FADE IN:

EXT. THE PATH - DAY

Three soldier brothers - DIEGO (the eldest one), MIGUEL (the middle one) and JULIO (the youngest one) are riding their horses on the way. They look tired and annoyed.

MIGUEL
I don't think we're on the right way.

DIEGO
Of course, we're on the right way! Or you think I lost my sense of orientation?
(points on the forest before them)
There's the forest. Once we cross it we'll arrive at the inn.

MIGUEL
You've said that a hundred times now. First there was a mountain to cross, then a river... now a forest?! Give me a break!
(to Julio)
What do you think, Julio?

JULIO
(to Miguel)
You're right.
(to Diego)
We're walking forever now. Horses need to rest too, you know...

DIEGO
Quit whining, you two! And you call yourselves great soldiers? Can't even withstand a little trip?

They ride on, arguing. They enter a forest.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

The soldier brothers are riding in the forest.

MIGUEL
Man, this forest gives me creeps.
DIEGO
(chuckles)
Hmph, and you were the one saying you were brave.

MIGUEL
It's not funny! Haven't you ever heard peasants talking? This forest is actually the home of the Asashins.

DIEGO
Huh? Who?

JULIO
The Asashins. They're merciless robbers - savage tribesmen who came from an unknown land long ago. They are known for having no remorse on people who pass this forest. They rob them and even kill them, or take them as hostages and do terrible things to them.

MIGUEL
Yeah, but they capture mostly women. They kill the men.

DIEGO
(chuckles)
Yeah, as if I would believe those foolish tales of some peasants! There's nothing in this forest. Just a bunch of trees, that's all.

They continue riding. Miguel and Julio get more and more nervous. They look around carefully. It gets darker.

DIEGO (CONT'D)
Hmph, quit it, you two! I said nothing_

SEE a sharp arrow shoot down from a tree and hit Diego right in heart.

MIGUEL AND JULIO
Diego!!

Diego falls off his horse, blooded and lifeless. The two brothers get horrified.

MIGUEL (CONT'D)
Quick, let's get out of here!
HEAR a savage battle cry.

Ten armed and muscled almond-eyed men - the Asashins - jump down the trees, grab their sharp swords and stab Miguel and Julio.

The brothers wheeze and fall off their horses, dead.

The savage Asashins grab their horses and goods and disappear in the depths of the forest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

In a little wooden village which is located near a forest, there are various people walking up and down - some on horses, some on donkeys and some on foot. Some are selling things in shops, some are buying things, and most of them are talking to each other.

There are several men and women talking. They seem frightened.

FIRST MAN
Have you heard the news? Another assault happened in the Blood Forest.

SECOND MAN
Really? Who did they attack this time?

FIRST MAN
They say it was three young soldiers. They were getting back from their last battle. They had to cross the Blood Forest and there, they got assaulted.

THIRD MAN
Oh boy! Were there any survivors?

FIRST MAN
None, I'm afraid.

FIRST WOMAN
Oh my! Poor boys!
SECOND WOMAN
Ugh, it is so horrible! That is why no one should walk in that cursed forest! Those savages are unbearable!

THIRD WOMAN
But still, they say there's a man who often enters that forest and stays unharmed...

SECOND WOMAN
Really? Who?

THIRD MAN
Oh, I've heard about that too. It's Friedrich Bloom - a forester from our village.

SECOND WOMAN
Wow, unbelievable...

FIRST MAN
Truly. I'm surprised to hear someone doesn't get attacked in the Blood Forest - so many savages roam there!

SECOND MAN
Well, I guess Friedrich Bloom, as a forester, knows the forest as the back of his hand.

EXT. THE VILLAGE, MR. BLOOM'S HUT - DAY

The wooden hut is located in the outskirts of the village, near the forest and near the village police department.

At the hut, two men are standing - MR. BLOOM - the old forester, and his friend, NORMAN - a muscled elderly man with a cut scar on his eye.

They're talking to each other.

NORMAN
Still going in that forest, eh?

MR. BLOOM
(smiles)
Well, it is my duty. And besides, I never walk too deep. I don't want to get cut up by the swords of those savages, hehe.

(MORE)
MR. BLOOM (CONT’D)
After all, I have someone to care for, Norman.

Mr. Bloom looks aside, in the garden of his hut, where his daughter CHERRIE is sitting - an eighteen-year-old girl with long dark brown hair and dark brown expressive eyes.

NORMAN
(smiles)
I understand... Well, safe trip, Friedrich.

MR. BLOOM
Thank you.

Mr. Bloom is ready to depart. Suddenly Cherrie cries to him.

CHERRIE
Goodbye papa! Have a safe trip!

MR. BLOOM
Goodbye dear! Take care while I'm gone!

Mr. Bloom walks off and soon enters the forest, disappearing.

Norman goes back to his hut on the opposite side of the street, and Cherrie continues watering plants in the garden.

There are three young peasant men gathered in the street, near Mr. Bloom's hut, and are watching Cherrie. Among them is JAKE THORNTON - a blond green-eyed young man, the best hunter in the village.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
That girl's a beauty, no doubt about it.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Such a pity Mr. Bloom doesn't plan on giving her in marriage just yet.

JAKE THORNTON
Yeah, and Cherrie Bloom doesn't like anybody from our village.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
Yet so many rivals who wish for her hand... Ugh, this is unfair! Every gorgeous girl is so hard to get!

SECOND YOUNG MAN
You said it...
EXT. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Near the police department there are two young horsemen standing - MARKUS DUNEFORD, the son of the police head officer - a blond boy with captivating light blue eyes; and his friend, a police officer and a soldier, HENRY.

Markus is watching Cherrie who is pulling water out of a well.

MARKUS
You see that girl, Henry?
(points on Cherrie)
I'll get my hands on her soon.

HENRY
She looks really good, sir... But why would you need a peasant forester's daughter?

MARKUS
Who cares about that Henry? A girl is a girl. You know what they're for, don't you?

HENRY
(grins)
Oh... I understand.

Markus chuckles and continues watching Cherrie as she subtly pulls the bucket full of water out of the well and takes it to her house.

MARKUS
Even when she carries a heavy bucket of water she stays soft and graceful...
She'll be divine, Henry.

HENRY
On that I must agree.

Cherrie disappears into her hut. Markus has a hideous smirk.

INT. FORESTER'S WOODEN HUT. DAY.

Mr. Bloom is at home, chopping some wood. His daughter, Cherrie, is sitting on a sofa, writing a story in her notebook.

Cherrie glances outside the window and sees beautiful green trees and chirping birds.
CHERRIE
What a fine weather!
(smiles to Mr. Bloom)
Dad, I'll go take a walk in the forest.

MR. BLOOM
Okay dear, but don't walk too deep, alright?

CHERRIE
Don't worry dad, I won't!

Mr. Bloom continues chopping the wood. Cherrie takes her little bag, puts her notebook inside it and walks out of the hut.

EXT. THE VILLAGE, MR. BLOOM'S HUT - DAY
Cherrie walks out of her hut and heads towards the forest. She is smiling, feeling happy in the warm weather. She soon disappears inside the forest.

Markus appears with the same hideous smile on his face. He silently follows Cherrie into the forest.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY
Cherrie walks in the forest, watching the green trees and the chirping birds. She is smiling, feeling happy and free.

She hears horse steps from behind. She starts and fearfully looks back. She sees Markus before her.

MARKUS
(grins)
Hello, Cherrie. I didn't expect to see you here.

CHERRIE
(frowns)
I'd say the same.

Cherrie takes a step back out of caution, as if sensing something bad coming from Markus.

MARKUS
(chuckles. Jumps off his horse)
You know, we had never talked to each other too much before...
(MORE)
MARKUS (CONT’D)
What do you say, could we have some... alone time?

Markus slowly approaches Cherrie.

Cherrie cautiously looks around, searching for a way to escape.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I'm too deep in the forest. If I cry now, no one is going to hear me.

She makes another step back. She frowns at approaching Markus.

CHERRIE
Do not dare come closer, Markus.

MARKUS
Or else?

He continues walking towards her.

CHERRIE
Or else... I'll scream.

MARKUS
Oh, give me a break! Not a single soul will hear you out here.

He walks up to her. Cherrie hastes back and leans against a tree. She is cornered. She looks into Markus' sparkling eyes.

Markus is about to touch her when Cherrie flares up and slaps him. While Markus is still confused and enraged, Cherrie slips off and runs as fast as she can.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
Ugh, you little... Just you wait!

Markus jumps onto his horse and rushes after the girl. Cherrie looks back and sees him coming. She hastens her pace. She doesn't even care where she is heading. Soon she passes a tree which is marked by blood.

Markus notices the blooded tree and stops his horse. He doesn't chase the girl farther.

Cherrie, however, continues running, frightened and agitated.

HEAR hooves of fifteen horses, and savage cries from afar.
Cherrie looks back. Fifteen almond-eyed savage horsemen are after her. She screams. She runs even faster, but trips and falls.

The horsemen surround her and point their sharp swords at her. They grin, showing their yellow teeth, and tell each other something in their language which Cherrie cannot understand.

Cherrie trembles in fear and blacks out.

INT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

Markus returns to the village with a worried face. Peasants gather around him.

PEASANTS
What happened?

MARKUS
Cherrie! She crossed the border of the Blood Forest! I heard her yell!

PEASANTS
What?!

The peasants start whispering among each other.

Mr. Bloom, who is there nearby, gets shocked. He dashes at Markus.

MR. BLOOM
Where's Cherrie?! Where is she, Markus? Why didn't you chase after her? Why didn't you stop her?

MARKUS
I tried, Mr. Bloom! I chased after her! I even sought the place where her yell came from! But alas, all I found was this...

Markus takes out the little bag of Cherrie and hands it to Mr. Bloom, having a saddened look.

MR. BLOOM
Her bag!

Mr. Bloom grabs the bag like a madman and observes it, looking into its pockets. It's empty.

Mr. Bloom's hands tremble.
MR. BLOOM (CONT’D)
(whimpers)
Oh, God...

He faints and falls. The peasants rush up to him and grab him.

PEASANTS
Mr. Bloom! Mr. Bloom!

They try to wake him up, but he doesn't. The peasants take him to his house.

The peasant women are worried and stressed.

FIRST WOMAN
Oh, poor old man!

NORMAN (O.C.)
Poor little Cherrie, rather...

Everyone starts and looks aside, to see Norman.

There are some young men gathered among the peasants. They whisper to each other.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
(points on Norman)
That's the man who has run into savages in his young years and has survived.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Yeah, that's Norman.

THIRD YOUNG MAN
What do you think they will do to Cherrie, Norman?

NORMAN
They'll do what's expected of a savage man when he gets his hands on a woman.

Everyone gets shocked.

FIRST WOMAN
Oh, poor girl!

The peasants are distressed.
INT. THE ASASHINESE TENT - DAY

Cherrie opens eyes and finds herself in an Asashinese tent. She looks around and bewilders - she is tied.

CHERRIE (V.0.) (THOUGHTS)
So those savages did kidnap me!

She wants to leap up, but feels extreme tiredness in her limbs, and falls back. She lets out a heavy breath.

Tears come to her eyes. She feels scared.

The curtains of the tent move and three tall almond-eyed fur-clothed savage men rush in. They grab her and drag her to the exit.

Cherrie gasps, struggles and shrieks.

CHERRIE
No! Let me go! No!

She can't overcome the men's strength. They drag her out.

INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP - DAY

The Asashin men bring Cherrie up to a large throne made of animal fur and bones, and drop her on knees before it. There are many savage Asashins gathered near the throne, shouting something in their incomprehensible language.

There's the CHIEF of the Asashins - a strict almond-eyed merciless man in fur clothes and a black fur cloak - sitting on the throne. He has adorned his hair with animal bones. There are five young PRINCES standing next to his throne. They all look like each other, and each of them wears precious silk clothes as well as fur cloaks. Each of them has their hair adorned with animal bones just like the chief. They all have strict looks.

CHIEF
(to Cherrie)
You stepped in our territory. Who are you?

He speaks good English, but has a bit of an East Asian accent mixed with Nordic (the Asashinese accent).

CHERRIE
(gulps her tears)
Mercy me... Please... I beg you...
CHIEF
Hmph... Prove me that you are unique and different from all those rats that have run into our forest before, and I shall grant your wish.

The savage Asashins burst out laughing. The laughter sounds demonic to Cherrie.

More tears shed down Cherrie's cheeks.

CHERRIE
But I... I don't know how...
What... What do you want from me?

CHIEF
The one who doesn't know their worth doesn't deserve to be pitied.

The chief nods to the three Asashin warriors standing nearby. They grab their swords and swing them at Cherrie.

Cherrie screams and covers herself.

CRACK!

Cherrie uncovers her eyes and looks up, to see CHAO LIN - a young almond-eyed Asashin man who has defended her, parrying the Asashin men's attacks with his sword. He wears blue silken kimono-like robe, black fur cloak, and has raven black long hair, less than half of which is tied in a ponytail and the rest is kept down. The right bang of his hair is covering his right eye. His left eye is deep blue, strict and expressive.

Cherrie, seeing Chao's black-handled sharp blade, trembles.

Chao Lin looks down at her, observes her with his deep blue eye, and then frowns at the chief.

All of the Asashins, including the chief and the five young princes next to him, are bewildered and shocked.

CHIEF (CONT’D)
(to Chao Lin)
What are you doing?! You disobeyed my command!

They're speaking in Asashinese so Cherrie cannot understand them, but she can guess nothing good is going on.
CHAO LIN
(to the Chief in English)
She is unique and different from
all those 'rats' that have run into
our forest before, so she deserves
your mercy.

Cherrie widens eyes hearing Chao's perfect English accent.

CHIEF
(in English)
Hmm... Prove her uniqueness to me
then.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(looks at Chao Lin)
How can he prove it? What is all
this 'uniqueness' thing about?

Chao Lin doesn't answer, simply lifts Cherrie's notebook.

Cherrie and the Asashins bewilder.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT'D)
How did he even get my notebook?!

She looks at the chief, anticipating his reaction.

CHIEF
(in Asashinese)
So, you got carried away by books
again, huh?

CHAO LIN
(in Asashinese)
It's not just a random book. It's a
book she has written.
(points on Cherrie)
And it is interesting enough for me
to not let its author die.

CHIEF
So you finally want a slave of your
own?

CHAO LIN
If that is the only option you
wouldn't kill her for then fine.

Chao Lin looks discontented by the chief's proposal.

CHIEF
Ugh, finally...
She's yours then.
(MORE)
CHIEF (CONT’D)
But you know the rules of our tribe!

CHAO LIN
Since she's mine, I'm the one who makes the rules, father.

Chao Lin looks at two robust Asashins standing nearby, and gives them a sign to take Cherrie to his tent. The warriors grab the girl and drag her off.

CHERRIE
Ah! Let me go! No!

She can't understand what's happening as she couldn't understand the father's and the son's Asashinese conversation.

The Asashin warriors drag her into a giant black fur tent.

INT. CHAO LIN'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY
The Asashin warriors drop Cherrie in the tent and exit.

The tent is black and is made of various animal bones and skins.

Cherrie crawls in a corner and begins miserably weeping.

CHERRIE
Papa... Oh, I'm so sorry!

Chao Lin has entered and is watching her weeping, however, she hasn't noticed him yet.

Cherrie suddenly feels the foreigner's presence. She crawls back until she reaches the end of the tent. She is terrified, watching Chao's black-handled sword he has girt on his waist.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Who is he? Why did he come here?
(trembles)
Maybe he wants to kill me? Oh God!

Chao Lin watches her with pity. He takes a seat on the animal skins and takes out her notebook.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)
My notebook again! Why does he want it?
How did he even get it?
Chao Lin opens the notebook and runs through the lines. He seems amused, a smile appearing on his face.

Cherrie continues watching him.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)**
He can read in my language?!
I can't believe he finds my stories fun!

Chao Lin does seem to have fun with her stories, as he is laughing amusedly, and is running through the lines even faster and more eagerly, wanting to know what will happen next.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)**
He seems rather gentle. Will that kind of a guy really kill me?

Chao Lin stops laughing. He turns the pages as if searching for the continuation. He closes the notebook and sighs with sadness.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)**
Of course! My last story's not finished! He was apparently reading that one!
(embarrassed)
That one?! About luckless knight Rodrigo who tries to gain beautiful Princess Dahlia's hand?! What haven't I written there! All that romance! Oh goodness...

She is looking down at the floor, embarrassed.

She hears quiet steps. Chao Lin approaches her. She gets frightened and crawls back.

Chao Lin comes up to her, bends both of his knees, taking a seat in oriental manner, and stretches out the notebook to her with both of his hands.

**CHAO LIN**
Please... Shall you continue?

**CHERRIE**
Co... Continue?

**CHAO LIN**
Um... Yes. I know it may be hard - all those muses and writing stuff...
(chuckles)
(MORE)
CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
But whenever you have time, and the inspiration comes, please write.

Cherrie gets confused. She looks right into Chao's ocean blue eye, getting dazzled. She slowly raises her hand and touches the notebook to take it.

Seeing a single hand, Chao Lin winches and saddens.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Ouch... You know, since you're going to be here, let's say, for a while... Our custom is - you take something they hand out to you, with both of your hands. One hand means you disrespect them. And just between us, my tribesmen hate disrespectful foreigners.

CHERRIE
Ah! I'm so sorry... sir...

She quickly adds her second hand and takes the book with both hands.

CHAO LIN
(chuckles)
No problem. You're new to our culture, so it's fine.

CHERRIE
Anyway... What are they going to do with me here?

CHAO LIN
Oh... (scratches his head)
Let's say - I decide whatever happens to you now, since I'm the chief's son_

CHERRIE
You're the chief's son?!

CHAO LIN
Yeah. More like the sixth son. Not a big deal.

CHERRIE
Still, you did have a strong word against him, to make him mercy a foreigner. Thanks, by the way, for saving me.
CHAO LIN
You're welcome.
(chuckles)
Thanks for writing awesome stories.

Cherrie laughs.

CHERRIE
I didn't expect anyone to tell me that. No one has ever liked my stories before. No one has ever even read them.

CHAO LIN
Oh...
Well then, I guess they have missed a great amusement.

Cherrie laughs again at his compliment.

CHERRIE
Thank you.

CHAO LIN
You're welcome.
(takes a seat beside her)
Anyway, you do not fear - no one's going to harm you here. Not anymore.

CHERRIE
It's a relief to hear that.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Dad...

CHAO LIN
What's your name, by the way?

CHERRIE
It's Cherrie... Cherrie Bloom. And yours?

CHAO LIN
Chao Lin.

CHERRIE
Oh, so Lin's your surname?

CHAO LIN
Oh, we Asashins don't call that a "surname". Here, it's more like a "clan name".
(MORE)
However, in our culture you say the clan name first, so my name goes as "Lin Chao".

CHERRIE
Wow, interesting!
So I would be Bloom Cherrie?

CHAO LIN
Seems so.

(laughs)
Though your name spelled that way resembles more of a cherry blossom tree.

CHERRIE
(laughs)
Yeah, I guess!
What does your name mean, then?

CHAO LIN
Well, "Lin" in our language means "Forest", and "Chao" means "Tide", though together they don't really seem to match.

CHERRIE
Haha, yeah.

CHAO LIN
Well then, I shall leave you alone now, for some time. Maybe you can grasp some inspiration for your story. I'm really eager to read it.

(stands up)
Also, I've got some things to take care of.

Chao Lin puts his hand to the handle of his sword and walks out.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (NARRATOR)
That day, I met Chao Lin for the first time. He left me quite surprised - at one point, he seemed a playful young man, but the next second, he resembled a cruel swordsman.

Cherrie looks down at her notebook.
CHERRIE (V.O.) (NARRATOR) (CONT’D)
But one thing I realised - if I wanted that chief's son to stay benevolent towards me, my notebook was the key.

EXT. THE VILLAGE, MR. BLOOM'S HUT - DAY

Mr. Bloom is lying in his bed in his wooden room. He raises eyelids and looks around. Norman is sitting on a wooden chair next to his bed.

MR. BLOOM (weakly)
Cherrie... Didn't she return?

Tears come to his eyes as he watches Norman.

Norman sighs. He watches Mr. Bloom with pity.

NORMAN
I know how you feel, Friedrich. My poor sister shared the same fate, long ago...
(a tiny tear comes to his eye)
I don't want to frighten you so much, Friedrich, but... when they first kidnapped my little sister, Lily, and I failed to retrieve her, she never returned, ever since.

Mr. Bloom's eyes widen from shock, and tears gush from them.

MR. BLOOM
No! No! Ah, Cherrie... Oh, my dear daughter!

Norman watches him with pity.

LILY (NORMAN'S SISTER) (V.O.) (faint yell)
Help! Help!

CUT SCENE (NORMAN'S FLASHBACK):

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

Young Norman is sitting on his horse, his eyes full of tears, galloping madly after ten young almond-eyed Asashin savages.
One of them – the Asashin CHIEF in his young years – is carrying LILY, NORMAN'S SISTER – a blond deep-blue-eyed beautiful girl – on his horse, riding off into the depth of the forest.

CRACK!

Norman and one of the young Asashins are fighting with swords, while the young Asashin chief (still a prince) carries his sister away.

LILY (NORMAN'S SISTER)
Help! Norman!

NORMAN
Lily!!

The Asashin's sword cuts Norman's right eye.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
(in pain)
Ah!!!

Norman touches his blooded eye. He crouches down in pain. Lily's desperate yell rings in his ears.

LILY (NORMAN'S SISTER)
(shrieks)
Norman! Help! Norman!

The cry slowly fades away...

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

INT. THE VILLAGE, MR. BLOOM'S HUT - DAY

Norman is sitting on the wooden chair, fallen in his remembrances. He touches his scar on his right eye, sadness and anguish expressed on his face. He closes eyes and sighs.

MR. BLOOM
(sobs)
Cherrie... Daughter...

NORMAN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(watches Mr. Bloom)
Sorry Friedrich. Cherrie won't come back, not anymore.
INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP - DAY

It's evening. It's slowly getting dusky. Little Asashinese boys are gathered in the field, training with their sharp Asashinese swords, hitting wooden dummies and yelling.

Chao Lin walks through their rows, watches them and gives them reprimands.

CHAO LIN
Wu Ying! Raise your hand a little more! Add some force, boy!
You, Lee Yang, more agility! You don't guide the sword, sword guides you! Move!

CHILDREN
(shout with enthusiasm)
Yes, Lin Chao Sensei!

The children try to maximally improve their movements as the master has advised. They are agitated.

Cherrie watches how Chao Lin walks through the children's rows and gives them reprimands and pieces of advice to improve their skills.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
He's so fierce when it comes to swordsmanship...

Suddenly the children bow and make way for another young man, JIN LIN (one of those five princes who stood at the chief's throne before). He is a little older than Chao, wears a pitch black kimono-like robe and a black fur cloak. He has girt a black-handled sword on his waist just like Chao. He has long black hair, half of which is tied in an upper bun and adorned with animal bones. His eyes are pitch black, arrogant, merciless, and sarcastic.

Chao frowns once sees him.

JIN LIN
(sarcastically)
Still educating children, eh, Chao?

CHAO LIN
New generation must know how to battle.

JIN LIN
(chuckles)
I see...
He begins walking around. He takes out his sharp sword and starts contemplating it.

    JIN LIN (CONT’D)
    How's your little slave?

Cherrie widens eyes. She can already understand a bit of Asashinese as she’s already learned a lot from Chao Lin during her time in the Asashins' camp.

    CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
    (watches Jin)
    He's asking about me. Who is he?

    CHAO LIN
    It doesn't concern you, Jin. Please don't interrupt me.
    (points on the children)
    Boys have training to do.

    JIN LIN
    So busy you can't even take time for the eldest prince's visit?

    CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
    (stares at Jin)
    The eldest prince? So he's the eldest son of the chief?

Chao clutches the handle of his sword, already annoyed and irritated.

    CHAO LIN
    Yes, I'm busy enough as to not have time for senseless chitchat.

    JIN LIN
    Then, dear little bastard brother, let's show your children how a real swordsman fights. You versus me. A little educational duel. What do you say?

    CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
    Bastard? What does he mean by that?

Cherrie looks at Chao now. Chao flares up. His eyes sparkle like the ones of a savage. His internal rage can be clearly seen.

The young Asashinese children watch both princes, excited to see the duel that’s going to occur.
FIRST ASASHIN CHILD
(whispers)
So cool - the princes are gonna fight!

SECOND ASASHIN CHILD
(whispers back)
I bet Lin Chao Sensei will win.

THIRD ASASHIN CHILD
(cuts in)
Lin Jin Sama is strong too.

CHAO LIN
(to Jin)
Accepted.

Chao takes his glittering sword out and stands in a fighter's pose.

Jin takes the same pose and the young men stand oppositely to each other, prepared to spar.

One of the children brings a small gong.

Jin and Chao are ready, both of them clutching their swords.

BANG!

The child beats the gong.

The young princes give a battle cry and rush towards each other.

CRACK!

The fighters clash. The children are watching the duel, excited and amazed, having encircled the opponents.

Cherrie curiously watches the duel - it is her first time seeing one.

Chao and Jin are swinging swords with all their might, trying to knock each other down, but both of them are good so their swords rather crack upon each other than actually hit the adversary.

Soon the crowd gathers around them, interested in the princes' duel. Even the four other princes come to watch their brothers fight.

ASASHINS
Go Jin! Beat him up!
The crowd is encouraging Jin. Jin, motivated by the crowd, fights even more excitedly, with a proud grin.

Cherrie gets surprised noticing that no one's cheering for Chao.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(watches the crowd)
What's wrong with them? Chao's an Asashin like them, and a prince! Why aren't they cheering for him?

The people seem rather hateful towards Chao. Cherrie gets angry that no one roots for their fellow tribesman. She stands up from the grass she was sitting on and shouts in Asashinese.

CHERRIE
Ike, Chao!

Everyone hears her voice.

FIRST ASASHIN
How she dares interfere in our duel?

SECOND ASASHIN
Who does she think she is?!

Chao, hearing Cherrie's voice, widens eyes. As if a whole new force gushes through his veins, he swings his sword in a perfect way and knocks Jin down in one swing.

The people begin to fuss.

ASASHINS
The eldest prince fell! He fell!

Chao puts his sword to his fallen eldest brother's neck.

CHAO LIN
You lost.

He then stretches his hand out to Jin.

Jin, angry that he lost, gnashes his teeth and doesn't take the hand, instead stands up on his own. He puts his sword back in the scabbard. He doesn't bow to the adversary after battle as the Asashinese rule demands, instead just dusts off his clothes and walks off, without uttering a word to Chao.

Chao watches him as he disappears through the crowd, and then sighs.
The people leave the place, disappointed that Chao won.

However, the children look at Chao amazedly, proud of him as their master.

Chao kindly smiles at them and bows to them instead. The children kindly and happily grin back and bow too. Then they put swords back in scabbards and go to their tents.

Chao looks down in sadness. He feels someone is looking at him. He spots Cherrie watching him with surprised eyes. Then she kindly smiles at him and walks off to her favourite cherry blossom tree near the river.

Chao smiles and walks into his tent.

**EXT. THE CHERRY BLOSSOM TREE - NIGHT**

Cherrie is still sitting under the cherry blossom tree. She is writing in her notebook. The moonlight is shed on her notebook, helping her to see.

She looks up at the moon.

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CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Papa, I wonder... How are you out there?
   (a tear appears in her eye)
I hope everything's okay by your side. I miss you so much, yet I can't return...
   (softly wipes her tear away)
But I promise papa, someday I'll come back to you, and hug you tightly. Please stay courageous... please...
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She looks up at the night sky, contemplating the twinkling stars. She mumbles to herself.

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CHERRIE
So many beautiful stars tonight...
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CHAO LIN (O.C.)
You like the stars?
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Cherrie starts and looks aside, to see Chao next to her. She gets relieved when sees him - she perceives him as her only protector in these savage lands.

She then casts her eyes down again, staring at her notebook.
CHERRIE
Yeah, I always loved the stars.
Even now when I look at them, they
fill me with hope.

She glances up at the twinkling stars again.

Chao smiles and takes a seat beside her.

CHAO LIN
Hope, huh?
(looks up at the stars)
You know, when I look up at the
stars, I can see myself.

CHERRIE
Yourself? How's that?

CHAO LIN
It's simple. Look up there. Each
star twinkles with its own energy
it holds within. Human's energy is
hidden deep within their soul. My
ancestors said that when your soul
burns bright, you twinkle just like
the star... your eyes twinkle just
like the stars.

CHERRIE
Eyes twinkle like stars?
(laughs)
I can't understand.

CHAO LIN
Haha! I know, it may sound a little
weird for you. But let me explain:
in human's eyes can be expressed
everything they hold within. The
soul finds the door to the outer
world through one's eyes. That is
why, when you look in someone's
eyes, you can immediately guess if
their soul matches yours or not.

CHERRIE
Really? And what... what do you see
in my eyes?

Chao kindly smiles.

CHAO LIN
In your eyes, I see the other half
of my own soul.
Cherrie blushes. She casts her eyes down and grows red. Chao, seeing her blush, laughs kindly.

**CHAO LIN (CONT’D)**
Yes, I mean what you think, Cherrie. I really like your personality.

Cherrie looks up at him, and notices his ocean blue eye, which is indeed twinkling like those stars above.

Her notebook slowly slips off her hands. She falls upon Chao's shoulder, softly touching his neck, and closes her eyes in delight.

She feels the touch of a soft, manly palm on her cheek... A sweet beam covers her face.

A sweet, melodic manly voice whispers in her ear.

**CHAO LIN (CONT’D)**
Do not fear. I shall always protect you, Sakura.

**INT. CHAO'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY**

It is morning. Cherrie groans, wakes up and gets dressed in her kimono-like green dress. She combs her hair and then steps out of the little corner of Chao Lin's big tent which serves specifically as her "room".

Once she goes out in the big tent, Chao is not there. Yet his sword is lying there on the animal skins.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)**
How come an Asashin prince has left his sword behind?

She stares at the sword. It looks dazzling and glittering.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)**
If I just had a sword back then, I'd never be kidnapped so easily.

She feels sad. Then she frowns and clenches her fist.

**CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)**
Ugh, it's all these men's laws - as if a girl has no right to use a weapon! We need weapons the most!
She walks up to the sword and takes it. But it is so heavy she can barely hold it and she lowers it down. She sighs with disappointment.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)
I can never learn how to use it if I can't even hold it.

THE ASASHIN QUEEN (O.C.)
Your master won't forgive you if anything happens to that sword.

Cherrie starts and looks aside, to see a slim, beautiful, long-soft-haired woman - the ASASHIN QUEEN - walk in. She wears a red kimono-like dress and a silver collar on the neck.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Silver collar... Asashin generals' wives wear iron collars. Silver collar must mean she's the queen - the wife of the chief.
(angrily)
How she dares call Chao my "master"?! Does she think she's anything better than me, only because I'm a captive?!

CHERRIE
(to the Queen)
Chao is a kind man. I doubt he shall punish me for this piece of steel.

ASASHIN QUEEN
You do realise you're nothing more but a slave to him, don't you?
(chuckles)
You don't know Chao, so do not make false assumptions, I tell you.

CHERRIE
I'm not anyone's slave, and I'll never be! I'm free!

THE ASASHIN QUEEN
(chuckles)
That can be seen, dear, as you're trapped in here and can't even roam free. If Chao were such a kind man as you say, and you were more than a slave to him, why wouldn't he have already let you go?
Cherrie guesses the queen speaks the truth. A tear appears in her eye. Bitterness fills her heart. She clutches the sword and swings it in the air in anger.

CHERRIE
I'm not a slave!
I... I'm not...

She falls to her knees and begins crying.

The sword flies in the air and falls upon the earth. The loud crack sounds all over the tent.

Both the queen and Cherrie look aside with fear - the sword has broken.

Cherrie covers her mouth with her hands - she broke Chao's sword.

She trembles.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
If I am truly considered a slave to Chao, he will surely kill me for this... Who am I lying to?! Of course he'll kill me! He's a savage!

She is fallen to her knees and begins sobbing bitterly.

CHERRIE
Oh God... What will he do to me now?

The queen chuckles and turns back, about to walk out, but freezes in fright - Chao Lin has arrived. The queen makes a step back.

Cherrie looks up and shivers in fright seeing Chao.

Chao wears a light-blue silken bathrobe. He seems to have just soaked up in a hot spring.

He eyes both of the women, and then at the broken sword. He widens eyes, bewildered.

The queen walks out of the tent, carefully watching him.

Chao glances at crying Cherrie, who is fallen to her knees, and then gazes at the queen. A frown covers his face.

CHAO LIN
(to the Asashin Queen)
You're not supposed to be here.
ASASHIN QUEEN
But your concubine_

CHAO LIN
Leave!

The queen gets frightened and quickly leaves the place without uttering any more word.

After the queen disappears between the tents, Chao turns back to Cherrie. Cherrie notices his stern gaze and shudders, tears pouring down her cheeks.

CHERRIE
I... I'm sorry.

Chao Lin approaches her.

CHAO LIN
What did she tell you?

Hearing this severe tone, even more tears gush from the frightened girl's eyes.

CHERRIE
I... It was an accident... Please...

She feels a warm touch on her cheek. She starts and looks up, just to see Chao sitting before her, rubbing her cheek with his soft manly hand.

He grabs Cherrie and slowly presses her to his chest, caressing her hair. Cherrie widens eyes in astonishment.

CHERRIE (CONT'D)
You... You're not mad at me?

CHAO LIN
I'm not my father.

It makes Cherrie even more surprised.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
He's not his father? What does he mean?

CHERRIE
What_

CHAO LIN
It doesn't concern you.
Cherrie prefers to hush up in order not to irritate him more.

They sit like this for some minutes. Cherrie slowly calms down and stops crying.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
What did you want with my sword anyway?

Chao Lin's voice is calm as well.

CHERRIE
Teach me swordsmanship.

CHAO LIN
You want to be a sword-user?

CHERRIE
Yes.

CHAO LIN
Why in all of a sudden?

CHERRIE
I want to be able to protect myself.

Now Chao widens eyes, even more astonished. Then, he recalls his childhood.

CUT SCENE (CHAO LIN'S FLASHBACK):

INT. THE ASASHIN CHIEF'S TENT - DAY

LILY, NORMAN'S SISTER and Chao's mother - a grown up blond curly foreigner woman with ocean blue eyes - is protecting herself from the Asashin chief - Chao's father. Lily is using a broken sword.

The savage chief yells and takes out his own sword, cutting the woman's throat out of bitter rage.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAO'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY

The scene gets back to Chao and Cherrie in Chao's tent. A tiny tear appears in Chao's eye remembering this bitter and fatal quarrel of his parents.
CHAO LIN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
If mother had known how to use a sword back then, she wouldn't...

He gulps a tiny tear inside, subduing his emotions.

Cherrie watches his watery eyes.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Is he... crying?! He's so mysterious... So strange and yet, he dazzles me more and more, day by day.

CHAO LIN
We'll start this evening.

Cherrie glances up at him. He is looking down at her with sad but kind eyes.

CHERRIE
So... You shall grant my wish?

Chao Lin soundlessly nods. Cherrie smiles.

CHERRIE (CONT’D)
Thank you.

CHAO LIN
You're welcome.

Cherrie cuddles with Chao's muscled chest and falls in her thoughts. She can feel how Chao's soft manly hand is caressing her hair.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
What is it that he hides? Something about his past doesn't seem right... I've got to find out.

EXT. THE FOREST, NEAR THE ASASHINS' CAMP - DAY

Two swordsmen - Cherrie and Chao Lin - are fighting at the riverside in the forest.

Cherrie is dressed in a green kimono-robe. Her sword has cherry blossoms attached to its handle.

CHERRIE
Ha!

She swings her long and swift blade and hits it upon Chao's strong and heavy sword. Chao easily parries the attack.
CHAO LIN
Not enough agility.
Your opponents will mostly be men,
so their physical strength shall
always overcome yours.

He cold-bloodedly hits his sword upon Cherrie's one and makes
her drop it. Then he puts the tip of his sharp blade unto her
neck.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Pick up your sword.

He puts his blade away. Cherrie picks her sword up from the
ground.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Let's continue.

He attacks. Cherrie parries the attack this time.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Good. You're getting there. Now add
precision.

He starts swiftly moving around Cherrie, making her confused.
Soon Cherrie indeed gets dizzy and Chao easily puts her to
the ground, tip of his sword unto her neck again.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
You lack concentration and
precision.

He stretches his hand out and helps Cherrie get up.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
You are a woman. You must deal with
it. You will never be stronger than
men.

Cherrie sighs and looks down in sadness.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
But, you can always be more agile
and smarter than them.

Cherrie looks up at him. Chao is smiling at her. Cherrie
smiles and grabs her sword. She takes her battle pose once
more.
Well then, use all the agility you have and find every possible means to bring down your opponent. Try to outsmart him.

Cherrie chuckles and continues sparring with him.

This time, she tries to be as fast as she can. She is swiftly avoiding Chao's attacks.

Chao hides behind a bunch of bamboo trees and then reappears behind Cherrie, but Cherrie notices him in time and quickly turns back. She parries his attack with her own blade.

CRACK!

The swords collide.

Cherrie smirks with satisfaction.

Seeing her swiftness and her smirk, Chao chuckles and smiles. He withdraws his sword.

Let's call it a day. (bows to his adversary) Good job. Thank you.

My thanks to you, Lin Chao Sensei.

She laughs playfully and bows back.

The youths laugh and walk back towards the camp, putting swords in their scabbards on their waists.

Haha! Say it! I finally made progress this time!

You surely did. But don't get too carried away. You still have a lot to learn.

Well, I will soon. I have the best teacher in the world!

She giggles and blushes. Chao blushes as well.

They are walking through the forest, towards the Asashins' camp, amused and joyful.
Between the bushes, someone is spying on them. It is Jin Lin - Chao's eldest brother. He is wearing a black kimono-robe and has adorned his long black hair with various animal bones. He carefully spies on the joyful youths. When they disappear through the tents, he frowns and quickly slips through the bushes. He runs off at an immense speed.

EXT. THE FOREST, THE ASASHIN HOT SPRING - DAY

Four young princes - YAO LIN, CHENG LIN, WEI LIN and SHIN LIN - are in the water, having a bath. They are talking and laughing.

    CHENG LIN
    My concubine was prettier than yours, Wei.

    WEI LIN
    (chuckles)
    Until you beheaded her?

    CHENG LIN
    (shrugs)
    Well, yeah.
    (dives deeper into the spring, only his head out now)
    That's what all concubines are for, right?

    WEI LIN
    Yeah, but I guess I'll keep mine for some more time, until I get bored.

    YAO LIN
    But don't make it too long like dad did, or you might get to have a son with her.

Yao laughs.

    CHENG LIN
    Yeah, just like dad did.

    SHIN LIN
    Good that mom made him get rid of that whore.

    JIN LIN (O.C.)
    But she didn't get rid of their bastard son, which is a bigger problem.
All the four princes look up and see their eldest brother - Jin - on the shore, his arms crossed.

They all frown at his words.

SHIN LIN
That's true. I can't even believe that bastard is dad's favourite.

WEI LIN
Yeah, and the best swordsman too.

Wei crosses arms with envy.

JIN LIN
(worked up)
He's not the best, and will never be! He's just a Hafu! The son of a foreigner concubine! A bastard - nothing more!

SHIN LIN
So what would you advise to do? Dad still loves him the most.

JIN LIN
Then we will have to overthrow dad first.

All the brothers gasp.

WEI LIN
What? Seriously?

YAO LIN
How is that possible? I mean, he's our father!

JIN LIN
Ugh, come on guys! Father chose a bastard over us! He threw us in the dust! I say we eliminate them both!

He shouts with rage and clenches his fist.

The brothers widen eyes. Then they look at each other with grim faces - all of them agree with Jin deep in their hearts. So they nod to each other. They then turn back to Jin.

THE ASASHIN PRINCES
Deal.

Jin grins in satisfaction.
EXT. THE FOREST, ANOTHER ASASHIN HOT SPRING - DAY

Hot water boils in a stony crater, above which the beautiful blue sky can be seen.

CHERRIE
Wow, I've never been in a hot spring before!

She carefully approaches the hot water together with Chao who is leading her.

CHAO LIN
Well, you get the chance now!

He points on the water.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Please, go in.

CHERRIE
Okay.

Cherrie takes off her light-green silken bath-robe and steps into the water. She takes a delightful breath as she feels the hot water touch her skin. She dives and hides her bare chest underwater. Then she looks back at Chao.

Chao Lin loosens his ponytail and takes the hair-tie off. His long black hair falls upon his back and shoulders. He looks handsome in Cherrie's eyes. He takes off his light-blue bath-robe and joins Cherrie in the hot spring.

CHERRIE (CONT’D)
It is so soothing...

CHAO LIN
Well, I told you... But you know what can be even more soothing and delightful?

Cherrie giggles.

CHERRIE
What?

Chao Lin smiles and swims up to her, softly touching her chin.

CHAO LIN
I think you can already guess what.
Cherrie starts and remembrances come up to her.

CUT SCENE (CHERRIE'S FLASHBACK):

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

It is the day when Markus chased Cherrie out in the woods. His eyes are sparkling with vile thirst for Cherrie.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

EXT. THE FOREST, ANOTHER ASASHIN HOT SPRING - DAY

The scene returns to Cherrie and Chao in the hot spring. These evil memories embrace Cherrie and she fearfully swims back. She wraps hands around her chest, and looks down.

CHERRIE
I... I can't...

CHAO LIN
What?
   (swims towards her)
Why?

CHERRIE
Please...

Cherrie swims back and leans against a stony cliff. It is a dead end.

CHAO LIN
Is anything wrong?

He swims up to her again and now traps her in a corner.

CHERRIE
I... I'm scared. It's my first time, and I don't have good remembrances of men wanting me before.

She casts her eyes down.

Chao feels surprised, but then he smiles. He touches her chin again and raises her head to meet his eyes.

CHAO LIN
Don't worry, just trust me. I won't let you feel any pain.
CHERRIE
Is... Is that possible?

Chao chuckles.

CHAO LIN
Everything is possible, if one wants.

He kisses her lips and closes eyes in affection. Cherrie gets dazzled by his sweet kiss and closes eyes too. They have sex.

The couple laughs at each other, delighted.

CHERRIE
You were right.

CHAO LIN
About pain?

Chao laughs.

CHERRIE
About that too and, that we're soulmates. I feel some different connection with you - a special one.

CHAO LIN
That's because we indeed are each other's halves.

They want to kiss each other again when a young horseman Asashin - YU KIRA, Chao Lin's main servant - rushes in and shouts.

YU KIRA
Lin Chao Sama!

Chao Lin looks at the shores and gasps - Yu Kira is wounded and is sitting on an exhausted horse.

CHAO LIN
What happened?

He rushes out of the hot spring and takes Cherrie too. Both of them anxiously put on their bath-robcs.

HEAR whoops of wild Asashins and neighs of their horses come from afar.

YU KIRA
They're here! Lin Chao Sama, it's a revolt!

(MORE)
YU KIRA (CONT’D)
Your brothers have rebelled! Your father is killed! You are the next target! You have to flee!

Chao Lin is shocked. Then he regains his senses and rushes up to startled Cherrie. He grabs her in his arms and puts her on his pitch-black horse.

CHERRIE
What are you doing?!

CHAO LIN
No time to lose.

He puts her cherry-blossom sword in a scabbard attached to the horse. Then he turns back to her.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
They will kill you. You must go.
You are free.

Cherrie is bewildered.

CHERRIE
I won't leave you!

HEAR the neighs of horses and the shouts of men approach.

CHAO LIN
No time for that! I must fight them off. You have nothing to do with this. Return home!

He hits his horse. The horse neighs and runs forward at a high speed. Cherrie shrieks. She clings to the horse tighter in order not to fall off.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

Cherrie looks back, tears in her eyes. The springs disappear out of the view, and only the forest can be seen around.

CHAO LIN (O.S.)
(in agony)
Ahh!!!

CHERRIE
Chao!!!

No one responds. An ominous feeling seizes Cherrie. She stops the horse and looks back.

HEAR a horse neighing from the behind, through the forest.
Cherrie brightens.

CHERRIE (CONT’D)

Chao?

HEAR even more horses and savage cries in Asashinese.

THE SAVAGE ASASHINS
She wouldn't have gone too far!
Find her!

Cherrie quickly hits her horse and gallops off again. Her heart is heavily beating.

A SAVAGE ASASHIN
There she is!

Cherrie, horrified, looks back, to see the savage ugly warrior after her, holding a sharp blooded sword.

Cherrie screams. She hits her horse more and rushes forward. The savage Asashin laughs.

A SAVAGE ASASHIN (CONT’D)
Goodbye!

He aims an arrow at her. He is about to shoot when he gets hit by an arrow in his back, yells and falls off his horse, lifeless.

Cherrie looks behind - there is another horseman.

She wants to scream, but recognizes him - it is her own villager, Jake Thornton - the best hunter and Markus' only rival.

JAKE THORNTON
(in stupor)
Cherrie?!

CHERRIE
Jake, it's me! Please! They're chasing me! We have to get to the village!

HEAR the savages' cries from afar.

JAKE THORNTON
Follow me!

Jake leads Cherrie away. Soon they get out of the forest.
EXT. THE VILLAGE BORDER - DAY

Cherrie and Jake cross the village border. Jake looks at Cherrie with a smile.

Near the woods, Cherrie spots the tiny wooden hut - her father's and her home.

Tears come to her eyes.

CHERRIE
Papa...

She wipes her tears away and bitterly smiles - she is finally home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

There's a party in Jake's house. Jake and Cherrie just got married. Friedrich Bloom, Cherrie's father, is extremely happy. Many villagers attend the party. Three young men are talking.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
Such a great party, don't you agree?

He grins and pours some wine to his two other friends.

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Truly! Jake did so well that he found and saved Cherrie Bloom! The whole village was worried about her. She is Friedrich Bloom's only daughter, so it was quite a loss for the poor old man.

THIRD YOUNG MAN
Yes, you're right. Finally, everything is behind. Imagine what a heart attack the poor old Friedrich would have all this time. After all, it was none other but the Asashins who had kidnapped his daughter.
SECOND YOUNG MAN
Yeah. Friedrich Bloom made a truly wise choice now when he married his daughter to Jake. He is the best fighter in our village. Rumours say he's even better than, (lowers his voice)
Markus.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
Shh! Don't let Markus hear that! (chuckles)
He's already jealous enough, you know?

SECOND YOUNG MAN
(laughs)
Don't you worry, man. I know.

THIRD YOUNG MAN
But jokes aside, Jake is truly a hero, to have returned Cherrie safe and sound. Do you remember what happened to Norman Gardner's sister?

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Yeah, you're right. We all thought same would happen to Cherrie - that she would disappear.

THIRD YOUNG MAN
That is why it was indeed a wise choice for Friedrich to marry his daughter to Thornton. He will protect her for sure.

They all get silent for a moment, but then the first young man breaks the silence.

FIRST YOUNG MAN
(smiles)
Well then, cheers to the newly married!

SECOND YOUNG MAN
Cheers!

THIRD YOUNG MAN
Cheers.

They all clink their glasses and then drink the wine.
Music is playing and Cherrie and Jake are dancing as a newly married couple. Cherrie is smiling at Jake, however, it is only a smile of gratitude. Deep at heart, she is sad she has lost her freedom forever, this time.

ONE YEAR LATER:

EXT. CEMETERY. DAY. ONE YEAR LATER.

Jake and Cherrie, a bit grown, are standing before a tomb. There are letters on the stone: "Friedrich Bloom". Cherrie has tears in her eyes. She is holding KYLE - a little blond one-year-old child with beautiful green eyes - her son with Jake.

CHERRIE
(weeps)
Papa, I miss you already. Please, rest in peace. I am fine. I live a happy life. I have Kyle and Jake. You don't need to worry anymore. Sorry I made you worry so much in the past.

Tears pour down her cheeks. Jake is sad. He embraces Cherrie in a comforting way.

Cherrie is weeping. She presses the baby to her chest and leans to Jake's chest.

CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Still, I feel my heart is torn apart...

She remembers her old days with Chao Lin, and his comforting embrace. She is unable to forget him.

NINE YEARS LATER:

INT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

On the second floor of Jake Thornton's house, KYLE - a ten-year-old blond boy with green eyes - is lying in bed, listening to his mother Cherrie retell the story. He interrupts her.

KYLE
(sad)
Wait, mom, you say Cherrie didn't love Jake?
Of course she did, Kyle. In time, she got to completely embrace her family, after her son's birth. She loved Jake with her whole heart.

Sadness appears on her face as she says this, but Kyle doesn't notice it.

Kyle falls in thoughts for some minutes, but then he breaks the silence again.

*KYLE*

What happened to Chao Lin anyway?

Cherrie starts, and then sighs.

*CHERRIE*

No one knows.

*KYLE*  
(disappointed)

Oh...  
What about Cherrie's writing notebook?

Cherrie laughs.

*CHERRIE*

I can't believe you remembered that small detail!  
Well, as Cherrie was so hastily sent away by Chao Lin and returned to her village, the notebook was left with Chao, as his only item to keep memories of his vanished love.

Kyle carefully listens to her, and then sighs.

*KYLE*

I still hoped to know how Rodrigo's tale ended in that notebook.

Cherrie laughs.

*CHERRIE*

Now that, dear, is another story.

She kisses Kyle on the forehead and extinguishes the candle.

*CHERRIE (CONT'D)*

Goodnight, sweetheart.

She leaves the room.
KYLE
Goodnight, mom.

He falls asleep and dreams of fighting in wars against the savage Asashins side by side his father Jake Thornton.

TWO YEARS LATER:

EXT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

Twelve-year-old Kyle and Cherrie are practising swordsmanship in the yard of their house. They have wooden swords so they won't harm each other. Cherrie fights in the Asashinese style, and teaches same maneuvers to Kyle.

CHERRIE
(swings her wooden sword)
Now dock there. Hold your feet tight to the ground. You will easily fall that way... Bend now!
That's good.

KYLE
(laughs)
Mom, what a weird style you have!
Dad never taught me these moves.

CHERRIE
Dad doesn't know those moves. Now, let's do it once again!

A VILLAGE WARRIOR (O.C.)
Mrs. Thornton! A notice from the battlefield!

Cherrie and Kyle start and look aside, to see some warriors stopped by Jake Thornton's house. Cherrie drops her wooden sword, grabs Kyle's hand and runs up to the threshold, looking at the warriors. The warriors sadly look at her and Kyle.

A VILLAGE WARRIOR (CONT’D)
Mrs. Thornton, we have a notice from the battlefield for you as well as other families of the village.
Unfortunately, we lost the current battle.

CHERRIE
W... What?! W... Where's Jake?
SECOND WARRIOR
We are sorry, Mrs. Thornton.
General Jake Thornton fell in battle.

Cherrie covers her mouth with her hands, terrified.

CHERRIE
No, can't be true...
   (tears gather in her eyes)
   No!!

She begins crying. Kyle is even more frustrated and tearful. He begins sobbing.

KYLE
You're lying! My dad will return!
He must! He promised!

He is sobbing heavily. Cherrie presses him to her chest, crying.

SECOND WARRIOR
We are truly sorry.

The warriors hang their heads, feeling pity towards the family left without a man to look after them.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
   (sobs)
   I... I shall avenge you, father! I shall become big and strong and kill those Asashins! I will definitely avenge you! Just you wait...

EIGHT YEARS LATER:

EXT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

Thirty-eight-year-old Cherrie and twenty-year-old Kyle are standing at the threshold of the Thornton house. Kyle is dressed in armour and his white horse is waiting for him outside. Kyle faces Cherrie, apparently bidding goodbye to her. Cherrie is sad.

CHERRIE
Well, you're going, huh?

KYLE
Mother, it's for the best. You know it.
He wipes Cherrie's tear away with his finger.

KYLE (CONT'D)
The Asashins need to know it's time for them to back down. There's no place for such savages here.

Cherrie looks up at Kyle, tears in her eyes.

CHERRIE
I don't want to lose you.

KYLE
(pats her on the cheek)
I will return, mother. I promise.

Kyle turns around when Cherrie grabs him by arm and clutches him. Kyle looks back at her. Cherrie is frowning.

CHERRIE
I can't afford to lose you too, Kyle. I've already lost a lot of precious men in my life. My father, your father, and... him too. You're the only one I have now, and I won't lose you. So hear me: If you ever, God forbid, fall into the Asashins' custody, remember to cry "Ketto" and then fight against whoever your opponent might be with the swordsmanship skills I've taught you. Don't use your father's skills, use my teachings.

Cherrie has a worried face. Kyle gets stupefied, but then chuckles.

KYLE
Come on, mom! No one fights with the skills you've taught me. It was just for fun. What's more, I won't be captured by the Asashins. Never.

CHERRIE
You never know what might happen, Kyle. When you go to battle you must be prepared for the worst. My teachings will greatly help you. They're in fact the Asashinese battle skills I had learned when I was their captive. If you use those skills properly, no Asashin will be able to beat you, save for one.

(MORE)
CHERRIE (CONT'D)
And if, by any chance, they still beat you, tell them you know Lin Chao Sama.

Kyle rolls eyes.

KYLE
But I don't even know that guy, mom.

Cherrie squeezes his hand.

CHERRIE
Just trust me.

Kyle chuckles and shakes his head.

KYLE
Okay, mom. I'll remember. See you.

He kisses her on the forehead, walks off and jumps onto his cloudy white horse. He gallops away.

Cherrie watches him as he disappears into the Blood Forest. Tears comes to her eyes.

CHERRIE
Be safe, Kyle.

EXT. THE BATTLEFIELD, THE VILLAGERS' CAMP - DAY

A new group of warriors arrives in the villagers' battle camp, Kyle among them.

The newcomers meet Markus - the commander of the armies. Markus greets them with a sarcastic smile and gives out orders, disposing them to their tents. He spots Kyle and whispers to his right hand-man Henry.

MARKUS
I know that brat. He's Jake Thornton's son from our village. The son of Cherrie.

He clenches his fist in rage.

HENRY
Ah, that Asashin's whore's son? (chuckles)
I wonder what he's doing here? Avenging his mother's lost dignity she had given away of her own free will?
Markus feels a bit nervous when watching Kyle, but at Henry's words he bursts out laughing and hits him softly on a shoulder.

MARKUS
You nailed it, Henry!
But for me, it is indeed time to avenge Cherrie for refusing me.
I'll let her taste the bitterness she deserves.

Markus hides in the warriors' crowd.

MARKUS (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I won't let that brat find out about my secret.

INT. KYLE'S BATTLE TENT - NIGHT
Kyle is in his tent when two warriors come in and report.

FIRST WARRIOR
Mr. Kyle Thornton, you are called to the tent of Commander Markus.

KYLE
Oh... What's the matter?

SECOND WARRIOR
He has a special mission for you.

Kyle turns joyful. He gladly follows the warriors out of the tent.

INT. MARKUS' BATTLE TENT - NIGHT
Markus and Henry are sitting in Markus' tent. The two warriors bring Kyle in. Markus viciously smiles. He refers to Kyle in a friendly tone.

MARKUS
Kyle Thornton, I heard you've been a great warrior so far. I have a job for you.

KYLE
What is it, sir?

Kyle feels proud to be called on a special mission.
MARKUS
I need you to penetrate into the Asashins' camp and secretly kill the chief while he's sleeping. The scouts informed us that there are no guards, so the camp can be easily penetrated.

Kyle is shocked.

MARKUS (CONT’D)
Will you do it for us Mr. Thornton?

KYLE
Oh, sure sir! You can count on me!
I'll go right now!

He bows and rushes out of the tent. Markus chuckles.

MARKUS
The fish is already on the bait.

Henry chuckles too.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' BATTLE CAMP - NIGHT
The moon is shining above the battle camps. Near the Asashins' camp, Kyle is hiding in bushes. He carefully watches a giant black fur tent in the Asashins' camp. It is the tent of the Asashin chief.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I'll kill him for sure, by my father's name!

Rage and grief are sparkling in his eyes. He crawls up to the chief's tent and wants to sneak in when he hears a ferocious cry in broken accent.

AN ASASHIN GUARD (O.C.)
Freeze!

Ten robust Asashin guards have gathered around him and are pointing sharp swords at him.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
But Commander Markus said there were no guards!

He raises his hands and surrenders. He drops his sword. The robust Asashin men seize him and tie him up. Then they drag him off and drop him inside one of the tents.
INT. AN ASASHIN TENT - NIGHT

A nobly-dressed Asashin - grown-up Yu Kira - walks in and talks in the same strange Asashinese accent.

Yu Kira
We knew the enemies would send an assassin, so we took necessary measures.
(clutches the handle of his sword on his waist)
You wanted to kill our chief. We shall pass our severe judgment upon you. So be prepared for your doom.

Yu Kira walks out. Kyle watches him as he disappears behind the curtains.

Kyle (V.O.) (Thoughts)
Mother was right, I must've prepared for the worst. And I've forgotten the name she told me to remember... Was it Shao Rin? Or... Nah, no use.

He hangs his head.

Kyle (V.O.) (Thoughts) (Cont'd)
Sorry, mother. Looks like I won't return. I'll die serving my village. God, please care for my mother. She has only you now.

TWO MONTHS LATER:

EXT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

The village troops return defeated from the battle. Two warriors walk up to the Thornton house and knock on it. Cherrie opens.

Cherrie
Yes?

First Warrior
We have a notice from the battlefield, Mrs. Thornton. The current battle is lost. And your son...

He stops and sighs. Cherrie gets frightened.
CHERRIE
What of my son?

SECOND WARRIOR
He fell into the custody of the Asashins, Mrs. Thornton. No one knows what happened to him after. We are sorry.

They hang their heads. Cherrie is terrified. Tears fall off her eyes. She falls to her knees and weeps.

The warriors have a pity on her.

From the opposite side of the street, through a closed window of a large house, Markus watches Cherrie with vile triumph.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP - NIGHT

There is a feast in the Asashinese camp. They drink alcohol and sing on the rhythm of flutes and drums around the bonfires.

The chief is not attending the party. His throne adorned with animal bones and skins is empty. His right hand-man, Yu Kira, is the head of the party.

Yu Kira chuckles in satisfaction seeing his tribesmen's amused faces.

YU KIRA
People! It is time to execute the prisoners!

The Asashins savagely whoop and yell, raising their bamboo glasses full of rice wine.

The robust Asashins drag out the eighteen prisoners. The last one is Kyle. They put them in line and make them kneel. The Asashin executioner points with his sharp sword on each of the prisoners, and people yell.

THE ASASHINS
Korose!

After hearing this cry, the executioner raises his sword and chops the prisoner's head off. The Asashins yell and whoop, raising glasses in joy.

Each time as this happens, Kyle shudders in horror.
KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(stares at the ground)
Sorry, mother.
Wait, that's right! Mother knew how
to act if I fell in captivity!

Kyle strains his mind, trying to remember what his mother
advised him.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT'D)
Come on! What was it?

The executioner points the tip of the sword at him.

THE ASASHINS
Korose!

Kyle gets shocked - it is his turn. The executioner raises
his sword.

Kyle strains his nerves. The image pops up in his mind.

CUT SCENE (KYLE'S FLASHBACK):

EXT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

The scene shows Cherrie and Kyle at the threshold of the
house. Cherrie talks to Kyle in his remembrance.

CHERRIE
If you ever, God forbid, fall into
the Asashins' custody, remember to
cry "Ketto" and then fight against
whoever your opponent might be with
the swordsmanship skills I've
taught you.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP - NIGHT

The scene returns to Kyle in custody. He remembers what his
mother had advised him.

The executioner's sword flies down.

KYLE
Ketto!

The sword freezes in mid air. The executioner looks at Kyle
in surprise.
THE EXECUTIONER

Eh?

The Asashins are astonished as well. They quiet down.

Yu Kira is no less astounded.

Kyle looks at all of the Asashins.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I think that was definitely it.

Yu Kira and the Asashins start a heated discussion in their language which Kyle can't understand. The word "Ketto" is frequently used and everyone points on Kyle from time to time. Yu Kira then says the final word in a strict tone, and orders something to the executioner. This latter swings his sword and cuts the rope Kyle’s tied with. Kyle gets surprised.

The executioner gives Kyle a sword. Sworded Asashin guards gather around Kyle and Yu Kira.

Kyle looks around in confusion.

YU KIRA
(to Kyle)
You will Ketto with me.

He stands in a battle pose Cherrie used to take when sparring with Kyle in his childhood.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
So mom was right, looks like a duel is going to be held indeed. Well then, better follow mom's guidance and fight like she has taught me.

Kyle clutches his sword. Some Asashins bring a small gong.

Kyle and Yu get prepared.

BANG!

The gong rings. Kyle and Yu Kira rush towards each other.

CRACK!

The swords collide. A terrible duel begins. Kyle swings his sword at Yu, but Yu moves swiftly, avoids the attacks and confuses Kyle.
KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)
He fights with the same style as mom.

Flashbacks of Cherrie pop up in his mind - of how she swings her sword, docks and avoids his attacks. His heart aches as he desperately misses his mother, but just then, he hears the Asashins' cries, and the remembrances fade away.

THE ASASHINS
Ike, Yu!

Yu gets even more energetic hearing such encouragements and goes on the direct offensive, while Kyle feels confused, just woken up from his remembrances in such a sudden. He stumbles and falls.

Yu puts the tip of his blade to Kyle's neck.

YU KIRA
You lost. So you die.

Kyle is frightened.

HEAR the savages' cries and whoops as they congratulate their tribesman.

The robust Asashins grab Kyle, tie him and put him to his knees. The executioner comes up to him again and raises his sword.

Kyle is dreaded.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(in despair)
Sorry, mother.

He prepares for the fatal hit.

The sword flies down.

A YOUNG ASASHIN (O.C.)
Matte!

Surprised Yu Kira and the Asashins, as well as the executioner and Kyle, look aside. They see a young bald Asashin rush in. The executioner stops his sword in mid air again. Yu Kira angrily asks something in Asashinese to the youngster. Once Yu Kira hears the answer, his eyes turn from angry to stupefied. He nods at the young Asashin.

The young Asashin now tells something to the guards. They grab Kyle and take him out of the crowd.
Kyle looks around in surprise and confusion, not able to understand what's happening.

The Asashins lead him in a giant black fur tent adorned with animal bones - the chief's tent. The bald young Asashin follows them in.

INT. THE BLACK FUR TENT - NIGHT

There is a little dark in the tent. There are candles lit. A robust man is sitting on a pillow in the midst of those candles, in a special meditative pose - it is Chief Chao Lin, over forty-two-year-old. He has long raven-black hair half of which is tied in a ponytail while the other half drops down his back and shoulders. His hair-tie is adorned with animal bones. The right bang of his hair is covering his right eye which is also covered with an eye-patch. His left eye is deep-ocean-blue. It is scarred as if a sword has cut it.

He wears a dark-blue-to-black kimono-robe, torn at his left chest, where he has a deep scar right at the heart as if a blade has pierced it. He wears a black fur cloak.

He has girt a long black-handled sword on his waist.

His hands are scarred as well. His eye is wise, cold, and strict.

Kyle trembles once sees such a frightful man. He looks down, afraid to look him in the eye.

The Asashins tell something to Chao Lin. He silently nods.

The robust Asashins leave the tent. Only the bald young Asashin stays in.

Silence falls for some minutes, tormenting Kyle. He clenches his fists nervously.

CHAO LIN (O.C.)
You fought well.

Kyle trembles and looks up. Chao Lin pours some tea in his little bamboo cup and sips it.

Kyle can't dare reply.

Chao Lin notices Kyle's uneasiness. A slight chuckle passes through his lips.

CHAO LIN (CONT'D)
Calm yourself.
Kyle glances up at him in fear. He clenches fists in nervousness.

KYLE
Wh-What are you going to do with me?

Chao Lin chuckles again and takes another sip of the hot tea.

CHAO LIN
You wanted to kill me. How would you act on my place?

Kyle trembles in worry.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
What a stupid question... Of course, I'd kill anyone who intended to kill me! But if I answer like that, they'll surely chop my head off, this time.

Kyle gets worried. Chao Lin calmly sipping his tea adds even more tension to it.

KYLE
Please, don't kill me.

Chao Lin smiles.

CHAO LIN
I'm not you.

He takes another sip.

Kyle looks at him in a stupor. He can't believe his ears.

CHAO LIN (CONT'D)
There are few foreigners whose battle skills I like.
(sighs)
Actually, there was only one.
For amusing me that much, I shall grant you life.

Kyle is stupefied, relieved and overjoyed all at the same time. His heart fills with hopes again.

CHAO LIN (CONT'D)
But only if you defeat me in a duel.

Kyle gets dreaded again.
CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
I shall give you seven days to prepare yourself.

He orders something to the Asashin guards who drag Kyle out and throw him in one of the empty tents.

INT. AN ASASHIN TENT - NIGHT
Sadness and sorrow embrace Kyle.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Mother, you're probably so frightened right now. I am so sorry I made you worry.

A tear falls off his eye.

SEVEN DAYS LATER:

INT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY
Cherrie is in her room, packing up provisions, deep frown covering her face. Norman is sitting in her room too.

NORMAN
What are you doing?

CHERRIE
I'm going to retrieve Kyle.

She closes up her bag.

NORMAN
What?! Cherrie, please reconsider! How could you ever think of it?! The Asashins are savages! They will tear you up to pieces!

CHERRIE
Don't worry, Norman. I have enough experience of living with the Asashins.

Cherrie looks at him with eyes reddened from tears.

CHERRIE (CONT’D)
I know how to deal with them.

She opens a large case and takes her long, sharp, dusted Asashinese sword out of there. Its handle is blue and adorned with withered cherry blossoms.
NORMAN
Please, Cherrie! The Asashins have taken everyone precious to me. I cannot lose you too! You are my late friend's daughter. I swore to Friedrich I would protect you!

Norman's voice turns sorrowful.

CHERRIE
Sorry, Norman, nothing can stop me now. Kyle is my son. He's the only one I have left. I cannot lose him.

She puts her sword in an Asashinese scabbard.

Norman sighs. He remembers how his little blond blue-eyed lovely sister was kidnapped by the Asashins in his far-off youth. Cherrie reminds him of his sister, so he doesn't want to let her go. Tears fill his eyes.

Cherrie smiles at him, then takes her bag full of provisions, goes out in the yard, mounts her pitch-black horse and gallops off into the Blood Forest.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP - DAY

It is seven days since Kyle fell into the Asashins' custody. He is sitting at the river shore, gloomy and sad. He is staring at his own reflection in the water.

Remembrances float back to him, of how he, ten-year-old, trains at the riverside with his father Jake Thornton, back home.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Dad, such a pity you're away and shall never return.
(a tear appears in his eye)
Mom and I felt so lonely without you.

He remembers the time when he was just twelve and the news came about his father's death. His mother cried and wept all nights, but tried to hold her emotions with Kyle, in order not to worry him much. But mother always acted strange - she respected and cared for Jake, but her heart was closed.

He then remembers mother's tales about that mysterious Asashin she loved.
CHERRIE (V.O.) (KYLE'S REMEMBRANCES)
He was strong and bold. He always
defended the weak ones, and
respected everyone as his equal, no
matter he was a prince. He was a
courageous warrior, the best of all
the existing. And he loved me
truly. He cared for me like no
other man ever did. It was he who
saved me from the certain death
back in our youth. I can never
repay him his kindness.

Kyle thinks.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
What happened to that mysterious
Asashin guy anyway? Where is he
now?

YU KIRA (O.C.)
Hey, the chief is calling you!

Kyle wakes from his thoughts. He looks aside and notices Yu.

KYLE
Ah!

Only now he remembers the seven days have already passed. He
gets frightened, but tries to stay courageous and stands up.
He follows Yu.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY

Kyle and Yu Kira arrive at the chief's giant black fur tent.
The guards let them enter.

INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY

Kyle and Yu enter the chief's tent. Chao Lin is sitting on
the pillows on the ground as before, and is sipping his tea.
His expression is stern and cold as before.

Kyle gets dead nervous once sees him.

Silence falls for some minutes. Chao is sipping his tea. This
silence irritates and torments Kyle.

CHAO LIN
Are you ready?

Kyle shudders.
KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
No, I'm definitely not ready.

Chao Lin takes another sip.

CHAO LIN
Know that if you refuse you'll be executed.

Kyle trembles.

KYLE
I... I'm ready.

Chao Lin puts the bamboo cup aside and stands up. He walks up to Kyle and takes the sharp sword out of the scabbard.

CHAO LIN
Let's start the battle then. If you win, I shall let you go. But if you lose, I shall kill you.

Kyle shudders. But then he tries to regain his courage.

KYLE
I accept.

Chao Lin clutches the black handle of his sword. Kyle grabs his own blade.

CHAO LIN
Let's start.

He goes outside. Kyle follows him.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, FIELD OF THE DUEL - DAY

The opponents - Kyle and Chief Chao Lin - are standing before each other in their battle poses, swords ready in their hands. Chao Lin's eyes are sparkling, and Kyle is frowning in determination. He is nervous, though.

Curious Asashins are gathered around the duelists, including Yu Kira. The bald young Asashin of before has brought a small gong.

BANG!

The gong rings. The battleers rush towards each other.

CRACK!
The swords clash. Chao Lin swings his sword and Kyle barely manages to parry the hit, almost losing his balance.

**KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)**
The Asashins were right – this man's really strong. I will have to use everything I've got.

He swings his blade, but the chief easily dodges.

**CHAO LIN**
You're good, but not good enough!

He springs up and swings his blade from above. Kyle quickly jumps aside. Chao Lin's sword hits the ground and marks a deep cut.

Everyone is amazed at such force.

**KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)**
He is really going to kill me like that!

Chief Chao Lin swings his sword both swiftly and strongly. He is a lot harder opponent than Yu. He has no openings while Kyle has plenty.

Kyle swings his sword at Chao Lin's head, but the chief docks, swings his blade and cuts Kyle on a leg.

Kyle shrieks in pain and falls. He drops his sword.

Chao Lin walks up to him, holding his blooded sword. He looks down at Kyle, whose heart is heavily beating. He is winching from pain.

**CHAO LIN**
You lost.

He raises his sword. Kyle is dreaded. He prepares for the end.

The sword flies down.

**CHERRIE (O.C.)**
Yamete!

Cherrie sitting on the pitch-black horse rushes in and jumps in between Kyle and Chao Lin. She doesn't recognize Chao and likewise, Chao doesn't recognize her. Cherrie parries Chao's hit with her Asashinese sword.

The Asashins, including Chief Chao Lin and Yu Kira, get stupefied, not able to understand who this strange woman is.
Once Kyle sees Cherrie, he gets astounded.

    KYLE
    Mother?!

The Asashins are shocked – they can't believe this woman is Kyle's mother.

Chao Lin frowns seeing a foreign woman oppose him.

    CHAO LIN
    (to Cherrie)
    Move.

    CHERRIE
    Don't you dare hurt my son, beast!

Cherrie's eyes are reddened from rage.

    CHAO LIN
    He insulted my pride. He shall be executed, and you cannot stop me.

He gives a sign to his men, and they rush towards Cherrie.

    CHERRIE
    I call for Ketto!

Kyle is shocked.

    KYLE
    No, mother, don't! He's too strong!

    CHERRIE
    (smiles at Kyle)
    An enraged mother is always stronger, Kyle.
    (frowns at Chief Chao Lin)
    Well?

Her tearful eyes are full of boldness and determination.

Chao Lin frowns and clutches his sword.

    CHAO LIN
    I accept.

The battlefield renews, now with different opponents – Cherrie and Chao, who still don't recognize each other.

Kyle gets worried.
KYLE
What's happening?! My mother shouldn't battle! Stop this!

He tries to get up, but winches in pain and falls.

YU KIRA
The woman whom you called your mother stood for you. By our rules, when a swordsman stands for one of the duelists and calls for Ketto, the defeated duelist is released and the whole burden falls upon the defender. In other words, you're free, but if your mother loses, she'll die.

KYLE
(dreaded)
What?!

CRACK!

They hear the swords collide - the opponents have already clashed!

Kyle yells in terror.

KYLE (CONT’D)
No!!!

He wants to get up once more, but winches and falls off again - his wounded leg hurts.

YU KIRA
You're in no shape to battle now.

KYLE
But I must! My mother's battling there!

YU KIRA
There's nothing you can do. A rule is a rule.

While Kyle is worried and frightened, Cherrie and Chief Chao are selflessly battling, their swords clashing and cracking upon each other. Both of the opponents are enraged, but Chao maintains his external calmness.

CHAO LIN
(to Cherrie)
You fight unusually well for a foreigner.
Chao parries her blow.

**CHERRIE**
That's because I was taught by a sword genius!

She swings her blade. Chao avoids her hit again. The blue handle of Cherrie's Asashinese sword catches his eye - it has dry cherry blossoms attached to it.

He gets stupefied as he recognizes the sword from back in his youth. He quickly docks and avoids Cherrie's hit. He then glances into her eyes, which take him back to the past when these brown eyes were still cheerful and lively, but now have turned sad and wiser, having experienced the bitterness of life. But they look as flammable as before.

Chao gets shocked - he recognizes Cherrie.

**CHAO LIN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)**
It... It is her! She didn't recognize me.

He dodges another blow and glances at Kyle, then back at Cherrie.

**CHAO LIN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT'D)**
She has a son now, and apparently another man she deeply cares about.

He swings his sword again.

**CHAO LIN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT'D)**
But that sword and those cherry blossoms... They have long dried out, why does she keep them? No, she hasn't forgotten me. She just can't recognize me, that's all.

His eyes turn sad for a moment, but then he frowns and attacks again, now more ferociously. He dodges a swift blow of Cherrie and swings his sword fast and strongly. Cherrie quickly jumps back, but stumbles and falls.

She winches. The sword falls off her hand.

**KYLE**
(horrified)
Mother!

Chief Chao Lin walks up to downed Cherrie. She looks up at him, her heart heavily beating.
CHERRIE
A deal is a deal. Take me and let my son go.

Tiny tears appear in her eyes.

KYLE
(in agony)
Mother! No!

He clenches his fists with desperation and tries to stand up, but falls back on the ground, winching from pain.

The Asashins eagerly watch the events.

Chao Lin frowns and raises his sword.

Kyle shrieks in horror.

KYLE (CONT’D)
No!!

Cherrie prepares for the blow. One more tear falls off her eye.

The sword slides down, and hits the ground.

The Asashins are shocked - the chief has deliberately missed.

Kyle is stupefied too, as well as Cherrie. She looks up at the chief.

The chief suddenly gives her a kind smile and leans onto his sword.

CHAO LIN
Nice fight, Sakura.

Cherrie is shocked - she recognizes Chao. Her eyes fill with tears.

CHERRIE
Is that you, Chao?

Chao grins.

CHAO LIN
Welcome back, Cherrie.

Kyle gets stupefied.

Cherrie's eyes are full of tears. She stands up and looks into Chao's ocean-blue eye.
CHERRIE

Chao...

She raises her soft hand to touch his cheek, as if wanting to
know it is all indeed real.

Chao smiles.

Cherrie suddenly slaps him.

CHERRIE (CONT’D)
You idiot! Do you even know how you
frightened me?!

The Asashins widen eyes in indignation as she dares do this
to their chief. Chao laughs instead.

CHAO LIN
Ouch! Hey, it hurts!

CHERRIE
You deserve even worse! I'm just
acting mild now.

Chao laughs kindly. Kyle watches them in a stupor.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
What are they doing?

Chao and cherrie hug each other tightly.

Kyle gets shocked. He guesses it all, and recollects the
name. He looks at Chao.

KYLE
So it is him, Mom's lost love -
Chao Lin the Asashin.

CHERRIE
I missed you, Chao.

CHAO LIN
I missed you too.

Cherrie rushes up to Kyle and hugs him tightly, shedding
tears.

CHERRIE
Kyle! You're alright! I'm so happy!
INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY

Kyle is lying in fur bedding. Cherrie and Chao are sitting beside him. Servants pour some tea in bamboo cups for Cherrie and Chao.

Chao and Cherrie are extremely joyful to see each other after so many years.

CHERRIE
(to Chao)
You've changed.
(caresses him on hair)
I didn't even recognize you.
(sorrowfully strokes his scars)
Are these from... back then?

CHAO LIN
Yeah. I defeated my rebellious brothers and became the chief.

CHERRIE
Oh... Looks like each of us had their own path to follow.

CHAO LIN
Yeah... But that couldn't stop me from remembering you.

He takes out a faded-and-torn yellowish notebook and shows it to Cherrie with a smile. Cherrie is shocked.

CHERRIE
My notebook! You've kept it!

She happily grins at Chao, touching the notebook.

CHAO LIN
Just like you've kept my sword and cherry blossoms.

They are happy.

Kyle watches them, and seems sad. Cherrie looks at him now. Her gaze turns sorrowful.

CHERRIE
Kyle, dear, how are you?

She lovingly caresses him on hair.
KYLE
I'm fine mother. Thanks for saving me.

Chao stands up.

CHAO LIN
(to Cherrie)
I'll leave you two for some time. I think you need some peace now. Especially your boy. The wound's not deep but it still needs proper treatment.

Chao walks out of the corner and disappears behind the curtains.

CHERRIE
Thank you, Chao.

Cherrie looks back at Kyle. Kyle seems upset.

KYLE
You loved this guy more than dad, didn't you?

Cherrie's heart sinks.

CHERRIE
Kyle, how can you say such things?

KYLE
You never talked to dad so passionately like you did to this savage!

CHERRIE
He's no savage!
And I loved Jake as my husband and the father of my only child, while I love Chao as my true friend and a companion of far-off youth.


CHERRIE (CONT'D)
Kyle, please...

KYLE
(looks away)
It's fine.

Cherrie sorrowfully casts her eyes down.
CHERRIE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I wish Kyle and Chao could get along someday.

WEEKS LATER:

INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAY

Cherrie is out of the room. Kyle is still in the bedding. He manages to get up and winches a little. He grabs a wooden mace and leans on it, as his leg still hurts a bit.

Kyle walks out of his corner and appears in the chief's large tent.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
I guess I'll take a little walk before mom returns with the medicine.

He heads towards the exit, but hears some manly voices come out of one of the curtains, talking in Asashinese. He gets curious and listens carefully. He can already understand Asashinese as he has spent much time in their camp.

FIRST MAN (O.S.)
These foreigners still want to call for another battle.

YU KIRA (O.S.)
Ugh, when will they learn to back down?

SECOND MAN (O.S.)
I wish that brave commander from eight years ago stayed alive. He was the only foreigner who negotiated with us for peace.

FIRST MAN (O.S.)
You're talking about Jake Thornton?

SECOND MAN (O.S.)
Yes.

CHAO LIN (O.S.)
He was the best foreigner soldier I had ever met.

Kyle is shocked.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
How do they know my father?
He listens to the conversation more carefully.

THIRD MAN (O.S.)
So what to do now?

CHAO LIN (O.S.)
We will not leave this forest.
That's for sure. It is our home_

AN ASASHIN GUARD (O.C.)
(to Kyle)
Hey, what are you doing here?!

Kyle starts and looks back, to see a robust Asashin guard. He grows pale from fear.

AN ASASHIN GUARD (CONT’D)
You were listening to the elders'
private conversation, huh? How you
dare insult our elders?!

The Asashin guard grabs Kyle.

KYLE
Hey! Get off me!

Kyle struggles to get free, but his leg hurts and he winches in pain. The guard calls two other robust guards and they subdue him together. They take him into the council room.

INT. THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT, COUNCIL ROOM - DAY

There are five elder Asashins sitting on pillows, among which there are Yu Kira and Chief Chao Lin. Bamboo cups full of tea are put for each of them.

The three guards bring struggling Kyle in. All of the five elders look at Kyle with surprise.

AN ASASHIN GUARD
(to the elders)
Great lords, this pest was secretly
listening to your conversation!

The elders get incensed. Chao Lin stays calm.

The third elder, WANG SHU, who looks quite old, shouts.

WANG SHU
Behead him!

Kyle gets dreaded.
CHAO LIN
(to Wang Shu)
Shu Wang Sama, this boy is under my protection, and I won’t tolerate anyone punishing him save for myself.

Wang Shu starts and bows to Chief Chao Lin.

WANG SHU
I apologize, Lin Chao Sama.

Chao Lin turns to Kyle.

CHAO LIN
Kyle, I'll talk with you in private.
(to guards)
Take him out!

Kyle is frightened. He follows the guards out, limping.

HOURS LATER:

INT. THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT, KYLE'S ROOM - DAY

Cherrie is already in Kyle's room together with Kyle. An Asashin guard enters.

AN ASASHIN GUARD
(to Kyle)
The chief calls you.

Cherrie starts.

CHERRIE
(to Kyle)
What is it about?

KYLE
(looks away)
Nothing.

AN ASASHIN GUARD
(to Cherrie)
Your son was detained for listening to the elders’ private conversation without permission.

CHERRIE
What?!
(dashes at the guard)
Please, let me talk to the chief!
AN ASASHIN GUARD
I’m sorry, but the chief has
ordered to have a private
discussion with your son. Third
parties are prohibited to enter.

CHERRIE
Oh my...

Kyle frowns and stands up.

KYLE
(to Cherrie)
Do not fear, mother. I need to talk
with the chief in private. I'll be
fine. I promise.

He follows the guard out, limping, leaning on his wooden
mace. Cherrie stares at him worriedly as he disappears behind
the curtains.

INT. THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT, CHAO LIN'S ROOM - DAY

The guard leads Kyle into Chief Chao Lin's room. Chao is
sitting on a pillow as always, and sipping hot tea from his
bamboo cup as before. Once he sees Kyle and the guard, he
nods at the guard and gives him a sign to exit. The Asashin
guard bows and leaves the place.

CHAO LIN
Please, Kyle, take a seat.

He points Kyle on a pillow beside himself. Kyle sits down on
the pillow, casting eyes down. He clenches fists nervously.

Chao Lin takes another bamboo cup and pour some tea in it,
placing it before Kyle.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Kyle, I need to know what concerns
you.

Kyle gets stupefied, but then looks away.

KYLE
Nothing.

Chao Lin gets silent.

Kyle glances at the tea cup put before him. Remembrances come
back.

CUT SCENE (KYLE'S FLASHBACK):
INT. JAKE THORNTON'S HOUSE - DAY

Kyle is still small - eleven-year-old. Jake has returned from the battle and gives Cherrie some tea he has cultivated from his garden.

CHERRIE
(smiles)
Oh... Are these from the tea seeds the Asashins gave you?

JAKE
Yes. They said it was in terms of future peace. So let's see how the peace tastes!


END OF THE FLASHBACK:

INT. THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT, CHAO LIN'S ROOM - DAY

The scene gets back to Kyle and Chao Lin. Kyle takes the cup and sips the tea.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
The same taste as my father's tea had... Yeah, I guess it's the same tea.

CHAO LIN (O.C.)
Do you like it?

Kyle awakes from thoughts and looks at Chao Lin. Chao is sipping his tea too.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
I remember one of your village army commanders liked it a lot when we were having peaceful negotiations in my tent.
(smiles)
So I gifted some seeds to him, as a sign of peace. He was extremely joyful.
Good old memories...

Kyle carefully listens to him and then clutches his bamboo cup, filled with doubts.
KYLE
What was that commander's name?

CHAO LIN
Jake Thornton. A fine man and a worthy adversary.

Kyle is shocked.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
A worthy adversary? So, (glances at Chao)
He killed him?!

Bitter anger fills his heart. But he hesitates from making early conclusions and calms himself as he can.

KYLE
If you talked about peace, why did you Asashins kill him afterwards?

CHAO LIN
We didn't kill him. His own villager did. On the battlefield. I witnessed it with my own eyes.

Chao takes another sip of the hot tea.

But Kyle trembles. The cup falls off his hand and the tea pours down.

Chao Lin gets concerned.

CHAO LIN (CONT’D)
Are you alright?

KYLE
My father... was killed by his own villager?

He is terrorized. Chao Lin is shocked.

CHAO LIN
Your father?!

KYLE
Can't be...

Kyle's heart aches from internal pain, and he blacks out.
INT. THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT, KYLE'S ROOM - DAY

Kyle opens his eyes. He is in his room, lying in fur bedding. Cherrie is sitting on the floor beside him. She watches him worriedly.

CHERRIE
You woke up!
(hugs Kyle)
Thank goodness, I was so worried!

KYLE
(weakly)
Mother...

CHERRIE
Shh, rest now, Kyle, dear.

Cherrie caresses Kyle on the forehead, giving him a loving smile.

KYLE
Father... He... He was murdered!

Tears gather in his eyes.

CHERRIE
I know... Chao told me everything about your discussion.

Kyle frowns, enraged.

KYLE
I'll kill that betrayer who dared murder him!
(clenches fists in anger.
Begins sobbing)
I'll kill him!

Cherrie watches him with sorrow.

CHERRIE
Kyle...

KYLE
(wipes off his tears)
That bastard...

The curtains of the entrance move and Chao Lin walks in.
CHAO LIN
I just got a word from my scouts.
The man who killed Jake Thornton is
the current commander, Markus
Duneford.

Kyle's eyes flash in anger.

KYLE
That bastard! Now I get it! He
wanted to kill me too! He tricked
me and sent me into the Asashins’
battle camp to be captured and die!

Cherrie is stupefied at first, but then gets angry.

CHERRIE
He made me suffer... He wanted to
insult me in our youth. Then he
killed my husband. Now you’re
saying he wanted to treacherously
kill my son too?!
(clutches the handle of
her Asashinese sword)
He shall pay!

KYLE
Let me battle him, mother.

CHAO LIN
Yeah, one more thing - your village
declared a war again. Markus is the
commander as before.

KYLE
Then there we shall meet, on the
battlefield.

EXT. THE BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

The villagers' and the Asashins' camps are situated
oppositely to each other. The battle is going to start at
dawn.

Norman is hiding in the bushes in the Asashins' camp,
scouting them. He is a professional scout.

NORMAN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
These bloodthirsty beasts!
(watches the Asashins)
First they took away my sister,
then Kyle, and now Cherrie too!
(MORE)
NORMAN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS) (CONT’D)
Ugh, I shall not sit still anymore!
It is time to act!

He silently advances towards the giant black fur tent of the Asashinese chief.

HEAR voices from the tent. Norman can't recognize them.

CHAO LIN (O.S.)
At dawn Commander Markus will be on the battlefield. We shall capture him.

KYLE (O.S.)
I'll kill him!

Norman is shocked.

NORMAN (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
Oh, goodness, they want to kill the commander!

He moves back and wants to return to his own camp.

HEAR the cries of the Asashin guards.

THE GUARDS (O.C.)
Hey! An intruder!

Norman grows pale. He springs up and wants to run, but the robust Asashin guards catch him and subdue him. They tie him up and take him into the black fur tent of the chief.

INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - NIGHT
The guards bring Norman into the tent.

THE GUARDS
Lin Chao Sama, we found a spy from the enemies' camp!

They throw Norman to his knees before the chief.

Norman winches and looks up. He gets shocked - Cherrie and Kyle are in the tent together with the chief.

NORMAN
Cherrie?!

CHERRIE
(stupefied)
Norman?!
CHAO LIN
(to Cherrie)
You know him?

CHERRIE
Yes! It’s Norman Gardner from our village. He’s my late father’s friend, and a very good man!

Chao Lin starts. He looks down at frightened Norman.

CHAO LIN
(to Norman)
Do you perchance know Lily Gardner?

Norman gets shocked.

NORMAN
How do you know my sister's name?!

It is Chao Lin's turn to get shocked.

CHAO LIN
Your sister's?!

Cherrie and Kyle watch them stupefied. They can't understand what's going on.

Tears comes to Norman's eye.

NORMAN
Lily Gardner was my sister, but she got kidnapped by an Asashinese prince, and never returned.

CHAO LIN
She was kidnapped by my father in their youth. She was my mother.

Now everyone gets shocked.

NORMAN
W-What? Your mother?!

He gazes into Chao's ocean-blue eye, and Lily's image pops up in his mind, with the same ocean-blue eyes and a kind smile.

NORMAN (CONT’D)
You do indeed have Lily's eyes. (tears stream down his cheek)
Oh God... (wipes the tears off)
Is she... Is she alive?
Chao Lin deeply sighs.

    CHAO LIN
    No.

Norman starts crying.

    NORMAN
    Oh, Lily!

Chao watches him with pity. He puts a hand on his shoulder.

    CHAO LIN
    I never thought I would have an uncle.

Norman looks up at him in a stupor. Chao Lin gives him a kind smile.

    CHAO LIN (CONT'D)
    I shall welcome you with open hands.

Norman is bewildered at first, but then smiles with gratitude.

    NORMAN
    Thank you.

INT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, THE CHIEF'S BLACK FUR TENT - DAWN

Chao, Cherrie, Kyle, and Norman are sitting in Chao's tent, discussing their plans. Norman already knows everything Markus has done. He is dreaded.

    CHAO LIN
    ... So that's basically all that scum did.

    NORMAN
    That's horrid!

    KYLE
    I won't forgive him.

    NORMAN
    Kyle, vengeance is a terrible thing. You won't find peace in your heart even after you kill your enemy.
KYLE
So what do you advise me Norman, suck it up?!

CHERRIE
(puts a hand on Kyle's shoulder)
Dear, Norman's just saying that you must calm down a little, and think more thoroughly of how to act.

KYLE
How can I be calm mother? He killed my father! You should be angry too! Or I guess you didn't love father enough?

He walks out of the tent.

Cherrie's heart sinks with sadness. A tear streams down her cheek.

She feels Chao wipe off her tear with his finger. She sadly looks up at him.

CHAO LIN
Do not worry. I shall talk with him.

Chao walks out of the tent too.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' CAMP, RIVERSIDE - DAWN

Kyle is standing at the river shore. He notices Chao Lin behind him, but doesn't look back. He just frowns and harshly asks.

KYLE
What do you want?

CHAO LIN
It is natural that you're angry. (stands beside him) But you must learn to subdue your feelings.

KYLE
You know nothing of how it feels to learn your father has been treacherously murdered!
I know exactly how that feels. (chuckles)
But I doubt you know how that feeling grows when you find out your father was treacherously killed by your own brothers’ hands.

Kyle looks at him in shock.

Kyle looks down.

Kyle looks down.

KYLE
Then... Then what did you do?

CHAO LIN
I selflessly fought with them. Since then, I got these eternal marks.

He strokes his scars on the eyes and the left chest.

The whole confrontation was a burden. Just like you, I was filled with resentment and bitter rage. But bloodshed bears only more bloodshed, so vengeance is never the key. However, the third parties almost always make the right judgment in conflicts, when they’re not engaged in it, but have witnessed and analyzed all the events.

KYLE
What do you mean?
CHAO LIN
After the people - our tribesmen - saw what my brothers and the queen had done against my father - their chief - they got enraged at such injustice and shamefulness, so they executed my five brothers and the queen on their own, and chose me - my father’s staunchest and the most honest son - as their chief, no matter I was Hafu, thus not a pure-blooded Asashin.

KYLE
So what does that have to do with my concern?

CHAO LIN
Take my uncle and return to your villagers’ camp, and tell them we Asashins call for peace. Don’t inform them of Markus’ actions. When Markus refuses to form peace and an argument starts in the camp, he will show his true face very soon.

KYLE
How are you so sure?

Chao smiles.

CHAO LIN
Because I know well my adversaries.

KYLE
What will happen even if he shows his true face?

CHAO LIN
Your villagers will judge him themselves.

KYLE
But people aren’t always just.

CHAO LIN
(smiles)
When it is about unjust authorities, they always are.

Kyle falls in his thoughts. Then he smiles.
KYLE
Thanks for everything.

He goes back into the tent. Chao watches him as he disappears behind the curtains.

INT. THE VILLAGERS' CAMP, THE VILLAGE ELDERS' TENT - NIGHT

The next night after the clash, Kyle and Norman are in the village elders' tent, acting as ambassadors of the Asashins.

KYLE
(to the villagers)
They say they want peace. They sent a Sakura flower, which is the symbol of peace in their tribe.

MR. DINKINS - the elder of the village - attentively listens to Kyle and then speaks.

MR. DINKINS
Hmm... What do they offer as a compensation for the losses they have caused to us?

KYLE
They promise to send troops to aid us in each battle against other villages, and pay us ten thousand silver pieces as a tribute for terrorizing our villagers before. Instead, they demand that their borders of the Blood Forest wouldn’t be trespassed without their permission, or they shall have the absolute freedom of actions on their territory, including the proper punishment of trespassers. That is how they said.

MR. DINKINS
Hmm...
(strokes his white stubble)
That’s actually how our late commander, Jake Thornton, had envisioned.

(to Kyle)
We were ready to finish our negotiations with a contract of truce, but then Jake Thornton was killed by the Asashins on the battlefield.
Kyle notices how Markus grows nervous. He feels inner rage.

   KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
   That bastard... So it was really
   his doing.

He feels Norman's touch on a shoulder - it is a sign to calm
himself down. So he takes a deep breath and calmly looks up
at Mr. Dinkins.

   MR. DINKINS
   Well, we shall accept the truce
   then.

   MARKUS
   That can't be!

He leaps up.

   MARKUS (CONT'D)
   Jake Thornton was treacherously
   killed by them! We can't trust
   them!

Kyle feels inner rage again.

   KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
   How does that scum dare talk of my
   father so shamelessly?!

He feels Norman's hand on a shoulder again. He understands
the sign and takes a deep breath, calming himself down.

   KYLE
   By the way, the chief of the
   Asashins, Lord Chao Lin, sent this
   sword to you, as the first sign of
   repayment. It was found in the
   heart of deceased Jake Thornton,
   and still has his blood on.

He takes out a golden-handled sword and gives it to Mr.
Dinkins.

The villagers are shocked - it is not an Asashinese sword but
their village one. One of the young warriors, MR. SMITH,
speaks.

   MR. SMITH
   It's a sword like the ones my
   father makes - the village
   blacksmith. It couldn't belong to
   the Asashins!
A second youth - a professional swordsman - speaks up.

SECOND YOUTH
But the Asashins never pick swords from the battlefield. They consider their swords their sacred companions and only wield Asashinese style blades.

THE VILLAGERS
Then why did they take this sword?

SECOND YOUTH
Dillan, you have lived with the Asashins for long. Can you explain it?

DILLAN - a trader who has lived with the Asashins for long - speaks.

DILLAN
Only when their adversary is treacherously killed the Asashins take the sword he was killed with, to let him rest in peace, and leave the blood on the killer sword as a remembrance of one’s unjust death. They have that kind of a custom and that is considered an honour by them.

THE VILLAGERS
But does that mean Jake Thornton was treacherously killed?!

MR. DINKINS
(frowns)
It turns out so.

Henry enters the tent and remarks in surprise, once sees the golden sword.

HENRY
(to Markus)
Hey, Markus, isn't that the sword you said you lost?

Markus grows pale. Everyone looks at him. His lips start trembling.

THE VILLAGERS
No way...
MR. DINKINS
(strictly)
Markus, is that really your sword?

Markus can't answer, so speechless he is, trembling. Then he faints and falls off.

The warriors start a heated discussion, but Kyle can't hear them, as his thoughts are flying elsewhere.

KYLE (V.O.) (THOUGHTS)
(smiles)
Thank you, Chao Lin.

He finally feels peace within.

EXT. THE ASASHINS' VILLAGE - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)
After that day, the villagers looked into the case, and Markus was deemed guilty and got apprehended.

Markus is shown in a dungeon.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Cherrie, Kyle, and Norman began to live with the Asashins.

Cherrie, Kyle, and Norman are in the Asashins' camp. Cherrie and Chao are spending time together, smiling. Norman talks with young Asashinese kids with a bright smile on his face, while Kyle walks in front of the warrior lines, armoured.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kyle became the leader of the Asashinese armies and established peace with the villagers. He was elected as a new commander of the village troops too. Thus, the village and the Asashin armies united.

Kyle is sitting on his white horse, commanding the joint armies of villagers and the Asashins.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kyle married an Asashinese woman - a Lin Clan representative - and had a happy life with the Asashins.
A beautiful almond-eyed woman and Kyle get married in Asashinese style – dressed in a kimono and a haori, under that same cherry blossom tree where Chao and Cherrie had pledged their love in their youth.

Chao, Cherrie, and Norman are smiling. The villagers attend the feast too.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Then, was born Shao Lin – a hafu just like his step-grandfather Chao Lin.

SEE Shao Lin – a little baby with green almond eyes and black hair – Kyle's and the Asashin woman's son.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT’D)
A boy who would prove to be a legend, and a sign of peace between the villagers and the Asashins. But that, my friends, is another story.

THE END.