commander of the gunners! Take your men to Azusa Field and lay an ambush, the one who kills Saburo will be given the highest honors!

Surprised, Kurogane rides to Jiro.

KYOAMI

What are you saying! If you break your promise to Lord Saburo, war is inevitable.

JIRO

Then so be it!

Kurogane is bewildered.

JIRO (CONT'D)

Sooner or later war becomes inevitable. If later, Saburo will have enough reason to attack us. Better to fight today, blaming him for invasion, than to wait for his abuse.

KUROGANE

Idiot! Saburo is not our only enemy!

JIRO

I know. If Fujimaki and Ayabe attempt to cross the border, they will be welcome. We will counterattack and break into their realm. It will be our chance to take their domains.

KUROGANE

What brave words! But battles are not won with words.

JIRO

Why do you fear this war? You always rebuked me for my defensive thoughts. Where is that Kurogane? As Kaede said, you are a coward in the guise of a villain!

KUROGANE

(Glares at Jiro)

You have again been influenced by
Lady Kaede.

JIRO

Silence! If you are loath to fight,
do not follow me! If you fear this
war, desert!

KUROGANE

(Painfully watches Jiro)

My lord... where do you think I
could go if I deserted you?

Shirane and Naganuma, behind Kurogane, watch Jiro in disgust. Guiltily surveying their faces, Jiro has no further words for them. As if to forget his remorse, he turns to the commander of gunners.

JIRO

(Shouting)

Commander! What are you waiting
for? Go!

COMMANDER

As you command.

(To his men)

Follow me!

The commander hurriedly leads his gunners away, leaving a trail of dust.

171C EXTERIOR - SABURO'S POSITION - DAY

Hatakeyama watches the opposite position, where a sudden activity has arisen.

HATAKEYAMA

Messenger! Report to Lord Saburo!
"Enemy gunners have departed for
Azusa Field. Be careful!" Tell him
so.

171D EXTERIOR - JIRO'S POSITION - DAY

Jiro raises his military fan.

JIRO

Forward! Straight forward!

Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are disagreeably watching Jiro. Jiro's army begins to advance.

171E EXTERIOR - SABURO'S POSITION - DAY

HATAKEYAMA

Damn them! They are breaking the agreement and trying to pick us off with their guns. We will move to the forest over there. Follow me!

Saburo's troops turn right in perfect formation and move to the forest that separates Azusa Field from Hachiman Field.

171F EXTERIOR - JIRO'S POSITION - DAY

Jiro, on horseback, sees this movement of Saburo's troops.

JIRO

Forward! Forward! Pursue the enemy! Turn left, with the left wing as an axis!

KUROGANE

My lord. If the battle begins, they will pull back into that forest. Our numerical superiority means nothing if we fight in the forest. It is easy to defend and difficult to attack.

JIRO

If they run into the forest, we will burn it!

172 EXTERIOR - FUJIMAKI REALM - ON A HILL - DAY

Fujimaki and the old general are watching the Ichimonji realm.

FUJIMAKI

My son-in-law's troops are being pursued. I can no longer merely wait and watch.

OLD GENERAL

Our realm extends to the river. Your son-in-law would not blame you if you advanced to the border line.

The old general raises his whip, signaling his men who are waiting behind, then gallops down the hill with Fujimaki. The Fujimaki army follows, avalanching down the hill.

173 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Saburo's troop is moving to the forest, Jiro's army following leftward. In the rear are Jiro and his staff members - Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma. Kurogane and the others stop as they look away.

KUROGANE
My lord! My lord!

He points with his whip.

174 EXTERIOR - RIDGE - FUJIMAKI REALM - DAY

The Fujimaki army is avalanching down the slope.

175 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - DAY

Jiro reins in his horse. The horse rears up.

JIRO
(Glares)
What is Ayabe doing?
(Looks up at ridge in
Ayabe realm)

The Ayabe troop on the ridge is quiet.

JIRO (CONT'D)
Good. We will sweep Saburo's troop
away before Ayabe makes a move.
Naganuma! You take command of the
right wing and guard the river. Do
not allow the enemy to cross, not
even a single soldier! Go ahead!

Naganuma gallops away.

176 OMITTED

177 EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

This vast field is quiet. The sun is setting on the ridge of the mountain. The reddish sunlight has already begun to dye the summer grass. Heaven is preparing a magnificent sunset.

Saburo and Tango have stopped their horses in the summer grass. They are watching their men gallop this way and that. They cast, from time to time, a worried glance at Kyoami, who is crying and desperately searching for Hidetora.

177A EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Saburo's soldiers, led by Hatakeyama in front of the forest, are bravely fighting the surrounding Jiro's army. The troop, though numerically inferior to the enemy force, looks invincible with the superb commander.

Looking at the battle, Jiro is irate, his eyes reddened.

JIRO

(Shouts)

What are you doing? They are few in number. Beat them! Crush them!

A messenger comes galloping up.

MESSENGER

My lord! My lord! The main force of Ayabe has crossed the boundary and is swarming to the First Castle!

JIRO

What!

He gazes at the messenger, startled, then turns the gaze to the ridge, where the Ayabe army is still quiet.

KUROGANE

They got us! It was a trick! The troop on the ridge is a decoy!

Jiro, shocked, turns pale.

177B EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

VOICE

Master Saburo! Master Saburo!

Saburo reacts and looks away. Kyoami is hopping and shouting:

KYOAMI

Here is the Great Lord! He is here!

Saburo and Tango gallop up to him. He is holding Hidetora, who has been lying in the grass. Saburo and Tango dismount and help Kyoami. Hidetora looks at the three with vacant eyes.

HIDETORA
How cruel you are! How could you
pull me from my grave?

SABURO
Don't you recognize me?

HIDETORA
(Regards Saburo's helmet)
You are a demon. You have horns on
your head.

TANGO
He has yet to regain his senses.
Let us carry him quietly.

Hidetora looks around as if awakening from a nightmare.

HIDETORA
(Looks up at sky)
Oh, what a beautiful sky!... Am I
in Heaven?

Saburo exchanges glances with Tango.

SABURO
Father!

HIDETORA
Father? Who do you mean by
"Father"? Wait. I remember. I had
three sons. And you seem to be one
of them.

SABURO
Yes. I am Saburo.

HIDETORA
Saburo?

SABURO
Yes.

HIDETORA
It is true! You are Saburo! How can
I show my face to you? With what
words should I apologize? If you
tell me to take poison, I will
gladly comply.

SABURO
What are you saying? I do not hate
you, Father.

HIDETORA

Never try to deceive me. I have had
my fill of sweet, false words!

Saburo gazes at his old father, tears running down his
cheeks.

TANGO

Great Lord, look at his eyes. Does
he look like a liar? Some speak of
love without the least thought of
it, but none sheds tears of
sincerity like his without a full
heart.

SABURO

Father, let us go. You can forget
your bad dream by living with me.

HIDETORA

(Bursts into tears,
stammers)

I wish you to forget my cruel
attitude toward you. I hope you can
forgive me. I was a stupid old
fool!

SABURO

Father!

HIDETORA

Saburo!

Tango and Kyoami watch the father and son in each other's
arms with silent relief and emotion.

177C EXTERIOR - RIDGE - AYABE REALM - LATE AFTERNOON

The Ayabe army finally begins to move, starting its invasion.
As the soldiers look down...

178 EXTERIOR - HACHIMAN FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

Jiro's army is retreating. Soldiers, on horseback and foot,
are desperately running for their lives in total confusion,
pale and stricken with fear. The red bannerets on their backs
whirl and dash like the gushing stream of a torrent.

Crazily shouting amid the confusion are Jiro, Kurogane,
Shirane, and Naganuma, their faces unusually ugly and fierce.
But their voices are inaudible, drowned in the tumult.

Saburo's troops, led by Hatakeyama, are in hot pursuit of the retreating enemy, triumphant but quiet, in ranks and formation, well trained and disciplined, in contrast to Jiro's army. Hatakeyama in the lead raises his spear and reins up his horse.

HATAKEYAMA

(Shouts)

Halt! That is enough!

179-182 OMITTED

183 EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - SUNSET

Saburo's party, in single file, is crossing the field toward the Fujimaki realm. Saburo is in the lead, Hidetora seated behind him on the same horse, Tango following, carrying Kyoami on his horse. They are quietly advancing in the soft light of the setting sun - a picturesque sight.

Suddenly the serenity is broken by gunshots. Several mounted Samurai fall from their horses. Hidetora, holding Saburo from behind, realizes that his son suddenly goes limp, his head drooping.

HIDETORA

(Surprised)

Saburo! What is wrong, Saburo?

Saburo is silent. His body slowly tilts, then finally falls from his horse together with Hidetora, who is clinging to him.

Tango and Kyoami, shocked, dismount and run to them. Hidetora, bending over Saburo, suddenly looks up at Tango and Kyoami, seeking rescue; he shouts in grief. His voice is so sad it seems his heart is breaking.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

My son is dead!... I can still tell the living from the dead. Saburo is dead! I am alive; you are alive; but Saburo is not! Saburo! You must not die so soon! I have something to tell you. I owe you an apology! Can this be fair? Saburo! Come back to life!

TANGO

Great Lord! Compose yourself!

HIDETORA

Do not approach me! Saburo is dead!
Every one of you is a murderer!
Every one deserves death!

TANGO

Great Lord! Great Lord!

HIDETORA

Who are you? It is getting dark.
Damn old fool! I can no longer
live! I am suffocating! Someone,
open my chest!

Kyoami quickly loosens his clothes at the chest.

HIDETORA (CONT'D)

(Screams)

Saburo!

(Goes limp)

It is the last of the great warrior who once reigned supreme.
Kyoami clings to him.

KYOAMI

Great Lord! Great Lord!

Tango watches everything in deep sorrow.

TANGO

Kyoami. You must not call back his
soul. You must not let him wander
in this hellish world any longer.

Tango and Kyoami, as well as Saburo's men who are surrounding
the corpse, silently behold the horrible sight of death, the
old warlord lying atop his lifeless son.

Over track, we hear hoofbeats. A messenger comes riding up.

MESSENGER

We have won! The enemy is
retreating toward the First Castle!

TANGO

(More sorrowful than
pleased)

What is this? Of all things, Master
Saburo is no longer with us to
hear! The Great Lord is no longer
here to see it! Why? Why?

Kyoami suddenly rises and spits toward Heaven.

KYOAMI

(Yelling)

Is there no God or Buddha in this world? Damnation! God and the Buddha are nothing but mischievous urchins! Are they so bored in Heaven that they enjoy watching men die like worms? Damn God! Is it so amusing to see and hear human beings cry and scream?

TANGO

Enough! Do not slander God or the Buddha! They are the ones who are crying! The evil of human beings... the stupidity of the sinful creatures, who believe their survival depends on killing others, repeated again and again throughout all time... Even God or the Buddha cannot save us from it.

Kyoami bursts out crying loudly.

TANGO (CONT'D)

Do not cry! This is nothing unusual in this mortal world. Human beings seek sorrow, not happiness, and prefer suffering to peace. Look at the First Castle! Those stupid people are fighting for sorrow and suffering, reveling in murder and bloodshed!

184 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - SUNSET

Shouts, screams, destruction, and massacre. Sounds of carnage and turmoil fill the castle - clanking swords and spears, storming footsteps, neighing horses, whistling arrows, reports of guns.

Soldiers charging; clouds of dust. Banners and spearheads appearing and disappearing in the haze. Soldiers, friend and foe, swarming toward the front gate, which is about to be closed. They fight to enter the castle before the gate is closed and squeeze themselves through the gap between the doors. Banners and bannerets of Ichimonji and Ayabe intermingle with each other.

185 OMITTED

186 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - SQUARE - SUNSET

The front gate is closed. Two groups of soldiers from both sides are trapped in the square between the gates. They desperately struggle and fight for their lives, the slaughter going unobserved.

From the tower and the firing battlements above the square, bullets shower on the soldiers, killing them at random, friend and foe alike. Gunfire flashing in the slanting sunbeams in the sunset.

187 OMITTED

188 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - PASSAGE - SUNSET

Jiro, Kurogane, Shirane, and Naganuma are silently watching the confusion, uncomprehendingly. Samurai and soldiers are running in all directions, not knowing what to do. Jiro and the other generals have no way of quelling the confusion.

From the crazed mob a spirited Samurai, carrying something wrapped under his arm, runs toward Jiro.

SAMURAI

My lord! My lord!

KUROGANE

(To Samurai)

Is it the Lord Saburo's head? Or the Great Lord's? Either way it is of no use now.

SAMURAI

No. My lord ordered me to bring Lady Sué's head.

Astonished, Kurogane wrests the wrapping from the Samurai and opens it. The cloth contains a beautiful floral design.

189 EXTERIOR - TSURUMARU'S HUT - SUNSET

Two corpses are resting on the grass and flowers of the field - the old woman and Lady Sué. The young lady's neck is covered with a bundle of wild flowers which were picked by rough hands, but her slender white arm is revealed from under her torn sleeve. The hand clasps Tsurumaru's flute - a sad and cruel sight.

190 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - PASSAGE - SUNSET

Kurogane looks up away from the wrapping, glares fiercely at Jiro.

KUROGANE

Is the master of this castle you or
Lady Kaede? I serve you, my lord,
but not Lady Kaede!

(Runs to donjon)

JIRO

Wait!

(Pursues)

190A EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - CASTLE GATE - SUNSET

Fire arrows flying.

191 INTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - DONJON - LADY KAEDE'S ROOM - SUNSET

Despite the confusion and clamor, Lady Kaede is quietly seated, ignoring the women who run about seeking refuge. Her lips display a cold smile, as if she were enjoying the turmoil.

The door bangs open, and Kurogane rushes in.

KUROGANE

Vixen! You fooled the lord! You
caused him to do useless things,
and you have now destroyed the
House of Ichimonji! Now you should
know the shallowness and stupidity
of a woman's wisdom!

KAEDE

(Calmly)

It is not shallow or stupid. I
wanted to see this castle burn and
the House of Ichimonji ruined by
the long grudge of my family. I
wanted to see all this!

KUROGANE

To Hell with you!

He draws his sword and kills her with a single stroke. A stream of smoke comes hovering over the blood-drenched corpse of Lady Kaede. The smoke creeps to Jiro, too, who is standing aghast, watching the body of his treacherous woman.

KUROGANE (CONT'D)

(To Jiro)

There is no escape. Prepare to die.
I will follow you later.

192 EXTERIOR - FIRST CASTLE - SUNSET

The castle is belching fire and smoke. The Ayabe soldiers are cheering and dancing crazily as they look up at the castle in flames.

193 EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - SUNSET

Saburo's party, reduced in number, is crossing the field in the glow of the evening. Two groups of soldiers are carrying the corpses of Saburo and Hidetora on crossed spears. Tango and Kyoami as well as Saburo's guards are silently following.

Saburo's troops, led by Hatakeyama, and the Fujimaki cavalry are sweeping the summer field like a black tide. They see the corpses of Saburo and Hidetora, and lower their spears in mourning.

FUJIMAKI

Alas! Of all things!

(Discouraged, his head
drops, then he looks up)

Men! Let us avenge my son-in-law!
Follow me! We will take the First
Castle!

TANGO

(Stops him)

That is not necessary. Master
Saburo had no ambition. He wanted
to avoid war. You had better
withdraw your army today out of
mourning for Master Saburo, and
pray for him.

Fujimaki nods, raises his whip, and bisects the surrounding cavalry to make way for Saburo's troops. Those with the bodies of Saburo and Hidetora resume their advance.

Twilight creeps to the field, darkening the figures of these humans who have seen hell in this world. The glow of the evening is as red as blood, slowly paling, giving way to dusk. Azusa Field is beginning to disappear under the cloak of evening.

Far beyond the field, upon the stone walls of the remains of Azusa Castle, a small figure is seen.

193A EXTERIOR - REMAINS OF AZUSA CASTLE - STONE WALL - SUNSET

Tsurumaru wanders alone, cane in hand. His cane knocks at the stones at the top of the wall, then finds nothing further. Surprised, he steps back. The scroll falls from his hand, rolls down the high wall of the donjon, opens, and lands on the grass in the empty moat.

The picture of the Amitabha, torn in places, shines golden in the last light from the darkening sky. The face of the Amitabha looks sad as it gazes at the upper side of the wall.

193B EXTERIOR - AZUSA FIELD - SUNSET

On top of the steep stone wall, Tsurumaru is at a loss.

The evening glow is now in its final stages. The last light of day will soon fade, and darkness will reign over the realm.

Against the background of the last glow of evening, the small figure of Tsurumaru is standing alone on the lofty stone wall in the remains of the castle.

Wretchedness!

THE END