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Tsuruya Nanboku

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OSOME AND HISAMATSU
THEIR AMOROUS HISTORY
READ ALL ABOUT IT

A Translation of the Kabuki Play
Osome Hisamatsu Ukina no Yomiuri
by
Tsuruya Nanboku IV
(1813)

A thesis presented
by
Caryl Ann Callahan
to
The Committee on Senior Scholars
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts
in the subject of
History

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In my opinion the "Introductory Note" submitted by Miss Callahan is an adequate synopsis in the sense of the Committee's requirements. The length seems to exceed the desiderandum very slightly.
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The play Osome and Hisamatsu: Their Amorous History, Read All About It (Osome Hisamatsu ukina no yomiuri) written in 1813 is a representative work of the kabuki playwright Tsuruya Nanboku IV and reflects his distinctive features as an author. The basic love story of Osome and Hisamatsu was a popular one in kabuki from the eighteenth century on, and there had been performed various versions of the story; however, Nanboku's play is not a rewrite of these previous works. It is, instead, a technical tour de force completely transformed into the Nanboku style.
In *Osome and Hisamatsu*, Nanboku exploits all the possibilities of the *hayagawari* or quick-change technique, in which a leading actor plays several roles at once. The technique is carried to the extreme in this play, with the leading actor playing almost all the major roles. This requires split-second timing and a high level of skill, and Nanboku found an actor equal to the task in Iwai Hanshirō V, for whom especially he wrote the play.

Due to Tokugawa government restrictions, women were not allowed to perform on the stage and this led to the development of the *onnagata*, actors specialized in woman's roles. The art of the *onnagata* was refined and polished to a high degree, and Hanshirō was the leading practitioner of his day. In this play he was called on to portray practically all the types in the *onnagata* repertory, including a young well-bred girl, a lady-in-waiting of a daimyō house, a young man of good family, a hard-boiled brazen of a woman, a dignified motherly type, a madwoman, and a humble country wife. In some performances the lead *onnagata* may also take the role of a geisha.
Hanshirō and his successors in the performance of Osome and Hisamatsu have been tested to the limit of their skill by the necessity to change roles (and, of course, characters) in lightning-quick succession. Accomplishment in this instance consists of fooling the audience into thinking that no stand-in is used, or, at the least, of confusing the uninitiated into incapacity at a given moment to distinguish between the actor and his double. For example, in the second act, the scene in the inner compartments of the Aburaya -- while it does move the plot forward -- is not written to show Teishō's grief. Instead, it exists to make the audience gasp in awe at the excitement of the split-second changes. In this scene, Hanshirō plays Osome, Hisamatsu, and Teishō in rapid succession. Hanshirō/Hisamatsu goes behind a folding screen, and almost instantly Hanshirō/Osome peeks out from behind the other end of the screen. A few moments later, Hanshirō/Teishō enters. In a similar way, the promenade-like entrance of characters at the beginning of the play exists as an exciting and colorful bit of stagecraft; but it is also meant to excite the audience by the lead onnagata's virtuosity and get them in the mood for the rest of the play.
A play such as Osome and Hisamatsu can perhaps be appreciated better as a performance than as a scenario. But this is true of most plays of the kabuki genre.

The Chinese characters with which the word "kabuki" is conventionally written mean "song," "dance," and "skill." These three elements comprise the spirit of the performance. The plot provides a concrete medium for the expression of the actor's accomplishment; the text is less important than the technique. The dramatist is subservient to the actor; it is only the truly talented author that makes preeminent the stamp of his own originality. Tsuruya Nanboku was such an author. On the surface some of the vehicles he worked on seem to be shallow types. His own peculiar and wry cleverness makes them rise above the level of clichés. A standard story such as that of Osome and Hisamatsu is completely redirected by the Nanboku twist.

The basic plotlines and motivations of the main characters of Nanboku's play may be summarized as follows.

A sword belonging to Lord Chiba has been stolen
by one of his retainers, Suzuki Yachūta, and the blame has been laid on Ishizu Kyūnoshin, another retainer, in whose care the sword had been placed. As a result of the disgrace, Kyūnoshin was forced to commit suicide. The family broken, the son Hisamatsu is registered as the younger brother of Kyūsaku, a loyal servitor, and sent as an apprentice to the Aburaya, a pawnshop. His express purpose is to uncover leads as to the sword's whereabouts and to regain the family's honor by recovering the heirloom. In the meantime his elder sister Takegawa has entered service as a lady-in-waiting.

Unknown to Hisamatsu, Devilgate Kihei, Yachūta's henchman, has pawned the sword at the Aburaya and has taken off with the pawn money. The sword must be accompanied by a certificate proving its genuinity, and that certificate has also found its way to the Aburaya.

Hisamatsu and Osome, the young heiress of the Aburaya, have fallen in love, but Osome — who is four or five months pregnant — has been betrothed to Yamagaya Seibei, and the two must keep their affair a secret.
Another triangle exists between the villainous Yachūta, the geisha Oito, and Osome's brother Tasaburō, the heir to the Aburaya. Both Yachūta and Tasaburō want to pay off Oito's ransom in order to claim her and each one separately is trying various schemes to get the money.

Zenroku, the chief clerk of the Aburaya, has his eyes on the shop and on Osome as well. He tempts Tasaburō into stealing the sword pedigree from the shop, telling the youth that he can raise the money for ransoming Oito with the certificate as a deposit. Zenroku's game is to get Tasaburō disowned, thus clearing the way for his own ambitions, and incidentally to make some money by getting his hands on the valuable sword and certificate.

Devilgate Kihei had once been Yachūta's footman, and so Yachūta had asked his help in disposing of the sword. But Kihei has not let the old ties of loyalty keep him from making some easy money: he is, for that matter, perpetually casting around for good money-making schemes. Kihei and his wife Oroku have led a shady existence since their separation
from samurai service. They have fallen on hard times and run a small tobacco shop on the edge of town. Overhearing a chance conversation, they light upon a plan to extort money from the Aburaya. Their blackmail tool is a stray corpse. The use of a dead man is a peculiar Nanboku device. The extortion scene is a standby of late Edo kabuki; but this play's instance is a veritable classic of ingenuity.

Oroku is the perfect accomplice for Kihei. The particular hard-boiled, sleazy atmosphere that Oroku dwells in and evokes made this character the show stealer of the play. Oroku was such a hit that Nanboku could not merely abandon her; and subsequently he wrote an entire play around her.

The play revolves about the love affair between Osome and Hisamatsu and about the purloined sword. It is a relatively short piece but nevertheless is a fit representative of Nanboku's talent and special flavor as a kabuki playwright.

Tsuruya Nanboku IV was born the son of a craftsman in Edo in 1755. He began as a playwright apprentice in 1776,
but it was not until 1808, when he was 53 years old, that he attained to the position of principal playwright. For twenty years after that — until his death in 1829 — he produced a great number of plays which reflect the daily thoughts, manner of life, and emotions of the Edo townsman. Osome and Hisamatsu was first performed at the Edo Moritaza in 1813. It was a smash hit and became famous under the popular name "The Seven Roles of Osome," because audiences were immediately taken by the fast change technique which the actor Hanshirō so skilfully employed. The play has remained in the repertory, although it is not performed very often. Obviously, it is not a vehicle for every actor. The primadonna of the contemporary kabuki world, Nakamura Utaiemon, put on a particularly thrilling spectacle in the seven roles in January 1963, and was partnered by the perfect Kihei, Ichikawa Ennosuke (the late En'ō).

Urayama Masao and Matsuzaki Hitoshi, the editors of the best available text of Osome and Hisamatsu,1 have commented that Nanboku's work is noted for a realism which

does not attempt to superimpose a moral system. The basic story of Osome/Hisamatsu had been treated in previous plays, but Nanboku and his assistant playwright Sakurada Jisuke II bypassed the traditional theme of duty clashing with human feeling (the standard *giri-ninjō* matrix of Tokugawa Period dramaturgy), which had ended with the lovers' double suicide, and provided a happy ending. Nanboku's version of the old story was composed on a theme entirely different from the conventional motifs of self-sacrifice and disappointed love because of duty. Perhaps that is one measure of Nanboku's modernity and originality.

Nanboku's realism extends to his treatment of individual characters such as Devilgate Kihei. Nanboku "transcends the frame of the feudal concept of duty as opposed to feeling and pierces through to the avarices of an actual life."^2

The play from which we now lift the curtain is exciting in plot and in technical conception. In the translation which follows every attempt has been made to retain the flavor of Nanboku's original.

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2. Urayama and Matsuzaki, p. 10.
The translation of a kabuki play involves the translator in a complex variety of problems. The general difficulty of reproducing idiom while remaining true to the presuppositions of two cultures is compounded by the peculiar nature of kabuki dramaturgy. Kabuki is in the truest sense of the word a popular form of theatre. Accordingly, the kabuki script very often tends to be slangy; the verbal humor frequently depends on puns of the most outrageous sort. One of the principal merits of Miss Callahan's translation is her highly ingenious rendition into English of the Japanese play on words.
The requirements of stage convention contribute further difficulties. The kabuki play is essentially a spectacle composed of the famous three elements song, dance, and acting skill. The articulation of these three modes within the performance implies a variety of styles of acting and of diction. Obviously, the narrative accompanying the shosa or dance portion is tied to the actor's demonstration of skill in a fashion entirely distinct from that of the dialogue situation. The dictates of adherence to musical rhythm and the rules of Japanese poetry remove such narrative far from the sphere of the colloquial and sometimes render it quite arcane. The heavy use of such poetic devices as the pivot word (kakekotoba) and of archaisms is a great barrier to understanding, let alone translation. For these reasons Miss Callahan was not required to submit a translation of the play's Grand Finale. That brief act is almost entirely a shosa piece. The Tokiwazu accompaniment incorporates a joruri chant set in a style totally different from that of the rest of the play, and the author is no longer Nanboku himself but rather his assistant Sakurada Jisuke II.

Osome Hisamatsu ukina no yomiuri confronts the undergraduate with yet another high insurmountable problem: no
adequate text is available of the vital third scene of Act Two. The reconstruction must be pieced together from several sources: snatches of script which seem to be near contemporaries of the first performance, other portions from subsequent versions of the play, and (for the stage directions) woodblock prints and photographs illustrating the drama's development during the century and a half since 1813. What Nanboku actually wrote for this scene cannot at this date be established: only an approximation can be attempted. For the sake of easier comprehension of the play's totality, the tutor has contributed his version of Act Two Scene Three. The portion derived from the Iwanami Koten Bungaku Taikei edition may be accounted near authenticity;¹ but it would be rash to assert the same of the balance, which was emended from the Nihon gikyoku zenshū.² In fact, the latter edition is the perfect illustration of the dictum that in kabuki the dramatist is the slave of the actor. A comparison of this

1. Urayama and Matsuzaki, supplementary note 31, pp. 496-498.

script with Nanboku's own extant text will reveal an appalling
degree of corruptness. The vibrancy and the bon ton of Nanbo-
ku's language was destroyed by his anonymous epigones.

The play's denouement occurs, of course, in the
Grand Finale, so that a few words ought to be said about Act
Three. The shosa is set in several rural locales. The mood
is light and the coloration brilliant, befitting a dance play.
The exploitation of dazzling quick changes continues.

The first interlude merely sets the scene: Hisamatsu in flight after killing Kihei, Osome a captive of the
villainous palanquin bearers Matahachi and Shôroku. The se-
cond episode involves Hanshirô in miming yet another two
disparate characters: Omitsu, Hisamatsu's mad fiancée, and
Osaku, a peasant wife; the dance involves the two in a
contretemps with the mountebank Sajirôbei, who is assisted
by his monkey. The threads of the drama come together in
the climactic third episode, and the conclusion is worthy
of opéra comique.

Zenroku appears on the scene to clair the abducted
Osome. She shakes him off momentarily, but he grabs hold of
her again. As they scuffle, Zenroku's cohorts Shōroku and Matahachi come running in. The two manhandle Osome. Hisamatsu tries to rush to her assistance but Zenroku fastens himself to him. Shōroku and Matahachi bundle Osome willy-nilly into their palanquin and waste no time in carrying it off.

Entering down the hanamichi, Kyūsaku has observed this scene. He comes running to Hisamatsu's aid and goes right for Zenroku. During their struggle a document drops from the folds of Zenroku's kimono. Hisamatsu picks it up. It is the long-sought sword pedigree. Zenroku snatches it back and is on his way, only to be stopped by Kyūsaku. We let the script take over.³

KYŪSAKU: Hisamatsu! Well, it seems I got here just in time. Now here's the pedigree, and I hear you've the sword to go with it. So all you have to do is bring them to the Residence and you're a samurai again, just like that. That way what you've done doesn't count as murder: a samurai is free to cut down any townsman for an insult. In that case you've no cause to commit suicide.

(to Zenroku) Well, hand over the document!

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³ Urayama and Matsuzaki, pp. 271-272.
He tries to get it out of Zenroku's kimono.

**ZENROKU:** What the... You bastard!

He gets loose for a moment. A sparring exhibition follows.

**KYUSAKU**

**ZENROKU:** Not so fast, buddy!

... ... ... 

**KYUSAKU:** Here it is, Hisamatsu!

He hands over the sword pedigree.

**ZENROKU:** Let me...

He rips it out of Kyūsaku's hands and flings it away. At this moment Sashirō [this play's mediator figure] enters and makes a beeline for them.

**SASHIRŌ:** Hisamatsu! So here's where you were! Here -- I ran into the palanquin with Osome in it just now and sent the bearers flying. Osome's safe with Sa-jirōbei. Now all I've left to do is talk with Seibe and everything's fixed: Osome, Hisamatsu, and your fiancée Omitsu for good measure. You'll have two wives -- and who'll ever know the difference?

**KYUSAKU:** Yes! But, Hisamatsu: on to the Residence right away, with sword at side and pedigree in pocket. You'll be a samurai again, and who'll dare charge you with a crime!
SASHIRŌ: The threatened cloud has passed away
and fairly shines over Japan the day
of your impending wedded bliss.

HISAMATSU: How marvellous all this!

SASHIRŌ, KYUSAKU: Congratulations! Congratulations!

... ... ...

In the meantime Shōroku and Matahachi have
snuck upon the scene; and Zenroku rises
to the occasion.

ZENROKU: The pedigree!

SHŌROKU, MATAHACHI: Hisamatsu! You've...

The three pounce upon Hisamatsu. Sashirō
grabs Zenroku and renders him immobile.
Kyūsaku gets rid of the two others.

ALL: Hold it!

Tableau.

SASHIRŌ: And that
is it
for today.

Happy
END.

Drumbeats. CURTAIN.
The basis of this translation is the Iwanami text edited by Urayama Masao and Matsuzaki Hitoshi:

Osome Hisamatsu ukina no yomiuri, in Kabuki kyaku-hon shū, II (Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 54; Tokyo, 1961), 169-272 & 490-500 supp.

The pagination at the left margin of the translation provides a cross-reference to this edition.

Also utilized for the purposes of collation was the Shun'yōdo text edited by Atsumi Kiyotarō:
Osome Hisamatsu _ukina no yomiuri_, in _Nihon gikyoku zenshū_, XII (Tokyo, 1929), 393-466.
The bracketed pagination at the left margin in Act Two Scene Three refers to this edition.

The characters Gonsuke and Shōroku were bracketed in listing the cast of Act Two because the Shun'yōdō text does not designate them by those names. In the light of the Iwanami text there is, however, no doubt of their identification.

The asterisk which precedes much of the stage directions indicates that the character is miming emotions. A technical distinction in the mode of expression is sometimes drawn between an _omoiire_ or facial mime and a _konashi_ or bodily gesture, but the definitional border is not clearly drawn in practice.

--/-- identifies certain portions of text which are chanted.
ACT ONE

in three scenes

1. Yanagishima: The Hundred Circumambulations
2. Kameido: The Tomoeya Restaurant
3. Koume: A Tobacco Shop
The Cast of the First Performance

Edo
Moritaza Theater
the third month,
Bunka 10 (1813)

In order of appearance:

OKURA,
a teahouse maid

Iwai Takijirō

LONGSWORD HACHIRŌZAEMON,
a peddler of toothpowder

Ichikawa Masusaburō

OSOME,
young lady of the Aburaya,
a pawnshop in Kawara Street

Iwai Hanshirō V

OSONO,
her maid

Iwai Umezō

YAGOBEI,
a peasant from Terajima

Ogawa Jūtarō

NIGHTFLYER OIRO,
a whore of the worst sort

Sawamura Kinoji

OITO,
one of the girls of the
Kyōmuraya, a geisha house
in Fukagawa

Nakayama Kamesaburō

OCHIKA,
an upstairs maid in Kumemoto's,
a house of assignation in Fukagawa

Iwai Kamejirō

GENSHICHI,
attendant at the Kyōmuraya

Arashi Shinpei
SUZUKI YACHUTA,
a villainous samurai

SAN,
from the Ichikawaya
pleasure boat

TASABURÔ,
profligate young heir
of the Aburaya

GONSUKE,
Yachûta’s footman

KANKICHI,
from a swordshop

MATSUMOTOYA SASHIRO,
a merchant in perfumes

UNOMATSU,
an apprentice at Sashiro's shop

TAKEGAWA,
lady-in-waiting at
a daimyô residence

OKATSU,
her maid

SANPEI,
Takegawa's servant

MATSUMOTO KINSHA,
an actor

FUJIMA IWATARÔ,
an actor

ZENROKU,
chief clerk of the Aburaya

Kiriyama Monji III
Ichikawa Danbei
Mimasu Ōtarô
Ichikawa Narizô
Sawamura Kawazô
Matsumoto Kôshirô V
Ichikawa Heijirô
Iwai Hanshirô V
Iwai Yoshinosuke
Bandô Kunizô
Matsumoto Yonesaburô
Iwai Kiyotarô III
Sawamura Shiro-Goro II
KYŪTARŌ, an Aburaya apprentice

ZANGETSU, a monk of no great consequence

HISAMATSU, a young man of good family
brought up in the Aburaya as an apprentice; younger brother of Takegawa

FUKUMOTOYA FUKUSUKE, a professional buffoon

A BLIND MAN

ANOTHER

DANSAKU, a last-minute convert to religion

KYŪSAKU, a peasant from Iozaki

TOMOEYA SHINPACHI, a teahouse proprietor

TARŌSHICHI, uncle of Tasaburō and Osome, guardian of the Aburaya estate

KYŪSUKE, servant at the Aburaya

DEVILGATE KIHEI / Kimon no Kihei, the tobacco-man

DITCHSIDE OROKU / Dote no Oroku, his wife

Kirishima Giemon I

Bandō Otohei

Iwai Hanshirō V

Ichikawa Shinzō

Bandō Momotarō

Ichikawa Danshichi

Ichikawa Dansaku

Ichikawa Danjūrō VII

Matsumoto Torazō

Ichikawa Monzaburō II

Bandō Yoshiji II

Matsumoto Kōshirō V

Iwai Hanshirō V
ICHÎ THE CARVER,
an outcaste

KAME,
a hairdresser
from Naka no Gō

Onoe Senzō

Bandō Tsurujūrō
Main stage six yards square.

To the left of stage center is a large pine, the sacred tree of the Bodhisattva Myōken, surrounded by a low black fence to which is attached an offering box. Many votive pictures of a white snake and, in back, many votive flags.

At center rear is the gravestone of Sakurada, the Jōruri playwright, surrounded by a bamboo picket fence and a profusion of yellow flowers. In the background, the graceful branches of cherries in bloom.

Stage right is a tea shop shaded by marsh-reed blinds and festooned with paper lanterns bearing the name of the Moritaza Theater. OKURA, a waitress wearing a red apron, is attending to the tea.

HACHIRŌZAEMON, a peddler of tooth powder who does fast sword draws as a come-on, puts down his pack at the base of the sacred pine. He bears a huge longsword. A group of young loafers, acted by bit players, sit on a long bench at stage front, all talking at once and taking in the scene.

The setting is meant to evoke the atmosphere of the Yanagishima Myōkendō, and the props are directed to that special effect.

The beat of a temple drum. A gong sounds. Voices intoning a sutra are heard as the curtain opens.
HACHIRÔ: Step right up, folks, for your absolutely free demonstration of a lightning draw. This blade is just equal to the spirit of a man. The finest of flowers is the cherry blossom, of trees the cypress, among men the samurai; for arms take a brace of swords. When I cut a scoundrel down, I hack him up in pieces. And here's how to deal with your wife and her lover. You find them in bed, you tie them up in a bundle. Now slice through the top without scratching the one on the bottom -- you see it's natural the woman lies underneath. That's the trick, there you are! I'll mow down any fools that don't buy my toothpowder!

His demonstration continues. A samisen begins a tune to suit the occasion. From the lift curtain enter two pilgrims acted by bit players who proceed down the hanamichi on their way to the shrine for the devotion of one hundred circumambulations.

After them enters Hanshirô costumed as OSOME. Her maid OSONO follows, carrying the bundle of paper twists used in counting the circumambulations. YAGOBEI from Terajima, costumed as a peasant, enters behind them. OIRO, a night-flyer bald from the clap, comes out leaning on a cane and holding a long-tasseled rosary.
From behind the pine enter: OITO costumed as a Fukagawa fancy woman; OCHIKA, an upstairs maid from her house of assignation; GENSUCHI, a geisha house attendant; SUZUKI YACHUTA costumed as a country samurai; and SAN from the Ichikawaya pleasure boat. Each carries the customary bundle of paper twists.

Oito and Osome greet each other in passing at center rear and then part, Osome and her group exiting to the rear of the gravestone.

ABURAYA TASABURO, an effete young dandy, enters through the lift curtain, carrying the paper twists, and meets Oito and her group on the hanamichi. The two exchange significant glances. Oito gives him a letter out of her bosom. Genshichi and Ochika attempt to keep her customer from observing the scene; but Yachuta suspects something and pushes himself between Oito and Tasaburo. The two reluctantly part and pass each other. Oito's group exit through the lift curtain. Tasaburo exits to the rear of the gravestone, looking back again and again.

GONSUKE, Yachuta's footman, enters through the lift curtain. He is followed down the hanamichi by Koshirō costumed as SASHIRŌ, a merchant of substance, in haori and tight silk trousers and bearing one sword. Behind him enters the apprentice UNOMATSU who carries a silk-wrapped bundle.

From behind the gravestone enters the lady-in-waiting TAKEGAWA (Hanshirō in his second part). The maid OKATSU and the lackey SANPEI, members of Takegawa's retinue, follow in her train. They all carry the paper twists and have come for the hundred circumambulations.
MATSUMOTO KINSHA and FUJIMA IWATARŌ, costumed as actors in visiting attire, come down the hanamichi on their Myōken pilgrimage. The group, which includes two extras, disappears behind the gravestone.

Lady Takegawa and her attendants exit through the lift curtain; ZENROKU costumed as the chief clerk of a shop, in tight silk trousers and bearing one sword, and KYUTARŌ, a simpleton apprentice, enter onto the hanamichi from it. Kyutarō bears on his back a bundle enclosed in a furoshiki wrapper, and comes out eating a paper-wrapped lunch of the sort handed out at funerals.

ZANGETSU, a monk of the lower orders, enters from behind the gravestone. He wears a large bamboo hat, hempen habit, and a stole of the Lotus Sect. As he tries to pass Kyutarō on the hanamichi, the apprentice drops his funeral lunch. Kyutarō is furious and takes a swipe at the monk's head. His hat flies off and Zangetsu stands exposed as a large-headed dwarf. Kyutarō is amazed. Zangetsu tries to grab hold of him but Zenroku forces his way between the two and Zangetsu, carrying his bamboo hat, stomps down the hanamichi and exits through the lift curtain muttering. Kyutarō is struck dumb by it all. He picks up his funeral lunch and as he eats it absently, Zenroku berating him leads him off behind the grave mound.

HISAMATSU (Hanshirō's third part) enters through the lift curtain. He also carries the paper twists and has come to perform the circumambulations. Behind him enters FUKUMOTOYA FUKUSUKE, a professional buffoon, followed by two blind men with their canes. They clomp along in their
geta on their way to the circumambulations. Next comes DANSAKU, an old profligate who has suddenly seen the light and got religion. He is dressed in any one of the shabby costumes used for people of the lower grades of society, has a long-tasseled rosary hanging from his collar, and comes out chanting the Nichiren Sect ejaculation.

Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) exits behind the gravestone.

The lift curtain opens and Oito, Yachūta, Ochika, Genshichi, and San come down the hanamichi. From behind the gravestone emerge Yagobei and Oiro. Hanshirō, having done a quick change, comes out behind them as Osome and, accompanied by Osono, proceeds to the hanamichi. They pass Yachūta and his group, who exit behind the gravestone.

KANKICHI, a sharp dealer in swords, Tasaburō, Gonsuke, Sashirō, and Unomatsu all emerge from behind the grave on their circumambulation of the shrine and exit down the hanamichi.

From the lift curtain enter: Hanshirō, again transformed into Takegawa, Okatsu, and Sanpei, mingled in a group of extras. As they disappear into the shadow of the gravestone, from it emerge Kinsha, Iwatarō, their attendants, and Fukusuke. While these proceed down the hanamichi, Hanshirō passes behind the boxes on the theater's right side, the only time he does this during the performance. Kinsha and Iwatarō's group exit through the lift curtain.

Another quick change allows Hanshirō to appear through the lift curtain as Osome. Osono and several extras follow her down the hanamichi. They proceed to the gravestone, whence emerges
Hanshirō's double as Hisamatsu to meet Osome (the real Hanshirō). Osono whispers to Hisamatsu: "Your elder sister was just here!" Osome catches up with Osono; leaving Hisamatsu behind, they enter the gravestone's shadow. During this interlude, extras are uninteruptedly entering the stage and distributing themselves right and left.

Yagobei enters and sits down on the bench at stage right. Takegawa (Hanshirō), Okatsu, and Sanpei enter from behind the gravestone and sit down on the bench at stage left. In the meantime, Hachirōzaemon has finished with his swordplay.

EXTRAS: Bravo! That was very good!

HACHIRŌ: Now I'm off to Kameido where I'll put the show on at the Tenjin Shrine.

EXTRAS: Let's come along to watch.

Temple drum. They exit boisterously by the hurry door.

The farmer KYUSAKU of Iozaki enters through the lift curtain. He is a rustic, wearing a short jacket over his shabby clothes, cotton drawers, and straw sandals. In his funnel-shaped vegetable basket he has some greens tied with knotted straw. He ambles down the hanamichi and sets his basket down at stage right.

Okura fills a cup and gives it to Takegawa.
OKURA: Here you go. Some tea.

YAGOBEI: How about some over here too?

OKURA: Yes, sir. It's coming right up.

KYŪSAKU: Miss, I'll have a cup too, please.

OKURA: Ah! The flavor's just right now.

Takegawa is taking genteel puffs from a pipe. Yagobei spots Kyūsaku.

YAGOBEI: Why, if it isn't Kyūsaku!

KYŪSAKU: Why, it's Yagobei! You're here on a pilgrimage, are you?

YAGOBEI: Well... if you really want to know, we're here to offer up prayers because of something your brother Hisamatsu has done.
*Takegawa overhears this and makes sure to listen, casually hiding her face with her fan.

KYŪSAKU: But what could be the matter with Hisamatsu?

YAGOEI: Well... now that young fellow who used to be in your house -- he's the boy from Edo you adopted, right?

KYŪSAKU: That's right. My late mother took him into the family as my younger brother. He's back in Edo now, serving as an apprentice.

YAGOEI: Yes, that apprentice -- well, Yoshirō's daughter Omitsu is head over heels in love with him. If they'd left her alone, she would have done herself in; so your mother said she'd arrange a match for Omitsu with the boy. Your mother passed away soon after that and Hisamatsu went away to Edo as an apprentice. The story goes that he's having an affair with his master's daughter, and that he might even marry into the family. Omitsu got wind of this
and has simply been pining away. We villagers thought it was just too sad to see her like that, so we came today for the Hundred Devotions.

KYŪSAKU: That is a terrible shame. But Hisamatsu went up to Edo for a long term of service. No matter what, he can't even talk about marrying when his time isn't up.

YAGOBEI: Now that is a problem. At any rate, if the master will give him his leave, you know what to do. Don't worry just because the boy is having an affair with that Edo girl.

KYŪSAKU: You're right. Then I'll ask his master to give him his freedom.

YAGOBEI: That's the wisest thing to do. Well, I'll have to be going now, so let me say goodbye. Come on over and visit, Kyūsaku.
KYŌSAKU: I will. I'll drop by for a chat some evening. Have a good journey.

Pause. Temple drum. With a pipe clamped between his teeth, Yagobei exits down the hanamichi.
*Lost in thought and worried about Hisamatsu, Kyōsaku watches him leave.

A country girl in love in her own one track mind is your Omitsu. For her own peace of mind, mother hushed her with this talk about marriage. Too bad, she was left in a fool's paradise. The blueblooded heir of a samurai house... and somebody like a farmer's daughter. Now really!

*During this monologue Takegawa has been waiting with an expression of great concern to ask Kyōsaku about the rumors involving Hisamatsu.

TAKEGAWA: But it's Kyōsaku, isn't it?

KYŌSAKU: What a surprise! Lady Takegawa, how nice to meet you here!
OKATSU:  Do come closer, won't you?

SANPEI:  How are you, Kyūsaku. It's been a long time.

Kyūsaku exchanges greetings with them and then goes over to Takegawa.

KYŪSAKU:  Miss, bring this lady some tea, please.

OKURA:  Yes, right away.

TAKEGAWA:  Okatsu and Sanpei, while I discuss some business with Kyūsaku, please go fetch the amulet I requested from the abbot.

OKATSU:  Yes, my lady. We'll leave you by yourselves. Shall we go, Sanpei?

SANPEI:  Yes, ma'am! We'll be back later.

Exit music as Okatsu and Sanpei depart stage left. Okura goes inside the teahouse. *Takegawa looks around to make sure there are no eavesdroppers.
TAKEGAWA: Now, Kyūsaku! Your mother was the wetnurse my parents employed for Hisamatsu, and you know the full story. The sword Goō Yoshimitsu was lost while under my father's charge, and... Oh, the memory is just too cruel!

*Her every movement expresses her sorrow.

KYŪSAKU: The House of Chiba had many retainers, but none more distinguished than your father, Lord Ishizu Kyūnoshin. Oh, my lord's lineage was of long and meritorious service; but when the sword he was entrusted with disappeared, he was disgraced and had to commit suicide. His family fell. You yourself entered service as a lady-in-waiting. As the son of his wetnurse, I had -- although quite unworthy -- the young lord Hisamatsu placed under my care, and he was registered as my younger brother. And then he was placed in service as an apprentice in the Aburaya. That such a thing should come to pass! But it is all for the sake of his search for the lost sword Goō Yoshimitsu.
Your father said to me: "You and Hisamatsu drank the same mother's milk. In a way, you are his elder brother." And he designated me to bear part of his name Kyūnoshin, so that I am called Kyūsaku. Overwhelmed with gratitude for this signal favor, and attempting to repay part of my debt to him, I took charge of Hisamatsu and spread it about the village that he was just a boy we had adopted. The matter was settled for the moment. But the young lord is such a handsome young fellow! The girls in the village couldn't keep their eyes off him, and were always pulling him by the sleeve trying to get him alone. My mother made a good excuse with that fictitious engagement. But now I'm in trouble because of that.

TAKEGAWA: I've known for some time about that farm girl -- what's her name, Mitsu. What I'm worried about now is the girl where Hisamatsu is employed, the only daughter of the Aburaya. Just now that country fellow was spreading rumors about my brother, not caring
who hears. All Edo is talking about this girl Osome. Hearing it is enough to make me sick with worry.

KYŪSAKU: That's just it. People say that putting an eager young man together in the same house with a girl who is equally eager is as dangerous as putting a teacup on the edge of a well. But Hisamatsu's aim is to search for the sword. Working in a pawnshop should give him many leads. While he is on his own, of course, there are bound to be all sorts of rumors. As the saying goes, men's mouths have no doors. There is always talk about young people.

TAKEGAWA: I am not one to worry about mere talk. But if there really is something between him and that girl, if the affair makes him put off the search for the sword -- or even abandon the crucial task -- then, then he will bring grief upon our dead father. That is what torments me.
KYUSAKU: What are you saying? Once you start thinking that way, you'll never set your mind at ease. Hisamatsu is intelligent. He would never do such a thing.

TAKEGAWA: I think so too. And that is why I am offering the Hundred Circumambulations today, so that he will escape danger himself, and get the sword back safely. But just a while ago I thought I saw in the crowd my brother with a young girl of fifteen or sixteen. That must have been that Aburaya girl.

KYUSAKU: Yes, it must have. But if Hisamatsu came by here, then I can try to find him and ask about his search for the sword.

TAKEGAWA: Ask him how things stand, and if there are any clues to let me know immediately. And tell him his sister is requesting it.

KYUSAKU: Yes, my lady. But will you be going back to the Residence now?
TAKEGAWA: No, there are still some things to take care of.  
So I think I will have dinner at the Tomoeya.

KYŪSAKU: If I meet him, I'll come to the Tomoeya and let you know.

*He ponders how best to find Hisamatsu.

Temple gong. Okatsu and Sanpei enter from the hurry door.

OKATSU: Are you leaving already? Madam, that samurai from the Residence that we were talking about the other day, Suzuki Yachūta, is coming this way. He has a girl from the pleasure quarters with him.

SANPEI: Not letting a pilgrimage put him off from his fun.  
If you want me to, I'll...

TAKEGAWA: Calm yourself! You only make things worse with your bluster. I will give the two of you your instructions at the Tomoeya. Kyūsaku, please don't forget about my brother.
KYŪSAKU: I won't. Goodbye, Lady Takegawa.

TAKEGAWA: Kyūsaku...

KYŪSAKU: Take care on the way.

Pause. To the sound of a song Okatsu and Sanpei accompany Takegawa down the hanamichi and through the lift curtain.

Hmm... Then Hisamatsu might come back here today, escorting the girl. Yes...

*Kyūsaku is lost in thought.

Tsukudabushi, the sort of merrymakers' music one associates with the Fukagawa gay quarters. Oito, Yachūta, Ochika, Genshichi, and San enter through the hurry door. Okura comes out of her tea shop.

OKURA: Welcome, welcome. Do come right in. Shall I bring tea for all of you?

YACHŪTA: Not me! I've been at the temple drinking sake with that vegetarian stuff they give you; and I'm sick to my stomach. Now for a quick one at the Tomoeya,
and I hope they serve fish with it. Anyway... well
now, Oito, why don't you hold my hand as we walk
along?

OITO: How could I do such a thing, in broad daylight!

YACHUTA: Now, what am I supposed to do? Listen here, Oito,
I'm redeeming you out of your house. I'm handing
over fifty ryō to Genshichi here this very day,
right? That means I'm having you quit work and
setting you up. So who's to utter a peep, even if
we do hold hands!

GENSHICHI: Now, here, here, here, dear sir! You're no man about
town! Walking along holding a girl's hand is com-
pletely passe.

YACHUTA: Um... They held a girl's hand in the old days and
now they don't?
GENSHICHI: That's right. It is particularly out of fashion to hold hands with a girl you plan to make your wife.

YACHÜTA: I see. If that's the way it is, I won't hold her hand.

SAN: Now that is a good idea. Isn't it, Ochika?

OCHIKA: That it is. Nowadays, a man about town is one who doesn't get on your nerves. One who tries to make out with a girl in public is just a man out in the street.

YACHÜTA: So if I've been out in the street all this time, why can't I hang around the corner and maybe pick up a weed off the street? ... Ha ha. Wasn't that pretty clever?

OITO: Ah... Do excuse me, please. I have this special prayer to make, so I'll be going to the Azuma Shrine. Ochika, you come along too.
OCHIKA: Yes, just the two of us. We'll be right back. But do let us go, madam.

YACHÛTA: Wait, let me come along. Without holding hands.

OITO: No, no... Just the two of us women, without any men along. That's part of the vow I've made, you see.

YACHÛTA: Well, maybe I can pick up that stray weed and console myself.

SAN: But, sir, rather than go to the trouble of picking, why not just buy up the dandelion greens this fellow has right here?

GENSHICHI: That's right. As San said, buy his whole load; then you can spread it around for gifts. You, you over there! We're going to buy your whole load. So how much? How much is it?
KYUSAKU: I'm sorry, I've sold everything already. All I have left here is one bunch of bridewort greens.

He takes out the bunch and Genshichi takes it and looks at it.

GENSHICHI: This is all you've got left? Well, if that's all we've no use for it. But once I've said I'd buy something I hate to leave it unbought. How much do you want for this?

KYUSAKU: Give me what you think is fair.

GENSHICHI: Now here's an honest fellow. Let's see -- is fifty coppers all right?

Pause. Genshichi looks into the purse which hangs from his belt.

Damn! I gave all my money away to a beggar in front of the temple gate. I'll send a messenger back for some. Please wait here.

He puts the bunch back into the basket.
KYŪSAKU: Oh, go right ahead and take it with you; it's all right. I'll leave my basket right here, so take it along any time you feel like it.

He thinks out loud.

Now to look for the young master. Have to find him somehow...

He comes to himself.

Miss, I'll leave my load in your care. And now, to go look.

Temple drum. Kyūsaku leaves his basket and exits through the hurry door.

Peering out of the teahouse is Tasaburō. Oito notices this.

OITO: Oh, I'm so happy to see you here!

She starts toward him. Tasaburō quickly hides himself. Yachūta is surprised at the girl's utterance.

YACHŪTA: Now, Oito, I've been here all this time.
OITO: But I wasn't talking to you.

YACHÛTA: If you weren't talking to me, who was it you saw?

OITO: Well.... Uh....

GENSHICHI: That's right! Saying, "I'm so happy to see you" to someone else than your master! Oito, be more discreet!

YACHÛTA: What made you say, "I'm so happy to see you"?

OITO: Well.... Uh....

She is squirming.

OCHIKA: Please! Just now, Oito said...

YACHÛTA: "I'm so happy to see you," she said...

OCHIKA: ... to the snake.
YACHUTA: Huh?

Pause. He is really taken aback.

Where's this snake?

OCHIKA: There, there! A big white snake coming from the top of the Sacred Pine! Over there, over there!

SAN: Oh, this is just too much!

Great commotion as Yachuta and the others rush about.

Sound of the temple drum. The owner of the Tomoeya, SHINPACHI, costumed as an old man, enters through the lift curtain. He walks out to the stage briskly in his geta.

OKURA: Ah, Shinpachi, have you come to meet somebody?

SHINPACHI: Lord Yachūta, what are you all so excited about?

YACHUTA: A large white snake just appeared here!
SHINPACHI: Pretty creepy, isn't it? But you ought to feel happy to see a white snake at the Myōken. What you saw really was the God of Luck!

But, my dear sir... Dear sir, I have come to fetch you. There are some actors from the Moritaza at my place. I also have guests from a daimyo residence. It's really quite a party! Please, do hurry, and I'll accompany you. So come right along now, come right along!

GENSHICHI: It sounds like fun, sir. Maybe we can all squeeze in.

SAN: Let's go! Bring on the booze!

YACHŪTA: All right, let's go, let's go. Come along with me, Oito.

He takes her by the hand.
OITO: Oh, not that again! I won't go if you hold my hand in broad daylight!

YACHUTA: I give up! If that's the way you want it, I won't hold your hand.

OITO: I'll come later. Please, do go on ahead. I have a prayer to make at the shrine.

YACHUTA: What are you talking about? You can say your prayers just as well inside the restaurant.

GENSHICHI: Since the gentleman requests it, Oito, go along to the Tomoeya. I have to go talk to the priest, but you go right along with the gentleman.

YACHUTA: Hold on! You come along too just as soon as you can!

GENSHICHI: Yes, sir. I'll come right away.

OKURA: Shall I come too, and help out?
SHINPACHI: There's a big crowd. I would appreciate your help.

OCHIKA: Well, then, let's all go now.

To the sound of the Fukagawa music all go down the hanamichi. Oito leaves with obvious regret; Yachūta presses her on.

Tasaburō comes out from the shadow of the tea shop. He takes Oito's letter from inside his kimono and looks at it.

TASABURŌ: According to this letter, the samurai who plans to ransom Oito is this very same Yachūta. She says he'll hand the fifty ryō deposit in very soon. My own security for raising a deposit is this pedigree of the sword Yoshimitsu that I took from my family's pawnshop.

As he takes the sword certificate out of the folds of his kimono --

Geza music portraying the sound of rapid footsteps. Unomatsu chases Kyūtarō out onto the stage, arguing with him.

UNOMATSU: Give me back my lunch! Give me back my lunch!
KYŪTARŌ: Why should I? If you've got any more, hand it all over!

UNOMATSU: You cheeky apprentice! Give it back!

He grabs for it. Tasaburō steps between the two.

TASABURŌ: I'm shocked at you, Kyūtarō!

KYŪTARŌ: Ah! The young master!

UNOMATSU: You greedy devil! Give me back the lunch!

Tasaburō stops their fighting.

TASABURŌ: Hold on! (to Unomatsu) You're one of Sashirō's apprentices, aren't you? Don't you know when to quit?

UNOMATSU: Well... if it isn't the young master of the Aburaya who's been staying at our shop! Say, don't let the boss know that I got into a fight. As for you, Kyūtarō, remember I'm not through with you yet!
KYUTARÔ: Yah, big talk!

Unomatsu exits through the hurry door.

TASABURÔ: Now, that will do, Kyutarô. Say... who're you with today?

KYUTARÔ: I went with the chief clerk Zenroku to Isehachi's funeral. Where've you been hanging around the past few days? Your stepmother's pretty worried, you know.

TASABURÔ: Yes -- I've been a house guest at Sashiro's. But, say, Kyuta, do me a favor. Here...

He takes out the sword pedigree.

This is a very important document. Take it to Zenroku and when you give it to him, say: "Tasaburô wants immediately what he asked you for before!"

This letter will tell him all the details. Tell him that's why I want what I asked for immediately.
He gives Kyūtarō Oito's letter and the sword pedigree.

KYŪTARŌ: Yes, sir. I just tell him that and give him these, isn't that right?

TASABURŌ: Just do it right away! And be sure to tell Zenroku that I'll be waiting in the Tomoeya for an answer.

KYŪTARŌ: Yes, sir, I'll tell him.

TASABURŌ: Don't mess it up. And now -- if I can only meet Oito...

Sound of the temple drum. Tasaburō hurries down the hanamichi and exits through the lift curtain.

KYŪTARŌ: That jerk! What a stupid thing to ask me to do!

He's just got no sense.

As he grumbles to himself Zenroku and Genshichi enter.
ZENROKU: Kyūtarō, where are you? Kyūta, Kyūta! Ah, there you are. Where've you been hiding yourself, Kyūta? We've been looking for you a lot.

KYŪTARŌ: And in a minute I'll be looking for a lot from you.

ZENROKU: Come off it, you fool! What do you want?

KYŪTARŌ: What, indeed? This business wants a fool. That giddy Tasaburō was here just now and gave me these for you.

He takes out the letter and the sword pedigree.

"Give these to Zenroku. He'll understand if you tell him I want immediately what I asked for before."

That's what he told me to tell you. See how good I remembered it. So here you've got it all.

Zenroku takes the two items and examines them closely.
ZENROKU: Here's why he's giving me the sword pedigree. There's a note with it: "Take this and borrow fifty ryō on it somewhere. I'll redeem it in two or three days and put it back in the cabinet where it belongs." So let him think he can do it! This boy can't see an inch in front of his nose!

GENSHICHI: So are you going to hustle up the fifty ryō for him?

ZENROKU: What friendship's between us that calls for such help? Here's what I think...

He whispers and Genshichi nods.

GENSHICHI: Yes -- the kid takes the rap and gets driven out of the house, although you're the one that made him take the certificate. I get your game this far. But the heiress Osome is going to marry Seibei of the Yamagaya. Sashirō's the go-between; you won't get her.
ZENROKU: I've got a plan for that too. We make Hisamatsu's affair with the heiress the talk of the town, so that Seibei breaks off the match. And then we spread it around to the relatives that the young stepmother's got a thing going with Seibei -- he's her daughter's bridegroom, so that's incest! That way the match stays broken off.

GENSHICHI: That's a damn good plan. At any rate -- I'll trick Oito and lead Tasaburō on, so the boy sinks in deeper and deeper. I take it that is our game.

ZENROKU: I'm counting on you.

GENSHICHI: That you can.

While the two are plotting, Kyūtarō stares at them and takes it all in.

KYŪTARŌ: I heard a good thing. Didn't hear no bad thing. Don't know nothing 'bout it: Chief Clerk with some man. I heard a good thing: Didn't hear no bad thing.
He claps his hands, beating time.

ZENROKU: Here, here, here, Kyūtarō! Kyūtarō, not so loud!

KYŪTARŌ: Chief Clerk, I heard everything! Hee hee!

ZENROKU: If you promise not to tell anybody, I'll tell you a very good thing!

KYŪTARŌ: What do you mean by a very good thing?

ZENROKU: Here, here -- nothing else: There's a woman who's just crazy about you.

KYŪTARŌ: Who is it, who is it?

ZENROKU: Um... The woman who's crazy about you...

*He pauses to think.

... well... it's that young stepmother at our shop.
KYŪTARŌ: What! The young stepmother? That would be nice, but you're telling me a lie.

ZENROKU: Would I lie to you?

GENSHICHI: That beautiful young widow has an eye for you, you lucky fellow!

KYŪTARŌ: Still, it feels a bit stupid... Is it really true?

ZENROKU: What do you think? Listen, Kyūtarō, that young widow said: "Somehow or other, I'm going to marry Kyūtarō. I've been letting my hair grow, and I'm not going to be a nun anymore, but we just can't get married in this neighborhood. I want to live with Kyūtarō at Kasai no Shibamata where he was born." That's what she said.

So you sneak away first and lie low for a while. She'll run away and follow after you very soon.

What do you think?
KYŪTARŌ: I'll run away first and wait for her if she really will come after me. But is it really true?

ZENROKU: Would I lie to you? If you want to run away, here.

Pause. He takes a quarter ryō from his purse.

Here's some pocket money. Go and wait in the country. Don't you by any means come back to Edo at all!

He gives the money to Kyūtarō.

KYŪTARŌ: If all you tell me comes true, why should I come back to Edo?

Should I start a family with this quarter ryō? Or -- Should I eat my fill of Hashimoto's blowfish soup?

Start a family? Eat blowfish soup?

Blowfish, family? Family, blowfish?

*He does a bit of elementary fortune-telling by counting the two alternatives off on his fingers.

Well, looks like blowfish soup comes out on top. I'll eat my fill with this quarter ryō.
ZENROKU: Wait, Kyūtarō! You just stuffed yourself with rice and beans from the funeral.

KYŪTARŌ: That's all right. Blowfish doesn't go with rice cake but there's nothing wrong with blowfish and rice and beans.

ZENROKU: Hey, you are very clever! But we knew it all the time. But, Kyūta: Once you've run away, don't you come back to the Aburaya ever again!

KYŪTARŌ: Wouldn't be Kyūtarō if I did. I'll never come back. I've got a quarter ryō now, to buy and eat my fill. I'll eat all I want; and then I'll build a monument in my home town.

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GENSHICHI: What are you going to build?

KYŪTARŌ: I'll build a Chowpel to the Great Foodha.

ZENROKU: Stop this nonsense! Get lost!
KYŪTARŌ: Right!

He runs full speed down the hanamichi and turns back at the lift curtain.

I'm getting lost!

He exits.

ZENROKU: Such an idiot!

GENSHICHI: But why did you get that fellow to turn runaway?

ZENROKU: When I meet Tasaburō, I'll claim I never received the sword pedigree. His messenger Kyūtarō's run away; so we've got somebody to take all the blame.

GENSHICHI: Spoken like the chief clerk of a major store!

ZENROKU: Looks pretty clever, eh?

GENSHICHI: That it does, that it does.

ZENROKU: Come now, it can't be all that clever!
THE TWO: Ha ha ha ha ha.

GENSHICHI: Well, I'm off to the Tomoeya. Tasaburō's there also, isn't he?

ZENROKU: Don't let him catch on!

GENSHICHI: Don't worry! I've drunk it all in and swallowed it down. Anyway, I'm off.

Temple drum. Genshichi exits rapidly down the hanamichi.

ZENROKU: Well, that's taken care of. I got rid of that apprentice. But if I run into Tasaburō right now and he asks about the sword pedigree, I'll have it on me while I'm putting him on about knowing nothing.

Pause.
*He ponders what to do next, and then spots a straw wrapper in Kyūsaku's vegetable basket.

Aha! Now here's something useful! I'll put the pedigree in this straw wrapper and if I carry it
along just like it was a plain bunch of bridewort greens...

Pause.
*He looks very smug. He puts the certificate into the straw wrapper.

... like this, no one will ever catch on.

*Placing the straw wrapper on a bench, he pauses to think.

Temple drum. TARÔSHICHI, the uncle of Tasaburō, enters through the lift curtain. He wears a straw cape and tight silk trousers, has one sword at his side and carries a deep bamboo hat. KYŪSUKE, one of the Aburaya servants, enters after him. He is dressed in a cotton traveler's garment, cotton drawers and a yard-long waist band, wears straw sandals and carries a bundle of old clothes wrapped in a huge furoshiki which is covered with oil paper. The two are returning from the market in Matsudo and catch sight of Zenroku.

TARÔSHICHI: If it isn't Zenroku!

ZENROKU: Ah, Tarōshichi! Just getting home, sir, aren't you?

With such good weather, you must have had a very fine day at the market.
KYŪSŪKE: Say, Chief Clerk, the market sure was good. We sold so much stuff that -- look here! -- all we've got left is the four or five pieces of old clothes that I'm carrying here.

TARŌSHICHI: Yes, we really can't complain. On the way there, we had to have a horse to carry all the goods, and we sold practically everything. The few things left Kyūsuke can carry back on his shoulders. We haven't done business like this in years!

Pause. He remembers something.

Ah, that's right. Zenroku, I have something to talk over with you. Here's what it is.

The sword Goō Yoshimitsu that Kankichi or whatever his name, the one from the swordshop, pawned a while ago -- well, there was this talk at the market yesterday. It seems that Lord Chiba lost a sword of the same name. Now it's not likely to be the same article, but we don't want to hold on to anything that's even remotely similar. We'd best get it off
our hands just as soon as the period for redeeming the pawn expires. That reminds me -- does Teishō have the sword pedigree?

ZENROKU: Yes. She shut it away in a chest. Please don't worry about it.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, I simply can't be too careful. My brother Tarōbei made a deathbed request of me, and I always try to keep it in mind.

"My son Tasaburō" -- he said -- "is weak-willed and fools around in the pleasure quarters. He can't manage his inheritance, the Aburaya. My daughter Osome will go as a bride to Seibei of the Yamagaya. Have Sashirō as the go-between. The wife I leave behind is still young. The relationship between her and the children is a problem, since she is not their real mother. Please try to keep an eye on things."

As you know, I have followed his request and acted as a guardian. Now Teishō is only in her thirties,
and there is always somebody that's urging a second marriage on her. The son really has no blood relation with her, so there are rumors about them. So she shaved off her hair like a nun. She wants to settle Osome's marriage and get a good bride for Tasaburō. And then she hopes to step down as soon as possible, and retire. Somehow it doesn't seem right for such a young woman. Don't you feel sorry for her too? But what a model of prudence!

ZENROKU: Yes, she does have quite a reputation.

KYŪSUKE: Excuse me... Why don't we do this now: I think they should be ready to serve dinner at Hashimoto's. Shall we have them fry up some dengaku for us?

TARŌSHICHI: Sounds good! It's dinnertime, Zenroku, so why don't you come along?

ZENROKU: Fine. Fine. Good idea!
Zenroku picks up the straw wrapper. The three start toward the hanamichi. Kyūsaku enters and sees this.

KYŪSAKU: Say, just a minute! Where are you going with those greens?

ZENROKU: Ah, well, I thought I'd buy these.

KYŪSAKU: I'm sorry, I've already promised them to someone else, and they're sold. Please give them here.

He tries to take the greens. Zenroku holds on.

ZENROKU: What is this? It doesn't matter who you sell to. You sell, I buy.

KYŪSAKU: But I've sold them already.

ZENROKU: Oh, this fellow is pigheaded! Didn't I say I'd buy them?

KYŪSAKU: Well, I told you I'd already sold them.
Kyūsaku grabs the greens and thrusts them into his basket.

ZENROKU: Look here, you! I said I'd take them.

As they are arguing, Yachūta's footman Gonsuke appears at the lift curtain and runs down the hanamichi. He spots Zenroku --

GONSUKE: Here, Zenroku, is it? My master Yachūta wants to see you for a few minutes to ask you something about a pawned article. Come along now, come along.

He grabs Zenroku by the sleeve.

ZENROKU: Wait! I'm really tied up now. Please tell him I just can't get loose.

GONSUKE: Good for you! So you're busy; but this is urgent too. My master wants to talk to you about the sword Yoshimitsu.

TARŌSHICHI: The sword Yoshimitsu! Did anything happen to it?
ZENROKU: Aa... yes, about that sword Yoshimitsu, I've got to, with this tradesman...

KYŪSUKE: But, Chief Clerk, what in the world does this vegetable peddler have to do with the sword?

ZENROKU: Just the same, I can't leave with things as they are.

GONSUKE: Well, you were told to come, so come along now!

He drags Zenroku away.

ZENROKU: Now I'm in trouble. You! Tradesman! Don't go away! Hey, Kyūsuke, buy those greens for me! It's a matter of life and death! A matter of life and death! Buy those greens for me! Make sure you buy those greens!

Temple drum. Gonsuke pulls Zenroku along. Zenroku repeatedly looks back, worrying about the greens, as they exit through the lift curtain.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, will you look at him, Kyūsuke! What in the world bit him? Do you suppose a fox got to him? He looks like he's had a spell cast on him.
KYUSUKE: You're right! He's sure spellbound by those greens.

KYUSAKU: Hmm... I wonder where that other man went, the one who said he wanted my greens before.

*He looks around here and there.

KYUSUKE: Hey, you! Tradesman! I don't know why, but the Chief Clerk sure wanted those greens. So why don't you sell them to me just as soon as anywhere else? I'll see to it that they get to him.

KYUSAKU: What do you mean? I sold these before you came, right? I can't sell them to anyone else!

KYUSUKE: This fellow is damn pigheaded! It's not like it was something imported from China: you can pick those crummy weeds in any ditch. If you won't sell, the hell with you. You can't win with a yokel who's a cabbagehead on top of it all!
KYUSAKU: Hold on, now! I told you I can't sell them because they're already sold. But this business of "damn pigheaded," "cabbagehead," "yokel" is just too much! Please watch what you're saying.

KYUSUKE: I said it. So what? I said it with my own mouth. So what're you gonna do? I said you're a yokel because you're a yokel! Can't do nothing with a monkeyfaced Chink!

KYUSAKU: Who're you calling a monkeyfaced Chink?

KYUSUKE: There's only one here.

KYUSAKU: What do you mean? Do you mean me?

KYUSUKE: I mean you! And I'll turn that face around for you!

KYUSAKU: You just try!

KYUSUKE: Well, then I will.
He belts Kyūsaku one on the cheek.

KYūSAKU: You hit me! You...

KYūSUKE: Yeah, I hit you. So what? This is what you get if you fool with me!

Kyūsuke raps him with the pipe he has been smoking. The corner of Kyūsaku's eye is cut.

TARŌSHICHI: Kyūsuke! What are you doing!

He tries to stop them.

KYūSUKE: Please let go! This damn hick...

KYūSAKU: You have struck a tradesman...

TARŌSHICHI: (to Kyūsuke) Wait! (to Kyūsaku) Please try to excuse him!

He ad-libs persuasions to stop the two from fighting. Kyūsuke and Kyūsaku stand facing each other.
A group of young men enter from the lift curtain. San of the Ichikawa boathouse is mixed in among them. Another large group enters from the hurry door.

EXTRAS: A fight! A fight!


He hits Kyūsaku.

TARŌSHICHI: Hold on! Not you too!

KYŪSUKE: Knock him down, San!

SAN: Damn yokel!

He smashes Kyūsaku. The extras try to separate them. Tarōshichi fusses about, at a complete loss what to do. Kyūsaku's hair is a mess; the shoulder of his jacket is ripped. Kyūsuke, with San helping, lays into him.

Matsumotoya Sashirō enters from the hurry door and comes into the middle of this.

SASHIRO: Stop! Wait! That poor tradesman! What in the world are you doing?
Pause. He sees Tarōshichi.

Ah! It's Tarōshichi of the Aburaya!

TARŌSHICHI: Sashirō, our go-between! My servant Kyūsuke and that tradesman -- they got into a quarrel over nothing at all! Please stop them. Stop them, please!

SASHIRŌ: I saw what was happening, so I came to arbitrate. Kyūsuke, I don't know what this is about, but a tradesman is no match for you. It's always best to keep one's temper.

KYŪSUKÉ: What the hell! It started because he wouldn't sell some greens I wanted to buy.

SASHIRŌ: That small a thing! And San, you -- how do you say it? -- you leapt right in on Kyūsuke's horse, didn't you?
SAN: Uh... yeah, that's right.

SASHIRÔ: Oh, but that is not right. You're not acting like adults. You're not two-year-olds, you know! What in the world did you think you were doing!

Pause. His attitude and voice change as he turns to Kyûsaku.

Excuse me, tradesman, you are from the country, aren't you?

KYûSAKU: Yes, that is correct. I am a farmer from Iozaki. That man insisted I sell him these greens that another gentleman had already bought. Well, I told him they were already sold to somebody else. He didn't care for that, and that is how the fight started.

SASHIRÔ: I see. A tradesman has to put up with a lot of nasty things. It'd be best if you let me handle this.
Pause. He looks at Kyūsaku more closely.

Ah, but you have a cut on your face!

KYūSAKU: Yes, that is true, I've a cut on my face -- and look at this here! My jacket was ripped. They didn't have to hit me so hard. They're a little hotheaded, aren't they?

SASHIRŌ: You're right there -- a fight at the drop of a hat. Please be patient for a while. I won't do badly by you.

KYūSAKU: But, please -- I'm putting you to so much trouble!

SASHIRŌ: Not at all. It's not as though these people were complete strangers. And I can see you're a prudent young man, the kind that can put up with a lot. So let me try to settle this.

KYūSAKU: That's true, I'm the kind of person who just hates fights. Please, sir, I leave it to you.
SASHIRŌ: Say, Tarōshichi, I'd like to talk to you for a minute.

TARŌSHICHI: Certainly. What can I do for you?

They go off to stage left. Meanwhile Kyūsaku rather pathetically ties his dishevelled hair together with straw from his basket and ties a towel around his head. The extras ad-lib, watching Kyūsaku and laughing. Sashirō insistently whispers to Tarōshichi.

SAN: (to the group of loafers) Hell, there's nothing special about these two. Just a quarrel is all. No sense in hanging around. So let's get the hell out of here! Get the hell going!

EXTRAS: Ha ha ha ha ha.

San is furious at the young men for laughing.

SAN: What are you laughing at? What the hell is so funny?

He chases the actors out through the hurry door.

SASHIRŌ: As you can see, Tarōshichi, this is just a plain tradesman. He has been injured and his jacket has been ripped. We cannot just leave things like this.
TARÔSHICHI: Well, then, please try to think of a good way to settle this. Now his jacket is ripped... let me see if I've got something left here after the market.

Pause. He searches his bundle and comes up with an old lined kimono.

Well, Sashirō, he can't very well go home with his jacket all ripped. This is used, but let's see if he will take it in exchange.

SASHIRŌ: Yes, why don't you try that? Now for my part, since I entered in as arbitrator, I will give him a quarter ryō to buy medicine with.

TARÔSHICHI: No, please don't. I wouldn't feel right about that. I'll take care of it myself.

SASHIRŌ: No, no -- I'm the arbitrator. Please leave it to me.

Go ahead if you insist and give him the kimono.

He takes out a quarter ryō from his purse, takes the lined kimono, and goes over to Kyūsaku.
Say, young man. Come here for a minute.

KYŪSAKU: Do you mean me, sir?

SASHIRŌ: Yes. Here's what it is -- since I've let myself get involved in this quarrel I may as well try to do as well as I can by you. This may not be satisfactory to you, but please take this lined kimono in exchange for your ripped jacket. Before you go home, fix your hair and put some medicine on your face. While no one is looking -- here! -- why don't you buy some Jitanbō plasters or something.

He puts the quarter ryō, wrapped in paper, on top of the kimono and tries to pass it to Kyūsaku.

*Kyūsaku is a bit nonplussed by all this.

KYŪSAKU: But, please -- what is this! It's only the shoulder of my useless old jacket that's been torn, and you treat me so kindly. I just don't feel right about it. Please keep it.
SASHIRÔ: Now, now. You don't need to stand on ceremony. I'm the one doing the arbitrating, so it's my part to assume the low posture. Now, don't get angry at me; remember, you're just a little tradesman, and the customer is always right. If that tradesman's clothes are ripped or if his face is cut, even slightly, would anyone let that pass? No matter what, please take this.

KYŪSAKU: Oh, no, sir. I couldn't rest easy if I took it. I really do wish you'd keep it.

SASHIRÔ: Well, you are being unreasonable! So what is it? You don't find my efforts satisfactory? If that's the case, it's best for me to wash my hands of the matter; just the two of you talk together. Excuse me, Tarōshichi, it's best if the two of you talk without me.

TARŌSHICHI: Oh, but then you're putting me in a tight spot.
SASHIRŌ: All the same, the young man is not satisfied.

KYUSAKU: What! I'm not satisfied? But everything is fine.

SASHIRŌ: In that case, please accept this.

KYUSAKU: I really don't want to put you to any trouble -- but since you are being so considerate, perhaps I ought to accept your kind offer. Well, then, if you're sure it's all right, let me take this.

SASHIRŌ: Please do so; then my arbitration will have had some worth. Here, please accept these.

KYUSAKU: In that case, I will accept your kind favor. Thank you very much.

He takes the kimono and the money with signs of the greatest respect.

TARÔSHICHI: Tradesman, they really aren't anything much.
SASHIRŌ: Since everything seems settled, let's clap hands together to seal the bargain.

They clap hands --

THE THREE: Aa, yoi yoi yoi yoi... Aa, yoi yoi yoi.

KYŪSUKE: Well, Sashirō, thanks a lot.

SASHIRŌ: You will be more careful from now on, won't you?

KYŪSUKE: Oh, sure. I've learned my lesson from this.

KYŪSAKU: In many ways, I've put you to a lot of trouble. Well, then, I'll be taking my leave now.

SASHIRŌ: Are you going already? When you come to Edo next time, please stop by. Go to Sumiyoshi Street, ask for Matsumoto's shop, and you'll soon find me.

KYŪSAKU: Yes, certainly, I'll make sure to stop by. (to Tarō-shichi) And you, sir, I cannot thank you enough.
TARŌSHICHI: Please take care.

KYŪSUKE: It was a stupid reason to fight. Don't take it too hard.

KYŪSAKU: Not at all. It takes two to tangle. Ha ha ha.

Well, I'll be seeing you.

Popular tune. He puts the kimono into his basket, shoulders his load and then exits through the lift curtain.

SASHIRŌ: Remarkable. For a country hick, especially a young one, he has very good manners.

TARŌSHICHI: Seems like an honest fellow to me.

Pause. He remembers something.

Ah, Kyūsuke. You know the boathouse by Tenjin Bridge, don't you? Go rent a small boat. We can take it down to the Daichi riverbank.
KYUSUKE: Yes, sir. I'll go for the boat. Sashiro, will you be going home already?

SASHIRO: No, I'm going on my rounds now.

KYUSUKE: Hmm... round the whorehouse perhaps?

SASHIRO: What do you... Stop your nonsense!

KYUSUKE: Have fun.

Popular song. He goes quickly down the hanamichi and exits through the lift curtain.

TAROSCHI: Sashiro, I'm afraid I've really caused you a lot of trouble.

SASHIRO: Not at all. That's what friends are for. But, to change the topic -- Tasaburo seems pretty hot on Oito, the Fukagawa playgirl. He's spent the last four or five days at my house. His mother must be pretty angry.
TARÔSHICHI: Yes, we just don't know what to do about that nephew of mine. He's not of a mind to listen to anything I say nowadays. And just put yourself in Teishō's position! To start with, she's not his mother by birth, so there are rumors about them -- you know what they say about young widows. And she knows that her obligations to the family ancestors won't be fulfilled until her stepdaughter goes as a bride to the Yamagaya -- though that's being arranged, thanks to you -- and until she turns over the estate to Tasaburō, even though he is so flighty. People keep telling her she ought to remarry. But the new husband would of course take over the Aburaya. So she shaved her hair off and looks like a nun.

SASHIRÔ: You've really got to admire her for being so young yet so prudent. I've been thinking of all that family's been through, and here's what I've decided to do. After I've completed the arrangements for Osome's marriage, I'm going to adopt that geisha,
Oito, and let her marry your nephew. Then everything will be taken care of.

Osome (Hanshirō), accompanied by Osono, enters from the hurry door and hesitates while looking over the scene.

TARŌSHICHI: Very good! Very good! Won't my niece Osome be the lucky girl when she marries into the Yamagaya!

*Osome listens to this with a sour expression.

SASHIRŌ: Well, if it only makes her happy... According to what they say, she's taken up with someone pretty outrageous; and now, no matter how you slice it, the bridegroom gets the short end.

TARŌSHICHI: How come the bridegroom...

SASHIRŌ: Since I'm the go-between, I'm on the spot myself. Last night Seibei came to speak to me in strictest confidence. He said rumor has it that Osome and the shop-apprentice are just like that...
TARÔSHICHI: You mean Osome has been having relations with...

That's not what we meant when we took that boy in practically as a relation. Why, he's really getting ahead, that Hisamatsu!

Osome hears this and can't help herself --

Osome:

OSOME: What about Hisamatsu?

SASHIRÔ: Ah! Osome! You startled us!

TARÔSHICHI: Well, uh... Osome. Did your stepmother come on the pilgrimage too?

OSONO: No. Osome suddenly said she wanted to go on the Hundred Devotions today, and I came along with her.

TARÔSHICHI: So... Just you women?

OSONO: No, the shop-apprentice...

OSOME: ... Hisamatsu came along too.
SASHIRŌ: What! We just said that HISAMATSU'S A LO...

He stops in time, just before he completes the word "lover."

OSOME: Yes, that Hisamatsu's a...

SASHIRŌ: Ah... Not him, not him. We were just saying about this old sacred pine, "HE'S A METSUSELAH."

He pauses to collect his thoughts.

Osome, my dear, so you've come on a pilgrimage to this old pine tree.

OSOME: Yes, HE'S A METSUSELAH with fresh young limbs.

SASHIRŌ: On this Isle of Willows Caressed by the wind, A pine with fresh limbs...

OSOME: ... graceful enveloping limbs...
SASHIRŌ: ... has the youthful Hisamatsu.

OSOME: Oh!

*She gives a start, wondering whether he knows the full story.

SASHIRŌ: Do you pine for those elegant limbs?

He nudges her on the knee.

It's true, isn't it?

*He studies her carefully. Osome hides her face with her long sleeves. Tarōshichi wonders whether the rumors were after all true. Osono is shocked, afraid that they know everything, and amazed that the story has spread this far.

Song. With this tableau, the stage turns.
ACT ONE SCENE TWO

Kameido Tomoeya no Ba

Main stage six yards square.

The scene is a private room in the Tomoeya Restaurant at Kameido. Stage left is a room with its sliding paper walls shut. Paper lanterns hang from the eaves. Stage right is a bamboo fence, loosely intertwined in the Kenninji style, and a similar bamboo gate. In the garden may be seen shrubbery, a waterbasin, a profusion of yellow flowers, and a bamboo fence with a small gate leading to the hurry door.

The actors Matsumoto Kinsha and Fujima Iwatarō are here, dressed in the costumes they use when invited out by their fans. Okura is serving sake to Suzuki Yachūta, Oito, Ochika, and Genshichi. The buffoon Fukumotoya Fukusuke is performing the Fukusuke Dance, a good-luck pantomime in which the dancer wears a huge papier-mâché head and imitates the movements of a puppet shaped like a large-headed dwarf.

Bowls of fish are scattered about.

The revolving stage stops along with the dance music.

GENSHICHI: Bravo! Bravo! Splendid interpretation! Splendid!

ALL: Bravo, Fukusuke, bravo! Great fun! Thanks a lot!
Fukusuke finishes the dance.

You were great! Really great!

FUKUSUKE: Whew! I'm all sweated up! Now for some sake.

The party really begins now; there is a lot of ad-libbing.
Tomoeya Shinpachi comes in from the rear, bringing in more food.

SHINPACHI: Gentlemen, there's not a rotten fish in the lot, and
the tomatoes are all ripe for the plucking.
Ha ha ha ha ha.

YACHUTA: Excellent, Shinpachi! You always take good care of us.

SHINPACHI: Not at all. Not at all. (to Kinsha and Iwatarō)
You were done with your parts early today, eh?

KINSHA: Yes, just had the matinee today, so I invited Iwatarō to come along to the Myōken Shrine.
FUKUSUKE: And I also went out to stroll around Willow Island today. On the way I joined up with this fellow from the Cherry Shop and with our budding actor Iwatarō. As we walked along I had a bud on one hand and a cherry blossom on the other. How's that for a flower of speech? How'd you like that one? Here's one pun that would leave them rolling in the aisles at the Moritaza.***

SHINPACHI: Well, Fukusuke, I'm very glad you rolled along.

KINSHA: Say, one of these nights, how about going to see the cherry blossoms along the Sumida River?

*** Fukusuke's pun involves the association of Matsumoto Yonesaburō (the actor in the role of Kinsha) with the SAKURAi -- CHERRY Well -- which was a restaurant in Nihonbashi. The flower of speech continues with a play on the name of the character FUJIma Iwatarō, so that it is literally a WISTARIA blossom that Fukusuke has on one hand and a cherry on the other.
FUKUSUKE: That's a damn good idea. Count me in.

IWATARŌ: And we'll pick a few cherries on the way home that night, eh?

GENSHICHI: (to Yachūta) We'd like to have you along that night, sir.

YACHŪTA: All right, if you go I'll come along too.

There is a hand clap from within the paper walls.

SHINPACHI: Coming, coming!

He turns toward the rear and calls to the waiters.

Hey, didn't you hear them calling? Excuse me, I think I'd better go myself.

He enters into the room behind the sliding doors.

KINSHA: Sir, please come and see my play one of these days.
YACHÚTA: Why, of course, of course. I'll be sure to go, and I'll bring Oito too.

OITO: Ah! Um... when I go to a play, I get terribly dizzy.

YACHÚTA: Huh? You don't like kabuki?

OCHIKA: What do you mean? She likes it even better than eating!

OITO: Oh, here you've done it again! Ochika, just forget it!

*She would hate to go with Yachūta, and she tries silently to impress upon Ochika to shut up.

Shinpachi comes out from the sliding doors, carrying three money envelopes.

SHINPACHI: Say, here's a gratuity for the three of you gentlemen. Please go inside and say your thanks.
FUKUSUKE: This is much appreciated. Come on, you two, let's go make our compliments.

IWATARÔ: Let's do that.
KINSHA: The three go inside the sliding doors. Yachūta sees this and grows curious.

YACHUTA: Say, who's the customer in the next room?

OKURA: Which one do you mean? I don't know.

YACHUTA: I wonder if I'm supposed to...

He suddenly takes out his purse and extracts some money, dividing it into three piles on top of tissue paper. He then goes about measuring out the cash, meticulously, like a druggist weighing his medicines. "Too much," he worries, and takes some money away; "too little," he agonizes, and puts it back down, totally unaccustomed to the ways of the big city. While he is thus absorbed, Fukusuke and the two actors enter back in from the shōji, ad-libbing. In dismay, Yachūta quickly wraps up the three packets.

KINSHA: Goodbye, sir. Please come see the play soon.
YACHŪTA: You're going already?

In great confusion, not knowing how to go about giving a tip, he starts to hand it over directly and at the last moment reconsiders.

Shinpachi, here. Shinpachi!

*He passes the packets to Shinpachi, signalling that he wants them divided among the three.

SHINPACHI: Yes, sir. I've got it.

He pauses as he turns his attention to the others.

Ahemm... This is from Lord Yachūta.

*The three exchange glances as they take the money, agreeing to say their thanks simultaneously.

THE THREE: Sir, we're very thankful to you.

YACHŪTA: Me, too. I'm tank full of sake.

SHINPACHI: And not carping about the fish that goes with it.
THE THREE: Goodbye, see you soon. Have a good time, Oito.

OITO: Kinsha, everybody, come up and see me sometime.

OCHIKA: Are you going straight home? Or are you making your usual stop at the Benten? The girls there aren't licensed, you know.

GENSHICHI: Wouldn't mind stepping lightly myself, and into a boat to the Benten. That sounds like fun.

THE THREE: It sure is!

SHINPACHI: I'll see you off as far as the boat.

Popular song. The three lead the way off the stage, with two bit actors in their train. Shinpachi follows, and harangues them with allusions to Ichikawa Danjūrō, who was indeed a rising star of the contemporary kabuki world (and whose father was in fact the proprietor of a teahouse).

Say, wonder what my kid will put on the next time -- is it going to be the Soga Confrontation? Will he
play Kudō Saemon? Or is he going to be Jūrō instead? You know, his reviews have been pretty good lately. He's tops by far among the young actors. Maybe it's just a father's fond eye, but he's become quite terrific.

They go down the hanamichi with this sort of talk and exit through the lift curtain. On-stage, the drinking party continues, with lots of ad-libbing.

Popular song. Yachūta's footman Gonsuke enters from the lift curtain and pulls Zenroku out on stage. The sword-dealer Kankichi comes out along with them.

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GONSUKE: Sir, I've finally managed to get Zenroku here.

YACHŪTA: So... Zenroku. I see Kankichi's come along too.

KANKICHI: Yes, sir.

Tasaburō appears at the small gate in the garden and stands there, spying out the situation. He has a towel about his head.

ZENROKU: Eeh... Where'd that damn vegetable peddler take off to...
He cranes his neck, looking around restlessly.

GENSHICHI: Say, Zenroku, what on earth are you looking for?

ZENROKU: Well, after all I went through to put one over on Tasaburō...

He barely catches himself in time.

OITO: What about Tasaburō?

ZENROKU: Um... nothing.

He gulps down what he was going to say, but mumbles to himself --

You won't catch me telling you, dearie.

*As Zenroku puts on his nonchalant pose, Oito spots Tasaburō. Ochika sees her agitation and spots him in turn, then worries that Yachūta and the others might see him too.

OITO: Ah, the flowers in the garden are so sweet. Come on, Ochika, let's go take a closer look at them.

OKURA: But do let me lead the way.
YACHŪTA: Here now, come back quickly.

GENSHICHI: I will go too.

OCHIKA: Eh? But you really needn't come along.

GENSHICHI: Ah, but not at all. You know I'd follow you anywhere.

Fukagawa music. Tasaburō, his face concealed by the towel, steals through the little gate and offstage. The three onnagata follow him off. Genshichi in his confusion has even forgotten to put on his footwear; but he bustles about and then exits, ad-libbing, through the same little gate. *Zenroku remains, in the pose of one thoroughly distressed. He is worried stiff about the sword pedigree.

YACHŪTA: Well now, Chief Clerk, just to make sure: This man here from the sword shop pawned the sword Yoshimitsu at your place for one hundred ryō, didn't he? That's right, isn't it? Isn't it, now?

ZENROKU: Exactly. I was given custody of it for one hundred ryō.
YACHŪTA: Now, you from the sword shop, you did pass on the money to...

KANKICHI: ... Kihei the tobacco-man, yes. He was making the arrangements for you, and he asked me to sell the sword one way or the other. Since you have the sword pedigree to go with it, all you'd have to do is wait for the right man and the sword would fetch two hundred at least. But since you were in such a hurry, I left the sword with Zenroku right here for one hundred ryō and turned the money over to Kihei immediately.

Please look at this. I got a receipt, just to have it in writing.

He shows it to Yachūta, who takes it.

YACHŪTA: Hmm. That's Kihei's writing all right. But since you're the one that's been dealing with him, Kankichi, take my servant along, get that damn Kihei and bring him here. Bring him here!
He speaks with obvious impatience.

KANKICHI: Yes, sir. (to Gonsuke) You come along with me.

(to Yachūta) Goodbye, sir, I'll be back later.

Exit music. Kankichi and Gonsuke hustle down the hanamichi.

YACHŪTA: Chief Clerk, the sword pedigree is there? Isn't it?

ZENROKU: Yes, now... The sword pedigree is... Uh...

He almost says it, but catches himself. Bidding for time, he blurts out instead the first thing that comes to mind.

Yes, it's still there.

YACHŪTA: Well, that ought to be that. Still... That damn Kihei! No one's safe from his tricks, not even his former master...

He stops short, not wanting to reveal his former connection with Kihei.

He's a God-damn bastard, that's what he is.
*He looks grim.
   Zenroku, oblivious of Yachūta, is peering intently toward the hanamichi.

ZENROKU: Eeh... Why has that peddler disappeared?

YACHŪTA: Listen here, Chief Clerk, now you're absolutely positive that the sword Yoshimitsu is at your place, aren't you?

ZENROKU: That is correct. If you wanted to redeem it, I could hand it over right away; but the pawner is Kankichi from the sword shop and the sword's owner is supposed to be somebody named Kihei who lives in Koume Daichi.

YACHŪTA: What! That damn Kihei! There just aren't any words for such a God-damned bastard. Chief Clerk, I've got some real important business to discuss with you... Hey, you! Aren't you listening?
Zentoku is totally absorbed in his own problems and is paying no attention to Yachūta.

ZENROKU: Who, me? Oh, I'd certainly like to hear what you say, but I'm looking for this vegetable peddler, you see.

He goggles around here and there.

YACHŪTA: What the... Hey, what are you goggling about for?

ZENROKU: Well, I've got to find that vegetable peddler...

Peering about him, he exits through the garden gate. Yachūta watches him leave.

YACHŪTA: Strange... No matter what I said, that damn chief clerk just stared around goggle-eyed. Something fishy here.

*Yachūta is mystified.

Meanwhile, from behind the hurry door --

OKATSU: Please come this way.
YACHŪTA: Hmm... What's going on here? First the guest in that room calls the actors in, and now her maid brings along a young man and takes him in there. Is that what she does on her day off? These ladies-in-waiting and palace employees! Eeh -- that young fellow just now, he's really got a good thing going. Hmm... A lady-in-waiting for a male body! How can she pass up a really virile man who knows all the ins and outs, one like me, for that soft-looking apprentice? Wonder what sort of woman she is. Eeh -- the lucky stiff, the lucky stiff!

*He stares enviously at the room at stage left, and, unable to stand still, makes restless movements, while cutting all sorts of faces.

Rapid clatter of footsteps behind the hurry door. Zenroku enters, in hot pursuit of Hanshirō, who has done a quick change and is now Osome. They chase about the stage. Yachūta can't stand the excitement and runs about with the others. Zenroku finally grabs hold of Osome.
ZENROKU: Aw, come on, Osome. You just don't have any feelings!
   It's me, Zenroku, that's really crazy about you.
   Meeting you here was the god of marriage bringing us together. We'll rent a room right here...

OSOME: You dirty old man! Stop it!
   She belts him one.

ZENROKU: Ow! That hurts! Ouch! But the more you whack me like that the more my head swells with love.
   He embraces her.

OSOME: Oh, why don't you get serious! I'm not that kind of girl. And I know nothing about things like that.

ZENROKU: Oh, yeah? It's no use playing innocent. You say you don't know what I'm talking about. But how come you know Hisamatsu so well?

OSOME: Huh -- what about Hisamatsu? Why put upon him?
ZENROKU: Why put on that innocent face! After you've had Hisamatsu teach you how it's done! He certainly watered your flower, now didn't he?

*Yachūta is all stirred up, and shows it by a whole series of grimaces.

OSOME: Pfui, what utter nonsense! I know nothing about things like that.

ZENROKU: You don't? Let me show you how!

He goes after her. Osome runs away from him. Yachūta can't stand it any more and jumps right in, also running about frantically. Osome picks up the fire tongs and bashes Zenrouku in the face with them. Ashes fly into his eyes and while he is thus distracted, Osome (Hanshirō) makes her escape into the room at stage left.

Groping around blindly, Zenrouku collides with Yachūta and straddles him, thinking it is Osome. Yachūta loses all presence of mind.

YACHŪTA: Yaaah! Help! Murder! Murder!

ZENROKU: Why, you're Yachūta!
YACHŪTA: Here, Chief Clerk, don't do that to me! That was just terrible!

ZENROKU: Eeh -- then while I had hold of you... I let Osome get away, what rotten luck!

YACHŪTA: Here, Chief Clerk -- so that was Osome, that Aburaya girl? I saw you making out with her here. Really turned me on.

ZENROKU: Listen, which way did she go?

YACHŪTA: Well, she must have escaped into this room.

ZENROKU: So! She's in here...

He starts toward the room.

YACHŪTA: Uh... here, Chief Clerk. There's something funny going on in that room, and it makes me feel sticky. There's a palace lady-in-waiting in there, and just
now her maid brought a young man in. I think it's a lovers' meeting!

ZENROKU: What kind of young man was it?

YACHUTA: He looked just like Hanshirō, the actor.

ZENROKU: Aha! That's the apprentice, Hisamatsu! If he's in there, I just can't let this slip by. You mean here inside?

YACHUTA: Well, he went in.

ZENROKU: Got you!

He opens the shōji and rushes inside.

ZENROKU: Just as I thought! Osome and Hisamatsu...

He is about to say, "in here together," when somebody suddenly grabs him by the fingers and twists his hand.

Yah! Ow, ow, ow! It hurts! Ow, ow! What are you doing!
From inside the shōji is heard the voice of --

TAKEGAWA: You impudent tradesperson! How dare you break into this room!

Geza music, accompanying the entry on stage of Hanshirō, who had run into the room as Osome and now comes out as Takegawa. She holds a fan in one hand and with the other pulls Zenroku along by his uptwisted fingers.

YACHŪTA: Ya! Why, you're Lady Takegawa, from the Residence.

TAKEGAWA: And you, sir, are you here on a pilgrimage also?

YACHŪTA: Exactly. I also am here in Kameido to call at the Tenman Shrine. Those are my orders for the day, from His Lordship.

*He is wearing the mean expression of one caught at an inopportune moment and having to fake an excuse.

TAKEGAWA: I see. Your efforts are indeed most commendable.

Today we also have been to a shrine on His Lordship's behalf. And on our way back from the Hundred
Circumambulations, we thought we would stop by the Tomoeya for lunch. Just we women by ourselves in this room, and why did this person, without any explanation, break in?

ZENROKU: Eeh...

TAKEGAWA: What an impudent fellow!

She thrusts him away.

ZENROKU: I don't know if I was impudent or impertinent, but I broke in searching for a secret lover.

TAKEGAWA: Tradesperson, now just a minute! You are implying something extraordinary. How could there be such wanton misconduct in my room?

ZENROKU: Please don't try to tell me differently, My Lady. It's my master's daughter that just went in there. And our apprentice Hisamatsu is trying to steal her from her fiance. You had Hisamatsu waiting in that
room: you arranged the assignation for him. Immorality is against the law, for samurai as well as townsmen. But aren't you playing the pander too much?

TAKEGAWA: What in the world!

YACHUTA: Yeah, it's just like this fellow said. We saw you invite those philanderers in for a revel. And you call yourself a lady-in-waiting! So this is your pilgrimage on His Lordship's behalf! Sleeping on the job, eh? Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!

TAKEGAWA: Those are very strong words from you. And all to prop up this tradesperson, who is no connection to you. Just now I saw you taking that fancy woman with you on your stroll to the shrine. Was your fascination with her all that religious? Dear sir, you seem to have gone off on a bender. Or was it the lord's order to take a geisha girl along to the shrine?
YACHŪTA: Uh... Well, that...

TAKEGAWA: Yes, those orders were not so stern after all!
    Ha ha ha ha ha...

*Her expression is one of utter scorn.

YACHŪTA: I assure you that was also part of my orders.

*He's really suffering.

ZENROKU: Save your talk with the samurai for later. Right
    now, I want what I'm after. Osome, Hisamatsu --
    I know they're in there, so hurry up about it. Hand
    them over!

TAKEGAWA: No, it can't be done.

ZENROKU: Suppose you tell me why.

TAKEGAWA: If I am to turn them over to you, I must have you
    come along to the Residence.
TAKEGAWA: A room reserved by servants of a military house, especially by women, is just like a samurai's castle. If a tradesperson trespasses and nothing is done about it, the entire military class suffers dishonor. The matter can not be left to lie, particularly since Yachūta, my own lord's retainer, has witnessed it all. So that's how things stand. Well then, tradesperson, you come with me.

She comes nearer him.
*Zenroku is petrified by this unexpected turn of events.

ZENROKU: Ah! Please, please! Taking me to task this way...

YACHŪTA: Right on, Chief Clerk, right on! I'm standing by, so don't give in!

*He eggs Zenroku on.

Meanwhile, Genshichi marches Tasaburō onstage from the hurry door. Oito comes out following them.
TASABURŌ: Disgraceful! Let me go!

OITO: Why are you being so mean to Tasaburō?

GENSHICHI: Hey, be quiet! Oito, Yachūta is about to take you out of circulation. So what's this with...

He spots Yachūta.

Ah, sir! Just listen to this -- Oito here, who you said you'd give a fifty ryō deposit for this very day...

He babbles on carelessly.

*Yachūta, who will be in trouble if Takegawa finds out about his relations with Oito, signals to him to shut up; but Genshichi does not get the hint.

Here, listen to this -- Tasaburō here was trying to cut in on your territory. He and this girl that you said you would ransom, he...

YACHŪTA: Sh-h... Sh-h... Sh-h...
*Yachūta now loses his composure completely and gesticulates wildly, trying to quiet Genshichi.

GENSHICHI: Come now, sir. Why are you wiggling around like that? Aha! You have a tendency to seizures?

YACHŪTA: Yes, yes! Seizures, seizures! You know why, you know why! Seizures, seizures! Ah, use your head! Use your head!

*He suffers agonies.

GENSHICHI: What am I supposed to know? I don't follow you at all.

TASABURŌ: Listen here, Zenroku, that sword pedigree that I sent you before...

ZENROKU: Ah... This is not the place for that, not the place at all!

*He signals to Tāsaburō to be quiet.
GENSHICHI: Ah! (to Tasaburō) Then you're trying to hunt up a deposit too. Before he can raise it, Yachūta, hurry up and put down the fifty ryō for the girl.

Yachūta starts to propel Genshichi towards the hanamichi.

YACHŪTA: Oh, it's bad to bring it up, bad to bring it up!

Whatever you do, don't you bring that up!

Genshichi, as he is being pushed away --

GENSHICHI: Wait, let me explain!

YACHŪTA: Who cares a fig! Don't even try!

Ahe-mm! Hack! Hack! Hack!

GENSHICHI: Well, knowing you as I do, I have faith in you.

Come rain or shine, Oito's ransom...

YACHŪTA: Ahe-mm! Hack! Hack! Hack!

GENSHICHI: Huh? This is no coughing matter! Oito's ransom...
Pause. As he starts to say, "is being handled all right," he gets the idea and starts coughing too.

Ahe-mm! Hack! Hack! Hack!

YACHÛTA: Hack! etc.

GENSHICHI: Hack! etc.

The two go down the hanamichi coughing in duet and exit through the lift curtain. Zenroku watches them go.

ZENROKU: What's with that samurai? What was Genshichi going to say that made him squirm so? Well, that's beside the point. My Lady, the girl in that room...

He starts to go inside.

TASABURŌ: You mean, there in that room my...

OITO: ... sister Osome...

ZENROKU: ... is not by herself but snug with Hisamatsu.
TASABURÔ: Then, My Lady, you had Hisamatsu...

TAKEGAWA: Oh, no. Even though the relation is broken now, Hisamatsu is my real younger brother.

THE THREE: Huh?

TAKEGAWA: Hisamatsu in quest of the lost sword Goô Yoshimitsu. Its location is known but, if one stirs up the matter, Hisamatsu will cause his present master...

Pause. She suspects that Tasaburô has done something with that sword's certificate which will cause him embarrassment if the search is pressed.

*Her glance at Tasaburô confirms her suspicions.

Yes -- though he grieves over how to avoid causing distress to his master, my brother also fears his discretion may not reap its reward. In that case, he must use any means to hunt out the sword thief; and I wonder what sort of involvement Yachûta will have.
TASABURŌ: Ah!

*Tasaburō gives a start. Zenroku's gestures express his unpleasant thought that Takegawa knows that he stole the sword pedigree.

TAKEGAWA: Yes -- recovery of the sword is his uppermost duty. And yet, an apprentice brought up in the house of his master, he has compromised that master's daughter. How far can one fall! From samurai to tradesman to licentious involvement...

*She glances at Tasaburō, realizing that in grieving about Hisamatsu's misconduct with Osome she has been rude to Tasaburō, the girl's brother.

But I have been most inconsiderate in speaking of this in front of you... for you are tradesmen yourselves. Please do not take it to heart.

TASABURŌ: But, my lady, that means that the servant Hisamatsu...

OITO: ... is really your brother.
ZENROKU: He may be her brother, but he's a crummy apprentice to me. And a chief clerk is there for chastisement. So it's natural, Zenroku will drag him out of his hole and...

He tries to break into the room but Takegawa prevents him. Pantomime fight. When they get to center stage rear, Takegawa grabs Zenroku's fingers, squeezing them tightly and bending them back.

*Zenroku winces with pain and screams "ouch, ouch."
*Tasaburō and Oito try to interpose themselves between the combatants.

TAKEGAWA: You more than, too, too...

ZENROKU: Yah!

When he tries to straighten himself up, Takegawa slaps him in the face with her fan. Zenroku covers his face.

TAKEGAWA: ... impudent thing!

*She glares at him in reproval, still holding him by his twisted fingers.

Song. With this tableau, the stage begins to revolve slowly.
ACT ONE SCENE THREE

Koume Tabakoya no Ba

Main stage six yards square.

The scene is a tobacco shop. Stage left a post bearing the name of the place. Persimmon-brown shop curtains of the type signifying a tobacco store hang over the entrance. Along with straw sandals and zōri, boxes of shredded tobacco are lined up on a draw platform at storefront; at night the platform is raised and constitutes a set of shutters. A placard advertises the patent medicine which the shop handles. The wall is painted a drab grey, as is typical in scenes depicting a poor house.

At center rear DEVILGATE KIHEI (Kimon no Kihei), costumed as a tobacco shredder, is going about his business of slicing tobacco leaves with a cleaver.

Hanshirō as Kihei's wife DITCHSIDE OROKU (Dote no Oroku), costumed as a housewife and with a towel about her head, is bundling tobacco leaves into tight rolls to get them ready for slicing.

A bamboo gate is at stage right. To the right of the tobacco shop is a lean-to made of marsh-reed blinds, sheltering a barrel-like coffin. Plain white funeral lanterns. A description of the unidentified body is stuck to the blinds.

ICHI THE CARVER, a hinin or unperson, is squatting on a straw mat and keeping watch over the dead body: the disposal of unclaimed cadavers is one of the tasks assigned to his shadowy outcaste group.

The locale is Koume Daichi in Honjō.
The music changes to *yotsudake bushi*, a song accompanied by castanets. The revolving stage stops.

Four or five extras enter from the right and left and stop by the coffin.

*They read the body description with expressions of curiosity or of solicitude for the poor unfortunate, and with a few pleasant shudders.*

A: Looks like this fellow dropped dead on the road.

B: It says here he died from overeating.

C: Pretty fullish way to go! But, let's get some tobacco.

A: How about some of that Kakā Tobacco that's supposed to be so good? 32 coppers an ounce, give me five ounces.

OROKU: Yes, sir. Want me to wrap it up?

A: No, that's all right. I've got my pouch right here.
He takes out the pouch and Oroku puts the tobacco in for him. The extras exit right and left, ad-libbing. Sound of the sange-sange, a pseudo-litany accompanied by castanets.

KAME, a door-to-door hairdresser from Naka no Gō, enters through the lift curtain, wearing a shabby kimono, trousers, and geta. Carrying his hair-dressing kit, he comes out on stage, stops at the tobacco shop, and looks inside.

KAME: Boss, do you want your hair done today?

*Kihei considers it for a moment.

KIHEI: Eh... Let's forget it for today. Can you do it early tomorrow?

KAME: Fine. Let's do it first thing tomorrow morning.

KIHEI: Good. I'm counting on you first thing tomorrow.

KAME: Yes, sir.

Pause. He recalls something.

Ah, missus, could you put a patch in the shoulder of my cotton kimono? Will you do it if I bring it over?
OROKU: I'm busy during the day but I'll do it for you some evening. So why don't you bring it the next time you come?

KAME: Thanks a lot. I left it back at the barber stand, so I'll go bring it around. See if you can't renew it somehow.

OROKU: Hey, that almost sounds like we're talking about renewing some IOU.

KAME: Sure does. Ha ha ha.

He stares at Oroku's comb, by way of establishing a departure point for a lengthy plug.

Ah, Oroku, what a stylish comb you're wearing!

OROKU: Oh, this? I bought it a while ago on the way home from the Moritaza. It's the latest word, the Tojaku Comb -- they call it that after Hanshirō's pen name, you know. Other new products are Iwai Perfume Hair Oil and Pine Snow Powder.
KAME: Oh, gee. Where can I buy them?

OROKU: Why, at the Takeshita Shop in Shibai Street over in Shibaguchi.

KAME: You know you're right about that hair oil. Even we barbers lay it on thick about it. Really tops on the hair. How about giving me a little if you've got some.

OROKU: Take some with you and try it for yourself. But, why don't we do this -- (to the audience) I ought to give some to all of you so you can spread the good news; but I'm sorry, I just don't have enough to go around. So there will be a lottery for everybody. (to Kame) At that time you can take a chance too.

KAME: Thanks a lot.
OROKU: Ladies and gentlemen, as I have said, during the intermission we will have a lottery for you. I've been asked to announce it by the sales outlet, the Takeshita Shop in Shibai Street, Shibaguchi. Please go buy some, and tell all your friends about it. I'd sincerely appreciate it.

The commercial is finished and the play's action can begin again.

KAME: Say, Ichi, that's the boy who dropped dead, isn't it?

ICHI: Ay. Looks like some sort of apprentice. It seems he ate too much. He kept crying, "I'm bursting, I'm bursting," and then he crapped out. Depressing, no? Got to have a drink on that. Say, Boss, I'll be right back, so please watch the stiff for me.

KIHEI: Cut it out! Watching over corpses isn't my line of work.

ICHI: Come on! I'll be right back.
KIHEI: Get back here fast!

ICH: Like a flash!

KAME: Well, I'll be off too, and get that kimono.

Song accompanied by castanets. Kame and Ichi exit through the hurry door.

KIHEI: What time is it, Oroku?

OROKU: It's after four already. About time to get the lamps ready.

KIHEI: Right. We got to work late tonight too.

You know, when you really think about it, life is a funny thing. You never know what's going to happen to you, or when, or how. Look at me -- I could have been a samurai if I'd gone straight. And here we are, in this dump at the edge of town, sitting across from each other and shredding tobacco. Never thought I'd wind up like this.
OROKU: You're so right. When I was in service at the Chiba Mansion my mistress Lady Takegawa used to say, "I will see that you are married into a suitable position." But I didn't wait and wound up running away from the Residence because of that romance with you, Yachūta's man. Since then we've sure seen a lot of ups and downs.

KIHEI: We sure have. But we can be glad at least that we've stayed on the right side of our masters, you and me both. If it comes down to that, we can always ask them for money. Eeh -- but that Yachūta's not one for the straight and narrow...

OROKU: Oh, stop talking nonsense! You've got less to boast about than him. Look at you! -- You drink, you buy women, and you do the rest of it too.

*She imitates the gestures of gambling.

Give it up! Once you're hooked, you've had it.
KIHEI: Oh, come off it! Do you expect me to buy my sake off what I make as an honest shopkeeper?

OROKU: Well, you can say what you want. But, listen here. Every single day, they come here from Yachūta's to get something. What did you borrow?

KIHEI: Ah. Oh, that. That's... Uh... That's a fellow that I went to the whorehouse with the last time, and he wants me to pay my part of the bill. Real skinflint, damn him! As if I'm stupid enough to pay up.

OROKU: Don't give me that! You borrowed something big.

KIHEI: So what if I did! I'm his old retainer. And he's my old master. So all of it's natural. But you look here. The other day a messenger from Lady Takegawa came here after something. So what did you borrow?
OROKU: Stop it. Would I do something crazy like that? A messenger came from Lady Takegawa and also a letter. She wants to ask me for something. Well, I'd like to go up to the Residence to see her. But I can't even go to the public bath in the daytime looking like this. Ah, your wife's just an old turnip!

KIHEI: Eh, you're one slick talker.

Pause. He remembers something.

Speaking of public baths, that's where I'm going before it gets dark.

He takes his towel and starts out.

OROKU: Well, you'd better hurry; it's almost dark. But leave your coat here.

KIHEI: You're right. Don't want a bathtub pirate to swipe it. Here...

He takes off his coat and throws it into the house. He starts to leave, wearing just his cotton kimono.
Hey, I don't suppose we've got any sake left.

OROKU: You going to stop on the way home?

KIHEI: Yeah, I'll get a pint.

OROKU: We got nothing to go with it either.

KIHEI: All right.

OROKU: Ah... On your way, get some oil.

KIHEI: Say, you're really getting your money's worth out of me!

OROKU: Don't fool around. Come right home.

KIHEI: Where the hell do you think I'm about to go?

Music. Kihei sticks a string of two hundred coppers inside his kimono. Carrying an oil dipper of cheap earthenware, and wearing geta,
he starts to go down the hanamichi. Oroku goes back to rolling up the tobacco.

Kankichi from the swordshop and Yachūta's footman Gonsuke enter from the lift curtain and meet Kihei on the hanamichi.

KANKICHI: Ah, it's Kihei. That was good timing.

KIHEI: Oh, it's Kankichi and Yachūta's batman. You going to pester me for that hundred ryō as usual? I'm on my way to the bath now. Why don't you come back tomorrow?

He tries to brush past them.

KANKICHI: Here, here. Here now! You can't get away so easy. Yachūta's got the whole story. He even sent for me today. I clued him in.

GONSUKE: Yes, he ordered us to bring you to the Residence tonight whether you like it or not. So let's go.

KIHEI: Well, I don't like it. So why the hell should I go? Say, you two don't know it but that sword Yoshimitsu
is hot. If Yachūta gets high and mighty with me about being my former master, I'll let his secret out of the bag. What else does he expect me to do? You go back and tell him I'll pay him when the time's right.

THE TWO: Why that's... You can't do that!

KIHEI: Eh? And why not?

KANKICHI: Yah! This guy's really hopeless!

Song. Kihei pushes them aside and exits through the lift curtain. The two follow him out, ad-libbing.

To the same song, Takegawa's servant Sanpei and maid Okatsu enter down the secondary hanamichi on the audience right and stop in front of the tobacco shop.

SANPEI: Excuse me, ma'am... I wonder if Oroku is in?

OROKU: Why, as a matter of fact she is.
She looks up at them.

Ah! Messengers from Lady Takegawa.

SANPEI: Yes, that's right. The Mistress went to the Myōken Shrine today on His Lordship's behalf, and...

OKATSU: ... since she's going back by boat, she went on to the boathouse at Ōkawa. She sent us along to you with this letter. It contains a request made in strictest confidence. Lady Takegawa would very much like you to take care of it. Here is the letter.

She hands it over to Oroku.

OROKU: Then this is from the Mistress.

She opens it and reads it in an aside.

Hmm... "There are certain clues to the goods being searched for. The sum of one hundred ryō is required in that connection. Would you be kind enough to provide the hundred ryō for me" -- is what she says.
*Oroku thinks that it is an unreasonable request but it would not help to tell Okatsu this.

Thank you very much for your trouble. Please tell Lady Takegawa that I will be glad to come to the Residence whenever it is convenient for her.

OKATSU: Yes, ma'am. I don't know what the business is but I will tell her you're coming.

SANPEI: We'll go back now and relay your answer.

OROKU: Thank you very much, both of you.

THE TWO: Goodbye, Oroku.

_Yotsudake bushi._ Sanpei and Okatsu go down the hanamichi and exit through the lift curtain. Oroku is left alone onstage. Music in a restrained mood.

OROKU: Judging from this letter, my guess would be —

Hmm... her brother Hisamatsu, he's an apprentice to a merchant. Hmm... most likely he's found out
where the sword is, but they can't get their hands on it without one hundred ryō. And that's the money she wants to borrow from me, of all people! Ah, the very ones that enjoy the high stipends...

*She reflects that the aristocrat Takegawa has no conception of poverty.

... if even you can't raise the sum, how can you expect it from people who live hand to mouth! In this whole wide floating world there's no other couple with an existence more ragtag than ours. And we're the ones you turn to with this talk of borrowing one hundred ryō!

*She can't hide her despondency.

Still... once a servant, always a servant. The mistress requests it; I will try to oblige her. If it's possible: please! And there's got to be a way, there's just got to be a way to get into some money!

Yotsudake bushi again. Kyōsaku, carrying his vegetable basket, enters from the lift curtain of the secondary hanamichi. His hair is tied up with straw.
Kihei, carrying the oil dipper, a quart bottle of sake, and a bamboo-bark wrapper, enters from the regular lift curtain. The two come out on stage from opposite sides.

KIHEI: Wife, the price of oil's gone up again.

OROKU: You back from your bath already?

KIHEI: Listen, there was a fight at the bathhouse and a gang of young fellows were making a hell of a ruckus. At a time like that thieves are apt to get active, so I forgot about the bath for tonight and just bought the sake.

OROKU: Well, that was quite sensible of you. Really would have been something to get taken by a bathhouse thief. So what did you get to go with the sake?

KIHEI: Eh? That crummy shop gives you a pretty lousy choice. It's pickled slugs and sprout salad again.

OROKU: Same as always.
KYŪSAKU: Excuse me, please. Give me five ounces of your tobacco at twenty-four per.

OROKU: At twenty-four an ounce. Right away.

She takes the tobacco out of a box. Kyūsaku puts it into his pouch and passes her the coppers.

*Seeing that Kihei has bought some sake, Kyūsaku concludes that he can sell him the greens that, after all, are left over.

KYŪSAKU: Say, you're going to have some sake, aren't you? Instead of your slug pickles, why don't you take the bridewort greens I've got left here? I'll let you have them cheap. You can make a very good salad with these.

He takes out the wrapper which contains the sword pedigree.

KIHEI: Let's have a look at them.

Pause. He takes the greens and gives them the once-over.
Say, there are a lot of red spots on these greens.
You picked them off some back ditch, didn't you?

KYūSAKU: On the other hand, they're cheap.

KIHEI: Too expensive even for free.

KYūSAKU: Ah, this just isn't my day.

He puts the wrapper into his basket.

Yotsudake bushi. The hair-dresser Kame enters
from the hurry door, an old kimono hanging over
his shoulder. He carries his hair-dressing kit.

KAME: Oroku, this is the kimono I meant. See if you can't
do something with it.

OROKU: All right if I have it for you tomorrow night?

KAME: Fine. See if you can't make it last.

He passes the striped kimono to Oroku.

KYūSAKU: Say, hair-dresser, would you fix my hair for me?
Just do it up loosely.
KAME: Eh? You're from the country, aren't you? All right. Just stick out your head and I'll fix it for you.

KYŪSAKU: Much obliged.

KAME: Just a minute, please. (to Kihei) Let me use your store, will you? Good, there's a straw mat right here.

He takes the straw mat from under the coffin barrel and puts it down at center rear.

All right. Please come over here.

KYŪSAKU: That straw mat... if you use your imagination -- it gives me the shivers.

KAME: Hey, you really are squeamish. Come on, it's getting late. Hurry up and stick out your head.

*He starts to fix Kyūsaku's hair and looks curiously at the cut on Kyūsaku's face.*
You have a cut right by the side of your eye. Did you get in a fight?

KYŪSAKU: Ay. I got into a quarrel today at Yanagishima with one of your real Edo people. And look what it was all about! A man wanted to buy some greens that I'd already sold -- well, I couldn't very well sell them over again! Hot tempered fellow. Just look here -- there's a cut on my cheek. What's more, look at this -- they just ripped my jacket apart.

KAME: That was a lousy thing to have happen. But did you get it all settled?

While they talk, Oroku keeps rolling up the leaves and Kihei chops the tobacco; but the two are listening very closely and keep throwing glances at Kyūsaku.

KYŪSAKU: Well, listen to the rest. Like they say, people aren't all beasts. A man who was just passing by stepped in to mediate. And the fellow I was fighting with -- well, his master seemed a goodhearted
person, though he sure was hot-tempered himself.

Well then, the mediator said, "Here, you better buy some plaster and put it on the cut," and gave me a quarter ryō. On top of that, look at this --

Pause. He takes the lined kimono out of his basket.

He said I should take this kimono and have it altered so I'd have something in place of my jacket. I kept telling him I didn't feel right about taking it, but he really insisted I accept. So here it is. But from what I just heard, the missus here does sewing for people.

OROKU: Ay. I can't sew anything fancy, but I do it if it's cotton.

KYŪSAKU: Good -- that's just what I have here. Do you think you could fix this kimono so it will fit?

OROKU: If you're not in a hurry, why don't you just leave it here?
KYUSAKU: Oh, anytime will be fine. While you're at it, could you just put any old kind of patch on this jacket?

OROKU: Sure. Just leave it here.

KAME: Well, your hair's done.

KYUSAKU: Thank you very much. How much do I owe you? Here, I'll put it right inside here.

He puts some coppers inside the hair-dressing kit.

KAME: Oh, all right.

Pause, while he puts his gear in order.

Say, let me look at that kimono! Hmm... Good pattern. It's Yuki cotton. This is a damn good kimono. Say. Look here. The tag's still attached: the Aburaya, Kawara Street. Then this is unredeemed goods from there.
KYUSAKU: The Aburaya? Isn't that in Asakusa?

KAME: That's right. Tarōbei of the Aburaya, you know that pawnshop. This is a kimono that went floating from there.

*Kyūsaku expresses surprise. Kihei and Oroku are still listening.

KYUSAKU: If it's the Aburaya I know, then that's where the young master's in service. I didn't know that.

What a shame.

*Kyūsaku now feels guilty about taking the kimono.

KAME: If it's the Aburaya in Kawara Street...

He mumbles to himself about a plot he is involved in there, thus establishing a plotline to Act Two.

Zenroku asked me to disguise myself as a chanter and come there. After I've asked Matahachi to help me carry the load...
*He determines to go see his accomplice right away.

Please take care of my hair-dressing kit until tomorrow.

KIHEI: Put it in the corner.

KYUSAKU: If you could do my jacket and kimono just a little bit faster...

OROKU: Come and get it in two or three days.

KYUSAKU: I'll leave it up to you.

He starts toward the hanamichi and then changes his mind.

Ah -- if the kimono is from the Aburaya as this man said...

He starts to say, "then I'd better return it, so let's forget about resewing it," but Kihei stops him from pursuing that thought.
KIHEI: Yees?

KYŪSAKU: ... then please take care of it for me.

KAME: I'll be back tomorrow.

KIHEI: You better come early.

Yotsudake bushi. Kyūsaku, carrying his load, exits down the hanamichi, still reflecting that he must say his thanks at the Aburaya. Kame, leaving his hair-dressing kit, exits through the hurry door. Exit music.

*Oroku and Kihei have separately hit upon the same scheme to extort money. Their faces and gestures express their scheming but neither is yet aware of the other's thoughts.

OROKU: The ripped jacket belonging to...

KIHEI: ... that fellow who had a cut by his eye.

OROKU: To make up for the beating...

KIHEI: ... he got this kimono.
OROKU: If I use this for proof and demand cash...

KIHEI: ... the hundred ryō that I'm being pressed for...

OROKU: ... is as good as mine.

KIHEI: Ya!

*Recognition comes. Spontaneously the two glance at each other.

Kihei covers up by changing his tone and expression.

Light the lantern.

Song. Sound of the six-o'clock bell. Oroku goes inside to light the lamps.

Kihei is left alone on stage. He looks around to make sure no one is watching. Then he takes the razor and whetstone out of Kame's hair-dressing kit, goes over to the barrel coffin and, cutting the ropes with the razor, throws the lid off.

*He pulls the apprentice Kyūtarō's neck out of the barrel and stands poised with the razor, ready to shave the forehead of the corpse. He will give Kyūtarō the hairstyle usual among grown men, such as Kyūsaku.
He kicks the barrel over. Kyūtarō's corpse comes tumbling out. Kihei lifts Kyūtarō up by the nape of the neck and thumps him by the eye with the whetstone, cutting his face.

Oroku comes back out, holding a lantern.

OROKU: What a bit of luck! So he left the kimono here. He really played into our hands. I'll work late tonight.

She picks up the kimono as Kihei is appraising his work.

KIHEI: There. That's the way he ought to look.

Oroku finally sees what he has been doing.

OROKU: Ya! You took the dead man out!

*Even she is astounded.

KIHEI: Just shut up about it!

*He silences her with a glance. In the meantime, Ichi the unperson has come back.

ICHI: Hey, the dead man...
Kihei whirls around and with a terrific move throws him. The momentum makes Ichi fly into the casket. Oroku clamps on the lid. Kihei hurriedly grabs the ropes.

KIHEI: Wife!

OROKU: Kihei!

KIHEI: Let's make sure it goes right!

Clappers. Oroku puts the kimono she is holding on Kyūtarō's corpse. Kihei starts tying ropes around the coffin. At this moment the bell sounds.

Clappers rapidly increasing in tempo. CURTAIN.
In the tenth year of Bunka, 
mizunoto tori, 
the third month, 
on a propitious day.

A thousand autumns
and a myriad years
may this theater flourish.

FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS --

Tsuruya Nanboku
Author
ACT TWO

in three scenes

1. Kawara Street: The Storefront of the Aburaya Pawnshop

2. Aburaya: The Inner Compartments

3. Aburaya: By the Storehouse out Back
In order of appearance:

TARÔSHICHI
ZENROKU
KYÛSUKE
MATAHACHI, a palanquin bearer
DANSAKU
YAMAGAYA SEIBEI, a drug merchant
OSONO
OSOME
KAME
DITCHSIDE OROKU
DEVILGATE KIHEI
KYÛTARÔ
KYÛSAKU
A CLERK of the Matsumotoya
HISAMATSU
SUZUKI YACHÜTA
TEISHÔ, Osome's stepmother
(GONSUKE
(SHÔROKU, a palanquin bearer

Ichikawa Monzaburô II
Sawamura Shirô-Gorô II
Bandô Yoshiji II
Ichikawa Kurizô
Ichikawa Dansaku
Onoe Shinshichi II
Iwai Umezô
Iwai Hanshirô V
Bandô Tsurujûrô
Iwai Hanshirô V
Matsumoto Kôshirô V
Kirishima Giemon I
Ichikawa Danjûrô VII
Ichikawa Jungorô
Iwai Hanshirô V
Kiriyama Monji III
Iwai Hanshirô V
Ichikawa Narizô
Bandô Tsurujûrô)
ACT TWO SCENE ONE

Kawara-cho Aburaya Misesaki no Ba

Main stage six yards square.

Upstage toward stage left is the platform designating the raised floor of a shop interior, with its sliding paper walls. At center is a cabinet and a curtained door leading to the inner parts of the house. Toward the right and at a lower level is the shop's vestibule, where barrels of oil stand arrayed on a dirt floor. At center rear within is the household's miniature Shinto shrine. The Great Ledger hangs prominently from a string.

In the right flank of the house area is a sliding entry gate. An alley at stage right separates the house from its neighbors; in it is a well, which is a stage prop necessary to this play but must be placed so that it does not interfere with entrances and exits. A lid is provided for it.

Purplish blue curtains of the sort that identify a pawnshop hang from the eaves; they bear the name of the establishment, the Aburaya. At center rear is the shop counter, surrounded by a low lattice; one of the props there is a scale for measuring the silver and gold.
content of articles brought in to be pawned. Tarōshichi sits checking the accounts at the large chest which holds the ledgers and serves also as a desk. Zenroku reads off the tags on various pawned goods.

Kyūsuke, wearing a long persimmon-brown apron, is ladling oil into the half-gallon container held out by a bit actor who plays a samurai footman. Another buyer is holding his dipper, waiting his turn and all the while chattering noisily. One of the store clerks hands over some pawned merchandise as a pawnner counts off some coppers.

All these stage effects are designed to reproduce the atmosphere of the Aburaya Pawnshop on Kawara Street.

To the tune of the samisen the curtain opens.

KYŪSUKE: Yes, sir; that will be a half gallon for the Residence.

FOOTMAN: It's paid for already.

KYŪSUKE: Yes, that's right.
OIL BUYER: How about a half pint over here? How much?

KYŪSUKE: Yes, sir; that will be thirty-six coppers.

PAWNER: Here. That'll do for three months' interest.

He throws down one hundred coppers.

CLERK: That will just do it.

Samisen throughout. The pawner exits ad-libbing down the hanamichi, his redeemed goods in his arms. The oil customers go along with him.

In the meantime, Zenroku is busy reading off pawn tags and sorting them out. Tarōshichi stamps the ledger to indicate that it has been checked.

ZENROKU: Eeh -- one thousand three hundred and sixty-seven; money lent, three and a half quarter ryō; Ueda silk kimono, man's black Hakata obi; pawner, Yasuke; guarantor, Hyōshichi.
He pauses to catch his breath.

Eeh -- one thousand one hundred and fifty-three;

money lent, six hundred coppers; unlined cotton

kimono; pawnner, Jinbei; guarantor, Sasuke.

The samisen staccato introduces a new
character onstage. Down the hanamichi enters
MATAHACHI, by profession a palanquin bearer.
He wears a cheap cotton garment over his
tight trousers and carries a copybook of the
sort used to record the names of donors to
a worthy cause. He is accompanied by
Dansaku, who is costumed informally, his
sash tied in front, and is one whose palsied
appearance gives ample cause to wonder
whether it isn't overindulgence that has made
him so -- at any rate, he's suddenly got
religion. (It seems that the actor Dansaku
in actuality was afflicted with palsy and was
about to retire.) Dansaku's disciples, lesser
actors all, follow after and play his atten-
dants. They come to the shop's entry gate.

MATAHACHI: Excuse me, please. Chief Clerk, you remember, the

other day...

ZENROKU: Ah, Matahachi, it's you. You here to redeem

something?
MATAHACHI: Why, no -- we came to ask for a favor. Come over here, Reverend.

DANSAKU: Ay, ay. Sorry to bother you...

MATAHACHI: Well, I present your old friend, the Reverend Dansaku. We're working on getting together donations to have his new robes made for him. I'd like to ask you to make a small contribution.

DANSAKU: Well, I don't suppose I need to introduce myself; and I'd like to ask you to keep me in mind. This is it -- I'm retiring and it's my last appearance. Please give me your kind consideration.

While the two harangue the audience, Kyūsuke has been waiting at the door to usher them in.

KYŪSUKE: Excuse me, Chief Clerk. There's some young men
here who want contributions for buying the monk

Dansaku his robes with.

ZENROKU: Right! I want to thank all of you for your
trouble. Please, everyone, come right in here.

EXTRAS: Oh, please don't put yourself to any trouble.

TARÔSHICHI: Aah, but this is the last act of Dansaku's
career! That is an auspicious occasion. In
recognition, perhaps this half quarter ryō...

Pause. He takes the money out of his com-
bination inkstone case and cashbox.

Here, Matahachi, this isn't much but it's the in-
tention that counts. Why don't you treat the
Reverend to some sake or something? I leave it
up to you.

MATAHACHI: Here, we've put you to a great deal of trouble.

But why don't you say your thanks, Reverend!
DANSAKU: Ay, ay. Thanks a lot, boss. Say, Matahachi, how about stopping at Kuroda's joint on our way back?

MATAHACHI: Oh, stop talking nonsense. The money's to buy you a robe with.

ALL: No more fish for you, Reverend!

DANSAKU: Well, what about mountain whale?

ALL: What! A priest who eats boar meat?

DANSAKU: Look at it this way. A wild boar's no fish. He doesn't live in the river. He lives in the mountains.

ALL: You can't win with this priest!

MATAHACHI: Chief Clerk, thank you very much.
ZENROKU: In return for that, Matahachi...

*He gives him a broad wink, to remind him that their plot is on.

You're in the picture, right?

MATAHACHI: Right! I've drunk it all in and swallowed it down.

Pause. He turns to the priest, changing his tone.

Well, Reverend, let's get on the road.

DANSAKU: Here, we can plan on a half quarter each house we go to.

MATAHACHI: Eeh, you're pretty damn greedy!

ALL: A greedy priest goes straight to hell!

DANSAKU: What's this? You can't expect me to go straight yet!

ALL: Hey, that's one hell of a lousy pun!
The samisen music accompanying the above dialogue has been correspondingly weak and strong, fitting in with the lines.

KYŪSUKE: Well, I'm off to the oil merchants' guild.

Dansaku's group exit down the hanamichi ad-libbing, and Kyūsuke follows in their train.

ZENROKU: Sir, shall I take over for a while?

TARŌSHICHI: Yes, that would be nice. My shoulder is all stiff.

ZENROKU: Yes, and why don't we have some tea made?

TARŌSHICHI: That's a good idea. Here, how about some tea, please.

CLERK: Yes, sir; right away.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, let's get back to the accounts.

Song. The clerk goes through the curtained door out back to get the tea. Tarōshichi and Zenroku go back to their accounts and pawned articles, which they wrap up as they go through them.
To the same song, Shinshichi enters down the hanamichi, in the role of YAMAGAYA SEIBEI. He is dressed in haori but without the rest of the formal costume and bears one sword. One of the young men of the Yamagaya shop accompanies him, carrying a crape wrapper. They come to the entry gate.

SEIBEI: Excuse me, please. It's Yamagaya Seibe.

ZENROKU: Ah, it's Seibe! Well, aren't we glad to see you!

Pause. He turns to Tarōshichi.

The bridegroom cometh.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, well... Please, please come right inside.

Seibe enters.

SEIBEI: (to his attendant) Here, you come get me later.

The young man, retracing his steps, exits down the hanamichi.

(to Tarōshichi) Uncle, I am sorry I've neglected to call lately. I hope Teishō is in the best of health. I had a meeting of the druggists' guild
around here today, so I thought I'd pay you a visit on my way back. Now I really have been negligent, but I do hope you'll forgive me, please.

TARÔSHICHI: But, please, we are quite unworthy of your apologies! Actually, there's no excuse for our failure to pay a call on you -- but we've somehow been so tied up lately.

ZENROKU: Some tea here! Hurry up with the tea!

He shouts toward the inner part of the house.

SEIBEI: No, no, please don't go to the trouble for me.

Mood music on the samisen. The maid Osono, wearing an apron, comes through the curtained door with the tea.

OSONO: Won't you have some tea, please?

She holds out a cup. Seibe takes it.

SEIBEI: Well, Tarôshichi, I suppose I really ought to consider myself a member of the family here. I have
been on intimate terms with this house for quite some time, ever since those days when your elder brother Tarōbei was still alive and promised Osome to me for my bride. Thanks to the kind offices of Sashirō, we exchanged the symbols of betrothal -- so that I really ought to live up to my obligations and call on you more often. I hope you will transmit my apologies to Teishō for my neglect.

Pause. He turns to Zenroku.

And you, Zenroku, I am grateful to you for being such a diligent chief clerk. We depend on you for all the store's affairs.

ZENROKU: Thank you so much for your kind compliments. But, if I may speak plainly, things aren't all as they might be, though I suppose you must expect that in a house composed entirely of women. We should indeed be grateful to this gentleman, who's acted as the guardian of the estate; but even the uncle has his
own separate establishment to worry about. And the
heir, Tasaburō -- well, you know him. Simply not
interested in business. Just shillyshallyies about.
On top of all that, there's this affair with that
Fukagawa...

TARŌSHICHI: Here, here, Zenroku, have sense! Don't shoot your
mouth off in front of Seibei. Mind your manners, my
man!

ZENROKU: Yes, sir; yes, sir! But, he's put us in quite a
bind, that boy.

TARŌSHICHI: Here, Osono! Go inform Teishō that Seibei is here;
and have Osome come pay her compliments.

OSONO: Yes, sir. Right away.

She goes off into the inner compartments.

SEIBEI: No, no, please, don't go to all that trouble. Don't
bother, please.
TARÔSHICHI: But, but, no bother at all. What will you think of our Osome! You know, she looks quite big, but there's a lot of the infant still in her. Ha ha ha ha.

The samisen sets the mood for the entry of Hanshirô in the role of Osome, who comes through the door-curtains holding a cat in her arms. She sits shyly on the raised platform.

ZENROKU: She appears! Osome, come say hello to Seibei. Come, say your hellos.

*Osome is being very bashful.

OSOME: Yes -- I'm very happy to see you.

SEIBEI: Well, Osome, we haven't seen each other for a while, have we? But, here, what's this! Your color is so poor! Are you burdened with an indisposition? Or has a germ spread by contact slipped in and laid you low?

OSOME: Yes. Yes.

Her expression is queasy. She strokes the cat.
ZENROKU: You think she doesn't feel so hot? To the contrary!
Haven't you heard? This is the mating season...

Pause. Having spoken out, he now rephrases himself.

... for that damn cat she's hugging, that is. Yeah, for that apprentice.

Pause. He has to rephrase himself again.

So, if the tomcat purrs -- guu, guu, guu -- she'll do the same -- fuu, fuu, fuu -- and sneak off with that two-colored tom that you've raised since he was a kitten. Yeah, and they have a high time of it up on the second floor of the storehouse or out where you hang up the clothes. That damn cat! You give him enough of an opening, and...

He makes a disagreeable gesture.

... yes, that little pussy!
SEIBEI: To be sure, to be sure, a cat does cause a lot of mischief that's pretty hopeless. Aah, but the house is in real bad shape if the cat isn't there to smell out the rat! But, hold it! Wait a minute... isn't an industrious clerk, one who's grown old and white-haired in the family's service, called a white rat by people? Well, Zenroku, I guess then that makes you the white rat in this shop.

ZENROKU: That's just the way it is. I'm one huge hard-working white rat, and all for the sake of the store.

SEIBEI: So it would seem. So it would seem. But a big white rat does a corresponding amount of damage.

ZENROKU: Eh?

*He's been cut to the quick.

SEIBEI: Oh, please! I'm not talking about you. I'm just talking about white rats. As opposed to the old days, recently white rats have multiplied
fantastically; but compared with your ordinary black-natured rat they seem a different color, so they manage to escape everyone's notice.

Your white rat runs amuck through the house. With the knife edge of his teeth, he gnaws right through the money box and right through the storehouse door. Oh, this white rat certainly isn't the kind you ought to let feed off you! Almost always, you think that the damage in the house is done by your common rat, but it's really the white rat that's behind it all. In the end he brings on losses to the proprietor, embezzles the money, cleans up, and clears out. But when he finds no place to slip into, thanks to our splendid hero of a cat, he is finally caught in the rat trap, caged in the meshes of what's called the Fall from Paradise, to suffer his ordained retribution.

But if he tries to gnaw impudently at the good name of a woman who has a man who looks after her, he'd better be ready to eat his words like rat poison. Aah, you just can't relax with a white rat around!
ZENROKU: Well, well. Seibei searches a bit for a story just like a rat searching a store for a bit. Say, Osome, did you hear rat? Rat was one story that certainly left me enrattured. Hey, cat, how'd you like rat? I'm spoken about badly but I'll grin-and-bear-rat. I'll even give up booze and be temperat. But, Osome -- just now your fiance seemed so worried about you, asking if some indisposition had laid you low. Well, why don't you come down here and let him examine your pulse? Oh, come now! Seibei's a druggist's son; he's done it before. Come on, girl. Come down over here.

He seizes Osome's hand lustfully.

OSOME: Oh, this is ridiculous! What do you think you're doing? Seibei's no doctor, is he? Why go through this sort of nonsense?

SEIBEI: Ah, no, no -- it's all right. As Zenroku just said, I'm a wholesale druggist, so there's a bit of the
doctor in me. Since we'll be married very soon, if people see me feeling your arm...

Pause. He starts to say sarcastically, "they will merely think, 'Those two certainly get along very well'," but decides against it.

... yes, they might think, "the bridegroom is sweet on the ladies." But this is different. You simply can't disregard signs of disease. Here, here -- do let me examine your pulse.

OSOME: Yes. Yes.

*She seems awfully embarrassed.

TARÔSHICHI: Oh, what is this! Why does this girl hesitate so with her bridegroom? Just let him see your pulse.

OSOME: Even if he is my bridegroom, I just don't want...

OSONO: Now, now. Please let him see what's wrong with you. You've nothing to be ashamed about.
OSOME: Just the same, I'd rather not have him...

SEIBEI: Come now, it's nothing big. This is special. If you ignore illness now, you'll regret it later.

OSOME: Oh well, if that's the way it is, go ahead and look.

*She submits very reluctantly. Ad-libbing, Seibei glances casually at Osome's face and meets her eyes.

SEIBEI: My, your eyes are bleary! Are they dim from dizziness?

OSOME: Um... oh no, it's not that.

SEIBEI: Well then, let me look at your pulse.

*He takes Osome's right hand and looks at the pulse.

ZENROKU: Eeh -- now her fiance's feeling her pulse. Aah -- must feel good! Yeah, I'd like to feel her too. Damn! Enough to make you feel sick to your stomach...
*He'd really like to spit out some more of his
gall but is afraid of Seibei and contains him-
self. Seibei in the meantime has found the
girl's pulse suspicious.

SEIBEI: When the vein at the right wrist is knotty and the
Lesser Yin pulses weakly...

*He continues feeling the pulse but now stares
her in the eye very intently.

... when the Lesser Yin pulses weakly, that always
means it beats for more than one heart.

OSOME: Ee...

She snatches her hand away. Seibei is about
to exclaim, "So the rumors were true," but
stops himself.

SEIBEI: Well, uncle -- please don't worry. It seems that
Osome's indisposition will work itself out in due
time.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, I am relieved to hear that.
SEIBEI: Please speak to Teishō and tell her not to worry at all. But, Osome -- your indisposition is not very serious; it's just a matter of time. Nevertheless, make sure you observe all the abstentions and avoid anything that might cause nausea. You yourself take care of yourself. It's a woman's greatest duty.

*He rattles on carelessly, to the absolute chagrin of Osome, who can't bear to listen to any more.

OSOME: Oh, please! Can't you at least lower your voice?

Song. Osome stands up abruptly and without ceremony goes inside through the door-curtains.

*Seibei, aware of the pregnancy of the situation, is sunk in thought as he watches them leave.

The music immediately changes to the sange-sange, to accompany the entrance down the hana-michi of Kame the hairdresser and Matahachi. They have towels about their heads and feign the appearance of the crude mountain ascetics known as yamabushi. The priests' staffs and small conch shells they carry are supposed to be part of that effect. They have come to serenade Osome, their song the parody of a chanted prayer. They enter swiftly and take up their posts at the gate.
KAME: Tonight's the twenty-third, the vespers of Tokudai Seishi Bodhisattva...

MATAHACHI: ... and of the Sign of Metal Senior and the Monkey, Our Lord Kōshin...

KAME: ... in whose name we bray. The Four Heavenly Kings. Amen!

Pause. Now he launches into the ballad proper.

-- Have you heard? In the east end of town on Kawara Street stands an oil shop, the Aburaya -- on the street's northeastern corner, what they call the Devilgate corner. And the shop's secret treasure, hoarded above all measure, is the sweet young thing called Osome -- sweet sixteen, lovely slender eyebrows.
And the clerk Hisamatsu, whom
they've brought up from childhood --
well, she taps his midnight oil.
The parents dream and never suspect
and visions of sesame seeds
dance through their heads --
and of the oil they press from them.
The while she presses
her sleeve to her eyes --
and weeps her tears of yearning.
Beads of Plumblossom Dew
form the thread of her life --
and they'll vanish like
a light whose oil's out.
No matter how you measure,
it won't last forever --
so the lantern she sees by
will grow dark. But
the end of the story
is clear in sight --
it's a double suicide ballad.
So we pray for these loved ones,
so nearly departed --
in all eternity. Amen. -/-

Kame chants the saimon ballad to samisen obbligato. His listeners react to the performance in their several ways.

*Seibei, restraining his displeasure, pretends to be unaffected. Tarōshichi is simply aghast: his every motion shows his wretchedness. Zenroku alone smirks and listens gleefully.

TARŌSHICHI: Listen here, Zenroku, we can't have these beggars blocking our shop entry. And with Seibei here listening! You there -- get out of here at once! Get out of here!

SEIBEI: Ah, but no, uncle! Please don't trouble yourself. I don't come very often, but as luck would have it I'm here today, so that was good timing -- or weren't these chanters called here especially to entertain me?

Pause. He keeps his eyes on Zenroku.
Well, what do you say, Chief Clerk? Shall we listen to the rest of it?

ZENROKU: Yes. Well, no. As Tarōshichi said just now, we can't have them blocking the shop entry. So the rest of it...

KAME: We'll continue if you'd like.

MATAHACHI: Yeah, but aren't you the one who asked...

ZENROKU: Sh-h... Sh-h... Sh-h...

*T he motions to Kame and Matahachi to be still, and looks anxiously at Seibei and Tarōshichi, worrying whether they've caught on. Then he turns toward the inner part of the house.*
Hey, you all dead in there? Do I have to get up again?

He stands up, goes over to the gate, and addresses his chanters in a little jōruri chant of his own, working in an appropriate line from Chikamatsu.

-/- Out, out, damned purse, a spot of alms for the needy. "One penny's worth redemption in two lives, the here and after." -/-

As he hands over the cash to Kame and Matahachi, he grimaces at them to get lost.

KAME: Here, look at this! Here he's kept us standing at the gate all this time, and all we get is one mon. And in small change!

MATAHACHI: -/- The gates of generosity tremble, and a penny's worth pops out. -/-

He too can declaim jōruri.

KAME: Oh, cut it out!
Pause. He turns to Zenroku.

Here, Chief Clerk, we'll expect to get the...

Kame tries to push his way inside. Zenroku stops him.

ZENROKU: Ah. Here, here. Right now nothing can... Eh...

Here, you got your money, just go away, go away!

KAME: Well, let's just go door to door chanting.

_Sange-sange_ music. Whispering to each other, the two go down the hanamichi, and meet Kyūsuke, who has entered through the lift curtain. They put their heads together to discuss the outcome of the chanting episode and after a moment separate. Kame and Matahachi exit through the lift curtain. Kyūsuke enters the house through the gate.

KYŪSUKE: Chief Clerk, that business at the oil merchants' guild: I don't understand what's up, so you'd better go yourself.

ZENROKU: Aah, so I'm supposed to go myself... See how busy I am, Seibe? Not even a minute's break!
He slips on his haori. Just then, Osono enters through the curtained door.

OSONO: Seibei, I have a message for you from Teishō. She is very glad you came to visit today, and she has something to talk over with you. Would you come to the sitting room, please? I'll show the way.

SEIBEI: I'll be very happy to have a talk with her. Shall we go, then? Goodbye, Uncle.

TARÔSHICHI: Seibei...

ZENROKU: ... I hope you enjoy your visit.

SEIBEI: Well, young lady, lead the way.

Song. Following Osono, Seibei enters the enclosed room at stage left. Zenroku fussily proceeds down the hanamichi and exits through the lift curtain. Tarōshichi goes back to his account books. Kyūsuke keeps busy straightening up the shop.
The same song sets the mood for the entry of Oroku, who comes through the lift curtain attired as a plain housewife. She carries a furoshiki wrapper in her arms and comes to the entry gate.

OROKU: Excuse me, please. I wonder if I could ask you something... The Aburaya pawnshop on Kawara Street -- this is the place, isn't it?

KYŪSUKE: Yes, this is the Aburaya and we do pawn-broking. Can we do something for you?

OROKU: Well, then: is this article from your shop?

She takes out of her wrapper the kimono we know so well from Act One and hands it to Kyūsuke.

KYŪSUKE: That's right. Look here, this is the pawn tag with our stamp on it. Why, just yesterday at Yanagishima...

*Remembering the circumstances, he is nonplussed at the sight of the kimono.

Excuse me, Tarōshichi, please have a look at this. This is the kimono you gave that country fellow.
TARÔSHICHI: Why, so it is! Yesterday I gave it to that young fellow to replace his ripped jacket, and now this woman has it.

Pause. He thinks it rather strange.

Excuse me, ma'am, but where might you be from?

Oroku in the meantime has come inside the shop and has sat down at stage center right.

OROKU: Yes... I'm from across the Sumida River, over in Kasai. But if I go through the whole story, it will be too long; so let me just give you the details. I have a younger brother who is frail and sickly. By nature, he's timid and reserved in every way. We're just poor farmers, and lately he's been taking small loads of vegetables to Edo to sell. When he came home last night he showed me this kimono and said: "There was this fight at Yanagishima today, over nothing at all, and it was my tough luck to have my jacket ripped up like this and get my face
cut, though it's not serious. The other party must have thought it was a shame too; because they gave me this old kimono from their merchandise and I came home with everything settled all right."

Well, that's what he told me. Now I thought perhaps by chance he'd fallen to a bad impulse and the kimono...

Pause. She starts to say "was stolen from someone" but rephrases herself.

Well, poverty is a bitter cup. So I kept asking him if perhaps he was caught doing something on a sudden impulse and was beaten for it and then came home. But he only answered, "The kimono was given to me." I just couldn't figure it out; and I thought it my duty as the elder sister to come here today just so I could get all the details. If you know, please tell me exactly what happened. I'd really appreciate it.

TARÔSHICHI: Not at all, not at all. Here's what it was. Your brother had a quarrel yesterday with this fellow...
right here from this shop. It was just the way your brother described it; and it was me and Kyūsuke, this fellow right here, that he ran into. What you say is quite natural for a sister under the circumstances. But to think that the young man did something bad... Dear, dear, dear, it's not that at all! The truth is that after Kyūsuke had the fight with him I gave him that kimono.

OROKU: So you really did give this kimono to my brother?

TARŌSHICHI: That's right. That's right. And all because Kyūsuke was so hot-tempered.

KYŪSUKE: It was just on the spur of the moment. You know -- hot words lead to a fight. And so, right next to his eye...

OROKU: ... you gave him a cut. And also a bit of a beating.
KYÜSUKE: Well, we sort of shoved back and forth, this way and that. It didn't come from any blows, but when we were pulled apart the shoulder of his jacket was ripped.

OROKU: And to replace it you gave him this kimono? The pawn tag has your shop's seal on it, right?

TARŌSHICHI: Yes, that's our stamp all right.

He shows her the shop seal in its box. Oroku takes it.

OROKU: So this is the very seal that was stamped on the tag?

TARŌSHICHI: Well, there's no mistaking it. Ah, I could tell — that young man has a nature honest beyond his years.

OROKU: Well, that fellow you call honest by nature, that brother of mine who's always been so sickly, and the very one that you beat up...
TARŌSHICHI: Eh?

OROKU: ... well, I've brought him here to say thanks.

She goes to the entry gate, looks in the direction of the lift curtain, and claps her hands.

Entry music on the samisen. Two extras come through the lift curtain bearing a rude palanquin and carry it down the hanamichi. Kihei, whose lower face is masked with a towel, follows them. They come to the gate and there deposit their burden.

KIHEI: Oroku, this is the place, right?

OROKU: The stamp on the pawn tag was made with this seal. Here, that man told me so himself, and handed over the seal. So there can't be no doubt about it.

KIHEI: That cinches it.

Pause. He turns to the palanquin bearers.

Bearers, bring it right inside. Right in here...
BEARERS: Right! Got you!

Pause. They carry the palanquin right into the house through the entry gate and put it down front and center.

Yoi yasa...

Lifting up the palanquin blinds, they tumble Kyūtarō's body out. The apprentice's newly shaved head is a faint blue; he wears Kyūsaku's ripped jacket. They lay him out at the shopfront.

KIHEI: Leave the palanquin at the gate and come back and get us later.

BEARERS: Right! Got you!

They leave the palanquin and exit down the hanamichi.

KIHEI: Hmm... may I come in? Wife, have them get us a cup of tea.

Kihei and Oroku make themselves comfortable at downstage right.
OROKU: Ay. Here, let's have a cup of tea! And a light for our tobacco!

Pause. As Oroku takes command, Kyūsuke gawks at the couple and then exchanges glances with Tarōshichi.

Hey, what's this! Where's that cup of tea? Haven't you even got a light for the pipe? This house sure takes fire prevention seriously.

Her brazen act intimidates Kyūsuke. He gingerly proffers the tobacco server.

KYŪSUKE: Yes, ma'am. Some tobacco...

*Tarōshichi's motions show that he is having a very hard time controlling his anger.

TARŌSHICHI: Here, here, madam! You just said you were bringing your brother here to say thanks. But what have we here? That's a dead man, isn't it?

OROKU: Right. He's dead. You can bet he didn't want to die, but you killed him. You batter a human being to death and then try to fob us off with this old
unlined kimono and one quarter ryō. You think that'll get your murderer's names off the most wanted list? Who in this shop figured the going rate for a man's life at a shot kimono and a lousy quarter? I want to meet that man! I want to meet that man!

KIHEI: Here! Wife, don't yell so loud! You'll hurt your own reputation more than this shop's. Don't forget this is a pawnshop. No use imploring a pawnshop for a lot of cash in return for your goods, because they'll just wonder if you're raving or simply don't know what's up. It doesn't look good. So speak softly. Speak softly.

Meanwhile Seibei has opened the sliding door at stage left and is looking over the situation. Two or three extras come out of the alley at stage right and listen at the entry gate. Two snoopy apprentices emerge from the inner part of the house.

OROKU: Are you kidding? They beat my brother to death! And you want me to keep my temper? Oh, it's just too hard to take, too hard to take!
KIHEI: There. There, you drop it! Any brother of my wife's is a brother of mine. Let me avenge him! Let me take care of the dastard that did him in! (to Tarōshichi) Well, I don't know if you're the owner of this shop or the chief clerk; but you see where things stand. Please call the bailiff. If he won't come here, I'll go to him. Where's the bailiff?

TARŌSHICHI: Ah... The bailiff's place is right here in the neighborhood, but... Wait, let me discuss this with my chief clerk and maybe we'll figure out a way to...

KIHEI: Never mind! I'll just go and report it to the neighborhood elder. Wife, you stay right here!

Kihei starts toward the gate.

SEIBEI: Here, now. Wait just a moment, please!

KIHEI: Who, me?
SEIBEI: Yes, that's right. I don't know what this is all about, but is it really a matter for city hall? Why not tell it to me first? I'm very closely involved with this shop too, so maybe we can settle this right here. Anyway, if you want to take it to the authorities later you can do as you please; but let's hear the story first. You're not just dealing with any old back-alley shop, you know, or a small-time, one-man operation. Aburaya Tarōbei, who set up this shop, was of no mean social position; and his widow is maintaining it now. I'm a member of the family myself; I don't know if you're willing to discuss it with me but you can be sure I won't back out or run away from any agreement. So please don't hesitate: tell me freely what's on your mind.

He comes out of the separate room and sits down with his tobacco tray at center rear.

KIHEI: In that case I'll tell you what got us this far. But these two know more about it than I can tell you. Ask them about a vegetable peddler being beaten at Yanagi-gishima yesterday. Then you've got the whole story.
SEIBEI:  Eh?  Yesterday at Yanagishima...

TARÔSHICHI: Well, here's what it was. Kyûsuke here and a peddler from the country had a dispute and while they were wrangling, a passer-by jumped in too, and the peddler was beaten up slightly. Sashirō felt very bad about the peddler being injured and as a result of his intercession we gave the country fellow an old unclaimed kimono, to replace his ripped jacket. Sashirō thought it would be a good idea to put a plaster on the wound and gave him a quarter ryô for that. At that time that young man was perfectly healthy.

KIHEI:  Sure, sure. That was his misfortune. Too bad he didn't die when he was beaten. What happened when he got home's another story. He looked quite normal and then he keeled over. Apoplexy, dead just like that! So there is your story, young fellow.
SEIBEI: I see. So the fight was just one of those things. It's not like it didn't take place; yet in a way it was settled all right. And once that's done what happens afterwards happens -- just the same as dying from sickness. On the whole -- if you really want to know -- this smells a bit of blackmail.

OROKU: Hey, hey! What do you mean? Smells a bit of blackmail, indeed! I might not look like much, but I'm not the sort that deals in petty frauds and swindles, not me! If you want to know who I am --

When I lived in Sanya I solicited johns for a neat little teahouse, your small-time operation good enough for me; I earned me my name of Ditchside Oroku: loafers who couldn't pay cash found me good for a little advance. Well, last winter when the Yoshiwara burnt down and all the girls moved to temporary quarters,
I moved too, for a change to Koume Daichi
and a shop with a big nine feet of frontage.
There I sit face to face with my man:
I cure tobacco in sake, he earns his pay
chopping the leaves; the product is
your famous Kakā Brand Tobacco. And I also
take in some laundry, so you can see --
I'm just an honest tradeswoman,
not the shade of an improper trade;
I'm not your common sort of ripe beauty
intent on a trick. But, Kihei, what's the use
of all these details? Tell it to the bailiff,
that's what we'll do.

KIHEI: All right, it's like you just heard. So you've
got to be in the picture. Her brother's beaten up,
gets a cut by the eye, and his jacket's all trampled
and ripped to pieces. And for all that one stupid
quarter and this old rag! Of course he was fool
enough to go home right after you'd beat him; so
here we are. His reward's in paradise, lots of luck!
OROKU: The stamp on the pawn tag that was on the kimono is identical with this seal you showed me yourself -- so you can't claim you don't know nothing about it. My brother went around selling vegetables; but his home was in the Kasai Domain, which belongs to the Lord Shogun himself. You might think you can just drop the matter, but I'm ready to go to the Shogun's magistrate with a petition. So how do you propose to make good?

The eavesdroppers at the entry gate are taking this in and whispering among themselves.

SEIBEI: I see. In fact, I'm quite astonished. From your standpoint, of course, what you say stands to reason. Still, did he die as a result of the beating? Or could he have had an attack of a long-standing illness and died a natural death? I'm sure that a doctor...

KIHEI: ... yes, was consulted. I mean, after all, he was my wife's only brother and all that. Doctors, medicines, we gave him the whole business, nothing was
too good. But all he said was, "Oh, it hurts!," and he left us. And we had the top men in the field in to examine him, too; but it was hopeless. Every one that we sent for, it was just: sorry, no dice.

SEIBEI: Aah, sorry to hear that. But I'm in the medicine business myself, so there's a bit of the doctor in me. Just to be sure, I'd like to examine the dead man's pulse.

KIHEI: You think checking a dead man's pulse is going to raise him...

SEIBEI: Oh, come on! You might think I'm foolish, but they say even a fool has his uses.

KIHEI: Well, if you want to, go right ahead and look.

SEIBEI: Please let me have a look, if only for my own peace of mind.
He goes over to the corpse and tries to find a pulse.
*He thinks something is very odd here.

*Tarōshichi takes a bundle of cash out of the money chest and takes it over to Kyūsuke; the two whisper to each other, wondering whether they can get rid of Kihei and Oroku with the sum they have in hand.

In the meantime Zenroku has returned. He comes down the hanamichi but sees the little group of eavesdroppers by the entry gate, finds the gathering strange, and decides to reconnoiter from a distance. His entrance is meant to be inconspicuous; no music accompanies it, of course, nor are there to be any shouts announcing his presence.

Tarōshichi now sidles over to Kihei.

TARŌSHICHI:Ahemm... Excuse me, sir. Now that it's too late, no matter what we do the deceased will not come back to life. There is...

"... really nothing I can say" is what he wants to say, but he breaks off. Pause.

This is really not much, but I hope you'll accept it. Please arrange for your brother's funeral with this money, and have a mass said for the repose of his soul.
He slips the money to Kihei who takes it and starts counting.

KIHEI: How much is this?

TARÔSHICHI: It is fifteen ryô.

OROKU: Eh? In gold?

KIHEI: You shut your trap!

There is an unpleasant pause.

Fifteen ryô? So you think you can buy a human life on the cheap?

TARÔSHICHI: Oh, dear me. Why, of course not. Of course not.

Pause. He adds some more money.

Well then, perhaps thirty ryô...

Kihei looks at it.
KIHEI: You wait! Let me see... That was one hundred ryō for the sword, and four months' interest... hmm... let me see... let's say that'll be one kanme in silver. You convert that to gold, makes fifteen, sixteen ryō...

Pause. He does some more mental calculation.

Nope. That way it just doesn't come out to...

OROKU: Here, don't forget I need a hundred ryō too!

KIHEI: Oh, shut up! And you... how the hell do you expect us to bury the dear departed on your rotten thirty, fifty ryō! The obsequies alone! If a human life's something that can be bought that cheap, then why not go into business? Lay in a good stock, make a good profit.

He mimics a few lines of a saimon chant.

-/- Have you heard? There's a new store in town, wholesalers in lives, a damn unique unheard-of
business! Devilgate Kihei, he keeps the accounts, and he's a dead serious merchant. -/-

Tsk, tsk, it just looks like we're not going to make it without the judge. What's the form? "With humble apologies" we're going to have to make them lap it all up.

*He puts on an overtly menacing expression.*

Zenroku, who has meanwhile been listening outside, now pushes through the crowd at the gate.

ZENROKU: Saa, saa, saa -- out of the way! Out of the way!

What is this! Haven't you got anything better to do? It's the middle of the day, what are you hanging around our gate for? Out of the way! Scatter, scatter!

As he berates them, the loafers move off down the alley.

Hey, that was a damn nosy crowd!

Pause. He comes up into the shop and addresses Tarōshichi.
But, sir, what is going on here?

TARŌSHICHI: Ah, it's Zenroku. You remember the story we told you last night about the vegetable peddler we ran into at Yanagishima? We thought he just had a slight wound but -- oh dear, oh dear, oh dear -- these people say that he died.

ZENROKU: And they carried him here? Then that means... um...

if that fellow that I said I'd buy the greens from yesterday is dead... um... if that fellow is dead, then the straw wrapper I hid in his basket...

Pause. He starts to say "is gone for good" but breaks off.

Saa, saa, saa... if he's been killed, then there's just no way to find his goods.

He is thrown into confusion and fusses about.

SEIBEI: Here, here, Chief Clerk. No need to get yourself all worked up. Here, they tell me this man's been
beaten to death. But the pulse isn't completely gone, so I don't think he's taken his last breath yet. I just happen to have some of my widely regarded Taihō pills with me. Why don't we try them?

ZENROKU: Excellent idea! Now I'm in a real spot too if that peddler's been killed; so let me try to apply some moxa to bring him around.

KIHEI: Here, here, Chief Clerk, if the doctors couldn't keep him alive, is moxa going to raise him again from the dead?

OROKU: Oh, drop it. Let 'em put moxa on him. Nobody I know's ever come back. And then we'll get them for even more. Drop it. Let 'em roar!

KIHEI: You may have a point there.

Meanwhile Seibei takes some pills out of his purse.
SEIBEI: This is my family's secret recipe, Taihō pills. Let's try them out, though it's probably not strong enough medicine.

KIHEI: What? He's dead, not suffering indigestion. What good's a crummy pill going to do? You think you'll bring him back to life that way?

ZENROKU: Calm yourself. It's just for our own peace of mind. Kyūsuke, give me a hand.

KYŪSUKÉ: A hand you can have; it's my neck I want to save.

Seibei forces a pill into the mouth of the corpse and pours some water on top. Zenroku takes a huge lump of moxa, just as it came out of the pouch, and sticks all of it on the dead man's stomach. Kyūsuke helps him put the wick to this sizzling invigorator. Kihei and Oroku laugh scornfully.

Samisen. Kyūsaku enters through the lift curtain. He wears a different change of peasant's clothes and comes down the hanamichi balancing on one end of a shoulder pole the basket in which Zenroku yesterday hid the sword pedigree, and on the other a basket filled with sprigs of camellia and peach blossoms. He comes to the gate.
KYUSAKU: Excuse me. Excuse me, please.

TAROSHICHI: Yes, yes. Here, Kyusuke, that seems to be a customer. Well, aren't you going to take care of him? Go take care of him!

KYUSUKE: Yes, sir. Well, what do you want? Oil? Or is it a pawn?

Pause. He goes to the entry gate and takes a close look at Kyusaku.

Yah! It's him! It's him! It's him!

Kyusuke is in total panic.

TAROSHICHI: Here, here, Kyusuke, it's whom?

KYUSUKE: That peddler I fought yesterday and beat to death...

It's another one of him, right here at the gate!

ALL: Yaaah!
*Universal amazement, mixed with abashment on the part of Kihei and Oroku, who exchange glances, realizing that they have been foiled.

TARÔSHICHI: What? What! The man who died from the fight yesterday, that's this corpse right here. You mean some other, different farmer's showed up?

KYÛSUKÉ: No, it's the same guy, no mistake about that!

ZENROKU: Here, Kyûsuke, what's this? It's that peddler I want, right here at the gate?

He looks for himself.

Yaaah! It sure is! It sure is! It's the man I looked for all day yesterday! Then the dead man here...

Pause. He inspects the corpse carefully.

Damn! I'm sure I've seen this stiff before. It's a man I've met someplace, but I just can't remember where. That face is very familiar, but I just can't place it.
TARÔSHICHI: Now you mention it, I've seen that face before too.

SEIBEI: All of you seem to know him, and I have the feeling I remember this dead man too.

KYŪSAKU: Excuse me. You all seem very busy with something, but may I come in for a moment?

Pause. Kyūsaku enters the shop.

Well, now... Yesterday when you were so kind to me I didn't know you were from the Aburaya. I took the kimono you gave me in to be altered, and I thought after it was finished I'd wear it when I came to express my gratitude. Well, I found out from the tag that was on it that it was from this shop, so I decided I'd come just as soon as possible and I'm here today to say yesterday's thanks. The pain from the cut by the eye went away since I put a Mannō plaster on it last night, and I feel guilty about having accepted money for such a slight thing. Here,
I've brought it with me. Would you be kind enough to return it to Sashirō whom I had the honor of meeting yesterday. You are not aware of it, but I am the apprentice Hisamatsu's guarantor. I am from Iozaki, and my name is...

OROKU: Eh! The apprentice Hisamatsu... why, that's the young master! And if this is where he's in service, then we've...

KYŪSAKU: Yah! Why, you're the woman I asked to fix the kimono I received from this gentleman yesterday.

OROKU: Here, not a word about that!

*She contorts herself motioning to Kyūsaku to be quiet and trying to distract the others from listening to him.

KYŪSAKU: Eh? Just the same, yesterday I asked you...

He spots the kimono.
Why, that's the kimono from yesterday!

Pause. Now he looks at the dead body.

Here, here, here, what's this? Why, that's my ripped jacket, and that man who's asleep is wearing it!

**SEIBEI:** Here, tradesman! That man lying asleep there is a country fellow. Well, he got into a quarrel at Yanagishima yesterday. Kyūsuke over there beat him up and gave him a cut by the eye. Tarōshichi thought that was a shame and gave him that kimono to replace his ripped jacket. He took it, went home, and...

**KYŪSAKU:** Eh?

Pause. Kyūsaku shudders.

*Kihei winces as he listens to Seibeī's sarcasm. Oroku, realizing that they have done an unforgivable thing to the Aburaya, looks mournful.*
The more I listen to what you say the more it sounds like my own experience. I wonder... Is there any chance that the man you say is dead really is me? Do check carefully, please.

SEIBEI: I don't think you've anything to worry about. True, the dead man is no longer breathing, and his vein definitely shows the effect of poisonous humours. But now that I've used the family's secret remedy...

ZENROKU: And I didn't spare the moxa either. It'll be good if he lives, but whether he lives or rots, the real peddler from yesterday's here, so the straw wrapper...

Pause. He starts to say "is where I can get at it" but reconsiders.

Well, the peddler's got the goods I want, so who needs a stiff around? But, aren't you two a lovely couple! You've got some nerve, adopting a corpse as your brother! Take this bundle of guts with you and go to hell!
He pulls the corpse up on its legs and hurls it at the two.

*At this Kyūtarō undergoes his resurrection and gives forth with an unearthly moan. All are stupefied.

TARŌSHICHI: Yaaah! That was the dead man moaning!

SEIBEI: Aha! The medicine takes effect! Judge the workman by the results.

Seibei pulls the body closer and presses down hard on the stomach. Kyūtarō flips his eyes wide open.

KYŪSUKE: Yaaah! The dead man's opened his eyes!

ZENROKU: What! Where! The dead man's opening his eyes?

He looks at Kyūtarō's face. Kyūtarō looks at his. They gape at each other.

KYŪTARŌ: Chief Clerk?

ZENROKU: Yah! The dead man is...
KYŪTARŌ: ... me, Kyūtarō.

ZENROKU: Yaaah!

KYŪTARŌ: Ah, Chief Clerk! I've a bone to pick with you!

ALL: No wonder he looked so familiar!

*Zenroku writhes in agony.

ZENROKU: Here, here, Kyūta... We thought you'd run away. Where and how did you -- ah -- die?

KYŪTARŌ: Where and how, Chief Clerk? Why, you're the one who told me yesterday, "Run away and, whatever you do, don't you come back! Go home to Kasai and lay low." So I took the quarter you gave me, had it changed to small coin, and went off to a sake shop in Koume Daichi. Had my fill of blowfish, though of course it's out of season; too bad my belly was already stuffed with that funeral lunch. You'd think rice
and beans would go all right with the blowfish; but
my belly, damn fool, couldn't tell the difference
from rice cake. Chief Clerk, oh, the terror of it!
The fish and the rice had a fight, and that was the
end of Kyūta. I don't know what happened after
that, but... what's this? Who could have shaved
off my forelock? Why, it's made me look like a man!
Chief Clerk, now you won't love me any more... Oh,
I'm so sad, I'll never be gay again; I'm so sad,
I'll never be gay again...

ZENROKU: Eeh... you idiot!

SEIBEI: Here, Kyūta, do you mean to tell me it wasn't your
own idea to run away?

KYŪTARŌ: Ay. Tasaburō asked me to deliver some kind of certi-
ficate to...

ZENROKU: Aah... Here, here, watch your tongue!
KYUTARÔ: Yeah, but aren't you the one who kept at me yesterday: "Run away and don't come back"...

ZENROKU: Aah... Here, here, don't shoot your mouth off so! Don't bring that up!

KYUTARÔ: Yeah, but aren't you the one who kept at me yesterday: "You sneak away first and I'll bring that beautiful widow along later. She's letting her hair grow so she can be your wife." That's what you told me, right?

ZENROKU: Here, here, that's enough. That's enough! Just keep it all inside, inside!

KYUTARÔ: Yeah, but listen here... When you've overeaten you're supposed to throw up everything inside. And I'm just bringing up what I'd swallowed.

ZENROKU: Eeh... Just too much! The way I feel right now, you should have stayed dead. I had to go and put that moxa on you...
KYUSUKE: The bad blunder of one is another's good luck.

KYUTARO: Well, thanks a lot anyway.

TAROSHICHI: Hmm... There's more than meets the eye behind Kyuta's running away. Especially the slip about Tasaburō and the sword pedigree... In that case, the chest where we put it...

KIHEI: The sword pedigree! You mean the one for Goō Yoshimitsu, where it says the sword's worth two and a half thousand ryō?

SEIBEI: Eh! You are very well informed!

KIHEI: Yeah, I've latched on to a bit about that sword's progress. In fact, you might say I know it all: the hands it passed through and the route it took before it wound up pawned right here. I thought I'd use that idiot there as a pawn in my plot, but...
Wife, the omens are bad. We've stuck around too long anyway. Before we wind up in the clink, let's just write this job off and clear out.

He takes Oroku by the hand and starts up to leave.

OROKU: Look. Didn't I tell you so? I said: "Since that's the way it's gonna turn out, there's no use breaking your back over this. Can't we handle it some other way?" That's what I said, but you wouldn't listen. Pretty stupid, I'd call it, the both of us; and all we can do is grin and bear it. Or can you come up with some funsies to chant as we shuffle off to the wings?

TARÔSHICHI: Judging from what's been said, it wasn't Kyûta's own idea to leave. If we check this out further, we'll expose other things yet...

He starts to say "as well as the man who's plotting them" but breaks off.
*Instead he glares at Zenroku, making his meaning plain.
But to talk about that would give the store a bad reputation. So Kyūta is the only one I'll dismiss. Kyūsuke, take him back to his guarantor and bring back his apprenticeship papers.

KYŪSUKE: Yes, sir. Well, Kyūta, come along with me.

KYŪTARŌ: You're sending me back to my guarantor? Does that mean I'm fired?

*He is crestfallen.

Aah, that leaves Hisamatsu with all the luck! The young widow makes such a fuss over him. And our Osome... Why, every chance she gets...

KYŪSAKU: Here, just a minute! I'm Hisamatsu's guarantor. What's this twaddle? The fact that you're a child is no excuse, don't talk nonsense. Stop this gossip and leave.
KYŪTARŌ: Eh? This man's Hisamatsu's guarantor? No need to scold me, I'm leaving. Now I think of it, this whole episode seems like something I went through in a dream. But since I've had such a close shave, no one will think me queer when I show up at home unannounced. Well, Kyūsuke, aren't you going to see me off?

KYŪSUKE: Stop babbling and start moving fast.

Pause. They move out through the gate.

Where do I take you?

KYŪTARŌ: My guarantor lives in Tsukiji.

KYŪSUKE: What's his name?

KYŪTARŌ: Hikozaemon. ***

*** Actually the name of the father of the actor playing Kyūsuke. In this instance, Bandō Yoshiji's father Bandō Hikozaemon, who lived in Tsukiji. An inside joke.
KYUSUKE: It's apparent that name's a parent of a certain actor. But let's not pursue any farther the matter of fathers.

Vesper bell, signalling the end of the commotion onstage. The samisen music sets a tone of general relaxation.

Kyūtarō and Kyusuke exit through the lift curtain. The young clerks go back inside through the curtained door.

KIHEI: Wife, let's go home before it gets dark.

OROKU: Let's do that. No matter how long we stay here, we're not going to get anywhere. Let's start walking.

They go outside.

KYUSAKU: What! Going home already? Say, if I'd showed up just a while later, you two would have pulled off your job. Just because I came at a bad moment...

KIHEI: ... our bluff was called and we're going home empty-handed. Doesn't this yokel know enough not to butt
in where he's not wanted? All because of a vegetable peddler, our best laid plans...

OROKU: ... for big money were ruined.

Pause. She notices the palanquin by the gate.

Ah! There's this palanquin here...

KIHEI: If we just leave it there, it's like throwing away the purse after you've lost the money. We'll take it along. Wife, get one end.

OROKU: Eh? You get me sometimes!

Kihei carries the front end of the pole and Oroku the rear. They stop at the hanamichi.

KIHEI: Just when the job was going so well... You, what's your name, Medicine Man Seibe -- you're a bitter pill to swallow; I'll keep you in mind.

SEIBEI: Anytime at your service. Don't hesitate to call if you need any more favors.
KIHEI: I'll be sure to come say my thanks for the one you've just rendered.

SEIBEI: Please, do pay a call. Bring your wife along, you're such a nice couple. Ha ha ha ha ha.

KIHEI: Hey, you sure you're not laughing too hard? (to Oroku) But I wonder how we appear to the casual onlooker. Here's a pretty stupid sort of palanquin going off duty.

OROKU: Yeah, no one's tried this type of exit before. A husband and wife team carrying off a parked palanquin -- it's a new twist, to be sure.

Pause.

Hmm... There was no way I could have known...

Lady Takegawa's brother Hisamatsu is an apprentice here and this is his master's shop. In trying to get her the hundred ryō...
She starts to say "I caused them a lot of trouble" but breaks off.
*Seibei is suspicious and challenges Oroku.

SEIBEI: Eh?

KIHEI: (to Oroku) What did you say?

OROKU: Uh... Let's get a move on.

KIHEI: We're a real picture puzzle; can you figure us out?

Song. Carrying the palanquin, the two exit through the lift curtain. The four (Tarōshichi, Seibei, Zenroku, and Kyūsaku) remain on stage. Mood music.

TARŌSHICHI: What those swindlers said, and especially what Kyūta let slip about a sword certificate sounds very, very suspicious. That Tasaburō and his loose habits!
Suppose that chest of drawers...

Pause. He starts to say "was ransacked and the sword pedigree stolen" but breaks off.

Ah! We've got to look into this. But -- hmm --
Hisamatsu should be back soon.
SEIBEI: That's right, I haven't seen him in the house. Did he go out on an errand?

ZENROKU: That is correct. But if you send him out on an errand, all he does is dilly-dally, shilly-shally every place he goes -- wastes all his time and accomplishes nothing.

Pause. He turns to Kyūsaku.

You're that apprentice's guarantor, so you'd better give him a good talking to. But, say! Still more important: I wasted the whole day yesterday looking for you, because that bunch of greens...

He starts to say "is something that I simply must have" but breaks off.

KYŪSAKU: Eh?

ZENROKU: Uh... You know, the bunch of bridewort greens...

uh, I mean, a bunch of greens reminds me of a bridal
bouquet. Osome's getting married, you know, to Seibei right here. Osome's got herself a bride-groom, but she's also got...

KYŪSAKU: What about Osome?

ZENROKU: Why, that Osome's got...

Pause. He starts to say "a good thing going with Hisamatsu, and you're his guarantor, bud" but thinks the better of it.

Eeh -- here, you know, right in front of the bride-groom, well...

-/- You don't rock the boat if you can avoid it. -/-

Ha ha ha ha ha.

He murders a line from the Nō play Benkei in the Boat.

The six o'clock bell sounds. A clerk, played by an extra, enters by the hurry door bearing a lantern, places it at center rear, and exits.

At that moment a clerk from the Matsumotoya enters through the lift curtain. He comes onstage carrying a letter and a paper lantern with a bow handle. (The lantern bears the crest of the Matsumoto family of actors.)
CLERK: Excuse me... Sashirō sent me with this urgent letter. He has something to discuss with Tarōshichi, and I've been told to ask him if he'd come along when I go back.

The clerk holds out the letter. Zenroku takes it at the gate.

TARŌSHICHI: What's this? From Sashirō?

ZENROKU: Yes, a letter for you.

He hands it to Tarōshichi, who opens it.

TARŌSHICHI: What's this? It's about Tasaburō, and he'd like to meet me? According to this letter, the pedigree of the sword Yoshimitsu that's supposed to be in Teishō's cabinet -- why, Tasaburō has...

*His worst fears have been confirmed.

Aah... where's Hisamatsu? I sent him off to the Residence, but he ought to be back by now...
ZENROKU: That's right, it's about time he got back. But you know him. Sending him off on an errand is just inviting bother upon oneself. I'm sorry, sir, but when that apprentice gets back you'd better give him a good tongue-lashing.

TARŌSHICHI: Hmm... I'd like to go talk to Sashirō myself...

Pause. He takes a moment to think.

Yes. Messenger, I'll be with you right away.

Could you please wait a minute? Have a puff on the pipe in the meantime.

*Again he sinks into troubled thought.

Song. The evening bell tolls. Hanshirō, in his third role as Hisamatsu, appears through the lift curtain. He carries a plain box of the sort used for letters, and proceeds to the entry gate.

HISAMATSU: It's Hisamatsu. I'm just back from my errand, sir.

TARŌSHICHI: Ah, Hisamatsu is it? So the office hours at the Residence were not over yet?
HISAMATSU: That's correct, sir. They took in your letter at the reception desk and I was ordered to wait, so I had to tarry a while. That is why I took so much time. And here is their answer.

Pause. Proffering the letter box, he moves to stage left and spots Kyūsaku.

Yah! But you're Kyūsaku! What brings you here this late at night?

KYŪSAKU: My lord Hisamatsu...

Pause. He realizes he has made a mistake in addressing Hisamatsu this way and starts over.

Well... So my younger brother's finally showed up. Hisamatsu, I don't know what kind of errand you were on, but the chief clerk said just now that you're always late getting back. He was terribly angry with you, Hisamatsu. Make sure you put your mind to your duty!
HISAMATSU: But it took more time than usual because I had to wait for an answer...

KYÜSAKU: Here, don't you start making excuses! You just start getting back promptly!

Kyūsaku starts getting indignant and raises his voice.

SEIBEI: Here, here, Kyūsaku, no need to get excited. And you, Hisamatsu -- not only is he your brother but your guarantor too; so you'd better listen to what he says. Come now -- he scolded you, but it's not all that serious. Just something you must learn to take when you're in service. A master's word is law, in a military house or a merchant's. As they say, you don't argue with sickness or with the master. And it's the chief clerk's business to speak for your master. You might make excuses to your brother, but don't ever talk back to the chief clerk, eh, to Zenroku here...
He really wants to add "though he's a crook."

That's correct, isn't it, uncle?

TARÔSHICHI: That's right. It's just as Seibei says. Here, Hisamatsu, make sure you listen.

HISAMATSU: Yes, sir. I will take care to obey the lessons Seibei has just taught me.

SEIBEI: That's just what I expected you to say, Hisamatsu. You're a good boy.

ZENROKU: Yeah, he's a good boy all right! He's just a little underage apprentice -- is what he'd like you to think! So what've we got here? A tiny, tiny baby! And that spells a lot of grief for his master; as for you, Seibei, dear sir, saving face is what counts when...

He starts to say "the results of his relations with Osome come out" but is cut off.
SEIBEI: Here, here, Zenroku. Don't forget: I'm Osome's fiancé and I'm going to inherit the Aburaya. How can a mere child -- an apprentice -- cause his master to lose face? You're pretty bold, even for a chief clerk. What you say is completely uncalled for, so stop it!

*Seibei doesn't mince matters with Zenroku, who is quite deflated.

ZENROKU: Yes, sir; yes, sir. I stand corrected. If I have offended you, I beg you earnestly -- earnestly -- do, please, do forgive me.

*Zenroku, the type who is arrogant to underlings and servile to superiors, is properly downcast.

Tarōshichi finally gets done with his inspection of Hisamatsu's letter box.

TARŌSHICHI: Well, then... The messenger's waiting; I must go meet Sashirō. Here, Hisamatsu, take the letter box to Teishō and show her the letter from the Residence. Tell her, "Madam, here is what they have to say."
HISAMATSU: Yes, sir.

He takes the letter box but does not leave yet.

SEIBEI: Well, I seem to have lingered on quite a long time, haven't I? It's about time to take my leave. I see you have this urgent business that's come up with Sashirō, though I can't imagine what it is. Aha! Tasaburō has left home and is wasting himself on wine and women. Not only that... What was this you were just saying about some sword pedigree or other? Could it be because of that article that the urgent...

KYŪSAKU: Excuse me. I'm from the country and I don't know anything about that affair. But here's an unexpected article that I found in my basket -- some sort of a document, with a letter attached. I thought by some chance it might be a pawn that belongs to this shop, and that's why I made the trip here today. You see, it's addressed "To Zenroku. From Tasaburō."
He takes out the note which Tasaburō had attached to the famous sword pedigree of Act One. Hisamatsu looks at it.

HISAMATSU: Why, this is a letter from Tasaburō, the young master. When you think that it's addressed to Zenroku... Is this part of the Chief Clerk's...

He doesn't quite utter "plot."
*Zenroku is quite alarmed, and moves about trying to catch sight of what Hisamatsu has in his hand.

ZENROKU: Yah! Why, that's the note that came attached to the sword pedigree yesterday. But if he's got that, then that means the certificate...

He starts to say "is here too and that fellow's got it" but stops just in time.

KYŪSAKU: Eh?

*Kyūsaku is doing his best to figure out what's up from Zenroku's words and attitude.

ZENROKU: Ah... uh... Kyūsaku. Please, please, I've got to talk to you. Just for a minute, I certify to you!
He sidles over to Kyūsaku.

KYŪSAKU: Since I took out the letter the Chief Clerk's suddenly been grinning and cheerful. Now, I wonder why? Could it be because he likes these swordlike sprigs of blossoms I brought? It's a present that I guarantee will cheer up Osome. Ah, the flowers that bloom in my rustic sward...

HISAMATSU: ... are pedigreed, to be sure. Camellias, peach blossoms, the best that there is -- what a marvelous present that you've cut down in your garden!

KYŪSAKU: Yes, I brought these camellias to wish Seibei and his bride the best of good fortune. May their progeny flower a thousand generations! But it's outrageous that the young girl...

"... will marry already deflowered" is of course what he means to say. Hisamatsu catches the tone of strong reproval without Kyūsaku!'s having to spell it out.
*If the tone weren't enough, the indignant glare would suffice to wither the culprit. Hisamatsu is cut to the quick.

HISAMATSU: Eh!

KYūSAKU: Well, since the young lady's to be a blossoming bride, I have brought these blossoms, and a bunch of bridewort greens to pass on to her mother.

He takes the wrapper of greens and the sprigs of camellias out of their baskets. Zenroku gives a start.

ZENROKU: Yah! That's the wrapper from yesterday!

He tries to get his hands on it but Kyūsaku shakes him off.

KYūSAKU: Seibei, sir...

SEIBEI: Kyūsaku...

TARŌSHICHI: Right now, I am going...

HISAMATSU: ... with me along...
KYŪSAKU: Ah, no, Hisamatsu! I've something for you...

HISAMATSU: Who, me?

KYŪSAKU: ... to talk over.

HISAMATSU: All right.

SEIBEI: Uncle, I hope your discussion won't keep you away very long.

*He is full of sympathy with Tarōshichi's worries.

Song. Temple bell. Tarōshichi and the Matsu­motoya clerk exit down the hanamichi. Seibei and Hisamatsu go inside through the curtained door with Kyūsaku, who carries the wrapper of greens and the branches of blossoms. Zenroku watches them leave.

ZENROKU: Hmm... that fellow Kyūsaku, Hisamatsu's guarantor...

It's that peddler I thought I'd lost sight of completely with the sword pedigree still stuck in his bundle of greens. So he shows up today... I wonder -- did he come expressly to hand over that
bundle to the family here? Still, there's no way he could know the certificate belongs in this house.

Hmm... I just can't figure the damn thing out.

*He thinks it all very strange and mulls over the possibilities as he leans on the chest containing the account books.

Temple bell. Kihei comes through the lift curtain. Looking around here and there, he proceeds stealthily toward the stage. At a good distance behind him, Yachûta also emerges and follows his traces. The country samurai again proves himself unaware of the conventions of fashion: for his face is cowled in the square hood worn in Edo only by women. His further costume is informal, but he bears both the long and the short sword. He also spies about him and wavers before he proceeds down the hanamichi.

KIHEI: Aah... and here I had the job all cased out. With that stiff for my tool, I was sure to squeeze a lot of cash out of them -- either that or the sword Goô Yoshimitsu, a pawn in exchange for the murderer's life. Well, I thought it was either the one or the other; but don't count your chickens before they are hatched, I sure wound up with egg on my face. But that chief clerk here -- he can be talked to.
It takes a thief to know a thief. That Zenroku is going to help me out. I'll get him out here and then the sword Yoshimitsu that's been put away in the storehouse...

As he peers into the house, Yachūta comes up to check him out.

YACHŪTA: That's that damn Kihei's voice.

KIHEI: Lord Yachūta? Oh, damn!

He turns and tries to flee down the hanamichi. Yachūta gives chase, grabs him halfway down to the lift curtain, and holds him, looking quite grim.

YACHŪTA: Kihei, damn you! You were just my lackey, but I sure did a lot for you. So where's your gratitude, eh? I never could get along with that Takegawa, old Ishizu's daughter. But you had to go and abscond from the Residence with her maid Oroku -- was that her name? I could have had your neck for that but I let it pass. It was all thanks to my kindness
that your crummy life was saved, you understand? And what do I get in exchange? This unspeakable mess!

I was hard up for cash to spend on Oito, so I swiped that sword and counted on you to unload it. It was supposed to be sold to Kankichi from the swordshop, but from what I hear it wound up pawned in the Aburaya right here. For one hundred ryō -- and you made off with the cash! Every time I send someone to collect the money, you just bash him around and beat him up for his trouble. On top of that, I hear you've been blabbing that because I stole the sword there's no need to give back a damn thing. Well, you might've thought you had enough of an upper hand to take advantage of me, but you'd better think again! So -- are you forking over the hundred ryō? Or, are you handing over the sword? Come on, out with it, out with it! Eh -- you goddamn ingrate! You goddamn ingrate!

He lays into Kihei.
*Kihei cringes apologetically.
KIHEI: Oh, master. It's just like you say. It's just like you say. Only it isn't quite true that I've neglected my duty to you on purpose. You see, I got in deep at a gambling joint, put the whole hundred down, and, uh... But I've been laying some money away in a pawnshop, little by little, three or five ryō a throw. A bit more time's all I need and I'll have it all back for you, and with interest besides. Though I really hate to ask you this... Now about the sword: the chief clerk here is obliging enough, but there's his master to consider as well, so he said we'll never get away with it unless we provide him with a fit substitute. If possible, I thought we could use in exchange that sword that you're bearing, and you'll have Yoshimitsu in hand immediately if not sooner. Sir, it would really be best if you please let me borrow your sword...

YACHŪTA: What! For some sort of substitute? You say you want to borrow my sword?
KIHEI: Yes, sir, that's right.

YACHÜTA: Uh... my sword's to be exchanged for Yoshimitsu?
Here, you're lying to me again! No, I'm not going
to swallow that.

KIHEI: Oh, no, sir; no, sir, I'm not lying to you at all!
If you doubt me, please be kind enough to wait at
the gate of the shop. I promise, there won't be
any slip-ups this time.

YACHÜTA: No slip-ups this time?

KIHEI: Would I lie to you?

YACHÜTA: In that case, here. I'm loaning you my sword. Go
exchange it for Yoshimitsu. But, just to make sure,
I'm coming along.

KIHEI: All right. But there won't be any slip-ups this
time. Please come along if you'd like.
YACHŪTA: Well, you lead the way.

KIHEI: Yes, sir; yes, sir.

Pause. Kihei walks down to the entry gate and looks inside.

Good! The chief clerk's all by himself. In that case, I'll just turn over the substitute sword...

YACHŪTA: Hurry up! Hurry up! And bring Yoshimitsu right out!

KIHEI: Right away! Please be patient a moment.

Pause. He makes sure that Yachūta is off his guard.

Here, Chief Clerk! Chief Clerk!

Kihei pretends to concentrate on Zenroku. His sudden draw catches Yachūta unawares. He gives a wicked slash at Yachūta, who shrieks "Wah!" and tries to escape. Kihei goes after him, hewing away until Yachūta is backed up to the well in the alley.
YACHUTA: Murder! Murder!

Yachuta's shrieks manage to distract Zenroku from his accounts, and he perks up his ears. It is too late for the samurai. As Kihei slices into him one last time, Yachuta totters and disappears over the edge of the well.

*Kihei quickly clamps on the lid and heaves a sigh of relief and of satisfaction over a job without slip-ups.

The temple bell tolls. As Kihei wipes the blood-smirched sword and puts it back in its sheath, Zenroku comes to the gate, ears on the alert. He opens the door softly. Kihei spots him.

KIHEI: Chief Clerk!

ZENROKU: Aiieeeeeee...

It takes him a moment to recuperate. Then he checks who it is he must deal with.

But, but you're the one from before...

KIHEI: Kihei. The swindler.

ZENROKU: What, not again! What business is it this time?
KIHEI: To get something out of hock.

ZENROKU: Eeh! What?

KIHEI: What that swords smith pawned here for a hundred ryō. The sword Goō Yoshimitsu.

ZENROKU: Yah! You got the principal and the interest together?

KIHEI: Not exactly. I don't have the hundred ryō. But I'm not asking you to give me something for nothing. Here, I want this exchanged for Yoshimitsu.

He points Yachūta's sword at Zenroku, who takes it nonchalantly.

ZENROKU: For that hundred ryō article you want to give me this? You've got your nerve! Why, you're impudent to the core -- even I am impressed. Just the man I need! Here, I've got this proposition...
KIHEI: Well, if you're ready, we can swear brotherhood. Birds of a feather...

ZENROKU: ... have no secrets one from the other. For your part, I want a little demonstration of skill; the girl, Osome...

KIHEI: Want me to pull a snatch?

ZENROKU: That's it exactly.

KIHEI: If that's what you want, then I've got you. And, for your part...

He whispers. Zenroku drinks it all in.

ZENROKU: Then your plan is... We steal the sword Yoshimitsu that's been pawned here for one hundred ryō, fence it for big money someplace...

KIHEI: ... and split fifty-fifty if all goes right. But there's something that comes with the sword.
ZENROKU: The pedigree, yes. I put that good-for-nothing Tasaburō on to swipe the certificate, and he got it all right. The catch is I lost track of it after it got stuck in that bunch of greens. But certainly that fellow Kyōsaku...

KIHEI: Let's forget about the pedigree for the moment. Yoshimitsu, the genuine article, that sword of renown...

ZENROKU: ... is in the storehouse out back.

KIHEI: Who leads the way?

ZENROKU: The chief clerk, of course!

KIHEI: We slip in, snatch the sword...

ZENROKU: ... and Osome too while we're at it...
KIHEI: ... whom we hide in a place where she's as good as buried...

ZENROKU: ... and Yoshimitsu covers the travel expense.

KIHEI: To seal the bargain...

ZENROKU: ... clap hands.

THE TWO: Yoi, yoi, yoi...

*Without thinking, they clap hands, and immediately realize that they blundered.

Sh-h...

*The two gesture to each other to be quiet. They stand tensely on the store's raised platform, peering intently about them to see whether they have been discovered.

Temple bell. Song. To this tableau the stage turns.
ACT TWO SCENE TWO

Aburaya Okuzashiki no Ba

Main stage six yards square.

The upstage platform indicates the raised floor of a house interior. Toward stage left stands a byōbu folding screen some five feet high. Further to the left of it is another, single-leaf screen. In the wall at center rear is a three-foot-wide sliding door. Stage right are two sliding door frames covered with transparent linen, through which can be seen a bureau in the inner room. Further to the right the house setting is completed by a narrow section of wall.

Stage left is the entrance to the storehouse, a thick door protected with wire netting, which opens and shuts. Stage right is a hedge of bush clover and in it a small gate. These are all special props.

To the continuation of the previous scene's song, the set is pushed forward. As the house platform reaches its proper spot, the stage stops revolving.

While the song is playing, the maid Osono steps in through the upstage entrance carrying a round lantern. She puts it down at center rear and opens the folding screen. Behind the byōbu, Osome (Hanshirō) lies atop a mattress. She is dressed in night clothes, a sleeved coverlet over her, and leans on the bedding.

Osono comes up to her and whispers --

OSONO: I spread your bed here tonight so that -- you know -- so that your...
OSOME: In that case... um... everything is set for tonight?

OSONO: Yes, I'll bring you together tonight.

OSOME: But isn't Seibei still here?

OSONO: Now, now. Don't worry yourself about a thing.

Right here, in another moment...

Pause. She pulls the folding screen about Osome. Song. She picks up the lantern and signals to stage right. Hanshirō enters through the garden gate, costumed as Hisamatsu. He approaches warily, but stumbles in his garden clogs to a thudding noise.

*Osono is startled.

Ah... oh!

HISAMATSU: Is that you, Osono?

OSONO: Hisamatsu... She has been waiting for some time.

*She points to the folding screen and beckons to him to step closer.
HISAMATSU: You mean... Behind the screen?

OSONO: Come.

She takes him by the hand and has him enter inside the screen panels.

OSOME: Ah! Hisamatsu...

HISAMATSU: Osome!

Hanshiro peeks out from behind the screen. (The intent is to set up the audience for the quick change which follows by sustaining to the last moment the illusion that the actor remains behind the screen.)

OSONO: Well, do take your time. If the timing is right perhaps you can come together often.

At that moment, from inside --

TEISHŌ: Daughter! Daughter! Osome! Have you gone to bed already?
As TEISHŌ calls out, Osono gets flustered and puts out the lamp. Entry music. Hanshirō, costumed as a nun, pushes open the sliding door at center rear and comes out holding a candlestick. Teishō is the actor's fifth role.

Daughter! Daughter! Is she bedded here?

OSONO: Yes, madam. But she is not yet asleep.

TEISHŌ: Why on earth do you look so flustered? And the lamp is out, too. What's all this fussing about?

OSONO: Ah... here's what it is. Um... Osome was seized by her old affliction, that stabbing pain in the abdomen. I've been massaging it for her.


OSONO: Oh, no! No! If I go, there will be no one left to massage Osome. So I'd really better stay. Won't you please ask someone else?
*She makes anxious gestures toward the folding screen.

TEISHŌ: Nonsense! I can massage Osone just as well. You go and call the doctor, please.

OSONO: But if I go...

TEISHŌ: Well, haven't I told you to?

OSONO: Yes, ma'am.

Song. Osone exits reluctantly.

*Teishō finds Osone's behavior very strange, and is suspicious. Suddenly realizing that Hisamatsu must be inside the screens, she gives a start.

In the meantime Kihei appears from the storehouse shadows. His lower face is masked by a towel. Peering about him, he softly approaches the storehouse entry, and pries open the wire netting. Then, taking infinite care not to make a noise, he opens the thick door a crack and snakes inside, leaving the door as is. Teishō fails to notice.

TEISHŌ: Dear, dear! How silly of Osone! Not like her at all. Whatever could be the matter? Ha ha ha ha ha...
Pause. She switches from ladylike laughter to a tone of concern.

Osome, those pains of yours... Osome, are you awake?

Hanshirō's double, playing Osome, responds from behind the screen in an imitation of Hanshirō's voice.

OSOME: Uh... Ah... I...

TEISHŌ: Just now... uh... just now Osono said you had stabbing pains in your abdomen. Shall I massage it for you?

OSOME: Oh, no! No! The stabs...

TEISHŌ: ... stopped already? Ah. Well then, I'm relieved. Ah. But, but... yes, stay in bed. It would be indecent, I mean incautious, to expose yourself -- to the cold, I mean. Yes, just stay as you are. Here, daughter, there's something I've wanted to
talk to you about for some time. It's just that I wanted to make sure we were in private. Tonight is our chance for a heart-to-heart talk. No one else around, no listeners, you know?

Pause.

Of course. There can't be anyone else here. Osome, listen to me. Your engagement is settled, your bridegroom awaits. You're still a child... but you're not to play with any males. Modesty...

*She waits for a reaction from within the screen.

... may on the other hand be carried too far. It seems you are reluctant to take up your marital duties. Of course, that is not entirely unreasonable. If at all possible, I want you to have a man you love and can be happy with. But then there is your dead father's last will. Here, for proof that your mother is not trying to deceive you, here, please look at this.
*Teishō (Hanshirō) wipes away her tears of grief. Her gestures show her resolve and the hope that Osome will be swayed by the sight of her father's will. Mood music. Hanshirō slides open the three-foot door at center rear and exits. Hanshirō's double, playing Teishō, immediately enters the house area at stage right and can be faintly observed, through the linen doors, opening a bureau drawer and taking out a document.

In the meantime Hanshirō transformed into Osome emerges from behind the byōbu folding screen and whispers to Hisamatsu (another double).

*Hisamatsu seems to have agreed to whatever Osome suggested. He looks about him carefully and then sneaks behind the single-leaf screen at left.

Osome (Hanshirō) rearranges the panels of the byōbu about her. In the next instant Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) peeks out from behind the single-leaf screen.

Carrying the document, Teishō (the double) disappears into the rear area at stage right. Observing Teishō's imminent return, Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) quickly pulls his head back and hides behind his screen. Thereupon the three-foot door opens and Teishō (Hanshirō) emerges with the document in her hands. She opens the byōbu panels, behind which Osome (Hanshirō's double) is prone on the mattress.

*Teishō (Hanshirō) makes sure that Hisamatsu is nowhere about.
Here, daughter, the proof that your mother is not trying to deceive you is here: the last will and testament of your dead father, my dear husband Tarōbei. You must look at it and I must make a very serious request. Here, listen carefully!

Pause. Koto music, written especially for this play.
*Teishō wipes away her tears, attempting to muster the courage to go on.

As you know, I was your father's second wife. Your brother and you are of course his previous wife's seed. Your father was much older than me, and now that he's passed away the people in the neighborhood keep pressing me to get married again, for the sake of the household. That sort of advice may have some merit. But I cannot think to saddle you children with a stepfather of unknown disposition. Especially since the two of you are quite grown up already. But if I remain a widow while I am still young, then we have all this talk of the heir to the house and the untoward stepmother...
Pause.

Well, you can't stop such rumors from starting. The gossip does not bother me personally; but if it stains the reputation of the Aburaya and gives Tasaburō a bad name, how could I ever face the ancestors of the house? Osome, you were the apple of your father's eye. He brought you up and safeguarded you like a secret treasure. Of course, I thought over every possible way to keep all this worry and unpleasantness from you. Even though I am not yet forty, last winter I decided to cut off my hair, leaving the cares of this world behind me. And now all I live for is that you quickly fulfil your father's will and marry Seibe, so I can soon see my first grandchild. What beautiful hopes!

But even the moon's beauty is often clouded; the gloom of my sorrow is almost too much to bear...

*Teishō's grief is obvious. Both Osome, within the byōbu panels, and Hisamatsu, by his screen, are affected. Their gestures express their sorrow and bitter pain.*
Oh, it all looks so different to one who is young!
But, here, what's this? Did you bind this around you for those pains of yours? Why... isn't this a maternity belt?

*The two lovers have been cut to the quick, and show it.

Even though you've tried to hide it from me, every time I see your appearance, morning or night, I feel a sharp pain, like a nail in my heart. Yes, I would like to see you marry this man you love so much; oh, that is one thing your mother would want to do for you...

Pause. As they listen to Teishō, the two lovers put their hands together imploringly.

... so you can be together. But in this floating world, above all is duty.

Pause. Teishō shifts her gaze toward the single-leaf screen; her words are in great part meant for Hisamatsu.
Since we are not really mother and child, you may think I am being hard-hearted. But precisely because I am not your real mother, if the house is ruined I too am ruined before the ancestors. I can not neglect my husband’s deathbed bequest, the wish that his daughter marry Seibei. Ah, how bitter it is to be caught in the middle!

Daughter, daughter! Don’t be taken in by people’s ill-considered advice! Because if you take medicine for an abortion, not only will you put your own life in peril but your child will never see the light of day, your own flesh and blood!

*Teishō is horrified at the thought.

Again and again, I beseech you -- you must not do anything rash. Neither you nor anyone who may be listening... But, what am I saying? Noone else can be listening to these admonitions. Let your child be born, I beg you; I beg you, go as a bride to the Yamagaya...
*She is suppliant of look and distraught of manner. From within the byōbu screen --

OSOME: Then no matter what...

TEISHŌ: ... go through with the marriage, I beg you!

*Teishō finds it very hard to say. The two listeners break into tears. After an adequate continuation of this scene of sorrow among the three --

Seibei opens the three-foot door; Kyūsaku enters through the garden gate.

SEIBEI: Aah, that you should be forced into these efforts... how it pains me to be the cause!

TEISHŌ: Yah! It's the bridegroom...

KYŪSAKU: ... Seibei.

Hisamatsu (Hanshirō's double) heads straight for the storehouse. Fortunately for him, the door has been left open, and he steals inside. Kyūsaku has observed this.
TEISHŌ: Why, you're the clerk Hisamatsu's...

KYŪSAKU: ... guarantor Kyōsaku. Madam, I am eternally indebted to you on my brother's account.

TEISHŌ: Well, on your brother's account...

SEIBEI: ... you have, I know, taken a great deal of trouble. It is a pity that I... Yes, now I feel very bad...

Pause. He corrects himself.

It is a pity for the family that Osome does not feel well, a great misfortune. While she is... uh... indisposed, why not have her come to my family's country villa -- in Negishi, such a pleasant place -- to get it all out of her system. It's not too late to rearrange the wedding plans; but now the bride is five months...

"... pregnant," he starts to say, but catches himself.
... overdue in her husband's house; but even if we delay for nine months, who's to say that's pregnant with meaning? Still, there are bound to be all sorts of rumors...

KYŪSAKU: Well, as they say, people's mouths have no doors; that is the way of our floating world. Why, even here the storehouse door is open -- how careless! My brother will not open up his heart to me. But I am his guarantor, and until I can take custody of him again, I will store up within me, cherish under lock and key my responsibility even for his failings.

Pause. He goes right over to the storehouse door, puts the wire netting in place, and snaps on the padlock.

Now the lock's in place, please watch out that nothing happens to the stored treasures.

TEISHŌ: How fortunate that you are here to take care of...
Her relief is at Kyūsaku's promise in regard to Hisamatsu, not at his safeguarding the storehouse.

Yes, both of us are relieved, I am sure.

KYŪSAKU: The storehouse key...

TEISHŌ: ... is safe with me.

She shows him the key-case attached to her waist.

SEIBEI: In that case, I will take my leave now. Hmm...

why hasn't anyone come to accompany me home?

KYŪSAKU: Ah, but let me come with you; it's along my way.

SEIBEI: Thank you very much for going to all that trouble.

Kyūsaku lights the lantern.

TEISHŌ: You might hear some bad gossip, Seibe, but please don't worry yourself about it.
SEIBEI: That sort of thing I ignore. The only thing I'm worried about is Osome's indisposition. Fortunately I just happen to have on me this extraordinary medicine for her stabbing pains.

KYŪSAKU: And, although this may not be satisfactory to you, I as guarantor accept without ill feelings Hisamatsu's release from service, and attest it with this document.

SEIBEI: This medicine for Osome, my family's own recipe...

KYŪSAKU: ... and this document of release...

THE TWO: ... expressly for you, please.

Seibei gives her a packet of medicine; Kyūsaku hands her a document. *Teishō thinks it all quite extraordinary, but takes the two items and examines the document first.

TEISHŌ: Ah! A! A! A! A! The sword pedigree!
Pause. She inspects Seibei's envelope.

And this medicine wrapper... Why, this, it's for a safe birth!

SEIBEI: Please accept my best wishes for the happy event, a safe...

"... delivery," he starts to say, but stops just in time. Pause.

Yes, when the time comes, I will consider it an honor to preside over the happy event of Osome's marriage to Hisamatsu. The fiance turned matchmaker...

KYŪSAKU: Spoken like the master of a great house.

Pause. He changes his tone.

Brother in the storehouse...

TEISHŌ: ... daughter Osome...
KYŪSAKU: ... implore divine protection...

TEISHŌ: ... express your gratitude.

Teishō softly opens the panels of the byōbu screen. Osome (Hanshirō's double), still on the bed clothes, casts herself prostrate before Seibei, her hands together in a gesture of profound gratitude.

SEIBEI: Oh, no, no, no. The fiance expects, deserves no gratitude.

*Teishō also is in a suppliant's posture. Seibei is overwhelmed and embarrassed by this profuse display of emotions.

TEISHŌ: Please, come by again, Seibei, soon.

KYŪSAKU: Well, sir...

Kyūsaku takes up the lantern. The two head directly for the hanamichi. Osome (the double) throws herself down upon her mattresses weeping loudly. Seibei and Kyūsaku stop and look back. Teishō quickly pulls the folds of the screen about Osome.
TEISHŌ: Thank you for coming.

Tableau.

Clappers rapidly increasing in tempo. CURTAIN.

Outside the curtain, Seibei and Kyūsaku remain poised for a moment. The bell tolls the prelude to the hour. Exit music on the samisen. The two go off through the lift curtain.

The temple bell slowly sounds the hour, providing a link to the next scene. Rapid change of stage settings.
In the tenth year of Bunka
mizunoto tori
the third month
on a propitious day

Thirty-five leaves of text

A thousand autumns
and a myriad years
may this theater flourish.

FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS --

Tsuruya Nanboku
Author
Main stage six yards square.

Stage left is a storehouse, some nine feet in width. In its second story is a window with shutters which open in folds to the right and left. The base of the storehouse is the usual thickly plastered and reinforced skirting, which in this play requires a special adjustment.

Toward stage right extends a black board fence. The little door at its center is closed. Bamboo pickets spike the wall’s top, further preventing entry; the middle stakes are removable. Visible beyond the fence is the second floor of a house with its six-yard balcony. Shōji screens enclose the entire area. Bells of the type that tinkle in the wind hang from the eaves. The branches of a pine tree overspread the wall. Directly beneath them is a four-cornered container of water for use in case of fire. A special attachment makes possible the easy descent from the pine onto the cask. These stage effects reproduce the atmosphere of the upstairs compartments of the Aburaya.

The bell tolls the hour. The curtain opens.
Bearing a rude palanquin, Matahachi and SHÖROKU enter through the lift curtain and hurry down the hanamichi. In the free hand each holds a long staff which he swings vertically for rhythm and balance. From the left wing Gonsuke drunkenly staggers onstage. He totters into the palanquin bearers at center.

BEARERS: Make way! Please! Please!

They try to pass Gonsuke, who grabs hold of the front end of the palanquin's carrying pole.

GONSUKE: Hey, you! Wait!

BEARERS: What's this! What do you think you're doing?

GONSUKE: Yeah, what's this? You bash a man with a pole and a "please make way!" Please? What's there to be pleased about?

BEARERS: It's night. Can't see a thing. Excuse us, please.

GONSUKE: No excuse! Down with your load! Put it down!
He pulls at them and forces them to set down their palanquin.

MATAHACHI: Here, here! We realize you're a samurai footman.
But we apologized, didn't we?

SHOROKU: Please consider: you're emptyhanded; we're the ones with the load.

BEARERS: Call it fifty-fifty! Let's each get out of the way.

GONSUKE: You bastards, you're two goddamn bastards! You, do you have any idea who you're dealing with? I am Gonsuke -- that means Sir -- the great Lord Suzuki Yachüta's retainer and footman himself. This time you've picked on the wrong man! It's your sheer luck you're too low to fight me. Who's in your palanquin? Come out! Come out and fight! He'll be a more proper match.

BEARERS: A woman's inside. Oh, just forget it, please.
In the meantime, unnoticed by the three, a kerchiefed woman has slipped out of the palanquin and has fled offstage left.

GON SUKE: Eh, what a damn bother! Have to drag him out, by the looks of it.

BEARERS: Think you can?

Action scene. The bearers grapple with Gonsuke for a moment, then grab their staffs and go at him. Gonsuke breaks off one of the fence pickets and hews about with it. To the clatter and whirl of the fight, they move offstage left, Gonsuke chasing the bearers.

A solitary voice intones a song, then breaks off after only the first part. The center shōji opens and reveals Osome (Hanshirō) as she draws an inkbox closer. Mood music.

OSOME: If I heard correctly what Kyūsaku said just now, Hisamatsu will be taking his leave of this house and going back to Iozaki early tomorrow. But if he does that, then his fiancee, that girl Omitsu, will have him for her own, and I will have no hope left at all. Oh, what will I do? Throw myself into a river, drown myself in the billowing wave... but
how can I? How mother worries about me, though I am only her stepchild! How kind she was to explain everything in detail! But if I follow what she says, then I must go through with the marriage. And how can I do that? Especially now that I'm pregnant... no, neither the baby nor I can live in this world. Oh, Hisamatsu! I must go first, but in the next world we shall be together!

I have managed to escape everyone's eyes, and this farewell note is finished at last. If only for a moment, oh, for just one last time with Hisamatsu! But no, no! Even as I say this, someone may be watching; if I am discovered, that adds shame to my disgrace. Before anyone can notice... Yes, that is the only way!

Hanshirō exits, bearing the farewell note. The rightmost shōji opens. A double has taken over as Osome, who is tying her note to one of the wind-bells.

Hanshirō himself, transformed into Hisamatsu, leans out of the storehouse window.

HISAMATSU: Who is there? Osome?
OSOME: Hisamatsu! I wanted to meet you! How I wanted to meet you!

Hanshirō (Hisamatsu) disappears from the window, to be replaced immediately by a double, who keeps his back to the audience. The other double, playing Osome, also withdraws. In the next instant the real Hanshirō opens the second screen from the left and appears as Osome. Somehow the girl has had the time to add a hood to her costume.

I wanted to meet you! How I wanted to meet you!

HISAMATSU: Oh, how well I understand! I've had the very same feeling. To meet you, to see you...

OSOME: At least you, you are a man; you can feel secure. But what can a hopeless woman do except die? Yes, I am resigned. Here is the note I planned to leave. Let me bring it to you -- will you look at it, please?

Osome (Hanshirō) exits. Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) shows his face at the storehouse window. At stage right the double portrays Osome, back to the audience, again untying her note from the wind-bell.
HISAMATSU: Osome, Osome, listen to me. Your stepmother, to whom you owe so much, has explained all the sad details to you. We must face it: we can never be together. Our ill fate will have it no other way. In the end -- I beg you -- go to the Yamagaya, to your fiance.

In the meantime Osome (the double) has removed the note. Her loud footsteps are heard behind the shoji screens as she runs with the note to her lover's window. A double assumes Hisamatsu's role, and Hanshirō in a lightning change emerges as Osome at the balcony's left.

OSOME: Cruel, oh cruel Hisamatsu! Is there life without you? If I went through with the marriage, where could I hide? Just hear them talk: "That Osome! How cruel of her to drop Hisamatsu to marry somebody else! Of course, she's come into riches with the Yamagaya. That one's out for fame and fortune, all right; it was done out of greed!" Rather than have people point their fingers at me, rather than be laughed at, I'd rather die. Die, and the sooner the better is what I hope and pray. But... here, here is my farewell note.
"*Groping across the dark, she tries to reach
the note to Hisamatsu, who also probes for it
from his window and finally takes it.

Ah, this untimely darkness! In my last hour, the
hour of death, unable to see your face! Oh,
Hisamatsu..."

HISAMATSU: Osome!

OSOME: ... the thought is too hard to bear.

HISAMATSU: Osome! We shall never see each other again!

He closes the shutters.

OSOME: Oooohh...

"*Osome sobs miserably, as if to move fate by
her tears. Little by little, she recovers
control of herself, and finally displays her
determination.

From the edge of the balcony, she cautiously
steps onto the branches of the pine tree and
from them onto the emergency barrel of water.
Slowly she manages to get over the wall."
While Osome is occupied with her descent, the reinforced skirting of the storehouse crumbles, broken open by powerful blows from the inside. Kihei emerges from the hole. He chops his way out with a sword, the famous blade Goō Yoshimitsu.

Osome in the meantime has come down to earth and is heading for the hanamichi. Kihei peers into the darkness and spots her.

KIHEI: Yah! Osome, isn't it? Good. Good! I've swung Yoshimitsu, and I'll swing this one too. Let me just catch a hold here and I'll pack you off to Zenroku right away. Come here!

He clamps the sword between his teeth and grabs hold of her clothes. Osome's obi comes loose as she tries to escape. Kihei holds one end and Osome tugs at the other as the two stand separated by the length of the sash.

*Tableau, Kihei glowering and Osome innocence outraged.

OSOME: Stop it! I'm not that kind of girl!

KIHEI: Shut up! Good, there's a palanquin here.

Kihei packs the protesting Osome (Hanshirō) into the palanquin and ties ropes around the outside. At the next instant Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) peeks through the hole in the storehouse, reconnoiters, and again disappears.
(Hanshirō has utilized a trap door underneath the palanquin for this quick change.)

The two palanquin bearers Matahachi and Shō­roku enter stage left.

MATAHACHI: Here, here! The palanquin's right here.

SHŌROKU: We've really made our customer wait. All right, let's go, let's go!

KIHEI: Here, this palanquin's occupied. Occupied!

BEARERS: Hey, now that's really wild! Of course it's occupied. We've got a customer inside!

KIHEI: Idiot! That's Osome in there!

BEARERS: Oh, shut up!

They pick up the palanquin and are on their way. Kihei tries to restrain them. The bearers throw fistfuls of dust in his eyes and then lay into him wildly.

*Kihei is blinded and stumbles about in total disorientation.
Matahachi and Shōroku with their palanquin hustle off down the hanamichi.

**KIHEI:** Yai! Yai, that's Osome in there! Hooy! Hooy!

Yelling at the bearers, he starts down the hanamichi after them.

Hisamatsu (Hanshirō) steps out of the hole in the storehouse wall, rushes after Kihei, and clamps his arms about him from the rear. Kihei shakes himself loose.

*The two confront each other.

**HISAMATSU:** Yaah! You thief! Busting open the storehouse and... here, what's this? I know that sword. It was pawned here before and I want it now. Yoshimitsu, hand over Yoshimitsu!

Kihei picks up the balancing pole dropped by one of the bearers and starts to bat Hisamatsu around. Hisamatsu is floored but as Kihei tries to make off with the sword grabs hold of him again.

Why, why do you beat me this way?

*Hisamatsu is mortified and bewildered. He cannot quite believe what is happening to him.*
KIHEI: Shut your mouth, small fry! You've bitten off more than you can chew. I know all about you: you're old Ishizu's offspring, the brother of Takegawa, my wife's old mistress. Hisamatsu -- that's you, isn't it? And you're out after Yoshimitsu too. Well, that sword Yoshimitsu was hot; a certain party asked me to fence it. I had it pawned here for a hundred ryō, then I swiped the money and away we go. I invested it all -- unfortunate as it turned out, just like a divine power's against you. Then it came to me like a flash: Sneak in, swipe the sword, chop a little hole in the rear end of the storehouse, squeeze out -- the job's complete. But if I'm spotted on my way with the goods, I'll never rest easy: my professional conscience won't let me sleep. So here's what I think: You crummy apprentice, you're in my way. I'm going to kill you!
No ill after-effects, that's my whole plan, no pangs after your delivery, eh? Take this, you little squirt! Bite the dust!
Go straight to hell!

Again he bats Hisamatsu into the ground with the pole. Hisamatsu clings to it, attempting to protect himself.

HISAMATSU: Then you... No wonder you are so well informed about my family and lineage! You're Kihei, beyond doubt! Your mate is Oroku, Lady Takegawa's old servant. In a way, through your wife, you've an old bond of allegiance with me. How dare you beat the brother of your liege lady! Have you no shame? Have you not one ounce of decency, sir?

KIHEI: Oho! I'll beat you within an inch of your life, and kill you the rest of the way. Don't hold your breath! I'll squash it right out of you; 'cause it's curtains for me if there's as much as a peep about this. That's why you've had it. Kick off, buddy! Die!
HISAMATSU: Aah! You, you listen to this! My father committed suicide on account of that sword; on account of Yoshimitsu my family fell. I knew when it was pawned right here in this shop, but I knew if I excitedly pressed my claim I would only cause difficulties for my master. I planned to get together the money to redeem the sword — and just when I thought the remedy was at hand, this criminal wants to purloin it! Why should I let you steal it, you scoundrel! I may look young but I'm a samurai's son, the second born of the glorious Ishizu! What are you waiting for? Hand over that sword!

KIHEI: Beh -- feel that stuck to you? That's the Angel of Death! Take this, you little brat! You'll croak right away!

Kihei draws the sword and slashes at Hisamatsu. The boy adroitly slips under the blow and grabs Kihei by the arm.

HISAMATSU: Townsman I may be now, but a samurai before. Am I to play impotent before a common criminal's brass?
KIHEI: Here's one for your cheek!

He takes a cut at it, which Hisamatsu avoids. An action scene ensues, swordplay countered by unarmed parry. Overly intent on finishing off Hisamatsu, Kihei misdirects a wicked stroke of the blade and slices himself in the vitals. He bleats loudly and falls to the ground.

HISAMATSU: Yah! Kihei's wound is fatal! The sword I have sought...

He tries to take it. Kihei manages to crawl to him and twist him to the ground. Again he pummels Hisamatsu with all the strength he can muster, screaming the while at the top of his voice --

KIHEI: Aaah! Murder! Murder! It's Hisamatsu! Hisamatsu's trying to kill me! Hisamatsu! He broke into the storehouse! Help! Yaaai!

HISAMATSU: Aah! Please! The sword!

Again he tries to take it. Action scene again, the youthful Hisamatsu evading the brunt of Kihei's crawling, stumbling, frenzied attack. Stop action.
*Hisamatsu and Kihei are poised against each other in a contrast of types, qualities, and attitudes. The handsome but weak and inexperienced youth confronts the robust and tricky but wounded scoundrel. Hisamatsu's nobility makes him ever more determined to recover the sword. Kihei's villainy blinds him to the fact that he is on the verge of mortal collapse.

Music. The action resumes, the fight continues. Impulse, not experience, guides Hisamatsu. Unsure, recoiling, stumbling all over himself, he gains the upper hand over Kihei, and the sword. Hisamatsu kills the villain in a tremulous, almost delicate manner. Kihei in his dying spasm claws at Hisamatsu's sleeve and rips it away.

The flustered Hisamatsu in trying to set himself aright drops Osome's farewell note and fails to notice his loss. Instead he takes up the sword and raises it reverently to his forehead before he sheathes it.

HISAMATSU: How grateful I am! Now the sword is mine I can restore the Ishizu name, my father's bequest.

*Rejoicing, he inserts the sword in his belt. Then he remembers Osome.

I have recovered the sword, what great joy! But have I lost my beloved Osome? Oh, my love, my poor love! And if you are no longer...
*He is aghast at the thought that Osone may be no longer among the living.

I must, I must find her!

*He reels and staggers in physical and mental exhaustion. Only the memory of Osone and a determined effort enable him to straighten himself.

The bell tolls the hour. Hisamatsu with unsteady steps exits down the hanamichi to look for Osone.

The little gate in the fence opens and Zenroku steps out, spying about himself. In his hands he holds a document. Kyūsuke appears through the lift curtain and enters down the hanamichi. Kyūsaku follows after. The lantern he bears has gone out since the previous scene. He steps briskly onstage and then stops and looks, suspicious of the two vague shadows before him.

KYŪSUKÉ: Chief Clerk! Chief Clerk, is that you?

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ZENROKU: Kyūsuke! So you're back. Listen -- great news!

The sword pedigree that wound up locked in Teishō's chest... Well, I've stolen it right back. Here!

KYŪSUKÉ: That's the way! Then I'll keep...
ZENROKU: ... the pedigree for a while...

KYŪSUKE: ... till the all clear. I've swallowed it down!

*Dumb show in the dark. Kyūsuke gropes for the certificate. Zenroku reaches it out to him. Kyūsaku creeps in between and swipes the document.

ZENROKU: Yah! Who took the certificate? Kyūsuke, was it you?

KYŪSUKE: Nope. Not me.

ZENROKU: Then it was someone else.

Zenroku gropes about him and makes contact with Kyūsaku, whom he grabs. Kyūsaku eludes him, and a pantomime scene akin to blind man's buff ensues in the dark.

The lift curtain opens. Oroku (Hanshirō) comes quickly down the hanamichi. She bears a cheap paper lantern dangling from a little stick, and shields it with her sleeves when she notices the scene being played before her. She steps onto the stage and trips over the dead body lying there.

*Revulsion and horror strike her.
OROKU: Yaaah! Why, this man's...

KYŪSAKU: There's a voice...

ZENROKU: ... that I've heard before.

  Oroku uncloaks her lantern.

KYŪSUKE: Yah! Murder!

OROKU: What! That's my husband...

ZENROKU: ... Kihei's corpse!

KYŪSAKU: That sleeve he's ripped off...

KYŪSUKE: ... is off Hisamatsu and...

OROKU: ... this note here's...

ZENROKU: ... Osome's handwriting!
KYÜSAKU: Then, then the murderer's...

ZENROKU: ... Hisamatsu! Osome!

KYÜSUKE: The proof's in this note...

Kyūsuke tries to grab the note, but must first fight off Oroku, who is determined not to let go. She tries to fling it into the second story of the house, but it catches in a branch of the pine tree and dangles from it.

ZENROKU: ... and this sleeve right here.

Action scene. Zenroku wrests the sleeve from Kihei's clammy grip but Kyūsaku stops him from going anywhere with it. Oroku makes her move but Kyūsuke grabs a bucket and inverts it over her head. Oroku reels and plops down. Kyūsaku gives her a hard tap on the head cover, swings her lantern and puts out the light.

Clappers, to announce the impending climax.

Kyūsaku and Zenroku, one in possession of Hisamatsu's ripped-off sleeve and the other with his hands on Osome's farewell note, come apart and stand poised with their objects of gain. Tableau.

Continued clanging of the bell. The tableau dissolves into a whirl. All onstage are immersed in the action.

Clappers rapidly increasing in tempo. CURTAIN.