

# RASHOMON

The Continuity Script

From the film with screenplay by  
Akira Kurosawa & Shinobu Hashimoto

The title sequence consists of some ten shots of the half-ruined gate, Rashomon, in the rain. Superimposed over these are the title and credits, including, in some prints distributed in the United States, vignettes (oval-shaped insets) showing the major characters in action. Various details of the gate are seen: its steps, the base of a column, the eaves of the roof, puddles on the ground. Everywhere there is evidence of the downpour. Gagaku, traditional court music, is heard during the credits, then the sound of the torrential rain.

The final title reads: "Kyoto, in the twelfth century, when famines and civil wars had devastated the ancient capital.

1 LS: two men, a priest and a woodcutter, are sitting motionless, taking shelter under the gate.

2 MS from the side of the two, the woodcutter in the foreground, as they stare out at the rain with heads bowed. The woodcutter raises his head.

WOODCUTTER

I can't understand it. I just can't understand it at all.

3 MCU of the priest; he looks at the woodcutter and back again at the rain.

4 LS from directly in front. The two men continue to stare vacantly at the rain.

5 A general LS view of the gate; a man enters from behind the camera and runs toward the gate, splashing through puddles. Thunder is heard.

6 LS from reverse angle. The man runs past a fallen column, and disappears from the frame.

7 MS of the steps of the gate; he enters from behind the camera and runs up the steps to shelter.

8 MS: out of the rain, he turns and looks back outside, then removes a rag covering his head and wrings it out. The woodcutter's voice is heard.

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

I just can't understand it.

9 LS: the newcomer, in the background, turns toward the priest and woodcutter, who are sitting in the foreground.

10 MS of the newcomer. He goes toward the others--the camera panning with him--and sits behind the woodcutter.

COMMONER  
What's the matter?

11 MS of the woodcutter and commoner.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
What can't you understand?

WOODCUTTER  
I've never heard of anything so  
strange.

COMMONER  
Why don't you tell me about it?

12 MS of all three men, the priest in the foreground. The  
commoner looks toward the priest.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
Good thing we have a priest here—he  
looks smart too.

PRIEST  
Oh, even Abbot Konin of the  
Kiyomizu Temple, though he's known  
for his learning, wouldn't be able  
to understand this.

COMMONER  
Then you know something about this  
story?

PRIEST  
I heard it with my own ears, seen  
it with my own eyes. And only  
today.

COMMONER  
Where?

PRIEST  
In the prison courtyard.

COMMONER  
The prison?

PRIEST  
A man has been murdered.

COMMONER  
What of it? One or two more...

He stands up.

13 MS of the commoner standing over the others; he looks down.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

Only one? Why, if you go up to the top of this gate you'll always find five or six bodies. Nobody bothers about them.

He begins to take off his shirt.

14 MS of the priest; he turns and looks up at the commoner.

PRIEST

Oh, you're right. Wars, earthquakes, great winds, fires, famines, plague--each new year is full of disaster.

He wipes his hand across his face.

15 MS, as in 13: the commoner wrings out his wet shirt.

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

And now every night the bandits descend upon us.

16 MS of the priest, as in 14.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

I, for one, have seen hundreds of men dying, killed like animals.

(Pause)

Yet... even I have never head anything as horrible as this before.

17 MS of the woodcutter, who has been listening; he turns to the priest.

18 MS, as in 14: the priest turns toward the woodcutter.

19 MS of the woodcutter and priest.

WOODCUTTER

Horrible--it's horrible.

The woodcutter looks away; dolly in to CU of the priest.

PRIEST

There was never anything as terrible as this. Never. It is more horrible than fires or wars or epidemics--or bandits.

Camera stays on him.

COMMONER (O.S.)  
 Look here now, priest—let's not  
 have any sermons.

The priest looks up.

20 MS of the commoner, as in 13.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
 I only wanted to know about this  
 strange story of yours because it  
 might amuse me while I wait out the  
 rain. But I'd just as soon sit  
 quietly and listen to the rain than  
 hear any sermons from you.

His wet shirt over his shoulder, he moves toward the camera.

21 LS: the commoner moves away, leaving the priest and  
 woodcutter sitting as before.

22 MS of the commoner at the other side of the gate; he peers at  
 some loose boards, then rips two of them free.

23 LS: he crosses back to squat in front of the woodcutter and  
 priest, and begins to pull the boards to pieces. The  
 woodcutter rises and runs over to him.

WOODCUTTER  
 Maybe you can tell me what it all  
 means. I don't understand it.

He squats down.

WOODCUTTER (CONT'D)  
 All three of them...

COMMONER  
 All three of whom?

WOODCUTTER  
 It's those three I wanted to tell  
 you about.

COMMONER  
 All right, tell me then, but don't  
 get excited. This rain won't let up  
 for some time.

Both men look up.

24 CU of the great signboard of the gate, seen in the opening shot of the titles: the sign reads "Rashomon" in large Japanese characters. The camera tilts down from the signboard to the men far below. The woodcutter moves closer to the commoner.

25 CU of the woodcutter.

WOODCUTTER

It was three days ago. I'd gone  
into the mountains for wood...

26 The dazzling light of the sun breaks through the branches of trees overhead as the camera travels through a dense woods. Music begins, a steady rhythm supporting a melody initially associated with the woodcutter but later becoming the underlying musical theme of the entire film.

27 CU of the woodcutter's ax, seen in a traveling shot, glinting in the sunlight as the woodcutter walks through the woods.

28 MCU of the woodcutter's face as he walks, ax over his shoulder, the camera tracking backward.

29 LS: panning from high above, the camera follows him.

30 A tree; the camera tilts from top to bottom to discover the woodcutter in the distance.

31 The camera pans with the woodcutter as he approaches a narrow bridge, crosses it, and goes off.

32 A forward-traveling shot of the sky seen through the branches of the trees passing overhead.

33 MCU of the woodcutter's back as he walks, the camera tracking after him.

34 A traveling shot as he moves rightward from LS closer to camera.

35 The sky and the tree branches, as in 32.

36 The camera travels toward the woodcutter, crosses in front of him, and pans around to follow his back receding into the woods.

37 The sun through the tree branches, as in 26.

38 The woodcutter from above. The camera travels as the woodcutter approaches, pans, and travels with him again, closer now, occasionally losing sight of him in the underbrush.

- 39 Extreme close-up of the back of the woodcutter's head, the camera tracking after him; again, the leaves sometimes block the view.
- 40 ECU: a traveling shot alongside the woodcutter; the view is frequently blocked.
- 41 ECU of the woodcutter's face as he walks toward the camera, camera tracking backward. Suddenly he and camera halt. Music ends.
- 42 CU of a woman's reed hat with veil, dangling on a branch near the ground. The woodcutter, in the background, looks at it and comes forward to touch the veil. Audible is a soft tinkle like the sound of wind chimes; it develops into bell-like music which is later associated with the woman. The woodcutter slowly walks on, the camera panning to watch as he recedes farther into the woods. The main thematic music begins again.
- 43 MS: traveling shot alongside the woodcutter; he looks about on either side as he walks cautiously on.
- 44 He approaches the camera and (MCU) looks down. He halts.
- 45 A close shot of a man's hat lying at his feet; he bends over to pick it up. The camera tilts up with him as he stands up straight again. He comes forward and goes off.
- 46 LS: he approaches, stops again (MS), and looks down; this time he picks up a piece of tope, and stares in front of him.
- 47 LS of something lying in the leaves.
- 48 A closer shot of the object: it is an amulet case.
- 49 CU of the woodcutter, who then moves to the right into MS range (pan) but stumbles; he jumps back with a look of horror on his face.
- 50 MS: the stiffly raised hands of a corpse are in front of him. A gong is sounded.
- 51 CU of the woodcutter's face; he leaps back, turns around and, his back to the camera, runs into the woods, dropping his ax as he goes.
- 52 MS: the camera moves rapidly alongside the woodcutter as he runs panic-stricken through the woods. His speech runs over this and the next two shots.

WOODCUTTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I ran as fast as I could to tell  
the police.  
(MORE)

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

That was three days ago. Then the police called me to testify.

53 MS: the camera continues to move with the woodcutter.

54 MS: the camera continues with him.

WIPE.

55 MS of the woodcutter kneeling on the sand of the prison courtyard.

WOODCUTTER (CONT'D)

Yes, sir. It was I who found the body first

(Pause)

He is obviously being questioned though we hear only his answers.

WOODCUTTER (CONT'D)

Was there a sword or anything? No, sir. Nothing at all. Only a woman's hat, caught on a branch... and a man's hat that had been trampled on. And a piece of rope... and further off an amulet case of red brocade.

(Pause)

Yes, sir. Yes, that was all I saw. I swear it.

He bows.

WIPE.

56 MS of the priest kneeling in the prison courtyard. Behind him is the woodcutter. The priest is testifying.

PRIEST

Yes, sir. I saw the murdered man when he was still alive. Well, it was about three days ago. It was in the afternoon. Yes, it was on the road between Sekiyama and Yamashina.

57 The priest is walking along a road which winds through a bamboo grove. Music in. Pan as he approaches the camera and passes it. He stops, back to camera. From the opposite direction a samurai approaches, leading a horse by the bridle. On the horse is a woman, sitting sidesaddle. The priest steps back and looks after them (pan); they recede into the distance.



PRIEST (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Her hat had a veil. I couldn't see  
 her face. The man was armed. He had  
 a sword, bow and arrows.

A gong sounds.

58 MS of the priest in the prison courtyard, as in 56.

PRIEST (CONT'D)  
 I never though I would see him  
 again; then, to see him dead like  
 that. Oh, it is true-life is  
 ephemeral, as fleeting as the  
 morning dew. But the pity of it.  
 What a pity that he should have  
 died like that.

He bows.

WIPE.

59 MS: the police agent is proudly testifying. Beside him, tied  
 up, sits the bandit, Tajomaru. Behind them sit the woodcutter  
 and the priest.

POLICE AGENT  
 Yes, it was I who caught Tajomaru.  
 Yes, indeed. That very same  
 notorious bandit who has been so  
 much talked about, even in the  
 outskirts of the city.

60 CU of the bandit gazing vacantly up at the sky, the voice of  
 the agent continuing.

61 The sky, filled with huge summer clouds.

POLICE AGENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Yes, this is the very same bandit,  
 Tajomaru, your honor. When I  
 finally caught him...

62 MS of the agent testifying, as in 59.

POLICE AGENT (CONT'D)  
 ...he was dressed like he is now,  
 and carried that Korean sword. It  
 was toward evening, day before  
 yesterday, by the riverbank at  
 Katsura.

Dolly to CU of agent. Music in, continuing into next shot.

63 The riverbank. Camera pans to follow as agent walks along the bank. He hears a horse neigh, and runs along the bank (away from camera) toward a man seen in LS range lying as though in agony. He leans over to lift the man and loses his grip, stumbling back into the river.

64 MS: Tajomaru, in the foreground, groaning, apparently in agony, writhing in the sand. In the background, the agent in the river. The camera travels left from them to reveal, farther down along the bank, a bow, arrows, and finally a horse.

POLICE AGENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There was a black-lacquered quiver holding seventeen arrows in all-- they all had hawk feathers. The bow was bound in leather... and there was a gray horse.

65 MS of the agent in the prison courtyard; the camera backs away from CU of him to same position as shot 59.

POLICE AGENT (CONT'D)

And they all belonged to the murdered man. But just imagine a fierce bandit like Tajomaru here being thrown by the very animal that he himself had stolen. It was retribution.

The bandit wheels toward him threateningly, hisses through his teeth, then bursts into laughter.

TAJOMARU

Retribution? Don't be stupid. On that day...

66 LS: a hill, low clouds. Triumphant music. Tajomaru, shouting, gallops across and off the screen in low foreground.

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

...while I was riding that gray horse I suddenly got very thirsty.

67 MS of Tajomaru, continuing in the prison courtyard.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

So when I got near Osaka Pass I had a drink at a stream.

68 LS from above. Tajomaru, stretched on the ground, drinks from a small stream. His heavy panting is heard.

69 MS of Tajomaru in the prison courtyard, as in 67.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

There must have been a snake or something in the upper stream, because after a few hours I began to have this terrible colic. Toward evening it got so I couldn't bear it any longer and so I got off the horse and lay down.

Dolly back to the two-shot [59] of Tajomaru and the police agent.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

And you thought I'd fallen off-hah!

He hisses and kicks the quiver lying in front of the agent.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

It takes a pretty stupid person to have an idea that stupid.

70 MCU of Tajomaru.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

No, I'm telling the truth. I know you're going to cut off my head sooner or later-I'm not hiding anything. It was me, Tajomaru, who killed that man. Yes, I did it. It was a hot afternoon, about three days ago, that I first saw them. And then all of a sudden there was this cool breeze. If it hadn't been for that breeze, maybe I wouldn't have killed him.

The bell-like music, like distant wind chimes, is heard as he concludes; the music continues into the next shot.

71 In the woods; the camera tilts from the great crown of an enormous tree down to its roots to reveal the bandit sprawled out sleeping at the base of another huge tree nearby. Music denoting the traveling couple fades in over the tinkling bells.

72 MS of Tajomaru asleep; the camera dollies in to closer range and pans around to reveal the samurai leading the horse on which the woman is riding.

73 Camera travels backward as it shows the pair coming down the road.

74 MCU of the bandit; he looks sleepily in their direction.

- 75 MS of the woman on horseback, her face barely visible through the veil of her hat.
- 76 MCU, as in 74: Tajomaru closes his eyes, scratches, appears to be falling asleep again, but then glances again in the direction of the couple.
- 77 LS: the pair approach the "sleeping" figure.
- 78 MS: profile of the samurai as he sees Tajomaru and hesitates.
- 79 MCU, as in 74: Tajomaru, his eyes half-open, staring back at the samurai.
- 80 MS: the samurai, now seen from in front, continues to assess Tajomaru.
- 81 MCU, as in 74: Tajomaru staring back; he scratches his leg lazily, closing his eyes again.
- 82 MCU: the samurai decides to move on, leading the horse toward the camera.
- 83 MCU of Tajomaru, as in 74, his eyes shut. Then, to the sound of the bell-like music, a fresh breeze stirs his hair; he opens his eyes, looks in the couple's direction, and gives a start.
- 84 CU of the feet of the woman, gently swinging with the movements of the horse; the camera tilts up to show her face as the veil is blown aside.
- 85 ECU of Tajomaru, now wide-awake, looking.
- 86 CU of the woman on horseback (pan), her veil parting to reveal her face fully.
- 87 ECU, as in 85: Tajomaru begins to raise himself up.
- 88 MS from behind Tajomaru, now in a sitting position. Pan as the horse and couple move past him in the background. Tajomaru turns and looks after them, then sinks back under the tree as they continue to move further down the road.
- 89 MS of Tajomaru, from in front. His sword rests between his legs, and now he slowly pulls it closer to him.
- 90 In the prison courtyard, Tajomaru continues his testimony, as in 70.

## TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

It was just a glimpse. First I saw her, then she was gone—I thought I had seen an angel.

(MORE)

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

And right then I decided I would  
take her, that I'd have her even if  
I had to kill the man...

He laughs.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

But if I could do it without  
killing him, then that would be all  
the better. So I decided not to  
kill him but to somehow get the  
woman alone. The road to Yamashina  
was hardly the place to do it  
though.

91 LS: Tajomaru runs through the woods toward the camera. Chase  
music in.

92 LS from the side; the camera travels with him as he races  
along.

93 MS: he runs down a slope (pan).

94 MS: pan to follow him as he leaps over a small brook and  
approaches the couple in the background. Music out.

95 MS of Tajomaru's back, the couple visible over his shoulder.  
The Samurai stops and turns.

SAMURAI

What do you want?

96 MCU of Tajomaru. He stares back at the samurai, absently  
slaps at a mosquito that has landed on his neck, then walks  
(pan) behind the horse (MS), glancing up at the woman.

97 MCU as Tajomaru eyes the pair, then walks to the front of the  
horse (MS) and crouches down.

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

What is it?

98 MS from behind the samurai as he approaches Tajomaru.

SAMURAI (CONT'D)

(threateningly)

What do you want?

Tajomaru rises and crosses back behind the horse (pan), into  
a clearing. As the samurai crosses in front of the horse into  
the clearing, Tajomaru suddenly draws his sword and swings it  
smartly—the samurai at once reaches for his own sword, but  
the bandit laughs loudly, for he is merely displaying his.

TAJOMARU

Isn't that splendid? Just look!

99 MS: reverse angle from behind Tajomaru as, in profile, he proudly raises his sword.

100 MS of Tajomaru as he steps up to the samurai and presents the sword, hilt first.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Here, take it. Look at it.

The samurai makes no move to accept it.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Near here I found this old tomb  
(points past camera)  
with lots of things like this in  
it. I broke it open and inside  
found swords, daggers, mirrors... I  
buried them all here in the woods  
and no one but me knows where. But  
if you're interested I might sell  
some of them to you cheap.

Tajomaru presents the sword again.

101 MCU from reverse angle as Tajomaru holds out the sword. The samurai abruptly takes it and examines it. Tajomaru glances in the woman's direction and scratches his cheek.

WIPE.

102 The forest, enormous trees. Idyllic music. The camera tilts down to reveal the woman sitting on the ground alone, the horse grazing behind her.

103 CU of the bow and arrows, which have been left lying on the ground near the woman.

104 LS: moving generally to the left, the bandit and the samurai are climbing a slope in the woods; a traveling shot from above and behind them. Music with drums accompanies the trek through the woods.

105 MS from above and in front of them as they continue up the slope (pan), now to the right, then turning.

106 LS: they push on to the left through the woods (pan).

107 MS: pan as they go on. Suddenly Tajomaru stops and draws his sword. The man recoils, thinking the bandit is about to fight.

Tajomaru laughs and with a shout pokes his sword toward the samurai. Then he begins slashing at the obstructing underbrush with the sword (pan).

108 CU: pan as the bandit hacks his way forward. He pauses.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)  
It's over there in that grove.

109 CU of the samurai, eyeing the bandit.

SAMURAI  
You walk ahead of me.

110 MS: samurai in the foreground; Tajomaru, in the background, waits, then turns from the camera and starts out, leading the way for the samurai.

111 MS: Tajomaru, hacking through the underbrush, leads the way as the two come toward the camera, which tracks backward.

112 MS: now the camera tracks forward and follows their backs.

113 MS: they approach the camera; it pans as they go off to the left. They proceed into the brush, away from camera.

114 MS: they approach from LS. Tajomaru stops and gestures.

TAJOMARU  
It's over there.

He replaces his sword in its scabbard.

The samurai moves past and in front of him (pan), and stands looking with his back to Tajomaru, who now is out of frame.

115 MS of Tajomaru-pan as he moves toward, then past the camera and attacks the other man, knocking him to the ground. Fight music punctuates the action. They roll over each other, but Tajomaru kicks the samurai away, then leaps through the air after him. The remainder of the fight is never seen, for as Tajomaru lands atop the samurai, a wipe leads into shot 116.

116 MS: a traveling shot of Tajomaru running to the right through the woods. He pauses for a moment to point back in the direction of the samurai, laughing and shouting.

117 CU: the camera continues to travel with him.

118 LS: still running and laughing loudly, he starts down a hill.

119 LS from the bottom of the hill. Tajomaru descends, stops, and peers through the bushes MCU.

- 120 Seen from over his shoulder, far below, stands the woman, waiting by a small brook. She crouches to dangle her hand in the water.
- 121 MS: a closer view of the waiting woman.
- 122 MCU, as in 119: Tajomaru looks down at her, his eyes wide.
- 123 MCU of the woman, serenely passing the time.
- 124 MCU, as in 119: Tajomaru peering down.
- 125 CU of the woman's hand, playing with the water as it flows gently past. Suddenly her hand stops.
- 126 MCU of the woman from the side as she turns abruptly to the camera, puzzled, and lifts her veil.
- 127 MCU, as in 119: Tajomaru sees she has noticed something and leaps forward from his hiding place.
- 128 MS from reverse angle. Tajomaru's back is to the camera as he bounds down toward her away from the camera.
- 129 Reverse angle from over the woman's shoulder in the foreground. Tajomaru runs swiftly up to her and stops, panting, in front of her.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Something terrible has happened.  
Your husband has been bitten by a  
snake.

- 130 MS: reverse angle of the woman from behind Tajomaru. Shocked, she stands up, removing her hat.
- 131 MCU of the bareheaded woman; she stares incredulously at the bandit.
- 132 MCU of Tajomaru in the prison courtyard, continuing his testimony.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

She became very pale and stared at me as though her eyes were frozen. She looked like a child when it turns suddenly serious. The sight of her made me jealous of that man; I started to hate him. I wanted to show her what he looked like, all tied up like that. I hadn't even thought of a thing like that before, but now I did.



- 133 MS: a traveling shot of Tajomaru running to the left through the woods, pulling the woman after him. Travel music begins.
- 134 MS of the woman; a traveling shot as she is pulled along by the wrist.
- 135 CU: a traveling shot of her hat dragging behind her; it snags on a branch (camera stops) and is left behind.
- 136 They run from LS up to the camera, which pans to reveal the samurai, tightly bound up, sitting in the clearing where Tajomaru attacked him. The woman stops abruptly.
- 137 MS of the samurai, helpless.
- 138 MCU of the woman who stands transfixed by the sight of her husband, Tajomaru behind her. The bandit steps forward past her.
- 139 LS from behind the husband, the woman and Tajomaru in the background: Tajomaru steps back to look at both of them.
- 140 MS from behind the husband, the woman in the background.
- 141 MS from behind the bandit, the husband in the background.
- 142 MS from the side of the woman, the bandit in the background.
- 143 MS from the side of the bandit, the woman in the background.
- 144 MS from behind the husband, the bandit in the background. The samurai looks toward his wife.
- 145 MS from the side of the woman, her husband in the background. The camera moves swiftly toward her and pans around then away from her (MS). CU: she suddenly turns to attack the bandit with her dagger. She races toward him, her weapon outstretched, but he dodges the thrust and springs around to look at her with admiring disbelief.
- 146 CU of her frenzied face as she regains her balance and whirls to charge again.
- 147 MS from behind her as she runs at him again (pan); he dodges, she turns and charges at him with the dagger held straight before her. Hysterical now, she misses and stumbles out of sight. The camera remains on Tajomaru's laughing face.
- 148 MS: Tajomaru in the foreground, the woman in the background; she dives forward and grabs his leg, but he pulls free.
- 149 MCU of Tajomaru; he stares down at her, excited by her desperate spirit.

150 MCU, stretched on the ground; she menaces him with the dagger held straight up at him, every muscle tense and ready.

TAJOMARU (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
She was fierce...

151 MCU of Tajomaru, as in 149; his admiration is unbounded.

TAJOMARU (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
...determined.

152 MCU of the woman, as in 150; she won't relent.

153 MS of the two of them; he continues to stand over her, silent, watchful.

TAJOMARU (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
She fought like a cat.

She starts to crawl away, then rises, slashes at him.

154 MS from reverse angle as he grabs her.

155 MCU: Tajomaru behind the woman. He shouts in pain as she sinks her teeth into his forearm; he flings her away and (pan) she trips to the ground.

156 MCU of Tajomaru; he licks his wound and moves forward.

157 MCU of the woman as she rises to attack again.

158 LS: she chases him to the right, wildly slicing the air with her dagger (pan). He circles a tree and continues in the opposite direction (pan).

159 MS: he reaches another tree, swings around it, and waits for her next move. She thrusts at him, sobbing, and they chase each other around the tree.

160 MS from right. He runs off (traveling shot); she follows, but collapses, exhausted; he stands jubilant over her.

161 LS: the woman in the foreground, in close range, helplessly sobbing; Tajomaru in the background. He stalks up to her, she lunges yet again, but now he grabs and holds her.

162 MCU of the husband watching them; he bows his head.

163 CU: the woman claws Tajomaru's face; he wrests his head free and pushes her to the ground (camera tilts down). She struggles but he kisses her.

164 The sky seen through the branches of the trees (pan).

- 165 CU of the bandit kissing her; she stares straight up.
- 166 The sky seen through the overhead branches (pan), as in 164.
- 167 CU from reverse angle; Tajomaru holding her, kissing her.
- 168 The sky and trees, as in 164. The camera has stopped panning; now the sun is seen shining brilliantly through the branches. Bell-like music begins.
- 169 ECU from reverse angle; Tajomaru kissing the woman, as she stares blankly up at the sun.
- 170 The sun through the branches, as in 168; slowly the scene goes out of focus.
- 171 ECU, as in 169. The woman closes her eyes.
- 172 CU of the dagger in her hand, Tajomaru tightly gripping her wrist. Her fingers loosen, the dagger drops to the ground.
- 173 CU of the dagger sticking point first in the ground.
- 174 MS of Tajomaru's back, the woman in his arms. The camera slowly dollies toward them during the kiss. Her hand encircles his back, her fingers move caressingly; she tightens her grip on him. Shot ends with ECU of the back of Tajomaru's head and an area of the woman's face as the kiss continues.
- 175 MS: in the prison courtyard, Tajomaru is laughing and kicking his feet exultantly.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

And so I had her—just as I'd  
planned, and without killing the  
husband. And that was how I did it.  
Besides, I hadn't intended to kill  
him. But then...

- 177 Shot of Tajomaru's back, beginning in close range, as he walks away from the camera to go off into the woods; the woman rushes after him (LS).

MS from reverse angle. She throws herself at his feet.

WOMAN

Wait. Stop. One of you must die.  
Either you or my husband.

- 178 MCU of her husband. Bound up, he stares without expression.
- 179 MCU of Tajomaru staring at the samurai; then he looks down at the woman.

180 MCU of the woman kneeling, seen from over Tajomaru's shoulder.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Either you or he must die. To be doubly disgraced, disgraced before two men, is more than I can bear.

181 MCU of Tajomaru looking down at her.

182 MCU, as in 180: the woman continues to speak intensely.

WOODCUTTER

I want... I will belong to whoever kills the other.

183 CU of the woman; her honor at stake, she looks up expectantly at the bandit.

184 ECU of Tajomaru. a fierce resolution comes over his face.

185 MCU of the woman on the ground. Tajomaru walks away to the samurai in the background (LS). The woman remains in the foreground with lowered eyes. Tajomaru takes out his sword.

186 MS: Tajomaru cuts the ropes binding the samurai, and holds out the unsheathed sword he has robbed from him. The samurai whips the sword from its scabbard and slashes at Tajomaru. The samurai then springs to his feet and they begin to fight (pan). They move away from the camera into the background.

187 MS: the two duel, slashing and parrying. Martial music.

188 MCU: Tajomaru turns, thrusts at the samurai.

189 MCU of Tajomaru's sword as the samurai dodges; Tajomaru pulls back and they cross swords again.

190 MS: the two of them fighting, Tajomaru in the foreground; the bandit heads away from the camera and scrambles up a slight incline.

191 MS: he slips and falls, but remains there in a sitting position, glaring defiantly at his opponent.

192 MS from reverse angle. The bandit's back in the foreground, the samurai visible below. Tajomaru scratches idly, then charges down the incline past the other man. Now in the background, the bandit turns and starts to walk insouciantly away, then whirls on his opponent.

193 Tajomaru lunges forward, the samurai backs out of the frame, Tajomaru follows.

The samurai charges back into the frame, followed again by the bandit. They fight toward the background; the samurai stumbles.

- 194 CU: the samurai, stumbling, falls to a sitting position.
- 195 MS: Tajomaru, in the background, circles menacingly around the samurai in the foreground.
- 196 MCU, as in 194, of the samurai on guard, ready to ward off Tajomaru's attack.
- 197 MCU of the bandit jabbing at the fallen samurai.
- 198 MCU, as in 194, of the samurai warding off the thrust.
- 199 MS, as in 197, of the bandit circling (pan), brandishing his sword, sometimes feinting a lunge.
- 200 The samurai, as in 194, still in a sitting position, turns with Tajomaru.
- 201 MCU, as in 197, of the bandit circling (pan) in the other direction.
- 202 MCU, as in 194, of the samurai, still sitting, sword in a defensive position.
- 203 MC, as in 197, of the bandit (pan) taunting, feinting—finally he lunges.
- 204 ECU: the samurai, who has kept in his free hand the rope that had bound him, now whips the rope at Tajomaru.
- 205 CU, as in 197: the bandit wards off the rope.
- 206 MS: the samurai is on his feet again, and the two cross swords, circling around so that the samurai's back is to the camera.
- 207 MS from reverse angle. The two men fight, running, struggling; they begin to duel around a tree, Tajomaru pursuing.
- 208 Camera dollies in to a closer shot of the two men fighting around the tree.
- 209 LS through the bushes of a thicket. The samurai is forced back into the thicket, his back to the camera; then he stumbles and falls on his back. Tajomaru moves in on him. The samurai's sword has become entangled in the undergrowth. Dolly in to MS of Tajomaru, who laughs, raises his sword to throw it, and spears the samurai with a mighty heave. Tajomaru stands looking down.

210 MS: in the prison courtyard, Tajomaru continues.

TAJOMARU

I wanted to kill him honestly,  
since I had to kill him. And he  
fought really well. We crossed  
swords over twenty-three times.  
Think of that! No one had ever  
crossed over twenty with me before.  
Then I killed him.

He laughs.

The camera has dollied back to reveal the police agent, as well as the priest and the woodcutter in the background.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

(answering the unheard  
voice of the official  
questioner)

What's that? The woman? Oh, she  
wasn't around anywhere. Probably  
got frightened and ran away. She  
must have been really upset.  
Anyway, when I came down the path  
again I found the horse grazing  
there. About that woman-it was her  
temper that interested me, but she  
turned out to be just like any  
other woman. I didn't even look for  
her.

(Pause)

What? His sword? Oh, I sold that in  
town on the same day, then drank  
the money up.

(Pause)

Her dagger? I remember, it looked  
valuable, had some kind of inlay in  
it. You know what I did? I forgot  
all about it. What a fool thing to  
do. Walked off and forgot it. That  
was the biggest mistake I ever  
made.

He laughs uproariously, kicking his feet on the ground.

211 MS of the rain pouring off the eaves of the Rashomon gate;  
the sound of the great downpour. Tilt down to reveal the  
three men below.

212 MS of the woodcutter, in the foreground, and the commoner,  
sitting by a fire; the commoner stretches and yawns.

COMMONER

Oh, that Tajomaru, he's famous for that sort of thing. He's worse than all the other bandits in Kyoto. Why, last fall a young girl went off with her maid to worship at the Toribe Temple and they found them murdered there afterwards. He must have done it.

He rises to fetch some wood.

213 LS: the priest in the foreground; the commoner, in the background, continues talking as he crosses behind the priest.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

They say the woman ran away and left her horse behind. I just bet he killed her.

He pulls some loose planks from the side of the gate. The priest rises to walk back to the commoner.

PRIEST

But the woman turned up in prison too, you know.

The commoner turns to listen.

214 MS from reverse angle, commoner in the foreground. The priest approaches the commoner.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

It seems she went to seek refuge at some temple and the police found her there.

The voice of the woodcutter cuts across this.

WOODCUTTER (O.S.)

It's a lie!

215 MCU of the woodcutter, the priest and commoner visible in the background.

WOODCUTTER (CONT'D)

It's a lie. They're all lies! Tajomaru's confession, the woman's story—they're lies!

COMMONER

Well, men are only men. That's why they lie.

He pulls a board loose and turns to speak again.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
They can't tell the truth, not even  
to themselves.

PRIEST  
That may be true. But it's because  
men are so weak. That's why they  
lie. That's why they must deceive  
themselves.

COMMONER  
Not another sermon!

He starts to move forward.

216 MS of the commoner, leaning forward as he puts the wood on  
the fire.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
I don't mind a lie. Not if it's  
interesting. What kind of story did  
she tell?

He looks up.

217 MS of the priest.

PRIEST  
Hers was a completely different  
story from the bandit's.

He comes and kneels between the others, the camera panning  
with him.

PRIEST (CONT'D)  
Everything was different.

218 CU of the priest.

PRIEST (CONT'D)  
Tajomaru talked about her temper,  
her strength. I saw nothing like  
that at all. I found her very  
pitiful. I felt great compassion  
for her.

219 LS of the prison courtyard, the woman prostrate in the  
foreground, the woodcutter and the priest kneeling in the  
background. The main thematic music begins softly and  
continues, almost uninterrupted, throughout the woman's  
version of the story.



At times gentle, at other times frenzied, it is the only musical theme through shot 254. The woman is bent over weeping; she raises her head.

220 MS of the woman, who slowly raises the upper half of her body.

WOMAN

And then, after having taken advantage of me, he told me-oh, so proudly-that he was the famous bandit Tajomaru. And then he sneered at my husband.

221 MCU as she continues, now more possessed.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, how terrible it must have been for him. But the more he struggled, the tighter the ropes became. I couldn't stand it. Not even realizing what I was doing, I ran toward him, or tried to.

222 LS: the woods. With her back to the camera, the woman runs toward her husband; the bandit pushes her, knocking her down, and goes up to the husband bound by the tree. He takes the husband's sword and starts to leave.

223 MS of Tajomaru as he turns to sneer at the husband. The woman's sobs are heard and Tajomaru begins to laugh and point at the husband, then turns away.

224 LS as Tajomaru stops to laugh again, jumping up and down; then he runs away from the camera, disappearing into the woods.

225 LS: the woman lies weeping on the ground by her husband.

226 LS: the same, from nearer.

227 MS: the same, nearer still.

228 MCU of the woman, sobbing; finally she raises her head to look brokenheartedly at her husband.

229 MCU of her husband, in profile. He stares at the ground.

230 MCU, as in 228: she looks at him, then begins to rise.

231 LS from behind the woman as she rises and rushes toward her husband in the background and throws herself on him.

232 CU from over his shoulder. She sobs on his breast, looks up, and is shocked by what she sees.

233 CU of the husband from over her shoulder. He looks at her coldly, cynically.

234 MCU of the woman in the prison courtyard as she continues: the woodcutter and priest visible in the background.

WOODCUTTER

Even now I remember his eyes...  
What I saw in them was not sorrow,  
not even anger. It was... a cold  
hatred of me.

235 MS in the woods, the woman seen over her husband's shoulder. She pulls herself away from him, staring at him. As she speaks, she moves from side to side before him, the camera moving with her.

WOMAN

Don't look at me like that. Don't!  
Beat me, kill me if you must, but  
don't look at me like that. Please  
don't!

236 CU: she covers her face with her hands and starts to sink back to the ground.

237 ECU of the top of her head as she lies shaking and sobbing.

238 CU: suddenly she looks up, glances around, starts to rise.

239 LS: the pair in the background; in the foreground is the dagger, still sticking point first in the ground. She rises to her feet, comes forward and retrieves it, and rushes back to her husband, starting to cut his bonds.

240 CU: the dagger cutting through the rope.

241 MS over the husband's shoulder; she extends the dagger to him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Then kill me if you will. Kill me  
with one stroke-quickly!

The camera dollies toward her face, then pans around to show the husband still staring at her as before.

242 MCU: she looks up imploringly, rises, and starts to back away.

243 MS: the camera dollies with her as she backs away.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, don't! Please don't!

She raises her hands to her face, still clutching the dagger.

244 CU of the husband's hard, unmoved face.

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

Don't-don't look at me like that!

245 MCU: she comes forward again, dagger extended.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Don't.

246 CU, as in 244, of the husband staring; her sobs are heard.

247 MS, as in 245, of the woman, backing off again, crying.

248 CU, as in 244, of the husband.

249 MS, as in 245. The woman continues to move, the camera seeming to weave with her painful approach and retreat before her husband. She holds the dagger almost absent-mindedly; her desperation grows.

250 CU, as in 244, of the husband, staring implacably.

251 MCU of the woman as she moves steadily forward now; her world forever destroyed, she holds the dagger high, without seeming to be aware of it. The camera tracks with her in the direction of her husband until she suddenly lunges off screen.

252 MS, as in 234, of the woman in the prison courtyard, continuing her testimony.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

And then I fainted. When I opened my eyes and looked around, I saw there, in my husband's chest, the dagger.

She begins to weep again.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I didn't know what to do. I ran through the forest-I must have, although I don't remember. Then I found myself standing by a pond...

253 Shot of a lake, illuminated by a low sun, a strong breeze moving over the surface.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 ...at the foot of a hill.

254 MS, as in 234, of the woman in the prison courtyard.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 I threw myself in it. I tried to  
 kill myself. But, I failed.

She sobs.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 What could a poor helpless woman  
 like me do?

She sinks to the ground.

255 The steps of the Rashomon gate with the rain pouring down.  
 The dreary, loud sound of the rain. Visible above the steps  
 are the three men, seated. The camera tilts up as the  
 commoner stands; he comes forward, looks out at the sky,  
 spits disgustedly, and turns back to the group.

256 MS: he rejoins the other two around the fire (pan).

COMMONER  
 I see. But the more I listen the  
 more mixed up I get.

He sits down.

COMMONER (CONT'D)  
 Women lead you on with their tears;  
 they even fool themselves. Now if I  
 believed what she said I'd really  
 be mixed up.

PRIEST  
 But according to the husband's  
 story...

COMMONER  
 But he's dead. How could a dead man  
 talk?

PRIEST  
 He spoke through a medium.

WOODCUTTER  
 Lies.

He rises and comes toward the camera.

WOODCUTTER (CONT'D)

His story was all lies.

PRIEST

Dead men tell no lies.

257 MCU of the commoner, in the foreground, and the priest.

COMMONER

All right, priest-why is that?

PRIEST

They must not. I must not believe  
that men are so sinful.

258 MCU of the two from reverse angle.

COMMONER

Oh, I don't object to that. After  
all, who's honest nowadays? Look,  
everyone wants to forget unpleasant  
things, so they make up stories.  
It's easier that way.

Grinning, he bites into a piece of fruit. The priest looks  
distraught.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

But never mind. Let's hear this  
dead man's story.

259 The ceiling and beams of the great gate illuminated by a  
tremendous flash of lighting.

260 LS from above the three men as they look up. A roll of  
thunder is heard.

261 MS of a fallen statue outside the gate. The rain falls even  
harder, flooding in rapid cascades past the statue.

262 CU of the statue.

263 CU of a hand bell being violently shaken in the air. The  
scene has abruptly shifted back to the prison courtyard.

264 MS of the medium, a woman, her hair and robes blowing in the  
wind. She is rattling the bell, dancing madly. The bell  
clatters, the wind howls, and a weird, unearthly voice drones  
on like a record player slowing down. A drum beats slowly.  
The wind, voice, and drum continue through shot 273.

265 LS from above the medium. Behind her kneel the woodcutter and  
the priest. She circles the altar which has been placed in  
the courtyard, shaking the bell.

- 266 CU, as in 263, of the bell being shaken.
- 267 MLS of the medium writhing about on her feet. She begins to turn dizzily in circles. Suddenly she stops completely still.
- 268 MCU of the medium, now possessed by the other world.
- 269 CU of the bell dropping from her hand.
- 270 MCU, as in 268: she turns abruptly in the direction of the camera.
- 271 LS: she rushes toward the foreground and stands, mouth open, her eyes wild, as the camera dollies in. Her mouth begins to move and suddenly the voice of the dead man is heard.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM  
(as though at a great  
distance)

I am in darkness now. I am  
suffering in the darkness. Cursed  
be those who cast me into this hell  
of darkness.

The medium starts to fall.

- 272 MS of the medium falling behind the altar to the ground. She moves convulsively on the ground, the camera panning with her.
- 273 MS: she sits upright as the camera dollies in. Her mouth opens and over the sound of the wind the voice of the samurai is heard.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)  
The bandit, after attacking my  
wife, sat down beside her and tried  
to console her.

The sound of the unearthly voice and drum stops abruptly.

- 274 LS: the woods. In the clearing where the rape took place, the bandit is sitting beside the woman, talking to her, touching her arm to get her attention. The samurai's story is accompanied by a somber musical theme which plays over most of the scenes through shot 305.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
She sat there on the leaves,  
looking down, looking at nothing.  
The bandit was cunning.

Camera dollies back to reveal the husband bound in the foreground.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He told her that after she had given herself, she would no longer be able to live with her husband—why didn't she go with him, the bandit, rather than remain behind to be unhappy with her husband? He said he had only attacked her because of his great love for her.

The husband turns his head toward them.

275 CU of the wife as she looks up as though she believes what Tajomaru is saying, her eyes dreamy.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

My wife looked at him, her face soft, her eyes veiled.

276 MCU of the medium in the prison courtyard, as at the end of shot 273.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)

Never, in all of our life together, had I seen her more beautiful.

277 MCU of the husband in the woods; he stares at the others, then closes his eyes.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And what did my beautiful wife reply to the bandit in front of her helpless husband?

278 MS: the woman looks up at Tajomaru, imploringly.

WOMAN

Take me. Take me away with you.

279 The prison courtyard. A black sky; the medium's face rises into view, the wind whipping her hair. From MCU range she runs away from the camera, which pursues her; she then moves forward, the camera retreating before her. Through all this, the unearthly voice fades in and out.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM

This is what she said.

The medium turns away, then abruptly faces the camera again.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)

But that is not all she did, or else I would not now be in darkness.

280 MS: in the woods, from behind the husband's back. Tajomaru picks up the husband's sword and moves off-screen. He returns, leading the woman off into the woods.

281 MCU of Tajomaru as he is jerked to a stop by the woman.

282 MS of the woman holding Tajomaru by the hand. She points toward her husband.

WOMAN

Kill him. As long as he is alive I cannot go with you.

She moves behind Tajomaru, clutching him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Kill him!

283 MS of the medium in the prison courtyard, the wind howling about her.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM

I still hear those words.

The medium writhes in circles on her knees.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)

They are like a wind blowing me to the bottom of this dark pit. Has anyone ever uttered more pitiless words? Even the bandit was shocked to hear them.

284 ECU of the woman in the woods, clinging to the bandit's shoulder, digging her nails into him.

WOMAN

Kill him!

285 LS: the bandit and the woman from behind the husband's back; the woman takes a step toward the husband, pointing at him.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Kill him-kill him!

286 MCU of Tajomaru, yanking the woman back to him. The look in his eyes makes her back off.

287 LS, as in 285: the bandit throws the woman from him.

288 MS of the woman as she falls to the ground; the bandit places his foot on her back.



289 CU of the medium in the prison courtyard. She throws her head back and then forward and the dead man's laughter pours from her unmoving lips.

290 LS: Tajomaru, still standing over the woman, addresses the husband.

TAJOMARU

What do you want me to do with this woman? Kill her? Spare her? Just nod if you agree.

The camera dollies around to show the husband in profile.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.)

For these words I almost forgave the bandit.

291 LS of the husband in the background; in the foreground (MS) Tajomaru continues pressing the woman to the ground with his foot.

TAJOMARU

What do you want me to do? Kill her? Let her go?

Now Tajomaru walks toward the husband. As soon as he has gone a few steps, the woman springs up and runs away. Tajomaru turns to chase her, the camera panning to show them disappear among the trees. Her screams die away in the stillness of the woods.

292 LS of the husband; still bound, he makes no effort to free himself.

293 MS of the husband.

294 MCU of the husband.

295 Dead leaves on the ground in the late afternoon sun.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.)

Hours later-I don't know how many.

296 MS of the husband's back. Tajomaru appears in the background, on the far side of the clearing, stomping along, slashing in disgust with some rope at the bushes. He walks up to the husband and stands looking down.

297 MS from reverse angle. Tajomaru takes his sword and cuts the captive's bonds.

TAJOMARU

Well, she got away. Now I'll have  
to worry about her talking.

He turns and goes.

The husband looks off after him, then down, then up at the  
sky.

298 Trees against the sky.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.)

It was quiet.

299 Dead leaves on the ground.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Then I heard someone crying...

The camera tilts up along the leaves to reveal the husband  
(MS). The bell-like tinkle of wind chimes is heard.

300 MCU of the husband crying. The camera dollies back and he  
rises to his feet. He moves painfully (pan), rests his head  
against a tree. There is the soft sound of grief, but it  
comes from the husband himself.

301 MCU as he rests his head against the tree, sobbing. Finally  
he raises his head and begins to wander off, but stops when  
he notices something on the ground.

302 MS from behind the husband, the dagger sticking up before  
him. Slowly he goes to it, picks it up, and turns to walk  
back toward the camera, staring at the dagger.

303 MS as he moves forward into the clearing; he stops, raises  
the dagger high above his head and brutally thrusts it into  
his chest. He begins to fall.

304 MS: his falling motion is completed by the medium in the  
prison courtyard (priest and woodcutter sit in the  
background). The medium sinks down as though dead, then  
slowly sits up.

305 MCU of the medium.

SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)

Everything was quiet-how quiet it  
was. It grew dark and a mist seemed  
to envelop me. I lay quietly in  
this stillness. Then someone seemed  
to approach me. Softly, gently. Who  
could it have been?

(MORE)

## SAMURAI-MEDIUM (CONT'D)

Then someone's hand grasped the dagger and drew it out.

The medium falls forward.

Music up and out.

306 LS: in the shadow of the Rashomon gate, the priest and commoner are seated at the fire; the woodcutter is pacing up and down, the camera panning with him.

307 MS as the woodcutter stops in the background and turns to the others.

## WOODCUTTER

That's not true. There wasn't any dagger there—he was killed by a sword.

The commoner looks up from tending the fire. The woodcutter, very agitated, moves farther into the background and sits down; the commoner rises and goes back to sit beside him.

308 Reverse of preceding: in the background, the commoner sits next to the woodcutter; the priest is in the background.

## COMMONER

Now it's getting interesting. You must have seen the whole thing. Why didn't you tell the police?

## WOODCUTTER

I didn't want to get involved.

## COMMONER

But now you want to talk about it? Well, come on and tell us then. Yours seems the most interesting of all these stories.

309 Reverse of the preceding: the priest in the foreground.

## PRIEST

I don't want to hear. I don't want to have to listen to any more horrible stories.

The commoner stands and comes forward to the priest.

## COMMONER

(to the priest)

Stories like this are ordinary enough now.

(MORE)

COMMONER (CONT'D)

I heard that demons used to live in the castle here by the gate, but they all ran away, because what men do now horrified them so.

He goes back to the woodcutter.

310 CU of the woodcutter and commoner.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

How much do you know about this story?

WOODCUTTER

I found a woman's hat...

COMMONER

You already said that.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

Then, when I'd walked about twenty yards farther, I heard a woman crying. I looked out from behind a bush and saw a man tied up. There was a woman crying. And there was Tajomaru.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Then it was a lie when you said that you found the body?

WOODCUTTER

I didn't want to get involved.

COMMONER

All right, then. Go on. What was Tajomaru doing?

WOODCUTTER

He was down on his knees in front of the woman and seemed to be begging her to forgive him.

311 MS: the woods. Tajomaru crouches by the woman, the samurai behind them. She is sobbing. From the beginning to the end of the woodcutter's story, there is a noticeable absence of music. The only sounds heard, aside from those made by the three people, are occasional noises natural to the woods.

TAJOMARU

Until now, whenever I wanted to do anything bad, I always did it. It was for me and so it was good.

(MORE)

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

But today is different. I've already taken you, but now I want you more and more--and I suffer. Go away with me. If you want, I'll marry you. Look.

He bows his head low.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

I am Tajomaru, the famous bandit, known all over Miyako, and yet here I am on my knees in front of you.

312 MS from the side. Tajomaru puts his hand on her, trying to soothe her.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

If you want, I'll even stop being a bandit. I've got enough money hidden away. You can live comfortably. And if you don't want me to steal, then I'll work hard--I'll even sell things in the street. I'll make you happy. I'll do anything to please you if you'll only come away with me, marry me.

She only sobs the harder.

313 MCU from same angle as shot 311. Now the bandit tries to cajole her.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Please say yes. If you don't, I'll have to kill you.

314 CU of Tajomaru; he is becoming desperate.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Don't cry. Answer. Tell me you'll be my wife.

Unable to endure her silence, he suddenly pushes her.

315 CU from over Tajomaru's shoulder. He bends over solicitously again.

TAJOMARU (CONT'D)

Tell me.

316 MCU from reverse angle. She sits up, almost in possession of herself.

WOMAN

But, how could I answer? How could I, a woman, answer a question like that?

317 She rises on her knees, the camera panning as she crawls over to the dagger and yanks it out of the ground.

MS of the samurai, trussed up, in the foreground. Tajomaru, in the background, leaps aside and trips to the ground as the woman spins around with the dagger in her hand. But she is going to her husband with it. She cuts his bonds, then backs away sobbing, stumbling, and falls to the ground between the two men.

318 MS of Tajomaru, crouching at the ready.

TAJOMARU

I understand. You mean that we men must decide.

He reaches for his sword.

319 LS from behind Tajomaru. The samurai is struggling to free himself of the bonds now that the rope has been cut.

320 MS of the samurai as he jumps to his feet and nervously backs away.

SAMURAI

(holding up his hand in front of him)

Stop! I refuse to risk my life for such a woman.

321 MCU: Tajomaru looks at him hesitantly.

322 MCU: the woman sits up and looks in disbelief at her husband.

323 MS: the samurai, now haughty and self-possessed, walks up to his wife.

SAMURAI (CONT'D)

You shameless whore! Why don't you kill yourself?

324 LS of the same, with Tajomaru in the foreground.

SAMURAI (CONT'D)

(to Tajomaru)

If you want her, I'll give her to you. I regret the loss of my horse much more than I will regret the loss of this woman.

He turns away.

325 CU of the woman; shocked, she turns from her husband to look at the bandit.

326 MS: she stares up at Tajomaru, who looks from her to the samurai.

327 MLS: the samurai in the foreground, Tajomaru staring at him. The samurai looks from one to the other.

328 ECU: Tajomaru looks at the woman distrustfully.

329 CU: she, sweating visibly, looks at Tajomaru.

330 ECU, as in 328: Tajomaru looks at her with distaste, wipes the sweat from his face.

331 MS: she watches him cross behind her as if to go, then gets up and runs after him (pan), both of them passing the husband, who stands immobile.

WOMAN

Wait!

Tajomaru turns and calls back.

TAJOMARU

And don't try to follow me.

332 MS: through Tajomaru's legs the woman is seen falling to the ground, her husband standing behind her. Then the husband steps forward.

333 MCU of the husband.

SAMURAI

Don't waste your time in crying. No matter how hard you cry no one is going to be taken in by it.

334 MS of Tajomaru as he steps forward to contradict.

TAJOMARU

Don't talk like that to her. It's unmanly of you. After all, women cannot help crying. They are naturally weak.

335 MS of the woman on the ground. Her weeping has been heard behind Tajomaru's words; now the sobs change and she laughs. She rises, screeching with hysterical laughter.

WOMAN

It's not me, not me-it's you two  
who are weak.

Pan as she goes to her husband.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

If you are my husband then why  
don't you kill this man? Then you  
can tell me to kill myself. That is  
what a real man would do. But you  
aren't a real man. That is why I  
was crying. I'm tired, tired of  
this farce.

Pan as she crosses to the bandit.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I thought that Tajomaru might find  
some way out. I thought that if he  
would only save me I would do  
anything for him.

336 CU of the woman and Tajomaru. She spits in his face, then  
backs off, laughing (pan).

WOMAN (CONT'D)

But he's not a man either. He's  
just like my husband!

337 MS of Tajomaru, looking shamefaced.

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

Just remember...

338 CU, as in 335, of the woman.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

...that a woman loves only a real  
man.

She moves nearer the bandit-pan.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

And when she loves, she loves  
madly, forgetting everything else.  
But a woman can be won only by  
strength-by the strength  
(she is now at Tajomaru's  
side)  
of the swords you are wearing.

339 MS of the husband. He looks at her abjectly, then reaches for  
his sword.



- 340 CU of the husband as he moves toward Tajomaru now ready for a fight.
- 341 MS of all three; the woman and bandit, his sword already drawn, are in the foreground. From too far away, the samurai hurriedly swings his sword at Tajomaru, then backs quickly off. The woman smiles scornfully.
- 342 MS: the woman looks from one to the other, laughing and pointing gleefully.
- 343 LS: the two men, from high above, through the branches of the trees. They stand facing each other from a safe distance, the woman between them.
- 344 MCU of the woman. She seems to realize what is happening and a frightened look comes over her face. The sound of the combatants' nervous panting is heard now, and runs throughout the fight scene. It is a tense, gasping sound, unrelieved by music or any sound other than the occasional clash of swords.
- 345 MS of the bandit, circling, feinting, a concerned expression on his face.
- 346 MS of the samurai, advancing uncertainly.
- 347 MS, as in 345, of the bandit advancing.
- 348 MS, as in 346, of the samurai advancing.
- 349 MCU of the woman, watching fearfully. The camera dollies back until the two raised swords are visible in the frame. Suddenly the tips of the swords touch.
- 350 LS: the men recoil from the touching of the swords, stumbling backward away from each other. The samurai trips to the ground. Tajomaru runs after the samurai, but falls down himself. Both men swing wildly and blindly as they get to their feet and run in opposite directions from each other.
- 351 LS: Tajomaru in the foreground. The men are separated now by a great distance.
- 352 CU of the woman as she peeks out from behind the stump of a tree.
- 353 MS of the samurai, who has fallen against the side of a slope. Finally he stands up and advances.
- 354 MS: back-tracking shot of Tajomaru, advancing fearfully. His arm shaking violently; he seems almost unable to bear the weight of the sword. His breath comes in short gasps.

- 355 MS, as in 353, of the samurai advancing, terror written on his face.
- 356 MS, as in 354, of Tajomaru advancing.
- 357 MS of the woman, terrified; the camera dollies back as the men enter from either side of the frame. Each thrusts, frightening the other, but this time the samurai turns to run first at the sound of the woman's scream, and Tajomaru pursues him over to the slope (pan).
- 358 MS: they both slip and fall on the slope. Tajomaru thrusts at the samurai but misses, and his sword sticks in the ground. He can't extract it. Now the samurai swings, but the bandit rolls out of the way.
- 359 LS: Tajomaru continues to roll away (pan) to another part of the slope, which he tries to crawl up but fails to get a handhold.
- 360 MS as Tajomaru dodged another thrust.
- 361 MS: the samurai scampers after him but keeps stumbling and missing with his flailing swings.
- 362 MS: the bandit gets back to his sword but still can't pull it out. The samurai keeps lunging and missing; Tajomaru keeps dodging.
- 363 LS: the bandit runs and makes another attempt to mount the rise but falls (pan). Now he runs away from the slope (pan) and falls by a tree stump. The samurai aims another stroke wildly as Tajomaru falls behind the stump.
- 364 MS: the samurai's sword lodges itself in the stump; Tajomaru seizes the opportunity by leaping up at his assailant and pushing him down.
- 365 MS: Tajomaru tries to run past the fallen man but the samurai grabs him by the ankle and pulls him down. Dragging the samurai after him, Tajomaru begins to inch toward his own sword.
- 366 MS from reverse angle. Slowly and with great effort, the bandit inches toward his sword, the samurai holding onto his foot. Then Tajomaru kicks him away and at last frees the sword from the ground.
- 367 MS: the samurai, still on the ground, backs off in alarm.
- 368 MS: Tajomaru, out of breath, rises shakily.

369 LS: pan as Tajomaru advances on the samurai, who pushes himself along on his hands farther and farther into a thicket. Dolly in on the trapped man, who screams.

SAMURAI

I don't want to die! I don't want to die!

Slight tilt upward to Tajomaru raising his sword and hurling it, out of frame, into the man lying in front of him. Then he whirls around triumphantly.

370 LS: Tajomaru in the foreground, the woman cowering in the background. He backs away from the body and stumbles to the ground in front of the woman.

371 MS of Tajomaru and the woman. They stare over at the body. Tajomaru, an idiotic expression on his face, rises and takes her hands, but she pulls them away and begins to back off frantically (pan), ending near the tree stump in which her husband's sword is still lodged. She utters little inarticulate cries. Tajomaru has followed stupidly, and now, half-crazed, he pulls the dead man's sword free and swings it mightily at her as she flees.

372 LS: she rushes off into the woods; he follows but trips. She disappears as he lies collapsed on the ground.

373 MS of Tajomaru's back. He sits up slowly, breathing hard, dirty, sweaty, exhausted. Silence—then the sound of distant cicada.

374 LS as he sits stupefied. After a long time, he gets to his feet and goes off, to where the body lies, reappearing a moment later with his own bloody sword as well as the samurai's.

375 MS: dragging the swords along, Tajomaru backs off and limps away into the woods.

376 LS: the Rashomon gate. The three men sitting, framed overhead by a huge horizontal beam. The sound of the great downpour. The commoner laughs.

377 MS: the priest is in the foreground. The commoner stands.

COMMONER

And I suppose that is supposed to be true.

WOODCUTTER

(getting to his feet)

I don't tell lies. I saw it with my own eyes.

COMMONER

That I doubt.

WOODCUTTER

I don't tell lies.

COMMONER

Well, as far as that goes, no one tells lies after he has said that he's going to tell one.

PRIEST

But it's horrible-if men do not tell the truth, do not trust one another, then the earth becomes a kind of hell.

COMMONER

You are right. The world we live in is a hell.

PRIEST

No. I trust men.

He turns away from the commoner and rises.

378 MCU of the priest, standing by a column.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

But I don't want to believe that this world is a hell.

The commoner appears behind him, laughing.

COMMONER

No one will hear you, no matter how loud you shout. Just think now. Which one of these stories do you believe?

Before the priest can answer, the woodcutter begins to speak. As he does the camera pans past the column to a MS of him.

WOODCUTTER

I don't understand any of them. They don't make any sense.

The commoner steps forward from behind the column and goes up to the woodcutter.

COMMONER

Well, don't worry about it. It isn't as though men were reasonable.

He turns to walk off.

379 LS: the commoner walks to the fire he has built, squats, and throws several of the burning pieces of lumber out into the rain. Just then the cry of a baby is heard. All look around. The commoner stands up.

380 MS: the three men try to locate the source of the crying. Then the commoner runs to the back and heads behind a partition of the gate. The priest and the woodcutter look at each other, then run over to the broken panels of the partition (pan) and peer through to where the woodcutter has disappeared.

381 MS from the other side of the partition. The heads of the two men appear through openings in the panels; in the distance, the commoner is kneeling over the baby, stripping off its few clothes.

382 MS of the commoner as he finishes removing the clothes and examines them.

383 MS of the priest and woodcutter watching; they dash around the partition (pan), the priest picking up the infant and the woodcutter going up to the commoner and pushing him.

WOODCUTTER

What are you doing?

COMMONER

What does it look like?

384 MCU of the priest holding the baby protectively.

385 MS of the three men, priest in the background, commoner partially hidden by some steps (shot from a low angle).

WOODCUTTER

That's horrible.

COMMONER

What's so horrible about it?  
Somebody else would have taken  
those baby clothes if I hadn't. Why  
shouldn't it be me?

WOODCUTTER

You are evil.

COMMONER

Evil? Me? And if so, then what are  
the parents of that baby?

Pan as he moves up close to the woodcutter.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

They had a good time making it-then  
they throw it away like this.  
That's real evil for you.

WOODCUTTER

No, you're wrong. Look! Look here  
at the amulet case it has on. It's  
something the parents left to guard  
over it. Think what they must have  
gone through to give this baby up.

COMMONER

Oh, well. If you're going to  
sympathize with other people...

WOODCUTTER

Selfish...

COMMONER

And what's wrong with that? That's  
the way we are, the way we live.  
Look, half of us envy the lives  
that dogs lead. You just can't live  
unless you're what you call  
"selfish."

The commoner turns and goes off. The woodcutter moves into  
MCS range.

WOODCUTTER

Brute!  
(With gathering anger)  
All men are selfish and dishonest.  
They all have excuses. The bandit,  
the husband... you!

His face distorted in anger, he leaps in the direction of the  
commoner.

386 MCU as the woodcutter grabs the commoner by the neck and  
shakes him; they struggle out into the rain, and continue to  
argue there.

COMMONER

And you say you don't lie! That's  
just funny. Look, you may have  
fooled the police, but you don't  
fool me.

387 MCU from reverse angle, the woodcutter facing the camera now.  
The commoner's words have affected the woodcutter. Guiltily  
he lets go his hold on the commoner.

388 MCU from reverse angle. The commoner smiles, then shoves the woodcutter; he comes forward and shoves him again, this time out of frame. Smiling, the commoner follows him out.

389 MS of the two men back under the roof, out of the rain. As the commoner speaks, he continues to shove the woodcutter back (pan), finally pushing him against the partition near the priest.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

And so where is that dagger? That pearl-inlay handle that the bandit said was so valuable? Did the earth open up and swallow it? Or did someone steal it? Am I right? It would seem so. Now *there* is a really selfish action for you.

He slaps the woodcutter and laughs harshly.

390 MCU of the priest holding the baby.

391 LS of all three men.

COMMONER (CONT'D)

Anything else you want to tell me?  
If not, I think I'll be going.

The baby starts to cry. The commoner glances at it; then, laughing, he turns to go.

392 LS from outside the gate. The commoner comes out in the rain toward the camera and disappears off-screen. The other two remain under the gate, seen in LS through the rain.

DISSOLVE.

393 MS: the two men, from closer; the sound of the rain diminishes.

DISSOLVE.

394 MS: the two men, closer yet; rain slowly stopping.

DISSOLVE.

395 MCU: the two men still standing as before; the sound of the rain has stopped; the baby cries.

396 LS: the two men seen from outside the gate as in shot 392, but now the rain has stopped. Drops of water drip from the gate onto the steps. The priest steps forward.

397 MS: he walks past the woodcutter, patting the baby, and leaves the frame. The woodcutter stands for a moment, then follows.

398 MS: the woodcutter approaches the priest and moves to take the baby away from him; the priest violently resists.

PRIEST

What are you trying to do? Take away what little it has left?

399 MS: priest in the foreground. The woodcutter, very humble now, shakes his head.

WOODCUTTER

I have six children of my own. One more wouldn't make it any more difficult.

400 MS from reverse angle; woodcutter in the foreground.

PRIEST

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

401 MS: priest in the foreground, as in 399.

WOODCUTTER

Oh, you can't afford not to be suspicious of people these days. I'm the one who ought to be ashamed. I don't know why I did a thing like that.

402 MS: woodcutter in the foreground.

PRIEST

No, I'm grateful to you. Because, thanks to you, I think I will be able to keep my faith in men.

403 MS, as in 399: priest in the foreground. The woodcutter bows, and the baby, who has been crying all during this dialogue, stops. The priest holds out the baby and the woodcutter takes it. Finale music begins, a distinctly traditional Japanese music.

404 MS from farther back. The woodcutter accepts the baby and steps back. The men bow to each other and the woodcutter turns to go.

405 LS from behind the men as the woodcutter, holding the infant, leaves the gate; the sky is clear, the priest watches as he goes.



- 406 LS from reverse angle. The woodcutter moves toward the camera. He stops and bows again to the priest. Then he turns and continues on his way, the camera tracking backward with him. The whole gate and the sunny sky come into frame. The woodcutter walks past the camera; the tracking stops and the priest is seen, small standing under the gate.
- 407 The great signboard of the gate. Music up and out.

THE END

## **"Rashomon" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa**

[The "Rashomon" was the largest gate in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. It was 106 feet wide and 26 feet deep, and was topped with a ridge-pole; its stone-wall rose 75 feet high. This gate was constructed in 789 when the then capital of Japan was transferred to Kyoto. With the decline of West Kyoto, the gate fell into bad repair, cracking and crumbling in many places, and became a hide-out for thieves and robbers and a place for abandoning unclaimed corpses.]

It was A chilly evening. A servant of a samurai stood under the Rashomon, waiting for a break in the rain.

No one else was under the wide gate. On the thick column, its crimson lacquer rubbed off here and there, perched a cricket. Since the Rashomon stands on Sujaku Avenue, a few other people at least, in sedge hat or nobleman's headgear, might have been expected to be waiting there for a break in the rain storm. But no one was near except this man.

For the past few years the city of Kyoto had been visited by a series of calamities, earthquakes, whirlwinds, and fires, and Kyoto had been greatly devastated. Old chronicles say that broken pieces of Buddhist images and other Buddhist objects, with their lacquer, gold, or silver leaf worn off, were heaped up on roadsides to be sold as firewood. Such being the state of affairs in Kyoto, the repair of the Rashomon was out of the question. Taking advantage of the devastation, foxes and other wild animals made their dens in the ruins of the gate, and thieves and robbers found a home there too. Eventually it became customary to bring unclaimed corpses to this gate and abandon them. After dark it was so ghostly that no one dared approach.

Flocks of crows flew in from somewhere. During the daytime these cawing birds circled round the ridgepole of the gate. When the sky overhead turned red in the afterlight of the departed sun, they looked like so many grains of sesame flung across the gate. But on that day not a crow was to be seen, perhaps because of the lateness of the hour. Here and there the stone steps, beginning to crumble, and with rank grass growing in their crevices, were dotted with the white droppings of crows. The servant, in a worn blue kimono, sat on the seventh and highest step, vacantly watching the rain. His attention was drawn to a large pimple irritating his right cheek.

As has been said, the servant was waiting for a break in the rain. But he had no particular idea of what to do after the rain stopped. Ordinarily, of course, he would have returned to his master's house, but he had been discharged just before. The prosperity of the city of Kyoto had been rapidly declining, and he had been dismissed by his master, whom he had served many years, because of the effects of this decline. Thus, confined by the rain, he was at a loss to know where to go.

And the weather had not a little to do with his depressed mood. The rain seemed unlikely to stop. He was lost in thoughts of how to make his living tomorrow, helpless incoherent thoughts protesting an inexorable fate. Aimlessly he had been listening to the pattering of the rain on the Sujaku Avenue.

The rain, enveloping the Rashomon, gathered strength and came down with a pelting sound that could be heard far away. Looking up, he saw a fat black cloud impale itself on the tips of the tiles jutting out from the roof of the gate.

He had little choice of means, whether fair or foul, because of his helpless circumstances. If he chose honest means, he would undoubtedly starve to death beside the wall or in the Sujaku gutter. He would be brought to this gate and thrown away like a stray dog. If he decided to steal... His mind, after making the same detour time and again, came finally to the conclusion that he would be a thief.

But doubts returned many times. Though determined that he had no choice, he was still unable to muster enough courage to justify the conclusion that he must become a thief.

After a loud fit of sneezing he got up slowly. The evening chill of Kyoto made him long for the warmth of a brazier. The wind in the evening dusk howled through the columns of the gate. The cricket which had been perched on the crimson-lacquered column was already gone.

Ducking his neck, he looked around the gate, and drew up the shoulders of the blue kimono which he wore over his thin underwear. He decided to spend the night there, if he could find a secluded corner sheltered from wind and rain. He found a broad lacquered stairway leading to the tower over the gate. No one would be there, except the dead, if there were any. So, taking care that the sword at his side did not slip out of the scabbard, he set foot on the lowest step of the stairs.

A few seconds later, halfway up the stairs, he saw a movement above. Holding his breath and huddling cat-like in the middle of the broad stairs leading to the tower, he watched and waited. A light coming from the upper part of the tower shone faintly upon his right cheek. It was the cheek with the red, festering pimple visible under his stubbly whiskers. He had expected only dead people inside the tower, but he had only gone up a few steps before he noticed a fire above, about which someone was moving. He saw a dull, yellow, flickering light which made the cobwebs hanging from the ceiling glow in a ghostly way. What sort of person would be making a light in the Rashomon... and in a storm? The unknown, the evil terrified him.

Quietly as a lizard, the servant crept up to the top of the steep stairs. Crouching on all fours, and stretching his neck as far as possible, he timidly peeped into the tower.

As rumor had said, he found several corpses strewn carelessly about the floor. Since the glow of the light was feeble, he could not count the number. He could only see that some were naked and others clothed.

Some of them were women, and all were lolling on the floor with their mouths open or their arms outstretched showing no more signs of life than so many clay dolls. One would doubt that they had ever been alive, so eternally silent they were. Their shoulders, breasts, and torsos stood out in the dim light; other parts vanished in shadow. The offensive smell of these decomposed corpses brought his hand to his nose.

The next moment his hand dropped and he stared. He caught sight of a ghoulish form bent over a corpse. It seemed to be an old woman, gaunt, gray-haired, and nunnish in appearance. With a pine torch in her right hand, she was peeping into the face of a corpse which had long black hair.

Seized more with horror than curiosity, he even forgot to breathe for a time. He felt the hair of his head and body stand on end. As he watched, terrified, she wedged the torch between two floor boards and, laying hands on the head of the corpse, began to pull out the long hairs one by one, as a monkey kills the lice of her young. The hair came out smoothly with the movement of her hands.

As the hair came out, fear faded from his heart, and his hatred toward the old woman mounted. It grew beyond hatred, becoming a consuming antipathy against all evil. At this instant if anyone had brought up the question of whether he would starve to death or become a thief—the question which had occurred to him a little while ago—he would not have hesitated to choose death. His hatred toward evil flared up like the piece of pine wood which the old woman had stuck in the floor.

He did not know why she pulled out the hair of the dead. Accordingly, he did not know whether her case was to be put down as good or bad. But in his eyes, pulling out the hair of the dead in the Rashomon on this stormy night was an unpardonable crime. Of course it never entered his mind that a little while ago he had thought of becoming a thief.

Then, summoning strength into his legs, he rose from the stairs and strode, hand on sword, right in front of the old creature. The hag turned, terror in her eyes, and sprang up from the floor, trembling. For a small moment she paused, poised there, then lunged for the stairs with a shriek.

"Wretch! Where are you going?" he shouted, barring the way of the trembling hag who tried to scurry past him. Still she attempted to claw her way by. He pushed her back to prevent her... they struggled, fell among the corpses, and grappled there. The issue was never in doubt. In a moment he had her by the arm, twisted it, and forced her down to the floor. Her arms were all skin and bones, and there was no more flesh on them than on the shanks of a chicken. No sooner was she on the floor than he drew his sword and thrust the silver-white blade before her very nose. She was silent. She trembled as if in a fit, and her eyes were open so wide that they were almost out of their sockets, and her breath came in hoarse gasps. The life of this wretch was his now.

This thought cooled his boiling anger and brought a calm pride and satisfaction. He looked down at her, and said in a somewhat calmer voice:

"Look here, I'm not an officer of the High Police Commissioner. I'm a stranger who happened to pass by this gate. I won't bind you or do anything against you, but you must tell me what you're doing up here."

Then the old woman opened her eyes still wider, and gazed at his face intently with the sharp red eyes of a bird of prey. She moved her lips, which were wrinkled into her nose, as though she were chewing something. Her pointed Adam's apple moved in her thin throat. Then a panting sound like the cawing of a crow came from her throat:

"I pull the hair... I pull out the hair... to make a wig."

Her answer banished all unknown from their encounter and brought disappointment. Suddenly she was only a trembling old woman there at his feet. A ghoul no longer: only a hag who makes wigs from the hair of the dead-to sell, for scraps of food. A cold contempt seized him. Fear left his heart, and his former hatred entered. These feelings must have been sensed by the other. The old creature, still clutching the hair she had pulled off the corpse, mumbled out these words in her harsh broken voice:

"Indeed, making wigs out of the hair of the dead may seem a great evil to you, but these that are here deserve no better. This woman, whose beautiful black hair I was pulling, used to sell cut and dried snake flesh at the guard barracks, saying that it was dried fish. If she hadn't died of the plague, she'd be selling it now. The guards liked to buy from her, and used to say her fish was tasty. What she did couldn't be wrong, because if she hadn't, she would have starved to death. There was no other choice. If she knew I had to do this in order to live, she probably wouldn't care."

He sheathed his sword, and, with his left hand on its hilt, he listened to her meditatively. His right hand touched the big pimple on his cheek. As he listened, a certain courage was born in his heart—the courage which he had not had when he sat under the gate a little while ago. A strange power was driving him in the opposite direction of the courage which he had had when he seized the old woman. No longer did he wonder whether he should starve to death or become a thief. Starvation was so far from his mind that it was the last thing that would have entered it.

"Are you sure?" he asked in a mocking tone, when she finished talking. He took his right hand from his pimple, and, bending forward, seized her by the neck and said sharply:

"Then it's right if I rob you. I'd starve if I didn't."

He tore her clothes from her body and kicked her roughly down on the corpses as she struggled and tried to clutch his leg. Five steps, and he was at the top of the stairs.

The yellow clothes he had wrested off were under his arm, and in a twinkling he had rushed down the steep stairs into the abyss of night. The thunder of his descending steps pounded in the hollow tower, and then it was quiet.

Shortly after that the hag raised up her body from the corpses. Grumbling and groaning, she crawled to the top stair by the still flickering torchlight, and through the gray hair which hung over her face, she peered down to the last stair in the torch light.

Beyond this was only darkness... unknowing and unknown.

## **"In a Grove" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa**

### **THE TESTIMONY OF A WOODCUTTER QUESTIONED BY A HIGH POLICE COMMISSIONER**

Yes, sir. Certainly, it was I who found the body. This morning, as usual, I went to cut my daily quota of cedars, when I found the body in a grove in a hollow in the mountains. The exact location? About 150 meters off the Yamashina stage road. It's an out-of-the-way grove of bamboo and cedars.

The body was lying flat on its back dressed in a bluish silk kimono and a wrinkled head-dress of the Kyoto style. A single sword-stroke had pierced the breast. The fallen bamboo-blades around it were stained with bloody blossoms. No, the blood was no longer running. The wound had dried up, I believe. And also, a gad-fly was stuck fast there, hardly noticing my footsteps.

You ask me if I saw a sword or any such thing? No, nothing, sir. I found only a rope at the root of a cedar near by. And... well, in addition to a rope, I found a comb. That was all. Apparently he must have made a battle of it before he was murdered, because the grass and fallen bamboo-blades had been trampled down all around.

"A horse was near by?" No, sir. It's hard enough for a man to enter, let alone a horse.

### **THE TESTIMONY OF A TRAVELING BUDDHIST PRIEST QUESTIONED BY A HIGH POLICE COMMISSIONER**

The time? Certainly, it was about noon yesterday, sir. The unfortunate man was on the road from Sekiyama to Yamashina. He was walking toward Sekiyama with a woman accompanying him on horseback, who I have since learned was his wife. A scarf hanging from her head hid her face from view. All I saw was the color of her clothes, a lilac-colored suit. Her horse was a sorrel with a fine mane.

The lady's height? Oh, about four feet five inches. Since I am a Buddhist priest, I took little notice about her details.

Well, the man was armed with a sword as well as a bow and arrows. And I remember that he carried some twenty odd arrows in his quiver.

Little did I expect that he would meet such a fate. Truly human life is as evanescent as the morning dew or a flash of lightning. My words are inadequate to express my sympathy for him.

**THE TESTIMONY OF A POLICEMAN QUESTIONED BY A HIGH POLICE COMMISSIONER**

The man that I arrested? He is a notorious brigand called Tajomaru. When I arrested him, he had fallen off his horse. He was groaning on the bridge at Awataguchi.

The time? It was in the early hours of last night. For the record, I might say that the other day I tried to arrest him, but unfortunately he escaped. He was wearing a dark blue silk kimono and a large plain sword. And, as you see, he got a bow and arrows somewhere.

You say that this bow and these arrows look like the ones owned by the dead man? Then Tajomaru must be the murderer. The bow wound with leather strips, the black lacquered quiver, the seventeen arrows with hawk feathers--these were all in his possession I believe.

Yes, sir, the horse is, as you say, a sorrel with a fine mane. A little beyond the stone bridge I found the horse grazing by the roadside, with his long rein dangling. Surely there is some providence in his having been thrown by the horse.

Of all the robbers prowling around Kyoto, this Tajomaru has given the most grief to the women in town. Last autumn a wife who came to the mountain back of the Pindora of the Toribe Temple, presumably to pay a visit, was murdered, along with a girl. It has been suspected that it was his doing. If this criminal murdered the man, you cannot tell what he may have done with the man's wife. May it please your honor to look into this problem as well.

**THE TESTIMONY OF AN OLD WOMAN QUESTIONED BY A HIGH POLICE COMMISSIONER**

Yes, sir, that corpse is the man who married my daughter. He does not come from Kyoto. He was a samurai in the town of Kokufu in the province of Wakasa. His name was Kanazawa no Takehiro, and his age was twenty-six. He was of a gentle disposition, so I am sure he did nothing to provoke the anger of others.

My daughter? Her name is Masago, and her age is nineteen. She is a spirited, fun-loving girl, but I am sure she has never known any man except Takehiro. She has a small, oval, dark-complected face with a mole at the corner of her left eye.

Yesterday Takehiro left for Wakasa with my daughter. What bad luck it is that things should have come to such a sad end! What has become of my daughter? I am resigned to giving up my son-in-law as lost, but the fate of my daughter worries me sick. For heaven's sake leave no stone unturned to find her. I hate that robber

Tajomaru, or whatever his name is. Not only my son-in-law, but my daughter... (Her later words were drowned in tears.)

#### **TAJOMARU'S CONFESSION**

I killed him, but not her.

Where's she gone? I can't tell. Oh, wait a minute. No torture can make me confess what I don't know. Now things have come to such a head, I won't keep anything from you.

Yesterday a little past noon I met that couple. Just then a puff of wind blew, and raised her hanging scarf, so that I caught a glimpse of her face. Instantly it was again covered from my view. That may have been one reason; she looked like a Bodhisattva. At that moment I made up my mind to capture her even if I had to kill her man.

Why? To me killing isn't a matter of such great consequence as you might think. When a woman is captured, her man has to be killed anyway. In killing, I use the sword I wear at my side. Am I the only one who kills people? You, you don't use your swords. You kill people with your power, with your money. Sometimes you kill them on the pretext of working for their good. It's true they don't bleed. They are in the best of health, but all the same you've killed them. It's hard to say who is a greater sinner, you or me. (An ironical smile.)

But it would be good if I could capture a woman without killing her man. So, I made up my mind to capture her, and do my best not to kill him. But it's out of the question on the Yamashina stage road. So I managed to lure the couple into the mountains.

It was quite easy. I became their traveling companion, and I told them there was an old mound in the mountain over there, and that I had dug it open and found many mirrors and swords. I went on to tell them I'd buried the things in a grove behind the mountain, and that I'd like to sell them at a low price to anyone who would care to have them. Then... you see, isn't greed terrible? He was beginning to be moved by my talk before he knew it. In less than half an hour they were driving their horse toward the mountain with me.

When he reached the grove, I told them that the treasures were buried in it, and I asked them to come and see. The man had no objection—he was blinded by greed. The woman said she would wait on horseback. It was natural for her to say so, at the sight of a thick grove. To tell you the truth, my plan worked just as I wished, so I went into the grove with him, leaving her behind alone.



The grove is only bamboo for some distance. About fifty yards ahead there's a rather open clump of cedars. It was a convenient spot for my purpose. Pushing my way through the grove, I told him a plausible lie that the treasures were buried under the cedars. When I told him this, he pushed his laborious way toward the slender cedar visible through the grove. After a while the bamboo thinned out, and we came to where a number of cedars grew in a row. As soon as we got there, I seized him from behind. Because he was a trained, sword-bearing warrior, he was quite strong, but he was taken by surprise, so there was no help for him. I soon tied him up to the root of a cedar.

Where did I get a rope? Thank heaven, being a robber, I had a rope with me, since I might have to scale a wall at any moment. Of course it was easy to stop him from calling out by gagging his mouth with fallen bamboo leaves.

When I disposed of him, I went to his woman and asked her to come and see him, because he seemed to have been suddenly taken sick. It's needless to say that this plan also worked well. The woman, her sedge hat off, came into the depths of the grove, where I led her by the hand. The instant she caught sight of her husband, she drew a small sword. I've never seen a woman of such violent temper. If I'd been off guard, I'd have got a thrust in my side. I dodged, but she kept on slashing at me. She might have wounded me deeply or killed me. But I'm Tajomaru. I managed to strike down her small sword without drawing my own. The most spirited woman is defenseless without a weapon. At last I could satisfy my desire for her without taking her husband's life.

Yes,... without taking his life. I had no wish to kill him. I was about to run away from the grove, leaving the woman behind in tears, when she frantically clung to my arm. In broken fragments of words, she asked that either her husband or I die. She said it was more trying than death to have her shame known to two men. She gasped out that she wanted to be the wife of whichever survived. Then a furious desire to kill him seized me. (Gloomy excitement.)

Telling you in this way, no doubt I seem a crueller man than you. But that's because you didn't see her face. Especially her burning eyes at that moment. As I saw her eye to eye, I wanted to make her my wife even if I were to be struck by lightning. I wanted to make her my wife... this single desire filled my mind. This was not only lust, as you might think. At that time if I'd had no other desire than lust, I'd surely not have minded knocking her down and running away. Then I wouldn't have stained my sword with his blood. But the moment I gazed at her face in the dark grove, I decided not to leave there without killing him.

But I didn't like to resort to unfair means to kill him. I untied him and told him to cross swords with me. (The rope that was found at the root of the cedar is the rope I dropped at the time.) Furious with anger, he drew his thick sword. And quick as thought, he sprang at me ferociously, without speaking a word. I needn't tell you how our fight turned out.

The twenty-third stroke... please remember this. I'm impressed with this fact still. Nobody under the sun has ever clashed swords with me twenty strokes. (A cheerful smile.)

When he fell, I turned toward her, lowering my blood-stained sword. But to my great astonishment she was gone. I wondered to where she had run away. I looked for her in the clump of cedars. I listened, but heard only a groaning sound from the throat of the dying man.

As soon as we started to cross swords, she may have run away through the grove to call for help. When I thought of that, I decided it was a matter of life and death to me. So, robbing him of his sword, and bow and arrows, I ran out to the mountain road. There I found her horse still grazing quietly. It would be a mere waste words to tell you the later details, but before I entered town I had already parted with the sword. That's all my confession. I know that my head will be hung in chains anyway, so put me down for the maximum penalty. (A defiant attitude.)

#### **THE CONFESSION OF A WOMAN WHO HAS COME TO THE SHIMIZU TEMPLE**

That man in the blue silk kimono, after forcing me to yield to him, laughed mockingly as he looked at my bound husband. How horrified my husband must have been! But no matter how hard he struggled in agony, the rope cut into him all the more tightly. In spite of myself I ran stumblingly toward his side. Or rather I tried to run toward him, but the man instantly knocked me down. Just at that moment I saw an indescribable light in my husband's eyes. Something beyond expression... his eyes make me shudder even now. That instantaneous look of my husband, who couldn't speak a word, told me all his heart. The flash in his eyes was neither anger nor sorrow... only a cold light, a look of loathing. More struck by the look in his eyes than by the blow of the thief, I called out in spite of myself and fell unconscious.

In the course of time I came to, and found that the man in blue silk was gone. I saw only my husband still bound to the root of the cedar. I raised myself from the bamboo-blades with difficulty, and looked into his face; but the expression in his eyes was just the same as before.

Beneath the cold contempt in his eyes, there was hatred. Shame, grief, and anger... I don't know how to express my heart at that time. Reeling to my feet, I went up to my husband.

"Takehiro," I said to him, "since things have come to this pass, I cannot live with you. I'm determined to die,... but you must die, too. You saw my shame. I can't leave you alive as you are."

This was all I could say. Still he went on gazing at me with loathing and contempt. My heart breaking, I looked for his sword. It must have been taken by the robber. Neither his sword nor his bow and arrows were to be seen in the grove. But fortunately my small sword was lying at my feet.

Raising it over head, once more I said, "Now give me your life. I'll follow you right away."

When he heard these words, he moved his lips with difficulty. Since his mouth was stuffed with leaves, of course his voice could not be heard at all. But at a glance I understood his words. Despising me, his look said only, "Kill me." Neither conscious nor unconscious, I stabbed the small sword through the lilac-colored kimono into his breast.

Again at this time I must have fainted. By the time I managed to look up, he had already breathed his last--still in bonds. A streak of sinking sunlight streamed through the clump of cedars and bamboos, and shone on his pale face. Gulping down my sobs, I untied the rope from his dead body. And... and what has become of me since I have no more strength to tell you. Anyway I hadn't the strength to die. I stabbed my own throat with the small sword, I threw myself into a pond at the foot of the mountain, and I tried to kill myself in many ways. Unable to end my life, I am still living in dishonor. (A lonely smile.) Worthless as I am, I must have been forsaken even by the most merciful Kwannon. I killed my own husband. I was violated by the robber. Whatever can I do? Whatever can I... I... (Gradually, violent sobbing.)

#### **THE STORY OF THE MURDERED MAN, AS TOLD THROUGH A MEDIUM**

After violating my wife, the robber, sitting there, began to speak comforting words to her. Of course I couldn't speak. My whole body was tied fast to the root of a cedar. But meanwhile I winked at her many times, as much as to say "Don't believe the robber". I wanted to convey some such meaning to her. But my wife, sitting dejectedly on the bamboo leaves, was looking hard at her lap. To all appearance, she was listening to his words. I was agonized by jealousy. In the meantime the robber went on with his clever talk, from one subject to another. The robber finally made his bold, brazen proposal. "Once your virtue is stained, you won't get along well with your husband, so won't you be my wife instead? It's my love for you that made me be violent toward you."

While the criminal talked, my wife raised her face as if in a trance. She had never looked so beautiful as at that moment. What did my beautiful wife say in answer to him while I was sitting bound there? I am lost in space, but I have never thought of her answer without burning with anger and jealousy. Truly she said,... "Then take me away with you wherever you go."

This is not the whole of her sin. If that were all, I would not be tormented so much in the dark. When she was going out of the grove as if in a dream, her hand in the robber's, she suddenly turned pale, and pointed at me tied to the root of the cedar, and said, "Kill him! I cannot marry you as long as he lives." "Kill him!" she cried many times, as if she had gone crazy. Even now these words threaten to blow me headlong into the bottomless abyss of darkness.

Has such a hateful thing come out of a human mouth ever before? Have such cursed words ever struck a human ear, even once? Even once such a... (A sudden cry of scorn.) At these words the robber himself turned pale. "Kill him," she cried, clinging to his arms. Looking hard at her, he answered neither yes nor no... but hardly had I thought about his answer before she had been knocked down into the bamboo leaves. (Again a cry of scorn.) Quietly folding his arms, he looked at me and said, "What will you do with her? Kill her or save her? You have only to nod. Kill her?" For these words alone I would like to pardon his crime.

While I hesitated, she shrieked and ran into the depths of the grove. The robber instantly snatched at her, but he failed even to grasp her sleeve.

After she ran away, he took up my sword, and my bow and arrows. With a single stroke he cut one of my bonds. I remember his mumbling, "My fate is next." Then he disappeared from the grove. All was silent after that. No, I heard someone crying. Untying the rest of my bonds, I listened carefully, and I noticed that it was my own crying. (Long silence.)

I raised my exhausted body from the root of the cedar. In front of me there was shining the small sword which my wife had dropped. I took it up and stabbed it into my breast. A bloody lump rose to my mouth, but I felt no pain. When my breast grew cold, everything was as silent as the dead in their graves. What profound silence! Not a single bird note was heard in the sky over this grave in the hollow of the mountains. Only a lonely light lingered on the cedars and the mountain. The light gradually grew fainter, till the cedars and bamboo were lost to view. Lying there, I was enveloped in deep silence.

Then someone crept up to me. I tried to see who it was. But darkness had already been gathering round me. Someone... that someone drew the small sword softly out of my breast in its invisible hand. At the same time blood again flowed into my mouth. And once and for all I sank down into the darkness of space.