

Ink Darkly the Painted Seasons a1 s01-2

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A creative story on an empire of China's magnificence and decadence, a rebellious then subdued Korea divided into three kingdoms, and a united Japan somewhat more remote from the others, highly influenced by China's culture but looking inward until it begins to harbor imperialistic ambitions.

Scene 01

HARU

... of the firmament embroiled with
the deep, from an undistinguished
medley came strains calamitous and
wailing, and the once whole
separated into yin and yang, male
and female.

NOBORU

Of one dead form, which bore
imprinted all features of nature,
to mutative shapes drawn into
galling service, that of life

SCENE 02

It is nearly full winter. HANEUL is currently the prince of a "Korean" kingdom. After a failed hunt chasing a fox, and very bored, HANEUL leaves his party to go off alone. Then he encounters a mysterious woman.

HANEUL

On a languid day of dalliance and

raillery among courtiers after a hunt, I wearily beat the gourd of ennui and left them, seeking better amusement elsewhere.

(beat)

Is there no end to this slack quietude?

Enter Fox Spirit.

FOX SPIRIT

Princely one, has the usual dreary bevy, whom you so carelessly left in sleepy strain, soured your mouth? Did not the shining blanched fur of the poor hunted fox, affrighted from gambol and frisk, entice you on?

A dog which has followed HANEUL growls menacingly at Fox Spirit and makes to leap at her, and she shies away. HANEUL sharply reprimands the dog and sends it whimpering back.

HANEUL

O goddess, come you as a visitation of death, or a deceitful vision of fatigue? For now, having perceived beauty of such freshness as to shame life in its youth, I trace gladly your steps. Not merely flowers or willows in the golden moon, nor gleaming white pearl, but flaming ruby and flashing diamond. For fire cannot vie in purity with the charms of the glorious

spectacle, a figure with lissome
step, I behold before me.

FOX SPIRIT

Dissipate the first gravid thoughts
pondered in so erratic a strain.

HANEUL

Though I speak in libidinous
lewdness, pray forgive me; you are
as a robe richly adorned of a
hundred hawks worked in gold, no
mere fragrance of flowers, and I am
of addled mind, a dunce, at the
sight.

FOX SPIRIT

Wherefore do you feel a stranger,
greeting with conventional
salutations only?

HANEUL

Lest you believe me a loose rake,
dissolute debauchee, with malignity
and perversity as my design--

FOX SPIRIT

Worry not; if you are so, I join in
lust as a sybarite. Let
unprincipled license rise wanton.
Bend inclination where it will.

Fox Spirit sheds most of her many layers of loose white
clothing, each falling sensuously to the ground, her amber
eyes intent on him.

HANEUL

A beauteous white-feathered shower
of crystal, descended from the
clouds in stolen fleece!

Haneul takes her in his arms, and things ensue in the usual
manner of a man and woman together.

HANEUL

So long I have journeyed a
poverty-stricken fugitive seeking
shelter, and know rest only in the
hollow of your hands. With you,
clad in frost and snow alike, I
would stray an outcast to earth's
remotest limits, wherever
far-roaming wanders convey.

FOX SPIRIT

(aside)

I have subjugated you, Prince
Haneul, as a willing victim, though
you would have made me prey to your
swords and spears. 'Tis but a game
to me, as 'twas for you, one that I
won. Here indeed desire bridles
wisdom's rein. The more fools men!
(beat)

Dim morn of the skies hastens on in
enfeebled silver beams to weightier
gold; winter slumber beckons, and I
tarry no longer with this captive
quarry, nor betray scant regard.

