

K.W.C. '92

L-V-L
&
陳 CHAN

Impotence may be our subject,
but climax is certainly our verb.

— The Authors

"DREAM OF THE WALLED CITY"

Episode 1: *First Shot*

Teleplay by

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and

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Registered WGA
DREAM OF THE WALLED CITY
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FADE IN:

KOWLOON WALLED CITY ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

The deserted rooftop of the Kowloon walled city. A flat concrete slab of uneven levels littered with rusted objects of every kind from every decade. There are no sweepers here.

Two girls of about eight years old, YINGYING and XI CHUN, huddle beneath a blue tarp as the first spring rain taps gently, then thrashes down on their heads. Over the concrete edge lies the whole of their island, Kowloon, and, sat atop their fortress built on the foundations of a thousand other fortresses, their Walled City, YINGYING and XI CHUN wonder if they'll ever leave; Will they ever see and touch those green swaying branches forever viewed from afar; could they ever know for sure that those black dashes smeared into the sea were really ships like they were told, that they weren't instead giant whales or squids summoned to eat their imagined princes? All this made them smile even in the harsh rain beating down and dripping onto their noses.

Then suddenly, for the briefest of moments, the rain stops. Craning their necks up toward the sky they watch the belly of an airplane passing silently overhead like the black underside of a whale. Their faces remain in the sudden shadow of the plane, which seems suspended above them like some great protector.

XI CHUN
(whispers)
Where's it going?

YINGYING leans over and whispers something into XI CHUN's ear. The two girls giggle until the plane has passed and the rain returns, harder still.

Cutting through the loud tap-tap-tap on the metal shutters below, a warm voice calls out.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Xiaopang! Xiaopang! You better not
 be out on the roof again! You'll
 catch a spring cold and be dead
 before the summer sun can warm you!

XI CHUN pulls the tarp all around her, dumping the water held in the creases out onto their feet. YINGYING laughs and pulls at the tarp, exposing both of them to the rain.

YINGYING
 Xiaopang! Xiaopang! Little fatty!
 Little fatty!

XI CHUN jabs her tongue out defiantly at YINGYING and runs off. YINGYING follows quickly after her.

WALLED CITY APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

An impossibly small apartment made of only nooks and obtuse angles. The walls are painted a dim blue, and the only decoration is a glossy poster of Maggie Chung. At a table crammed into one corner a woman, XI CHUN'S MOTHER, sits folding dumplings.

The pitter-patter of little feet can be heard running along in the hall until the two girls arrive in the doorway soaked to the bone. XI'S MOTHER looks up, trying desperately to look furious but failing.

XI'S MOTHER
 What have I told you about catching
 a cold in the rain, and then you
 could have fallen off that roof!
 It'll fall down any day now if
 the Tangs build that balcony! And
 Yingying, what are you doing here?!
 Your father would ground you for a
 whole year if he knew you were in
 this part of the city all alone!

The two girls drop their eyes and pout. XI'S MOTHER, unable to keep up the pretense of hard discipline, gathers the girls up and wraps them in a towel grabbed from above the sink.

XI'S MOTHER
 Come sit here by the stove and get
 warmed up. You can help me make
 dumplings.

XI CHUN and YINGYING jump together like one two-headed girl into a chair pulled to the table, each taking a hand full of filling and wetting their already wet fingers to fold it all into sloppy dumplings. XI'S MOTHER laughs to herself and sits down with the girls.

For a moment all three sit together filling and folding, filling and folding, until suddenly XI'S mother screams.

Two loud bangs echo between the tight concrete walls, then another, followed by the trailing sound of bare feet running away down the corridor outside.

The two girls, held tight together by the blanket, sit in silence, each with an unwrapped dumpling slowly spilling between their fingers.

XI CHUN screams, then YINGYING grabs at her ears and shuts her eyes.

From the other end of the corridor comes the sound of thick soled shoes running quickly toward the door. A middle-aged man dashes in through the doorway panting. He shouts out into the hallway and more steps can be heard running. At first he looks only at something on the floor. As his eyes survey the room they suddenly fall on the two girls. He stands there rooted to the tiles as if for a split second another plane had passed overhead and made everything silent again. Four or five men, all dressed in suits and stained ties rush in through the door, though none seem very surprised. Their entry knocks the man back to earth. Where seconds before his eyes had been tinged with steel, now his gaze threatens to burst in its fullness.

MAN
Yingying...

He grabs YINGYING, who tries desperately to hold on to XI CHUN, and carries her quickly out between the other men and away down the corridor.

XI CHUNG sits alone, no longer screaming, only crying.

CUT TO:

CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Hidden behind a half-built wall in the corridor, a teenage boy breathes as if just saved from drowning. The sound of the gun gripped tight in his fist tapping against the wall almost gives him away to the men just around the corner, but he grabs his wrist and pulls it tight against his chest until the shaking stops.

OPENING SEQUENCE



WALLED CITY

TIGER

confidante

ZHONG
鍾

K14?

#1 boy

JOÃO

runs syndicate
including brothel

JACKIE
TONIGHT

semi-brother/sister rel.
emotional tensions under

XI CHUN
奚 春

BFF

YING — YING
莹 莹

Father / daughter

Business deal

BREWER

Father / son

NASH?

Parental encouragement /
reluctant affection?

aspirations

AMERICAN COLLEGE

OUTSIDE WORLD

YING YING

SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

~~but~~ COMPASSION

harder than she acts (or maybe)

many disguises

has well-spread love - ambiguous affections

with Jiao + Juyi sister / girlfriend / flirtation

with ASH, initial forced flirtation to aid

Father, perhaps develops? (before Huiy

with Xi Chun - old friendship, ^{not hers} Huiy, Xiang

in brother cold has some

ambiguity. Tenderness in a

cold place

YING — YING

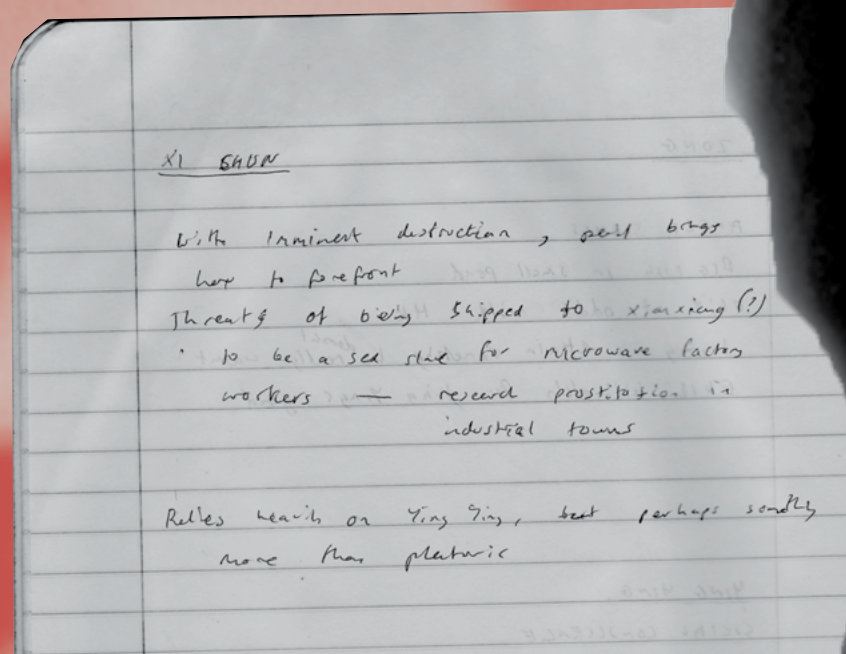
莹

莹



XI CHUN
奚春





JOÃO



ZHONG

鍾

ZONG

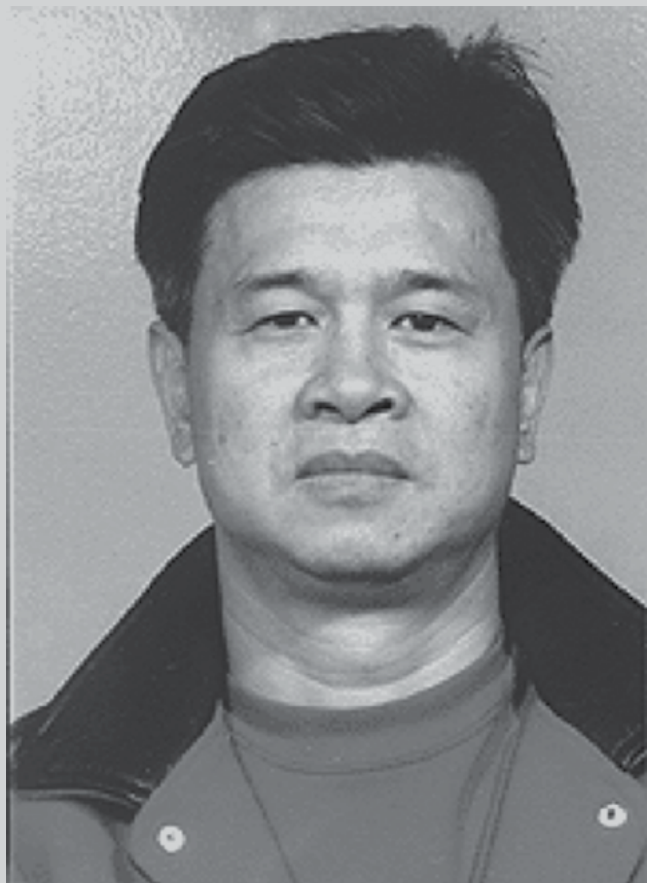
ANGER SCENES

BIG FISH in small pond

still at odds with HK

trying to attain something he ^{doesn't} really want

EVIL ultimately for Ying Yings good



GIRL'S BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

An eighteen year old girl, YINGYING, jolts awake in bed. She breathes as if she were still drowning, in jerks and spurts. Tears paste her hair to her lips. Her room is large and decorated in bright colors. The only light comes from a brand new laptop sat atop a stack of American university brochures.

CUT TO:

BROTHEL BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

An eighteen year old girl, XI CHUN, is shaken awake by a bare-chested old man. She's not been asleep for long, but long enough for tears to return like memories. Her short black hair looks liquid in the red light.

OLD MAN
(impotent yelling)
Wake up! Wake up! I'm not paying you
to sleep. Wake up!

XI CHUNG does not move, save her lips trembling.

The old man rolls out of bed and leaves, slamming the door shut behind him. Her eyes open slightly but she looks at nothing.

TRIADS BOARD ROOM - MIDNIGHT

The middle-aged man, called ZHONG (*General*) by most, is now older and greying at the edges. A sharp tone wakes him, his head held up by an arm propped on an expensive oak table. He looks around to check if any of the other black and grey suited men at the table, the Kowloon Triads council, have noticed his drifting off.

TRIADS BOARD ROOM - MIDNIGHT

The teenage boy, JOÃO, is now a man. His dozing off causes him to fall off the wall he is leaning against at the back of the room where the other second-in-commands are waiting for their bosses to finish another meeting. Before tumbling too far he rights himself. He stares out across the room and shows no sign of remembering. It's obvious he knows his dreams well.

CARPARK OUTSIDE BOARD ROOM - MIDNIGHT

Puddles reflecting neon tell that rain has been and gone. JOÃO leans heavily against the door of a brand new black BMW. He hums to himself (the opening tune.) A plane drifting over head drowns out his voice. The silence left by the plane's trailing away is broken by the noise of a large metal door slamming open then shut and a group of voices coming closer.

ZHONG, an unlit cigarette hanging from his lips, walks quickly to JOÃO, who stands up a bit straighter.

ZHONG
The old man bought it, even though
Xiao Wang wedged in as much as he
could. Since it's our territory
everything with the Americans goes
through us first.

JOÃO
...and we report back to Lao Yu?

ZHONG
We tell him exactly what he wants
to hear the whole way. That's your
job. You keep everything tight. I'd
rather one of our own end up in the
bay than have word get out if we
have any problems.

JOÃO
Will we?

ZHONG
(staring away)
Light my cigarette.

The two of them stand there side by side alone. JOÃO takes out his lighter and lights ZHONG's cigarette. Another plane passes over, but neither wants to speak anyway.

After only three drags ZHONG flicks his cigarette away and pretends to relax his shoulders. He glances at his watch.

ZHONG
Go check on Yingying for me.

JOÃO
She's at home. I'm sure she's fine.

ZHONG
Take the car. I have more business here.

JOÃO doesn't protest. He climbs into the driver's seat of the black sedan and pulls off as ZHONG walks slowly back to the board room.

YINGYING'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is pitch black. Even the computer is turned off. The front door of the apartment closes outside and footsteps can be heard coming toward the door. With a creak the bedroom door cracks open. A head peers in, then a hand reaches and flicks on the ceiling light. JOÃO stands in the doorway staring at the empty bed which has been revealed by the illumination, but he doesn't seem surprised or alarmed. He looks around the

room, noticing a small diary poking out from under her pillow. For a moment he hesitates. Quickly, he reaches for the pillow and the book, but only so as to make the unmade bed. But, when he goes to place the diary back under the now smoothed pillow he notices a sticker pasted to the back, the kind taken in a photo-booth. It's a photograph of YINGYING and XI CHUN when they are fifteen, each striking a different pose. JOÃO holds the book softly, as if he might drop it because its lightness is too heavy. Than suddenly he throws the diary with all his strength against the wall, scattering the pages around the room.

In the snowfall of white pages he is paralyzed. But, his paralysis is broken by the ringing of his phone. Taking it from his pocket, he answers:

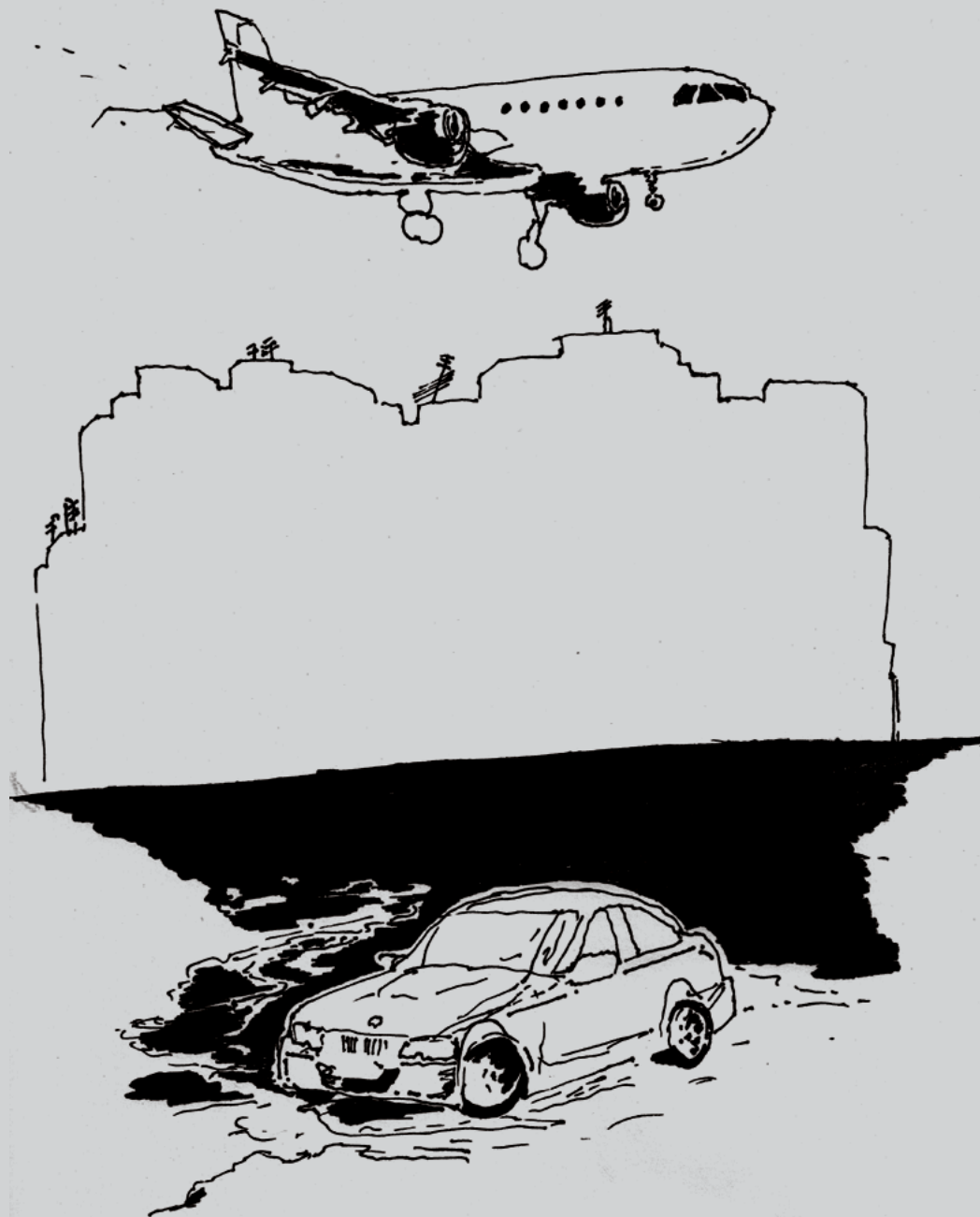
JOÃO
Boss?...Yes, I'm here...She's asleep in bed. Do you want me to stay for a bit or...Yes sir, is there anything else before tomorrow?...Yes sir...I'll...no, I promise I won't tonight, I couldn't stand the taste.

JOÃO re-pockets the phone and rushes out the door, forgetting the pages scattered about the still lit bedroom.

STREET STALL - NIGHT

The dampness of the wet street evaporates under the heat of the many stalls burning open flames. A certain mist, a city mist, obscures and reveals at random the scenes one sees every night in the walled city. An upturned scooter acts as a table for a trio of men slurping midnight noodles. Elsewhere a vendor yells and strikes out at a vagrant asking only to pick at bits of tofu dropped by the day's customers.

And, amongst all these citizens of the walled city



“She was so sad and so calm, at once so gentle and so reserved, that near her one felt oneself seized by an icy charm, as we shudder in churches at the perfume of flowers mingling with the cold of the marble.”

(from Madame Bovary)

14 July 1991
from : B. Ko
to : C.A. de Pegões
subject : idea

“There’s a television in the room I’ve been staying in for a few days.

Tonight a revelation:
Voice-over of girl writing letter to lover saying not to look for her.

cut
Girl walking along cliff-side past lighthouses, steps to cliffs edge and jumps (they must be as high as Dover at least.)

cut
Girl’s body twisted under water, then a close-up of her eyes opening and her body moving.

cut
Fly-over shot of Carnival cruise ship pulling at quick pace through ocean in bright sun.

cut
Lover walking girl in wheelchair along the deck of the cruise ship. She has minor bandaging around head and a broken arm. Receives a phone-call, then throws the cell-phone overboard.
THE END.”

wanders a girl disguised behind a pink wig and sunglasses. Two fingers grip a cigarette as if she’s only ever smoked alone. Only her thin, healthy frame and her delicate, stumbling stride give away her identity: YINGYING.

Somewhere behind the mist JOÃO stands silently watching her. After only three drags YINGYING drops the cigarette and walks confidently toward a small door made of scrap-metal. The vagrant scrambles from his crouched position behind a tire to pick up the still burning cigarette. YINGYING knocks on the door and someone on the other side opens, allowing the red light of a brothel to spill into the street. No one seems to notice or care.

All the time JOÃO watches. Once YINGYING is inside and the metal door has shut, he walks to the door himself. However, he does not have to knock for the door to open. The man on the other side of the door comes out and stands at a strange attention.

DOORMAN
(faint)
Everything is fine here boss. No need to come inside at this time of night. Shouldn’t you be off?

JOÃO
Do you check everyone who comes in?

DOORMAN
Of course sir, like you always say!

JOÃO
Every one?

DOORMAN
...like you always say.

JOÃO
And that last girl...with the pink hair?

The DOORMAN looks over his shoulder searching for an answer.

DOORMAN
Isn’t she... just one of the girls?

JOÃO
Is she?

DOORMAN
...yes. I checked her myself.

JOÃO grabs the DOORMAN by the throat and throws him against the metal door. Everyone in the small alley looks, but only for a split second before going back about their business.

JOÃO
That’s my boss’s daughter you idiot.

DOORMAN
Your...again?

JOÃO spits at the DOORMAN’s feet, then helps him up.

JOÃO
She can’t know I’m here. Keep an eye on her like usual.

DOORMAN
But why does she always...

But, the DOORMAN doesn’t finish his sentence before JOÃO starts back to his station in the mist.

BROTHEL CORRIDOR:

YINGYING walks firmly down through a paint-stripped corridor bathed in red light. At each door she peaks in looking for someone. At the end of the hallway she finds her door and walks in.

BROTHEL ROOM:

A red walled room illuminated by that inescapable red light. XI CHUN lies asleep on a bed wrapped up in the sheets. For a moment YINGYING only watches her friend, wondering if somehow they share the same dreams. She thinks how similar their hair is in color and length, how their lips part ever so slightly at the same jokes, and how their eyes used to fill with the same tears during the saddest moments of the same films. She wonders if they couldn't really be sisters. She wishes they were sisters.

YINGYING
(whispering)
Xi Chun. Xi Chun!

XI CHUN's eyes open slightly, and with her first glance comes a laugh. For a moment hers is the face of a child just woken from a nightmare they cannot yet understand and thus find funny.

YINGYING
What?! What's so funny?

XI CHUN
Pink tonight? And those awful
sunglasses!

YINGYING pretends to pout like they did when they were girls. She throws off the wig and sunglasses then jabs out her tongue at XI CHUN. The two girls laugh for a long while, not needing to speak.

XI CHUN
What are you doing here?

YINGYING
Seeing you. What else?

XI CHUNG smiles, but a smile of sadness and sudden embarrassment.

XI CHUN
But, not like this. I-

YINGYING smiles for them both.

YINGYING
Don't worry. It's just for a few
weeks right? Like you said... and
I'm going to get you some money so
that-

XI CHUN smiles painfully again to stop her.

XI CHUN
So, hows Li Xun?

YINGYING
Li Xun? Gone.

XI CHUN
Gone!?

YINGYING
Teresa came back from english school
in Guangzhou, so he had to go and
propose to her.

Now it was YINGYING's turn to smile painfully.



XI CHUNG
Oh well. He was a rat anyway.

YINGYING nods, and the two friends laugh again. But, their laughter is broken by an awkward knocking at the door.

VOICE (O.S.)
(slurring heavily)

You in there you stupid whore?
Stupid whore owes me money and I'm
gonna get it if I have to break her!

XI CHUN's face immediately flushes of all its beautiful color. She motions to YINGYING that she should hide behind a dressing curtain, but YINGYING has already made to open the door.

She turns the handle and a track-suited man of 35 stumbles into the room.

XI CHUN
Yingying no!

But, YINGYING doesn't hear. Her face is cold, a strange bitterness, a steel eyed confidence. She goes to the man and pushes at him.

YINYING
Who are you calling a stupid whore!
She's my friend and I'll get you
chucked in an alley if you're not
careful!

The man, XU CHUN's PIMP, looks up at YINGYING with a rye smile. Without a word he grabs at YINGYING, who kicks at his face. The man falls back and XI CHUN screams as he reaches into his shirt for a gun.

... YingYing is destined for
destruction... certainly a martyr.

PIMP
Stupid bitch.

But, even with a gun aimed at her gut, YINGYING stands tall above the man.

YINGYING
Shoot and see what happens. Don't
you know who my father is?

Immediately after the words leave her mouth she stumbles back, wishing she could collect them and shove them back in her mouth. The PIMP cocks his drunken head at her, unsure of what she could mean. However, his glaring eyes are interrupted by the black figure of a man rushing into the room and grabbing YINGYING. The figure drags her out towards the door as she screams to XI CHUNG, clawing at the door.

BROTHEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The light of the hallway reveals the figure to be JOÃO. He pushes Yingying to the wall until she stops her clawing and sees who he is. With the recognition of his face her body immediately goes stiff beneath his grip.

YINGYING
What are you...what are you doing
here?

JOÃO
(catching his breath)
I was getting noodles outside and
someone yelled that a gun was pulled
in here. When no one else wanted to
go in to help I came in and found
you here screaming like an idiot and
about to get yourself killed.

YINGYING
Killed?! Don't...

But, all too suddenly YINGYING realizes just how close she's been to death. She remembers the alcohol on the PIMP's breath and his loose finger on the trigger. She clings to JOÃO, and he realizes that its time to take her home. As he guides her out through the door he passes the astonished gaze of the DOORMAN.

BLACK SEDAN - DAWN

The sun drips out through the passed night's clouds still covering Kowloon. JOÃO speeds through the ever lightening city as if he were afraid of the luminous dawn rays passing now through every crack in the thick built city's structure. In the passenger seat YINGYING has fallen asleep. JOÃO glances over at her and wonders if she is dreaming and if her dreams might somehow be the same as his. A bump in the uneven road wakes YINGYING, but in the half-light she's unsure whether or not she is still dreaming. Her eyes fall on JOÃO, who's eyes can only now look straight ahead.

YINGYING'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Through the bedroom door, left open in JOÃO's haste the night before, YINGYING can be seen stumbling wearily about removing her shoes and jacket. JOÃO tries to help her, but she playfully resists. As she slides closer to her bedroom YINGYING notices the papers lying all around her room, and she dashes in to see. Her eyes are no longer half-asleep.

YINGYING
What's this! Is this some kind of
joke?!

JOÃO runs in behind her, suddenly remembering.

YINGYING
You're all bastards, every one of
you! I don't care what he thinks I
do. Stop spying on me!

JOÃO
Who's spying on you? No one is-

YINGYING
Get out! You're a pig like the rest
of them. You only ever listen to
him, to the stupid things he tells
you to do. You're all toys, and
you're the worst because you think
he trusts you!

JOÃO
But, I saved you tonight!

YINGYING
You only think you did. Like I said,
I could've handled myself. Now get
out!

JOÃO stares at her folding figure as she crouches and crawls to collect all of the papers he scattered. Whatever he wishes he could say won't come, and after awhile of being ignored and watching he can only retreat back out the door.

When YINGYING hears the door close behind him she stops her collecting and falls to her bed in cold tears.

WALLED CITY ROOFTOP - MORNING

Once the playground of curious little girls, the roof of the walled city has now been stripped clean of anything that can be sold for scrap metal. Only a few old rice sacks, dirtied blankets and an old blue tarp lie scattered around in their uselessness.

“And who could describe the expression worn by the new made Queen of Heaven? The purest humility, the loveliest sense of humbleness before a great undeserved honour, an incomprehensible immeasurable happiness, suffered her features, expressing what she herself felt as well as the conception of the role she was playing.” (from Elective Affinities)

[This, what is always being torn away from
Yíngyíng at every turn...]

JOÃO crouches next to the edge, thinking only of the thousand foot drop, were he to only take that final step. He pulls a bottle of something from his pocket and takes a deep swig, followed by a hard cough.

The sound of small feet chasing each other, little girl’s voices calling back and forth. Echoes ringing like inside a room of thin metal walls.

JOÃO turns to look over his shoulder, but there’s no one there. The echoes are his own, dreams pretending in the daytime, infiltrating and plaguing.

His phone rings. The bottle is exchanged for the phone in his pocket.

JOÃO
(wiping his lips)

Hello?... Oh, yes sir, I’m just...
Again? That’s the second time this
month,...Yeah, I’ll grab him. Do
you want me to just shake him up or
bring him in to you?...Ok. I’ll call
you when I’ve got an answer.

He hangs up the phone and stands to walk away. As he lurches toward the stairwell the first spring rain begins to fall, light at first, then always heavier. JOÃO pulls the collar of his jacket up around his neck.

ALLEYWAY – MORNING

JOÃO huddles beside a LITTLE GIRL under a tattered green awning as the rain washes away the small alley both are trapped in. He pulls a cigarette from his pocket and draws a lighter towards the tip. But, before he can light the cigarette the LITTLE GIRL points to him and cries out:

LITTLE GIRL 1
Killer!

JOÃO stares at the LITTLE GIRL’s eyes and her accusing finger, never once thinking that she means the cigarette and not him, not his trembling hands. A tremor up his spine drops the cigarette from his lips. The LITTLE GIRL kneels down and picks up the cigarette and holds it out to him. JOÃO only stares at the outstretched hand. Confused, the girl drops the cigarette at his feet and runs off out into the rain laughing.

JOÃO watches her as she runs away, and with each of her trailing steps the rain lessens until neither her footsteps or the pitter-patter of rain can be heard anymore. After checking the clouds, JOÃO walks out and continues a few steps up the alley to a semi-hidden doorway. On the wall beside the door is spray-painted a massive red ‘X’. JOÃO knocks at the door, and while he waits for someone to answer he inspects the ‘X’. He touches the wall and the paint rubs off red. It’s been sprayed recently; his fingers are stained crimson.

The door opens slightly and a TEENAGE GIRL’s head pokes out.

TEENAGE GIRL
Yeah?

JOÃO
(pointing to the ‘X’)
What’s all this then? Who did that?

The TEENAGE GIRL shrugs and says nothing. JOÃO gives her a hard look. It obviously gets through to her.

TEENAGE GIRL

Yeah, well some guys in hard-hats came around, guys from the city or something, not people from around here, and they started spraying certain buildings. I think I heard them say something about tearing places down or building new places. Whatever. They always threaten that but we don't care. They never go through with it anyways. We'll always be here in the end.

JOÃO takes another puzzled look at the wall, then remembers his first task.

JOÃO

Is Jackie K in?

TEENAGE GIRL

He goes by Jackie Tonight now.

JOÃO

Whatever he calls himself... is he in?

The TEENAGE GIRL steps aside and opens the door to JOÃO.

TEENAGE GIRL

Upstairs and to the right, but I think he's with somebody now.

JOÃO's eyes thin and his body tenses.

JOÃO

Who?

TEENAGE GIRL

How am I supposed to know? Another one like you. Cute, but a bit thick.

JOÃO gives her a sarcastic smile and smack of the lips.

JOÃO

They don't make 'em like they used to babe.

He trots up the stairs, but without making much of a sound. The TEENAGE GIRL watches, seeming not to care as he pulls a small gun from the back of his belt. JOÃO checks the bullets in the chamber, then thrusts through the first door on the right.

For a moment there's silence.

JOÃO(O.S.)

(yelling)

Damn it Jackie K!

Then the sound of gun shots erupts from the room. Stray bullets spray through the wall, and the TEENAGE GIRL ducks down, though remaining always strangely calm. After a further exchange of fire, bullets smacking into the wall opposite the door, JOÃO bursts out into the stairwell at a full gallop and hurls himself head first down the stairs. At the bottom he clatters into the TEENAGE GIRL, who finally lets out a lethal scream. Quickly, he picks himself up from the floor and stumbles out into the alleyway. The TEENAGE GIRL screams again, this time even louder, as she wipes a smudge of blood from her face, thinking that it must be hers. But it's not hers. Limping as best he can, JOÃO drags himself along the wall, adding from his shoulder a thin layer of red smeared across the still damp 'X'. As he disappears through the alleyway two black-suited men leap down the stairs in pursuit. A fat little face peaks out, shell-shocked, from the door (JACKIE TONIGHT), checking if the coast is now clear.

BLACK SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

JOÃO lies face down along the back seat of the black sedan. After a few moments we hear running footsteps passing, stopping, then keeping on in another direction. Once he can be sure that his assailants have gone, JOÃO turns over onto his back and checks his wounds. Opening his jacket he sees that he's been grazed by a bullet in the shoulder. He takes a deep breath.

JOÃO
(to himself)
Bastards...and bad shots.

He does his best to hide the blood stains and pulls himself back up. After a moment of collecting himself he gets back out of the car.

ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

JOÃO stands at the same door, which hasn't been shut. He pretends to knock, then walks in and up the stairs.

JACKIE TONIGHT'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A white room, dimly lit by strip-lights taped to the ceiling, with no furniture save a couch pushed cock-eyed into the furthest corner from the door. A cheap-made CD player with large speaks sits stacked in the opposite corner surrounded by hundreds of CD's strewn about the floor without their cases. The TEENAGE GIRL kneels beside the couch fanning a track-suited man of about 35, fat and sweating heavily: JACKIE TONIGHT.

Without their noticing, JOÃO arrives in the doorway, doing his best to hide his injury but still limping. He slides himself silently to the CD player in the corner. He leans down and presses the play button.

JOÃO
What have you been listening to
lately Jackie K?

The speakers crackle and "Cathy's Clown" by the Everly Brothers blares out. The TEENAGE GIRL jumps in surprise and JACKIE TONIGHT falls off the couch onto the floor. JOÃO chuckles to himself and makes a few movements like dancing. JACKIE TONIGHT rights himself and pushes for the TEENAGE GIRL to leave the room. She refuses to budge. JOÃO cuts the song short, and the room is once more returned to the silence of the humming lights.

JACKIE TONIGHT
(lips shaking)
Hey J...don't...well...

JOÃO
What?

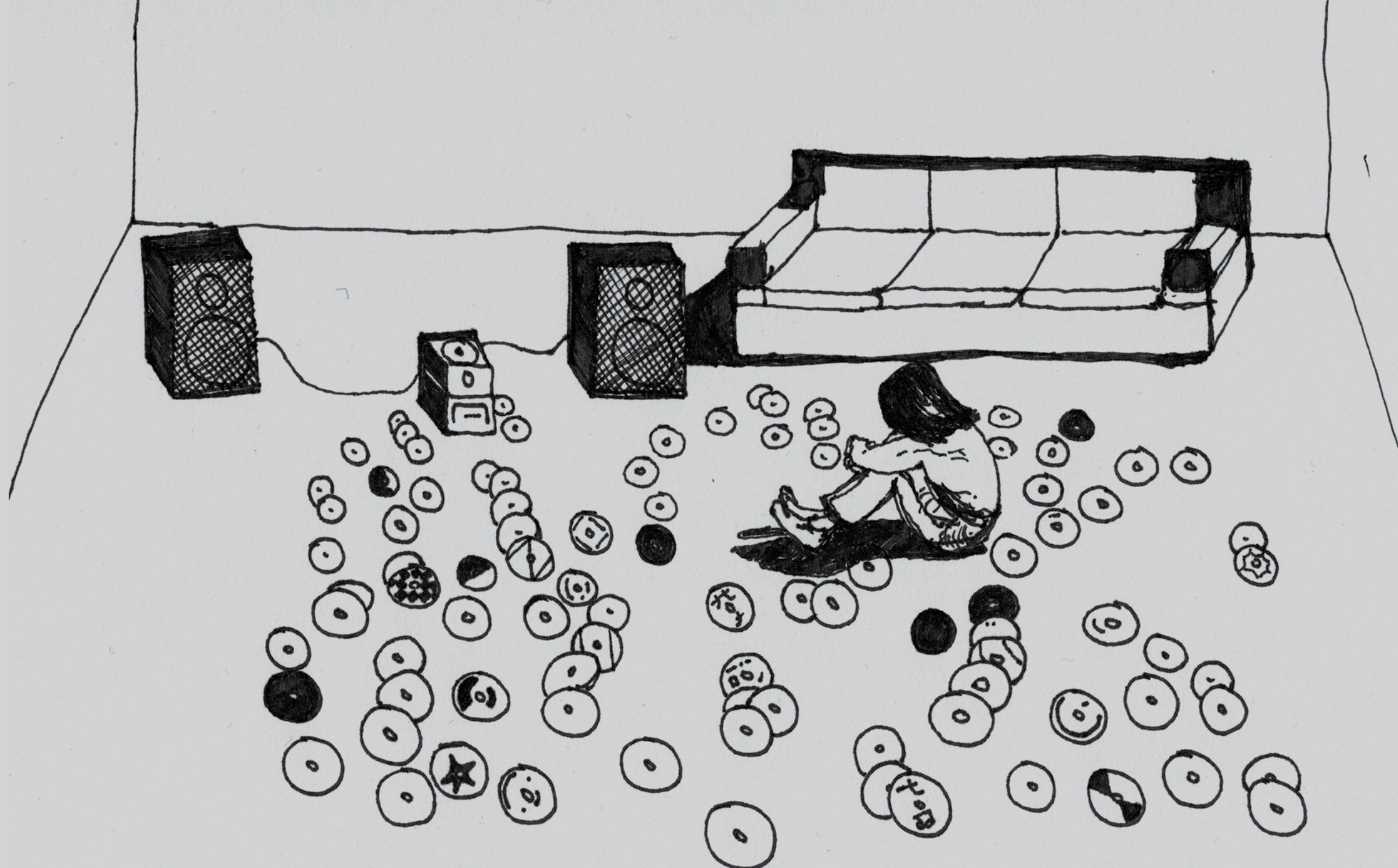
JACKIE TONIGHT
I mean...the girl is here. Not in
front of her.

JOÃO
What?

JOÃO stares blankly at the sweating man.

JOÃO
I don't care JACKIE K. I really
don't. I don't mind at all. You're
living on a thin string as it is,
and it's only getting thinner. But,
it's not snapped yet. So, I'll give
you a chance to keep your CD player
and your little girl.

JOÃO walks over to JACKIE TONIGHT and the TEENAGE GIRL
huddled beside him and kneels down so that the two men





are face to face.

JACKIE TONIGHT
Anything...

JOÃO
Names. Who was that? Who do they
work for, and where will they be
tonight at eight o'clock?

JACKIE TONIGHT tries to answer right away, but JOÃO
continues.

JOÃO
Once you've got that done you're
going to tell me what's that painted
on your wall out there. You don't
usually let little Li Qing or
Zhuangzi tag up your property.

TEENAGE GIRL
I already told you the-

JOÃO shuts her up with a glance.

JACKIE TONIGHT
You know who they are and where
they'll be tonight. I don't have to
tell you.

JOÃO
Fair enough. But how about why they
were here?

JACKIE TONIGHT scratches his head.

JACKIE TONIGHT
Well...

JOÃO
Don't worry Jackie K, I don't mind
shooting you if you'd prefer this
were a classic.

JACKIE TONIGHT's back goes rigid and his tongue fumbles
to say something.

JACKIE TONIGHT
It's the same thing. It's, well...
how...they're going around...around
and...

JOÃO
Come on. You're stalling.

JACKIE TONIGHT
Well, word comes and goes around
that you've got the line to the
Americans whenever and however they
come in. But some, obviously I can't
give you any names...

JOÃO
Obviously...

JACKIE TONIGHT
...some don't think the boss has his
percentages right... and maybe his
memory is a little short.

JOÃO thinks for a moment, then waits in silence for
JACKIE TONIGHT to continue.

JACKIE TONIGHT
The big 'X' is from a preliminary survey. It's like in my old village when they used to find the dead trees and cut them down so they wouldn't infect all the others. 'Cleansing.' Hah! But, now its us who are getting cut out. Good riddance I say.

JOÃO
Why didn't we hear about any preliminary survey? Anything from them goes through us.

JACKIE TONIGHT
(smiling shakily)
I'm only a small fat man with a young girl to keep me company. What do I know about big business like that?

JOÃO gives JACKIE TONIGHT the same sarcastic smile as he gave the TEENAGE GIRL, though this time no 'babe.' He stands up, pulls out his gun and fires a quick round through the CD player. JACKIE TONIGHT squeals and squirms, but says nothing. JOÃO pockets his gun and walks out.

ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Having forgotten for a moment his wound, suddenly, back in the overcast morning, the fresh salt air of the bay stinging, the pain comes flooding back into his shoulder. JOÃO pulls himself along back down the alley toward the black sedan parked around the corner.

VICTORIA HARBOUR - NIGHT

On a small motorboat, bobbing over the sparkling water. The lights of the city in swirling reflections. Huddled down in the boat is JOÃO, he holds the collar of his

windbreaker up to his cheek, squinting from the spray. A MOUSTACHED MAN dressed in workwear sits behind, steering the little motor. A large white yacht comes into view, glowing slightly.

MOUSTACHED MAN
Police are buzzing around tonight like flies round a dead dog.

JOÃO
They found a body washed up at Kwun Tong earlier. A girl, they're bound to make a fuss, they're all worried it's one of their mistresses.

MOUSTACHED MAN
Whenever there's money around there's gonna be savagery.

The little boat comes to the side of the yacht - it looks like a toy in comparison. The sound of Garth Brooks sounds muffled yet hellishly clear. Coming in too fast, the starboard grazes the side of the yacht.

BREWER (O.S.)
What the hell is going on down there?!!

MOUSTACHED MAN
(strained, yanking on a rope)
Just... a bump.

BREWER (O.S.)
Sounds like a pair of rutting buffalo!

A rope-ladder drops down suddenly, causing the MOUSTACHED MAN to lose his balance and fall in the water. JOÃO doesn't adjust his gaze and climbs up the ladder.



8 September 1991
from : C.A. de Pegões
to : B. Ko
subject : two more

What if we're always unsure of where Yingying is going exactly, that is, unsure of her trajectory after graduating... then suddenly were let in that she's decided to go abroad. She's got it in her sights and it's all that's keeping her alive through all the destruction witnessed around her. Then in the end (following a scene where all her bags are packed to leave, to escape) the last thread breaks and the sword hanging over her neck through the whole series comes down and ends it all. But, in her death all the other characters, wearied and broken, find some kind of redemption and see the evil in their ways.

32

YACHT DECK - MOMENTS LATER

BREWER
Well isn't it about time?!

BREWER slaps JOÃO on the back, in a hearty manner. JOÃO flinches and instinctually moves for his gun, but checks himself and the movement becomes a kind of flop.

BREWER
Oh ho! I do forget myself sometimes
- haven't adjusted to the slight
frames you have round here.

JOÃO looks up to meet BREWER's gaze, half irritated, half confused. BREWER is a large man, barrel-chested, wearing a loose-fitting, open necked, short sleeve shirt, and longish shorts, all of which looks very stiffly ironed.

BREWER
How darn rude I am, going on like
this when I haven't even introduced
myself to my guest. The name's
Brewer, you must be Mr ZHONG?

JOÃO
(coughs)
Mr ZHONG is occupied this evening,
my name is João, I take care of
things on his behalf.

BREWER's eyes narrow.

BREWER
Well I thought you looked a little
small...

Silence for a moment, both eyeing each other with a
degree of suspicion.

33

João, eh? The fella who runs the
7/11 back home goes by the same
name, how about that?

JOÃO
Mmm, I wouldn't know.

BREWER
No? Well excuse me.

BREWER looks over his shoulder.

BREWER
(shouts)
Danny! Come out here.

DANNY, a short stocky black man dressed in a classic
security guard combo of bomber jacket and combat
trousers, comes out on deck.

BREWER
Do excuse me, but you must give
any weapons to Danny here, he will
look after them for you. Let us go
inside.

JOÃO looks blankly at DANNY, hands him his gun and
walks on after BREWER. They go through glass doors,
entering a large, softly-lit sitting area. The Garth
Brooks is emanating from a giant black monster of a hi-
fi, full of graphic EQs and twinkling lights. It seems
like more or less everything in the room is made of
either beige calfskin, or heavily polished walnut. The
screens are pulled down over all the windows, but the
occasional flash of neon comes through to remind of the
electric world outside. BREWER pulls a remote control
out of his trouser pocket and lowers the music a few
notches.

BREWER
Care for a drink?

JOÃO
No.

BREWER
Well I don't suppose you'll mind if I have one, it's so darned stuffy here. I mean, I'm no stranger to a bit of heat, but here it feels like God threw a bucket of water over the sun.

JOÃO
You get used to it.

BREWER
(mis-hearing)
Like hell I will. Now, so it's just business then? Very well, so how much do you know?

JOÃO
ZHONG has told me everything.

BREWER
Hmm, exactly what do you mean by everything, Mr João? I think you'll have to be a little bit more specific.

JOÃO pulls a slightly pained expression, and takes a slow, deep inhalation of breath, like a bored teenager.

JOÃO
I've seen the letter of introduction from Lau Associates, and all the following correspondence. That's why I am here, Mr ZHONG would like to offer our assistance in the development of this relationship. As you know, his reputation in this city is second to none, we are the ones you need to talk to, should you wish to do any real business here.

BREWER
Hmm, is that so... Well, yes, it is business that I want to do. Business is what comes naturally. But I want to talk to Mr ZHONG in person and survey the site. I trust you can arrange that at least?

JOÃO
I will communicate this to Mr ZHONG, yes. He is very busy, but I am sure he'll be very pleased to welcome you.

CUT TO:

CAFE - NIGHT

YINGYING stares down into her plastic takeaway cup of bubble tea. Her reflection in the polythene covering is blurry, but we can see the glister of a tear on her cheek. Another girl of about the same age walks out through the glass doorway of the cafe, and through the open door we can hear As Tears Go By playing from a radio behind the counter. A WAITRESS wearily runs a wet rag across the glass countertop ready to leave for the night.

As YINGYING's tears splash down onto the plastic cup

subject : re: two more

And the discussion of Ying
Ying's ultimate destiny
makes me think we need to
have some sort of school
scene, or at least her talking about
it, studying ..

Does she have friends? probably not.
They are all too rich and immature I
imagine, though it would be good to
get this in.

held tight between her trembling fingers we hear the
fragments of a woman's voice:

XI'S MOTHER (O.S.)
What have I told you about catching
a cold in the rain, and then you
could have fallen off that roof!
It'll fall down any day now if...
What have I told you about catching
a cold in the...What have I told
you...fallen...It'll fall down any
day...

YINGYING wonders why those words have come to her again
now? Wiping a tear from her already damp cheek, she
remembers the smell of that room, of fried green onion
and egg, and how the wet fingers they'd used to pinch
dumplings felt the same as hers do now against her
cheek. Though her sadness multiplies under the strain
of her thoughts, her breast heaving as if wrapped too
tight around her lungs, her tears stop and her eyes
clear.

The clarity is unbearable. It is the moment when a
young girl realizes that a life once full of stars must
now suffer the darkening clouds of an ever looming
reality.

She looks up into the window before her. In the
reflection, half milky light, half obscured by the
density of the dying night, she divines the image of
the mother she's never known. It is her own reflection,
but for the first time she sees herself as a woman; and
what daughter, straddling that first step of womanhood,
fails in that moment to look the spitting image of the
one who bore her.

YINGYING
(Trembling whisper)
If yesterday was today and tomorrow
never came then I could be with
you...

The words are not only for her mother, but it is only
to her she can speak them.

CUT TO:

VICTORIA HARBOUR - NIGHT

The MOUSTACHED MAN, no longer bothering to acknowledge
JOÃO now that his duties are finished for the night,
guides the small boat back toward the dock from which
they'd departed. A calm breeze tugs at JOÃO's collar,
and for the slightest of moments he forgets all but the
sound of the buzzing motor and the lapping of the sea.

Suddenly the small craft jerks upwards as if they'd
already run aground, yet the shore line bobs still a
few hundred yards away. Almost pitched over the side,
the MOUSTACHED MAN grabs to the gunwale and turns
wildly to JOÃO.

MOUSTACHED MAN
What in God's name-!

But before the man can finish his cry JOÃO has already
grabbed at the offending object and pulled it from
beneath the boat. From between the soft waves emerges
a waterlogged body, bloated a blue. The MOUSTACHED MAN
makes a start as if to turn and run, but there's no
where to run... only the sea.

JOÃO wrestles to turn over the body. The ghost-white
face of JACKIE TONIGHT stares blankly, devoid of all
life, into the equally dead eyes of JOÃO.



subject : last one

Doesn't seem rushed, reads very well. Dialogue should just be indicative anyway, we want to leave plenty of room for manoeuvre anyway.

I think after this very succinct plot setting the next scene could be something more atmospheric—perhaps here we lead into images for a bit: the steaming door, famished cats, Sticky drips.

And then introduce the Americans landing (looking down at kwc as they land of course) ... Some kind of light relief scene involving a rat as they leave the airport?

I've just been sketching the romantic interlockings between the characters.
Xi chun is going to be a real juicy morsel.

JOÃO glances fiercely at the MOUSTACHED MAN as if to say "forget it" and the MOUSTACHED MAN has no reply. After one last look JOÃO drop the body back into the sea and lets it drift off.

JOÃO
Don't stop.

BAR - NIGHT

A dim red light flickers, its neon tubes shuttering as another flight passes what seems like only a few yards overhead. A bar made of stapled together 2-by-fours shakes, but the dirty-suited men sat round it know to hold on to their glasses. At a pool table shoved lengthwise into a moldy corner ZHONG, disguised in aviator sunglasses and an open-collared Hawaiian shirt, pings in the 5 ball, the 6, then the 7 all in quick succession. A cheap cigarette droops between his lips, the ash falling onto a pair of dirty work boots.

After pocketing the 9 ball ZHONG stubs out his cigarette with the cue chalk and wanders over to an empty side of the bar. (Bills, Bills and More Bills sung by Koko Taylor plays from a rusted juke-box left by an ex-pat in some scramble home.)

ZHONG
(with a laugh)
TIGER, what's the jungle like tonight? Have you seen my boy around?

A man of about 60, grey-templed but still possessing a vitality many a younger man has already lost, turns from polishing a whiskey glass with a smile. Over a yellowing shirt he wears a leather vest worn threadbare in the shoulders.

TIGER
When's he due in? He's not been here tonight.

ZHONG glances at his watch (a Rolex, the only faint giveaway in his disguise.)

ZHONG
Half an hour late already. You know him. Always early and never late.
(pause) You sure your old eyes would pick him up coming through the door in this light?

TIGER smiles with a row of teeth like a piano missing most of its ivory keys.

TIGER
You can kick me but you'll never lick me. Not a man like me.

ZHONG pulls his foot up onto the bar and points at his old boot.

ZHONG
We'll I'm not in my usual attire tonight.

The two men laugh heartily as TIGER places a tumbler with whiskey on the bar. But, just as the glass touches the wood another flight barrels over. ZHONG lunges to grab the glass, but the two men bump arms and the glass shatters on the floor.

At just that moment the bar-door opens and JOÃO stumbles in. His face is paler than pale, almost transparent. ZHONG turns, forgetting the glass at the sight of his compatriot, and stands to meet him, but almost in the same movement he rushes to JOÃO's side as he falls head first toward the floor. ZHONG catches him

B.K. > C.A.P.
 "After the collapse, I'm not quite sure where to go.

Ah! João wakes up at Zhong's house, Yingying tending for him. Perfect set up for an intimate moment, João's guard down, emotions raised. Do you concur? Are you feeling well enough to write?

C.A.P. > B.K.
 I'm not sure writing this is good for me...an emotional weight has arrived on my chest.

B.K. > C.A.P.
 Then it's getting good.

in his arms.

ZHONG
 What the-! Damn it boy!

ZHONG pulls his hand from under JOÃO's chest and notices it's covered in blood.

The bar clears out quickly. A quick glance from ZHONG tells TIGER to help him drag JOÃO into the back room.

YINGYING'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The digital clock on the desk reads 1:34am.

YINGYING, wrapped in a girlish-pink bathrobe and wearing cartoon slippers, sits perched on the edge of her bed holding a beginners acoustic guitar accented in purple.

She strums a few hopelessly tuneless chords and tries hard to press the faintest broken sound from between her lips. For a moment she stops and, frustrated with her lack of ability, ruffles her hair like a schoolgirl upset over a crush.

After a calming breath she presses her fingers back against the plastic strings and tries once more to play. But, before she can begin, the front door to the apartment is heard opening and something can be heard dragging across the floor.

Terrified at the thought her father might find her awake at such an hour, YINGYING sloppily thrusts the guitar under the bed and dives head first under the bed covers.

However, the sounds she hears coming from the still darkened living room are not that of her father having arrived home late as usual. There are two voices, both in whispers but one noticeably quieter than the other,

and instead of two pairs of shoes tapping against the laminated floor there is only a single pair seeming to dash quietly back and forth to the kitchen.

Her curiosity getting the best of her, YINGYING wraps herself tightly in her robe and sneaks from the bed to the bedroom door. Just as her hand touches the doorknob one of the voices becomes audible, she recognizes it as her father's, and she leans close against the door, straining to hear.

ZHONG
 (fragmented)
 It's too bad to explain it away at the emergency room... I'll call...
 no, it's not that bad, but I've got to go get... just wait here.

The pair of feet can be heard rushing out through the open door, leaving only the sound of a weary, heaving breath.

Though stunned, YINGYING instinctively opens the door a few inches and peers out. JOÃO, lying unconscious across a tan-leather couch, looks closer to dead than alive. The pallor that had before taken hold only of his face has spread to his shivering hands and the bare chest glimpsed through his unbuttoned shirt.

At the sight of the blood pouring slowly from between the fingers clutching the gunshot wound in his side, YINGYING lets out a scream, but JOÃO is too far gone into another world to hear.

BLACK SEDAN - MINUTES LATER

ZHONG stares heatedly through the front windshield, as if in one blink he might lose his whole world. The car engine hits each higher gear in quick succession as the dimly lit lights of the barbecue carts lining the impoverished streets pass by faster and faster until

the night outside is nothing more than a blur of black and deathly yellow.

ZHONG's phone rings. He grabs at his pocket as if the sound has rocketed him back to earth.

ZHONG
Hello?...Hello?...Who is this, and
why are you...YINGYING? What are
you-

And with a sudden crashing over of one of reality's bitter waves he realizes what he's done and what he can no longer hide.

ZHONG
Listen to me...listen to me!...
stop crying. Listen, the best thing
you can do is help him...do this
for me...get some alcohol from my
cabinet, clean the wound as best
you can and just keep pressing. I'm
going to get someone to help...
just...I'll explain late-

But the other line has already cut out. ZHONG stares at the blinking light of his phone, forgetting that he's behind the wheel. He wonders where the dream began and reality ends, but in neither the still ringing voice of his sobbing daughter or the endless night outside can he see an answer.

In an instant of the most unreality all the darkness outside turns to the piercing golden of a fresh morning. The barbecue sellers and shanty blocks have all given way, as if folded back into the memories of time, to a cliffside landscape along the coast. ZHONG glances to his right and sees there beside him a woman; it is YINGYING, but it is also his wife. With both hands he reaches out toward her face.

ZHONG
I never meant...

Yet the sound of a screeching horn draws him back once again like a stabbing hook retrieving a sailor from a death he'd already given himself to completely. He grips the wheel with a sudden venom and swerves around a scooter braking in his path. He rights himself and fights against his trembling nerves to continue towards his destination.

The memory of the morning light has gone, folded back into the eternal evening of his soul.

CUT TO:

ZHONG'S LIVING ROOM

YINGYING, still standing in the doorway of her bedroom - her face soaked with tears - looks desolately towards JOÃO. The room is filled with heavy silence. Slowly, she begins to step forward, looking around the room as if anticipating some kind of trap. She creeps over to JOÃO's side and crouches down, her expression now more quizzical than distressed. She lightly pokes JOÃO's cheek, and in seeing the twitch of his finger a slight relief descends.

She stands up and scurries to the bathroom to frantically rummage through the cabinet, a few tubes and bottles smacking down on the tiles. She scurries back clutching a small bottle and a huge handful of cotton wool. She carefully, but somewhat clumsily, tugs at his leather jacket, trying to roll him on to his side simultaneously. It quickly becomes apparent that it is harder than she imagined, so she resorts to plan B of edging his jacket and t-shirt up, to expose the wound.

She winces as the t-shirt sticks to his skin, pulling it into a kind of tent-shape, before snapping back and

Her for him...

"And thus she seemed so virtuous and inaccessible to him that he lost all hope, even the faintest. But by this renunciation he placed her on an extraordinary pinnacle. To him she stood outside those fleshly attributes from which he had nothing to obtain, and in his heart she rose ever, and became farther removed from him after the magnificent manner of an apotheosis that is taking wing." It was one of those pure feelings that do not interfere with life, that are cultivated because they are rare, and whose loss would afflict more than their passion rejoices."

revealing the coagulated black-red mess. The wound itself is not very large but is surrounded by a good 10cm of dark purple, veiny-looking damage. She closes her eyes and quickly sets about applying the alcohol to the cotton wool and dabbing up the drying blood. She can see slow movement in his chest as the diaphragm moves reassuringly up and down. There is still no movement in his face however, and his skin still looks ashen.

Once the pile of cotton wool has been exhausted, she fetches a roll of gauze and piles it up on JOÃO's torso. As she begins to fold it up into a pad, we hear a hiss of air passing through teeth. YINGYING glances towards JOÃO who has a look of excruciating pain on his face.

YINGYING
Hey! Hey!

Suddenly sprung to life, YINGYING practically jumps on JOÃO, her face suddenly brought to life by the product of her work. His eyes, slit but just open, can be just perceived to flicker beneath the lids. A hoarse groan comes out of some part of him as his eyes open slightly more.

JOÃO
(barely a whisper)
Don't stop... uh

YINGYING
Huh?

JOÃO
Ying yi-

YINGYING
Yes... it's ok, just rest.

YINGYING lays a faint, yet steady hand over the bandaged wound as JOÃO slips back and forth in a tremolo between the numbing comfort of exhaustion and the pain ripping through his body. Summoning all his strength he slides a bloodied hand to the the one tenderly holding him to life. YINGYING starts at the softness of his touch; she feels the warmth of the blood pulsing through him and the chill of death that's chasing, always chasing; and she remembers that morning on the roof, the warmth of spring's coming and the chill of the first rain on her cheeks. No tears fall from her eyes, for all her falling is in her chest. Her breast heaves and her eyes shoot like a bursting flame to JOÃO's eyes. But there is nothing there, at least nothing firm enough to grip to, to maintain this beauty against the gravity of the real.

JOÃO
(with a sudden, divine clarity)
Keep me above... Don't drop or I'll-

But just as quickly as the words escape his mouth, all the momentary life in his lips retreats back to other, invisible battlefields. Like a little girl chasing a rabbit down its hole, YINGYING presses at JOÃO's lips, forgetting his condition, trying desperately to retrieve his soul.

YINGYING
(whispering to herself and all the universe)
Please, please, please, please,
please, just come back to me this
once and I promise... I promise I'll
never... I won't... I'll never...

She struggles to know the end of the sentence; she wrestles and fumbles and dies a thousand girlhood deaths trying to know how she feels and who she's suddenly become. There before her, half dead yet still bristling with a heaving life that bowls her infinitely, this man seems to her all there is or ever could be.

Hasn't she known him since... since she could remember knowing anyone? Yet, when she thinks back over their countless meetings, his holding her close to save her from a passing car or to protect her from a passing autumn shower, she understands that every moment has lead to this one. She understands it with a certainty one knows only once or twice in one's life, a certainty of complete illogic, totally set in opposition to a horrifying reality. All the beauty contained in her small frame focuses and shoots through to the hand placed upon his chest as if to send an electrical charge straight into the beyond. For a moment his eyes seem to hesitate. He seems closer to death than ever and her heart plummets with each extinguishing breath that passes his icy lips. Where is he? His hand begins to slip slowly from hers, but she refuses to let go. YINGYING presses her now molten lips to his and breathes into him the breath of life. So close, she feels drawn into him, down and down to where his real body lay at the bottom of an unknown sea swirling and crashing all around her drowning head.

Like a man miraculously resuscitated from a ship gone down, JOÃO gasps at the air all around him. YINGYING leaves his lips and watches his squirming figure with the utmost calm, confident she's restored the life she loves.

JOÃO's eyes open for only a second, but his gaze falls like a harpoon shot straight through her. The connection is made, and she resolves to let him draw her in forever. Her head nods as if in unconscious pact as he once again slips back, but this time she knows he is only sleeping... sleeping in her embrace. She lays her head beside his and begins to fall with him into the intertwining rest of the most weary.

Yet, like the last bolt of lightening and clap of horrible thunder from a squall thought all but dispersed, the front door flings open and ZHONG, face ablaze like a threatened animal, stands motionless in the door. His eyes fall on YINGYING's content face,

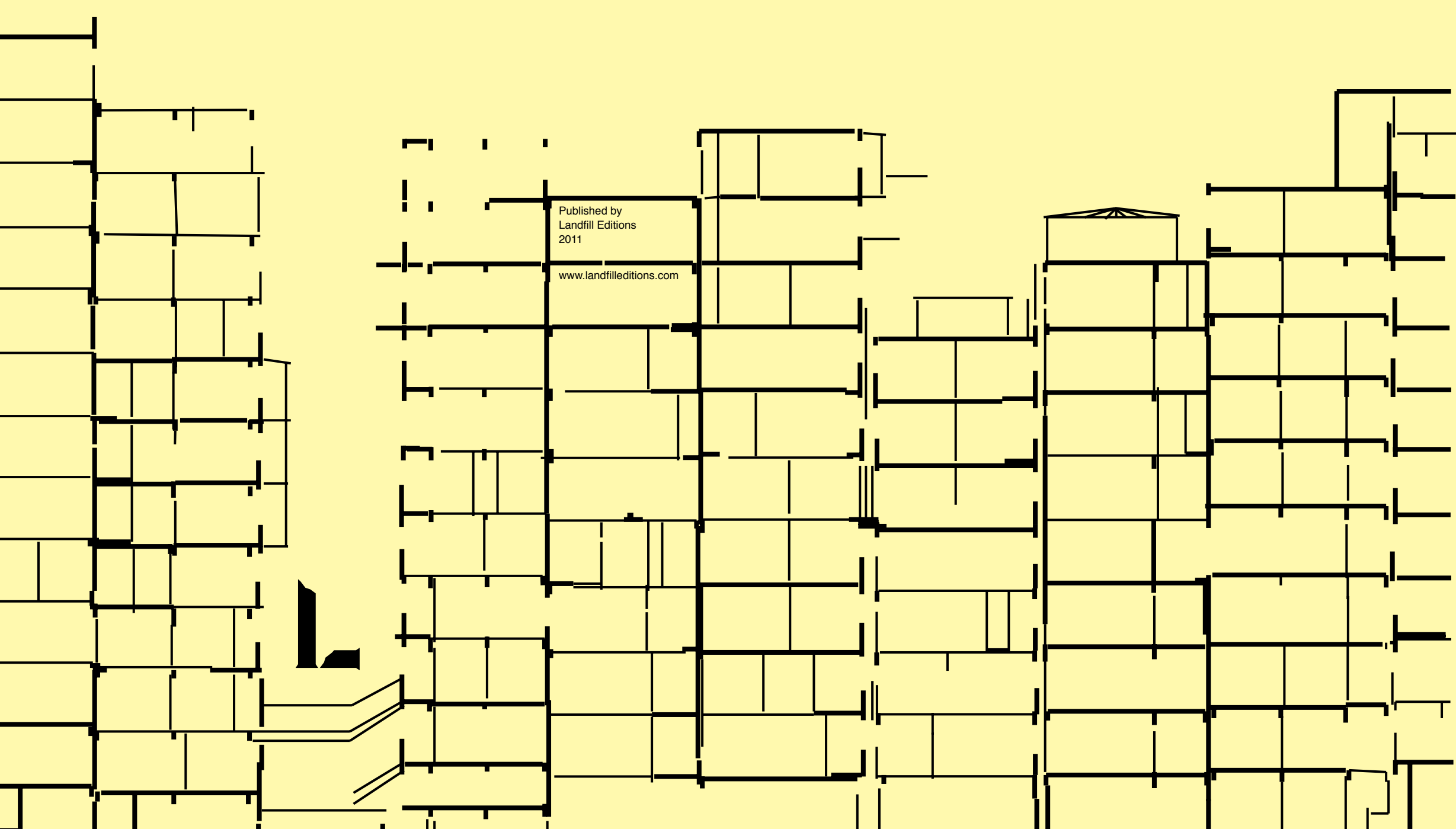
content there beside his only friend, his only brother, and now, perhaps, his only enemy. In a fit of madness he pulls his gun from his coat pocket and aims it frantically at the sleeping man, then at his daughter, whose sleep-filled eyes see only a haze of dark motion like a dream. He steadies his shot, but cannot fire. Fate will not allow it.

The gun tumbles to the floor, and ZHONG tumbles with it. He lies prostrate on the floor, grasping at every shallow breath as if praying to any god for redemption.

YINGYING, still buried and entranced by the touch of the life she's saved, can see nothing but him in front of her. The fallen figure of her father is only that, an imperceptible figure, and holds in the moment no more imitation of life than an undeveloped photograph.

She lays her head down beside JOÃO's and falls gently back to sleep.

From above the room looks like a chessboard whose pieces have been scattered by the wind. The queen presses close against her knight; the only opposing piece a crippled pawn lying on its side.



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