

OTOOSAN: Good daughters. Tooriko is quiet with shock for a moment and then weeps uncontrollably.)

AIKO: (Eerie calmness) You must tell me what has happened to my mother. (He takes out a silver, sparkling box. Immediately, the Kuro-ko tinkles wind chimes and Aiko looks around, startled as if she hears something. Aiko holds the box and slowly opens it, scattering sparkling dust. She takes out a large silver and gold lacquered mirror with angel hair hanging in shreds from it. It leaves her in a state of awe. Tooriko is afraid of it.) AIKO: What is it, Father? (Tooriko leaves. Aiko stares into the mirror as the Kuro-ko tinkles the wind chimes. Lights crossfade...) (Aiko dares look again and gasps. Tooriko's curiosity is quelled by fear.) AIKO: It is Mother, when she was a young girl! (Tooriko helps him off with his coat. He and Tooriko sit around the candle. Incredulous, Aiko puts on her father's coat and prepares to leave.)

OTOOSAN: Take off my coat and sit, Aiko. (Otoosan reaches for the satchel and removes two packages.)

OTOOSAN: Here. (Tooriko screams in fright and Otoosan silences her with a gentle look.)

OTOOSAN: It seems so, does it not? (Warm, loving woman's laughter is heard only by Aiko who jumps in surprise and fear.)

TOORIKO: (Staring at her) You are possessed. (He offers it to Tooriko, but she motions for him to offer it to Aiko. He hands it to Aiko. Her pleasure gives Tooriko pleasure.) For you, Aiko-chan.

TOORIKO: Aiko-chan, childhood is a butterfly feeding on the dew of youth. (Aiko brandishes the mirror toward her sister who jumps in fright.) Keep that thing away from me! There is no use for it.

AIKO: Let it burn and, when it is gone, I want its scent to linger in my hair and kimono.

TOORIKO (Bowing low) Welcome home, Otoosan. (Removes a porcelain doll from his satchel.) I brought this porcelain doll for your mother. (He picks up his things and leaves. Tooriko tries to blow out the candle and Aiko stops her.) Leave it be.

TOORIKO: But it is almost burned away.

OTOOSAN: Where are you going in such a hurry, Aiko?

TOORIKO: Quiet, Aiko!

AIKO: Tell me where she is.

OTOOSAN: Sit. (To the ether) Come back, Okaasan.

AIKO: (Facetiously) Oh I am certain. (She opens her gift. It is a scarf.)

TOORIKO: Thank you, Otoosan. And for you, Aiko-chan.

OTOOSAN: It is called a "mirror."

AIKO: "...mirror..."

AIKO: (Startled) There is a girl in the glass!

OTOOSAN: (Laughs) And who does she look like? I can hear her; can you hear--

OTOOSAN: No one else in Matsuyama has such a mirror.

AIKO: Thank you, Otoosan. And the dew disappears quickly.

TOORIKO: Dear Aiko...

AIKO: Welcome, Father.

TOORIKO: Out into the snow to find you!

AIKO: Where is Mother?

OTOOSAN: It is so cold. Let me sit for a--

AIKO: Is she with the horses? (Otoosan takes the coat off of her and forces her to sit.)

Children, your mother has...left us.

AIKO: What? No. No.

OTOOSAN: ...there has been...I shall save it.

OTOOSAN: Do not save it. Wear it. Make yourself look beautiful.

TOORIKO: Does it belong in the house?

OTOOSAN: It is magic.

AIKO: Mother has become a child in this mirror.

TOORIKO: No! We will all be cursed.

OTOOSAN: Whenever you miss your mother, look in this mirror and you will find her looking back at you.

AIKO: There is a spirit in the mirror!

TOORIKO: And not just because of this mirror.

OTOOSAN: It is healing magic.

TOORIKO: Little sister, learn to be practical. As you can see, our parents are not immortal.

AIKO: But they are.

TOORIKO: Put that thing away!

AIKO: But I really saw her. You must grow up.

AIKO: No. Never-never-no.

TOORIKO: Oh, how can you behave so when she has died this night?

AIKO: She is a soldier, a soldier of the soul, like me!

AIKO: The night shall never be good again. Hello. an accident. Today. Now. Look in the glass. How can that be so? What have you done? Have you put her in the mirror? Can I get her out? No! You will be the talk of the town. It is black

magic. Mother lives. I saw her in this mirror. I did! Do you not see that the gods have punished her for riding out into the snow like a soldier? I shall ride, too, and I will return in one piece with Mother at my side. Good night.