

APPENDIX 1

Matrix of Politeness Strategy's Criteria

A. Involvement Politeness Strategy (Positive Politeness Strategy)

No.	Details of Features	Distinguishing Characteristic	Examples
1.	Notice or attend to H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - notice the condition of H, “noticeable changes, remarkable possessions”. - the condition appears to show that H would want S to realize it and approve of it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How are you?</i> - <i>I like your jacket.</i> - <i>Are you feeling better today?</i>
2.	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually done with exaggerated intonation, stress, and other aspects of prosodic in showing any interest, approval or sympathy toward H. - it can also use intensifying modifiers, such as absolutely, very, really, exactly, for sure, marvelous, extraordinary, devastating, exquisite, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What a <i>marvelous</i> house you have! - The floor is <i>incredibly shiny like a glass</i>.
3.	Claim in-group membership with H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to show that S and H are cooperators. - it can be done by using the inclusive “we” from though it might means only “you” or “me”, such as the word “let’s”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Let’s stop for a break, ok?</i> - Give <i>us</i> a break, will you?
4.	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - S is actually fulfilling H’s wants for the sake of H (in some sense). - it can be done by giving H gifts in the form of goods, compliment, compassion, tolerance, support, etc, anything that can please H’s positive face. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>You have given a brilliant speech today, thank you.</i>
5.	Be optimistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to show that S and H are cooperators. - it can be done by indicating that in certain boundaries, whatever H wants, S wants it too for him and will help him to obtain it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I’m sure</i> you are going to help me with this problem, <i>right?</i>
6.	Indicate S knows H’s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to show that S and H 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Look, I know you</i>

	wants and is taking them into account	are cooperators. - it can be done by indicating S's knowledge and sensitive to H's wants.	<i>have other appointments, so shouldn't I go now?</i>
7.	Assume or assert reciprocity	- the purpose is to show that S and H are cooperators. - S may demand H's cooperation in return for something he had done or will be done for H. - it has resulted utterances like, "I'll do x for you if you do y for me" or "I did y for you yesterday, so you do x for me today."	- <i>I'll go with you today if you help me finish my homework.</i> - <i>I already saved your life the other day so now it's your turn to save mine.</i>
8.	Use given names and nicknames	- its purpose is to show the intimate or close relationship between S and H.	- Nice vacation, <i>pal!</i> - <i>Bill</i> , can you get that report to me by tomorrow?
9.	Be voluble (speak a lot)	- it is done so that H could share the same feeling or interest with him. - it can be done by exaggerating facts or using flourish words in his story.	- <i>I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? – a huge mess all over the place, the phone's off the hook and clothes are scattered all over ...</i>
10.	Use H's language or dialect	- its purpose is to assert the common ground with H based on what the definition of the group has carried out. - it can be done through a proper use of address form, of dialect, of jargon or slang, and of ellipsis.	- Help me, will you <i>luv?</i> - Lend us two <i>bucks</i> then, wouldja Mac? - <i>Mind</i> if I stay here for a while?

B. Independence Politeness Strategy (Negative Politeness Strategy)

No.	Details of Features	Distinguishing Characteristic	Examples
1.	Make minimal assumptions about H's wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the function is basically to soften some action or request for the sake of face. - it is to make minimal assumption about H's wants, what is relevant to H. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Please let me know if it is acceptable to you. - <i>Would you open the door, if you don't mind?</i>
2.	Give H the option not to do the act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is not forcing H in order to satisfy H's negative face wants. - it is done by raising H's certain positive face wants as a superior or humbles himself to H. - it indicates H's right to refuse S's request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Here, have some cakes. <i>It's not much but it's quite delicious.</i> - <i>We look forward to dining with you.</i>
3.	Minimize threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is not forcing H in order to satisfy H's negative face wants. - it is being done by minimizing the burden or the threat of his request. -it can be done by using such expression like: just, a little bit, a tiny bit, etc or by using some euphemism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I just want to borrow your car for just a second.</i> - <i>May I taste a tiny bit of you cake?</i>
4.	Apologize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to not impinge on H in order to be negatively polite. - it can be done by admitting that S has bother H in order to apologize or showing his reluctance in bothering H more clearly. - S can also apologize by using hedges or by really showing his hesitation into words. - S can also give overwhelming reasons to indicate that he really unable to do something so he needs H to help him. - the last one is simply by begging forgiveness to H for the trouble he might or will give to H. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I hope you don't mind me saying this, but I think your plan will cost much more than the budget allowed.</i> - <i>Could you possibly tell me what he is talking about because I simply can't understand a word of his saying?</i> - <i>I'm really sorry. It seems that my dog just drops a litter on</i>

			your new carpet. <i>Really, I'm so sorry.</i>
5.	Be pessimistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is not forcing H in order to satisfy H's negative face wants. - it can be done by expressing his doubt toward H's willingness to do his request. - it can also function to evoke the addressee's sympathy toward him and his request will be approved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>You couldn't possibly be able to lend me your computer to me for ... let's say, one week, could you?</i>
6.	Dissociate S, H from the discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to not impinge on H in order to be negatively polite. - it can be done by eliminating either S or H or both of them from FTA. - avoid using the words "I" and "you", especially in imperative form or replacing the words with indefinites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Take this thing out!</i> - <i>It seems (to me) that ...</i> - <i>One can do this by himself.</i> - <i>His Majesty is not amused</i>
7.	State a general rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to not impinge on H in order to be negatively polite. - it can be done by eliminating either S or H or both of them from the FTA and state the act as general rule. - it is to show that it is not his own intention to do the FTA instead of the circumstances are the one that force him to do it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Passengers will please refrain from flushing toilets on the train.</i> - <i>We don't sit on tables, we sit on chairs.</i>
8.	Use family names and titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to respect directly to H, S can use the form of address term that considered as honorable, like: 'sir', 'madam', 'lady', 'Prof.', etc to address H. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is the book that you have requested, <i>sir.</i> - <i>Mr. Lee, there's a phone call for you.</i>
9.	Be taciturn (speak little)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to be indirect in stating the FTA. - it is being done by eliminating some part of the utterance, and leaving the conclusion or interpretation of what he is saying to H. - its function is to give H a free respond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well, if one doesn't leave the gas open when he leaves the house ... - Well, I really can't see you ...

		for this FTA.	
10.	Use own language or dialect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the purpose is to not impinge on H in order to be negatively polite. - it can be done through a proper use of his own address form, of dialect, of jargon or slang, and of ellipsis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I was honored by his <i>kaishaku</i>. - <i>Takeshi-san</i>, have you seen what happens to the villages that stand in the way of the railroad?

APPENDIX 2.1
Politeness Strategies used by Captain Nathan Algren

No.	Utterances	Politeness Strategies	
		Involvement	Independence
1.	<i>You kept me alive just to speak English...</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
2.	<i>We don't cut the heads off defeated men on their knees.</i>		State a general rule
3.	<i>... Yes?</i>		Be taciturn
4.	<i>Read the book.</i>		Be taciturn
5.	<i>No. It's a middle rank.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
6.	<i>Don't you have a rebellion to lead?</i>		Make minimal assumption about H's wants
7.	<i>She has been very kind to care for me.</i>	Exaggerate	
8.	<i>I am a beginner.</i>		Be pessimistic
9.	<i>You know this word, howitzer?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
10.	<i>Either way, he's just as dead.</i>		Minimize threat
11.	<i>Honor...</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
12.	<i>In our Civil War, the South believed they were fighting for honor just as you do. And their men died by the thousands.</i>	Be voluble	
13.	<i>No they didn't have a good death! Their land was overrun, and their families were starving – do you place no value whatsoever on human life?</i>	Be voluble	
14.	<i>And what is yours?</i>		Make minimal assumption about H's wants

15.	<i>Honor isn't going to stop the railroads and the cities and the machines! The South couldn't, and you can't, either.</i>		State a general rule
16.	<i>I was told Japanese were agreeable and polite.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
17.	<i>Do you plan on letting [allowing] me return to Tokyo?</i>		Make minimal assumption about H's wants
18.	<i>KATSUMOTO!</i>	Use given names and nicknames	
19.	<i>Who sent those men to kill you?</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
20.	<i>Was it the Emperor? Omura?</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
21.	<i>So it was Omura.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
22.	<i>How do you know that?</i>	Notice to H	
23.	<i>Every soldier has nightmares.</i>		State a general rule

24.	<i>You have no idea what I have done.</i>		Make minimal assumption about H's wants
25.	<i>I have.</i>	Indicate S know H's wants and is taking them into account	
26.	<i>Good.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
27.	<i>Your lands are remarkable.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
28.	<i>You ain't whistling Dixie.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
29.	<i>You ain't whistling Dixie.</i>		Use own language or dialect
30.	<i>Excuse me.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
31.	<i>They're about to close a trade agreement that will bring this country more weapons than you can imagine.</i>		State a general rule
32.	<i>And you are to be the reason. Omura passes laws guaranteed to start a revolt so the Emperor has no choice but to take the deal.</i>	Notice or attend to H	

33.	<i>I know.</i>	Indicate S knows H's wants and is taking them into account	
34.	<i>If you go there today, they will kill you.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
35.	<i>Katsumoto-San.</i>	Use H's language or dialect	
36.	<i>These are your weapons your weapons. You don't know what their weapons can do... Your beautiful village burned, your family – Taka, Higen – slaughtered. For pride?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
37.	<i>-- Your Emperor is a boy! He'll do what he is told!</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
38.	<i>Katsumoto...</i>	Use given names and nicknames	
39.	<i>Lay down your swords. Is it worth it? Is it really worth it? Just for these...</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
40.	<i>I've lived without it for years.</i>	Be voluble	
41.	<i>How's your poem coming?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
42.	<i>This is Mr. Simon Graham. He would like very much to take your photograph.</i>	Exaggerate	
43.	<i>I thought I'd stay – see if I could convince you to escape.</i>	Be optimistic	

44.	<i>I am sorry about your son.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
45.	<i>To preserve your people.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
46.	<i>So what – you’re going to surrender?</i>	Indicate S knows H’s wants and is taking them into account	
47.	<i>In shame?</i>	Indicate S knows H’s wants and is taking them into account	
48.	<p><i>You read my journals.</i></p> <p><i>I promised Black Kettle his people would be safe if they listened to me. I gave him my word. But the truth is, I knew what would happen.</i></p> <p><i>And when we rode into his camp that morning... as they lay sleeping... in that beautiful place. I just wanted to end it. The lies. The promises. I wanted it... done.</i></p> <p><i>He should have been on his pony. In his paint. With his feathers...</i></p> <p><i>It wasn’t a good death.</i></p> <p><i>The Samurai cannot change. If you are to live, it must be as you have always lived. As a warrior. And if you are to die, it must be as you have always died. In battle.</i></p>	Be voluble	
49.	<i>A million -- you understand this number in English?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
50.	<i>For two days the Greeks made them pay so dearly that the Persian army lost all taste for battle and was defeated soon after</i>	Be optimistic	
51.	<i>I’m sure as hell wanted to find out.</i>	Be optimistic	

52.	<i>Trickery and deceit...</i>	Be optimistic	
53.	<i>No. I think a man can only do what he can, until his destiny is revealed.</i>		State a general rule
54.	<i>Dead to the last man.</i>	Be optimistic	
55.	<i>Now...</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
56.	<i>They'll move up the artillery now.</i>		State a general rule
57.	<i>We won't be able to stop them again.</i>	Claim in-group membership with H	
58.	<i>I should have died so many times before.</i>		State a general rule
59.	<i>Maybe I survived just to live this one day. I'll stay.</i>	Be optimistic	

APPENDIX 2.2
Politeness Strategies used by Mori Katsumoto

No.	Utterances	Politeness Strategies	
		Involvement	Independence
1.	<i>What is your name?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
2.	<i>This is my son's village. You cannot escape. We are deep in the mountains and winter is coming.</i>		State a general rule
3.	<i>We are deep in the mountains and winter is coming.</i>	Claim in-group membership with H	
4.	<i>My name is Katsumoto. What is your name?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
5.	<i>Are my words not correct?</i>		Be pessimistic
6.	<i>I will practice my English with you.</i>	Be optimistic	
7.	<i>If you would honor me.</i>		Give H the option not to do the act
8.	<i>The soldiers in your country do not kill?</i>		State a general rule
9.	<i>General Hasegawa asked me to help him end his life. A Samurai cannot stand the shame of defeat. I was honored to cut off his head.</i>		State a general rule
10.	<i>Many of our customs seems strange to you.</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
11.	<i>The same is true of yours. For example, not to introduce yourself is considered extremely rude, even among enemies.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
12.	<i>I am honored to meet you. I have enjoyed this conversation in your English.</i>	Exaggerate	
13.	<i>I have introduced myself, you have introduced yourself. This is a very good conversation.</i>	Exaggerate	
14.	<i>Questions come later.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse

15.	<i>It was a good death.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
16.	<i>Ujio is teaching you the way of the Japanese sword.</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
17.	<i>I have read about this. Tell me of your part in them.</i>		State a general rule
18.	<i>I wish to learn.</i>	Be optimistic	
19.	Because we are both students of war.	Claim in-group membership with H	
20.	<i>Because we are both students of war.</i>		State a general rule
21.	<i>So you were the General of your army?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
22.	<i>People in your country do not like conversation?</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
23.	<i>If it is my destiny.</i>		State a general rule
24.	<i>What do you want for yourself?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
25.	<i>In Spring the snows will melt and the passes will open, and the events of the world will unfold. Until that time, you are here.</i>		State a general rule
26.	Good day, Captain.		Use family names and titles
27.	<i>She is honored to have my guest in her house.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
28.	<i>Your skill is improving.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	

29.	<i>Such modesty is very Japanese...</i>	Notice or attend to H	
30.	<i>It takes no courage to kill a man from a half a mile away. You should look into the eyes of your enemy when you kill him.</i>		State a general rule
31.	<i>Taking a man's life is nothing. You cannot take away his honor.</i>		State a general rule
32.	<i>You do not believe in this?</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
33.	<i>The Emperor gave this to my family 400 years ago. Many of my ancestors have died in his service. Our lives mean nothing – honor is everything.</i>	Be voluble	
34.	<i>I was told Americans were difficult people...</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
35.	<i>So that you can bring your howitzers against my samurai?</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
36.	<i>A perfect blossom is a rare thing...</i>	Be voluble	
37.	<i>You could spend your life looking for one. And it would not be a wasted life.</i>	Be voluble	
38.	<i>I am writing a poem about a dream I had. "The tiger's eyes are like my own, but he comes from across a deep and troubled sea."</i>	Be voluble	
39.	<i>If the Emperor wishes my death, he has but to ask.</i>		State a general rule
40.	<i>I am having trouble finishing the poem. Can you suggest a last line?</i>		Give H the option not to do the act
41.	<i>Yet you have written many pages since you came here.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
42.	<i>... You have nightmares.</i>	Notice or attend to H	

43.	<i>Only one who is ashamed of what he has done.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
44.	<i>You have seen many things.</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
45.	<i>And you do not fear death. But sometimes you wish for it. Is this not so?</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
46.	<i>I, also. It happens to men who have seen what we have seen. And then I come to this place of my ancestors. And I remember... like these blossoms, we are all dying. To know life in every breath. Every cup of tea. Every life we take. That is the way of the warrior.</i>	Be voluble	
47.	That is <i>Bushido</i> .		Use own language or dialect
48.	<i>The Emperor has granted safe passage to Tokyo. We leave tomorrow.</i>		State a general rule
49.	<i>We leave tomorrow.</i>	Claim in-group membership with H	
50.	<i>Good.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
51.	<i>When I took these, you were my enemy.</i>		State a general rule
52.	<i>And soon they will belong to Omura. Four hundred feet on each side of all new railroads track. A good deal, isn't it?</i>		Be pessimistic
53.	<i>Stay.</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse

54.	<i>Thank you for helping my son.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
55.	<i>And my country is sold to yours. Elegant, isn't it?</i>		Be pessimistic
56.	The second takes away <i>our</i> swords.	Claim in-group membership with H	
57.	<i>Hand them to me, will you?</i>	Be optimistic	
58.	<i>Like you, I am hard to kill.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
59.	Like you, <i>I am hard to kill.</i>	Be optimistic	
60.	<i>Not for pride. For the emperor.</i>		State a general rule
61.	<i>If he wishes.</i>		State a general rule
62.	<i>A samurai's sword is his soul. I cannot live without my soul... Can you?</i>	Be voluble	
63.	<i>I thought you returned to America.</i>		Make minimal assumptions about H's wants
64.	<i>And how do you plan to do that?</i>		Be pessimistic
65.	<i>In Tokyo, I was prepared to die. Now I am here and Nobutada is dead. For what purpose?</i>		Be pessimistic
66.	<i>For 900 years my ancestors have protected our people. Now I have failed them.</i>		Be pessimistic
67.	<i>The Emperor could not hear my words. His army will come. It is the end.</i>		Be pessimistic
68.	<i>He is only interested in the new ways now.</i>		Be pessimistic

69.	<i>Many times I've asked myself why were you sent into my life.</i>	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empathy	
70.	<i>It makes no difference.</i>		Be pessimistic
71.	<i>Five hundred of five thousand – they will come and we will make our stand.</i>		Be pessimistic
72.	<i>Maybe five hundred. Like Custer, he?</i>		Be pessimistic
73.	<i>You think we can defeat them?</i>		Be pessimistic
74.	<i>What do you have in mind?</i>	Notice or attend to H	
75.	<i>You... ain't whistlin' Dixie...</i>	Notice or attend to H	
76.	<i>You... ain't whistlin' Dixie...</i>	Use H's language or dialect	
77.	<i>You will need this.</i>		Make minimal assumption about H's wants
78.	<i>What happened to those three hundred warriors at Thermopylae?</i>		Dissociate S, H from the discourse
79.	<i>This is not your battle. You do not have to die here.</i>		Give H the option not to do the act
80.	<i>But now you live again.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
81.	<i>It was not your time.</i>	Notice or attend to H	
82.	<i>You have your honor again. Let me die with mine...</i>	Assume or assert reciprocity	
83.	<i>I will miss our conversations.</i>	Notice or attend to H	

84.	I will miss <i>our</i> conversations.	Claim in-group membership with H	
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APPENDIX 3

Synopsis of the Film

Captain Nathan Algren (TOM CRUISE) is a man adrift. The battles he once fought now seem distant and futile. Once he risked his life for honor and country, but, in the years since the Civil War, the world has changed. Pragmatism has replaced courage, self-interest has taken the place of sacrifice and honor is nowhere to be found - especially out West where his role in the Indian Campaigns ended in disillusionment and sorrow.

Somewhere on the unforgiving plains near the banks of the Washita River, Algren lost his soul.

A universe away, another soldier sees his way of life about to disintegrate. He is Mori Katsumoto (KEN WATANABE), the last leader of an ancient line of warriors, the venerated Samurai, who dedicated their lives to serving emperor and country. Just as the modern way encroached upon the American West, cornering and condemning the Native American, it also engulfed traditional Japan. The telegraph lines and railroads that brought progress now threaten those values and codes by which the Samurai have lived and died for centuries.

But Katsumoto will not go without a fight.

The paths of these two warriors converge when the young Emperor of Japan, wooed by American interests who covet the growing Japanese market, hires Algren to train Japan's first modern, conscript army. But as the Emperor's advisors attempt to eradicate the Samurai in preparation for a more Westernized and trade-friendly government, Algren finds himself unexpectedly impressed and influenced by his encounters with the Samurai. Their powerful convictions remind him of the man he once was.

Thrust now into harsh and unfamiliar territory, with his life and perhaps more important, his soul, in the balance, the troubled American soldier finds himself at the center of a violent and epic struggle between two eras and two worlds, with only his sense of honor to guide him.

APPENDIX 4

THE LAST SAMURAI

By John Logan

Revisions by Edward Zwick & Marshall Herskovitz

FINAL SHOOTING DRAFT

February 28, 2003

FADE IN:

A WHITE TIGER

Surrounded by dark shapes with spears. The TIGER's eyes burn as he lunges at one tormentor, claws at another.

Suddenly, the TIGER leaps over them all and

BURSTS INTO

FLAME.

THE FACE OF A JAPANESE MAN

Sits up INTO FRAME. He is KATSUMOTO. He has been meditating. We will come to know him later.

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS OVER the FAINT SOUND of a BRASS BAND.

WINCHESTER REP (V.O.)

And now Ladies and Gentlemen, the moment you've been waiting for...

Winchester, America's leader in all forms of armament used by the United States Army, celebrates our Nation's centennial by bringing you a true American hero.

INT. CONVENTION HALL (SAN FRANCISCO) - DAY

A trade show is in progress. Scantly-clad lovelies in red-white-and-blue undies demonstrate the nation's newest export: arms. Banners declaim the virtues of Winchester and Springfield. Crowds mill around a stage, where:

WINCHESTER REP

One of the most decorated warriors this country has ever known. The bloody cornfield of Antietam. The stone wall of Sharpsburg. Winner of the Medal of Honor for his gallantry on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg.

LITTLE TIN SOLDIERS line up in a diorama. A troop of

Union cavalry facing brightly-painted Indian Braves on horseback.

WINCHESTER REP

He is late of the 7th Cavalry and their triumphant campaigns against the most savage Indian Nations. Decorated again for his gallantry in vanquishing the awful and terrible Cheyenne at the Washita River... Ladies and Gents, I present to you: Captain Nathan Algren!

A smattering of polite applause. The rep looks around.

No Captain Algren.

WINCHESTER REP

Captain Nathan Algren!

(beat)

Yes!... Yes!

(still no Algren)

[Where is he -- ?]

(to the audience)

One moment, Ladies and Gentlemen...

He heads behind the stage where he comes upon a man leaning against a wall, half-asleep on his feet --

CAPTAIN NATHAN ALGREN, U.S. Army, ret. The rep attempts to awaken him, but Algren barely opens his eyes before shutting them again. Next, the rep makes the mistake of shaking him.

WINCHESTER REP

Algren. Hey --

Algren suddenly and ferociously comes to life, grabbing the man by the throat, terrifying him.

WINCHESTER REP

No... Stop...! Aaaaagh...

For a moment it seems possible that Algren might choke the man to death, but gradually he comes to his senses.

WINCHESTER REP

(collecting himself)

Damn it, man, you're on.

ALGREN

...Right.

We realize he's drunk. The rep goes to straighten Algren's tie and recoils at the whiskey fumes on his breath.

WINCHESTER REP

This company has an image to uphold, you know.

ALGREN

I'm upholding. I'm upholding.

WINCHESTER REP

Sure you are. Here's your ten dollars. Do the speech and don't bother coming back tomorrow.

The rep walks away. Algren takes a last furtive swig from a flask, steels himself, then climbs onstage, stumbling on the steps.

ALGREN

My thanks, Mr. McCabe... You're too kind.

For a moment, he looks down at the rifle in his hands.

ALGREN

This, Ladies and Gents, is the Gun that is Winning the West.

Only a few people are paying attention as he looks at the little toy soldiers and Indians, then out at a man holding cue cards, and haltingly begins.

ALGREN

... Many's the time I've found myself surrounded by a swarm of angry hostiles -- with nothing but this rifle between me and a certain... and gruesome death. But let me tell you, folks, when you need a friend, Winchester is by your side. As he tries to recall the speech, the little Indian braves begin sliding up the metal hill. At a nearby exhibition, a STEAM CALLIOPE begins to PLAY.

ALGREN

And make no mistake, the red man is a fearsome enemy. If he had had his way, this scalp of mine would be long gone and it'd be a balder man standing before you today.

A nice chuckle from the audience, but as the laughter dies, something has begun to change in Algren's eyes. Nearby, someone starts RINGING the BELL of a STEAM ENGINE, further distracting him. He departs from the script.

ALGREN

-- Like those poor bastards out there on The Little Big Horn. Bodies stripped bare. Mutilated and left to rot in the sun. Just a fortnight ago.

Algren seems to be drifting off. The Winchester Rep turns to his assistant.

WINCHESTER REP

That's not in the script. What's he doing?

ALGREN

The Seventh Cavalry, Ladies and Gentlemen. Finest bunch of troopers ever to be led to slaughter.

And softly at first, then louder, Algren begins to whistle "Garry Owen." At first the audience is perplexed, but gradually a few of them begin to join in.

ALGREN

Come on, now... To the Seventh!

As the whistling grows, Algren begin to dance a little jig.

ALGREN

Captain George Yates. Sergeant William A. Curtis. Private Thomas Atcheson, Corporal William --

The audience claps in time to Algren's dance. In the audience, one man laughs knowingly. His name is SERGEANT ZEBULON GANT.

Finally the Winchester Rep has had enough, and speaks from the crowd. [ALT: he steps up onstage].

WINCHESTER REP

-- Thank you, Captain Algren. Thank you.

But Algren refuses to be moved. A new hardness creeps into his voice.

ALGREN

[Excuse me, I am speaking of the dead.]
(back to the audience)
Corporal William Teeman. Private Benjamin F. Brown --

Abruptly, Algren stops. Eventually, the audience stops, too. He looks out at them. However burnt-out and dissipated, Algren is a man accustomed to command.

ALGREN

[I AM SPEAKING OF THE DEAD!]
The terrified Winchester Rep backs away. Nearby, the CALLIOPE BEGINS again. So does the BELL. Grimly shaking his head, Algren reaches into his pocket for a handful of cartridges. Algren begins loading the Winchester. The rep turns to his associate.

WINCHESTER REP

Oh, God... Is he doing what I think he's doing?

KID ASSISTANT

Un-huh.

WINCHESTER REP

(backing away)
Oh, God... Oh, God...

ALGREN

(looks out at the audience)
The Model '73 lever-action "Trapper." 7-shot capacity. One round-per-second, accurate at 400 yards.
(to a boy in the audience)

Son, you ever seen what this can do to a man? Why this beauty will blow a hole six inches wide in your daddy's chest.

(to another audience member)

That's right, Missy. You'll kill yourself five, six, seven braves without ever having to reload.

(finishes loading)

-- You'll note the patented loading port and smooth cocking action.

He cocks the weapon and aims it straight at the Winchester Rep.

ALGREN

... Let's just see here --

Algren adjusts the aim over the heads of the crowd. KABOOM!!!

Ladies scream. The calliope is forever silenced. KA-BOOM!!! A hole in the boiler sends a cloud of steam billowing near the cowering Winchester Rep. KA-BOOM!!! The incessant bell has been blasted into oblivion. Suddenly the crowd is silent. He commands their undivided attention.

ALGREN

I thank you on behalf of all those who gave their lives in the name of better mechanical amusements and commercial opportunities.

In the silence, we look into his eyes and get just a glimpse of his torment.

ALGREN

(looks out at them)

Mr. McCabe is here to take your orders.
(throws him the gun)
God bless you all.

As Algren gives a small bow and starts offstage –
before tripping and stumbling headlong down the
stairs. Gant shakes his head.

INT. ALGREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Algren lifts his head from the wash basin into which
Gant has forced him in an effort to sober him up. He
looks vaguely like a drowned rat.

GANT
Nathan, you're the poorest advertisement for civilian
life I've ever seen.

ALGREN
Thank you.

GANT
Five hundred clerks in the War Department and not
one of 'em knows your whereabouts.

ALGREN
I've been busy.

GANT
Aye. Appreciated your performance today, especially
the little speech about the Seventh. Bastard got what
he deserved, you ask me.

ALGREN
Who's asking you?

GANT
You've got a gift for melodrama,
Nathan.

ALGREN
You're a critic now?

GANT
No, boyo, just a fella who's saved your sorry ass six or
seven times and still feels obliged to look after you.

ALGREN
Thanks, but it was me saved your sorry ass.

They smile. Both have saved the other more times
than they can remember.

ALGREN
When'd you get out?

GANT
Six months ago. Already failed at
mining, bridge building, and
selling insurance door to door.
Even tried working in a bloody
store. Can you picture me selling
haberdashery to the ladies? 'Oh,
dearie, don't you look a picture
in that lovely print...?'

As Algren reaches for the bottle, Gant moves it out of
his reach.

GANT
I've got a job for you, unless you're considering a
career in the theatre.

ALGREN
I have a job.

GANT
There's only one thing on earth you know how to do,
Nathan. And that's a man's job. Back in uniform.

ALGREN
I'm not wearing that uniform again.
GANT
Did I say a U.S. uniform?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Gant leads Algren into a plush restaurant. A ONE-ARMED
MAN stands up.

ONE-ARMED MAN
Captain Algren, Charles Wright.
With the 9th Illinois at Shiloh.
I just wanted to shake your hand, sir.

Algren is desperately uncomfortable with this adulation.
Nonetheless he makes the appropriate noises, then continues
on. Nearby, COLONEL BENJAMIN BAGLEY sits with three
Japanese men.

BAGLEY
Nathan, been a while. Good to see you.
Bagley extends his hand. Algren doesn't take it.
Instead he gives Gant a murderous look.

GANT
(sotto voce)
Just hear what the man has to say...

ALGREN
(flat)
Colonel Bagley, what a surprise.

BAGLEY
Nathan, I'd like you to meet Mr. Omura, from Japan, and his
associates, whose names I've given up trying to pronounce...
Sit down. Sit down...

OMURA, 40, is a handsome and intelligent man. Algren sits
down reluctantly. A WAITER hovers.

ALGREN
Whiskey.
BAGLEY
Japan's got it in mind to become a civilized country and Omura
here is willing to spend what it takes to hire white experts to
train their army.

Algren's cold stare is unnerving to Bagley. Omura
watches them carefully.

BAGLEY
Washington insists we only serve as advisors, not combatants -
- help them with training, tactics, and the like.
(raises his glass)
And if we play our cards right, the Emperor gives the U.S.
exclusive rights to import arms.

Algren's drink arrives. He downs it and trains his eye on
Omura.

ALGREN
I have an agreement with the Winchester Company -- I'm sure
these people have some concept of what an agreement is.

Omura suddenly speaks. His English is flawless.

OMURA

Your "performances" for the Winchester Company bring you twenty-five dollars a week. We will pay you 400 dollars a month.

In 1876, this is an enormous sum. Gant almost spits out his drink.

ALGREN
Five.

Omura looks at Bagley. He was not prepared to negotiate.

ALGREN
And another five hundred as a bonus when the job is done.
(pleasantly)
How many other genuine heroes you got lined up?
(looks around)
What does a man have to do to get a drink around here?

He laughs heartily. A waiter hurries to fill his glass. Omura and his associates confer in Japanese.

OMURA'S ASSISTANT
(subtitles)
He's rude.

OMURA
(subtitles)
That's how it is here. A land of cheap traders.
GANT

So who would I be training your boys to fight?
"Theoretically"?

Although offended by Algren's temerity, Omura is eternally polite.

OMURA
His name is Katsumoto Moritsugu. He is samurai.

GANT
Samurai?

OMURA
The word you might use is "warrior." Katsumoto helped restore the Emperor to his throne, but he is now a traitor, and he must be punished.
BAGLEY

Mr. Omura knows we have experience dealing with renegades...

ALGREN
Does he?

BAGLEY
He's even read your book.
(to Omura)

Captain Algren's study of the tribes was a crucial factor in our defeat of the Cheyenne.

Algren looks at Bagley, and then starts to laugh.

OMURA
Please excuse, what is funny?

ALGREN
Nothing. The old corps together again. It's just so inspiring.
(stands up)

Excuse me. I need to use the necessity.

Algren stands and starts out. Bagley also stands.

BAGLEY
This isn't a problem. I'll just talk to him.
OMURA
Colonel Bagley, we contacted you because you were Captain Algren's superior officer --

BAGLEY
I'm aware of that.
OMURA
And you assured us of his participation.
BAGLEY
He'll do it. Just give me a minute.

IN THE FOYER
Bagley catches up to Algren.

BAGLEY
Nathan... They know all about you. And reputation is very important to them.
(Algren stares at him)
This is a real opportunity, so what do you say we put the past behind us...?

(Algren doesn't respond)
I did what I was ordered to do out there. And I have no remorse.

(Algren glances up)
Nathan, you were the finest officer ever to serve under me. Now look at you.

ALGREN
You want me to kill Jappos, I'll kill Jappos --

BAGLEY
We're not killing anybody --

ALGREN
(ignores the interruption)
-- You want me to kill the enemies of Jappos, I'll kill the enemies of Jappos. Or Rebs or Sioux or Cheyenne, for 500 bucks a month, I'll kill whoever you want.

(leans close)
But keep one thing in mind... I'd happily kill you for free.

BAGLEY
And you will comport yourself at all times as befits an officer. Is that understood?

Algren burps loudly. And walks away.

EXT. SHIP (OCEAN) - DAY
A steamship churns its way across the great Pacific.

ALGREN (V.O.)
July 22, 1876. Twentieth day at sea. Somewhere out there is Japan.

Algren looks out into the endless waves.

ALGREN (V.O.)
For six months' work, I am to receive three years of Captain's pay. Could it be that training Orientals to soldier is more difficult than the simple-minded conscripts in my own country?

INT. ALGREN'S TINY CABIN - NIGHT
Algren opens his suitcase. Inside is a brand new U.S. Army uniform without insignia. He puts on the jacket and studies himself in the small mirror.

A BRIEF, SILENT FLASHBACK - A WINDSWEEP
RIDGE

Horses' hooves in the dust. Algren, wearing the uniform of the 7th Cavalry, gives orders to a column of troopers.

BACK TO THE TINY CABIN

From the open suitcase Algren takes a Colt revolver and places the gleaming weapon on a table. He spins it. It ends up pointing at him. He stares at it. And then, unaccountably, he is laughing.

EXT. YOKOHAMA HARBOR - DAY

Like all Japan, Yokohama is at the cusp of a new era. Ancient sampans and wooden schooners beside freighters and steamships.

EXT. DOCK (YOKOHAMA) - DAY

The Yokohama docks are a frenzy of languages and looks and smells and sounds. A series of rickshaws await our voyagers. As does SIMON GRAHAM, a dissipated Englishman who has lived in Japan for many years.

OMURA

Colonel Bagley, would you care to join me?

Bagley gets into Omura's rickshaw, Graham smiles at Algren.

GRAHAM

The hired help ride back here, I'm afraid.

(offers his hand)

Simon Graham. I'm to be your humble translator.

ALGREN

Nathan Algren. And Zebulon Gant.

GRAHAM

Welcome to Japan, gentlemen. Not your Wild West, but I trust you'll find it dangerous enough.

GANT

I'll see to the luggage.

Algren climbs into a rickshaw beside Graham.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham, I'd like to read everything you can turn up on this Katsumoto and his samurai.

GRAHAM

I'm afraid it's all in Japanese.

ALGREN

You're a translator, right?

The rickshaw sets off.

INT./EXT. RICKSHAW/TOKYO STREETS - DAY

In the bustling streets, white-face-painted geishas walk alongside bearded Russians. Traditional Japanese kimonos alongside European suits and hats; a schizophrenic world of ancient Japan versus modern commercialism.

GRAHAM

Twenty years ago, this was a sleepy little town. Now look at

it. For centuries this place was sakoku, closed to foreigners -- until one summer's day, out of the blue, your Commodore Perry sails in with his gunboats and politely requests they open the country to trade... or else he'll burn the entire place to the ground. Their whole world turned upside down in an instant. Government collapses. Men and women crying in the streets. Even the mighty Samurai couldn't figure out how to fight back.

(smiles)

But they're very clever, the Japanese. They hired people from around the world to learn how to beat us at our own game. I came over with the British trade mission, but I was soon relieved of my position.

(off Algren's look)

I had an unfortunate tendency to tell the truth in a country where no one ever says what they mean.

So now I very accurately translate other people's lies.

EXT. GUEST QUARTERS - DAY

Algren, Graham and Gant enter an ancient courtyard.

GRAHAM

You'll be quartered here. Not many places will accept Gaijin -- that's you and me -- but I'm sure you'll be quite comfortable.

As Algren and Gant start up the stairs, Graham clears his throat.

GRAHAM

Oh, just a moment -- So sorry...

(slips his shoes off)

I'm afraid we're expected to leave our shoes out here.

GANT

In the street?

GRAHAM

I'm afraid so.

Gant and Algren awkwardly begin the laborious process of removing their boots.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

SOLDIERS stand at attention as Graham, Algren and Gant step down from rickshaws. GENERAL HASEGAWA appears. He is a seasoned soldier.

GRAHAM

Gentlemen, may I present General Hasegawa. He will assist you in training the army.

ALGREN

General.

General Hasegawa bows. Algren offers his hand. A moment of confusion.

HASEGAWA

Youkoso okoshikudasai mashita. Stachi o mite morai massho.

Graham translates:

GRAHAM

He greets you with extreme courtesy and asks if you are ready to meet the Imperial Army.

He leads them to a platform where a parade ground is clearly visible. Soldiers in baggy uniforms are milling around.

Algren and Gant look at them.

HASEGAWA

Shnipei to ittemo, hyakusho agari no yose atsume de,
nanimo
shirannshi, nanimo dekin nodesu.

GRAHAM

... The general asks that you forgive him. The new
conscripts
are peasants, who have never had the slightest
responsibility or power.

ALGREN

Ask him what training they've had.

Graham speaks to General Hasegawa, then translates.

GRAHAM

Imamade donna kunren o shitanodesuka to kiiteimasu.

HASEGAWA

Sukunakutomo, mikatawa utsuna to oshiemashita.

GRAHAM

He says... We have trained them not to shoot their
asses off.

Hasegawa gives Algren a wry look.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

Algren and Gant study the Japanese soldiers.

GANT

Jesus, Mary, and the Saints...

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant, have the men stand to attention.

GANT

Sir.

(turns)

Imperial Army, Atten-tion!

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

Dai ichi rentai, kyotsuke!

ALGREN

For God's sake, let's not keep it a secret who's in
charge here... Mr. Gant.

GANT

(roars)

ALL RIGHT YOU LITTLE BASTARDS STAND

UP STRAIGHT OR I WILL SHITKICK EVERY

ONE OF YOU GOD DAMN COCKSUCKERS!!

ATTEN-TION!

The soldiers jump to attention.

GANT

Sir.

ALGREN

Well done, Sergeant.

GANT

Thank you, sir. When you understand the language
everything falls into place.

We begin a montage:

Gant marches alongside the recruits, chiding them.

Nearby, Algren uses a blackboard to teach formations
to a

group of young officers.

INT./EXT. ALGREN'S TENT - DAY

Algren writes in his journal.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

Gant and the Japanese Translator order the soldiers to hold
their arms. Algren inspects the line.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

Algren introduces them to their rifles.

ALGREN

This is the U.S. Springfield Model 1861 rifle musket. Fifty-
eight caliber. It is effective only when fired in volley. So we
will be teaching you how to fire in formation.

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

Kore wa 1861 gata beikoku supringufeeldo sha 58 kokei
hoheijyu. Renpatsu jyu to shite mottomo kokatekida. Tairetsu
o kunde uteruyoh ni kunrenshiteiku.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

Algren instructs firing in formation. He is a hard teacher,
accepting nothing less than perfect execution.

ALGREN

Once again, this is a battle line. On my command, the first rank
assumes a kneeling position. Rifles at the ready.

(demonstrating)

The second rank moves half a step to the right and half a step
forward.

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

(translates)

Mo ichi do, kore wa senretsuda. Shirei de zenretsu wa katahiza
o tsuke. Jyu o kamae.

(demonstrating)

Koretsu wa hanpo migi e soshite hanpo mae e.

ALGREN

First rank kneel! In volley, READY, AIM... FIRE!

N.C.O.

(translates)

Zenretsu hiza o tsuke zenin kame nerai ute.

Fifty rifles dry fire. They have not yet been given live
ammunition.

ALGREN

Shoulder arms!

N.C.O.

(translates)

Ninaetsutsu.

Algren turns away from the recruits.

ALGREN

Take over, Zeb.

GANT

(under his breath)

And when they get live ammo, I think I'll be in Kansas City...

(beat; ad lib)

First rank, STAND!

TIME CUT:

Algren has joined Hasegawa and Graham. Together they watch
the recruits train.

ALGREN

What can the General tell me about this man Katsumoto?

Graham translates the question.

GRAHAM

Katsumoto in tsuite motto shiritai.

HASEGAWA

Kare wa katsu et heika no shi de air, mottomo shinrai sareru soudan yaku deshita.

GRAHAM

(translating)

Katsumoto was (once) the Emperor's teacher and his most trusted advisor.

(editorializing)

But Omura's plan for a modern army has taken away the samurai's reason for being. Thus, the rebellion.

ALGREN

(studying the recruits)

Lieutenant! Get those men on their feet! Close order drill!

(back to Hasegawa and Graham)

Who supplies their weapons?

Graham directs the question to Hasegawa, who answers.

GRAHAM

Karera no buki wa dare ga kyokyu shiteiru noka?

HASEGAWA

Katsumoto wa samurai no michi o shirumono tachi in agamerareteoru. Imasara tobidougu nanka tsukawan daro.

GRAHAM

Katsumoto no longer dishonors himself by using firearms.

ALGREN

No firearms?

GRAHAM

(confirming)

Jyu wa...?

HASEGAWA

... Tsukawanyo.

GRAHAM

(adding a flourish)

To those who honor the old ways, Katsumoto is a hero.

Algren looks at Hasegawa, who nods back politely.

ALGREN

How well does he know him?

GRAHAM

The General and Katsumoto fought together for the Emperor.

ALGREN

He fought with the Samurai?

Graham looks at Algren.

GRAHAM

He is samurai.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAYS LATER

The army has shaped-up considerably. Gant marches them

in review past a pavilion where a garden party has assembled to see them. They applaud politely. A brass band plays Yankee tunes as Algren and Bagley, in

dress uniform, are being congratulated by DIPLOMATS representing all the powers currently trying to devour Japan: Russia, England, Germany, France.

DIPLOMAT

-- Marvelous, Captain. Such discipline. We're all so thrilled you're here. The entire diplomatic community is talking of nothing else. You must dine with us at the embassy.

Graham comes to Algren's rescue.

GRAHAM

Monsieur Tarquin, forgive me, the Captain is urgently required at headquarters.

He steers Algren away.

ALGREN

Excuse me. My thanks, Mister Graham.

GRAHAM

I wouldn't accept if I were you, he's likely to poison your soup. (looks around)

Oh, the vultures are out in force today.

Graham greets each passing diplomat.

GERMAN DIPLOMAT

Mein Herr Graham, warum marschieren sie nicht?

GRAHAM

Ah, mein Herr Graham, guten tag...

(to Algren; sotto voce)

Beats his wife.

FRENCH DIPLOMAT

(to Algren)

Felicitatation, Monsieur Le Capitan!

GRAHAM

D'accord, mon vieux.

(to Algren)

Pederast.

RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT

(to Algren)

Pri Krazna.

GRAHAM

Spaseba, Minster.

(to Algren)

He's a complete drunk.

As he continues on and mutters to Algren.

GRAHAM

You're a very popular boy.

Everybody wants to get a good look at the competition.

ALGREN

This trade agreement must be worth a pretty penny.

GRAHAM

Yes, but Japan's just the first leg. Next stop Korea, the Philippines, then the biggest prize of all... China.

Omura separates himself from his entourage.

OMURA

A great success, Captain Algren. The German ambassador was particularly complimentary.

ALGREN

Mister Omura, any army can march.

(CONTINUED)

THE LAST SAMURAI - Rev. 2/27/03 18.

22 CONTINUED: (1A) 22

OMURA

Indeed. And now you will teach them to fight. Mr. Graham, did you know Captain Algren is a great hero?

GRAHAM

I made that assumption.

OMURA

He is also an author. "Battle in the West: Tactics for an Unconventional War," published 1872.

GRAHAM

A bestseller, I'm sure...

(CONTINUED)

THE LAST SAMURAI - Rev. 10/1/02 18A.

22 CONTINUED: (2) 22

OMURA

(looks at him)

You are a valued part of his Highness' plans, Captain Algren. You will be honored to know he has commanded your presence at the Imperial Palace.

Omura bows and leaves them. Graham is open-mouthed.

23 EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY 23

Algren, Graham and Bagley approach the ancestral palace.

GRAHAM

You must remember that he is arahitogami. A god in human form. For two thousand years no emperor was even seen by a commoner. You must understand what a treat this is, and what an honor.

24 INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - STEPS - LATER 24

They climb the majestic approach.

GRAHAM

Now it's all highly ritualized, of course. You may look at him, but do not speak unless spoken to. If he stands, you must bow. If he bows, you bow lower. Do I look presentable? I haven't worn this in a decade. A bit snug around the mid-drift.

25 INT. IMPERIAL COURT - THRONE ROOM - DAY 25

Algren, Bagley and Graham approach.

GRAHAM

(to Algren & Bagley)

And, bow.

(closer)

Bow.

(CONTINUED)

THE LAST SAMURAI - Rev. 2/27/03 19.

25 CONTINUED: 25

Algren is surprised to discover the living god is barely in his twenties. The divine EMPEROR MEIJI is an intelligent and curious young man, yet there is a tentativeness about him.

His throne is surrounded by ADVISORS, principal among them is Omura. As the Emperor considers his guests, Omura addresses them. Then:

OMURA

The divine Emperor Meiji bids you welcome. He is grateful for the assistance your country offers. We hope to accomplish the same national harmony you enjoy in your homeland.

The Emperor speaks in Japanese.

OMURA

Captain Algren, the Emperor is most interested in your American Indians, and wishes to know if you have seen them firsthand.

Algren looks at Graham, who nods. He may speak.

ALGREN

[Yes] I have seen them.

Graham translates.

GRAHAM

Hai... Mimashita.

They wait, but Algren has said his piece. The Emperor whispers to Omura.

OMURA

The Emperor wishes to know if you have fought against them in battle.

BAGLEY

We have, your Highness. The red man is a brutal adversary. He –

The Emperor is not interested in Bagley. He asks another question of Omura. Bagley stops in mid-sentence, somewhat nonplussed.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Emperor, must you ask this now?

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

Just ask.

OMURA

The Emperor wishes to ask Captain Algren if it is true they wear eagle feathers and paint their faces before going into battle... and that they have no fear.

This strikes a chord in Algren but he buries it.

ALGREN

They are very brave.

The Emperor nods and smiles.

EMPEROR

(accented English)

Thank...you...very...much.

He stands. Everyone else hurries to follow suit. The audience is over.

GRAHAM

(to Algren & Bagley)

Step back... Step back... Step back... and, turn.

Algren, Bagley and Graham turn to leave.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Tokyo is a city in chaos. Everything seems out of balance. Dystopic. A collision of Eastern and Western.

Algren and Gant watch as Graham prepares to take a photograph of an old merchant in front of his store.

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

Hold still while I count to three... One... Two... Three.

Algren silently watches the passers-by. Something draws

his attention:

Across the street, a man is striding down the crowded sidewalk. His martial bearing, two swords, traditional dress and unique top knot of hair identify him as a samurai.

UJIO's proud gait and rigid, imperious manner intrigue Algren. Most of the people on the sidewalk instantly step out of the way, bowing in deference. But two YOUNG JAPANESE in Western dress do not. Ujio stands before them, waiting for them to move. They don't. Tense words are exchanged.

YOUNG MAN #1

(subtitles)

Oh, look. There's a man who's still wearing a kamishomo [formal samurai outfit].

YOUNG MAN #2

(subtitles)

You're still wearing a top knot.

ALGREN

(almost to himself)

Samurai.

GRAHAM

Yes, that's right. [Oh, dear,] quite a proud one, from the looks of him.

Ujio glares at them and moves off. The two Young Men follow.

YOUNG MAN #1

(subtitles)

Not to mention two swords.

YOUNG MAN #2

(subtitles)

They're probably bamboo swords.

GRAHAM

Oh, dear. This is bad... He's expecting them to show deference.

Across the street, Ujio barks out some harsh commands to the two Japanese men.

UJIO

(subtitles)

And you call yourself Japanese.

They laugh in response.

Ujio's hand inches toward his sword. One of the men raises a hand, says something clearly disrespectful.

YOUNG MAN #1

Your time is past...

Like lightning -- Ujio pulls out his long samurai sword.

It flashes -- with two precise strokes, he cleanly BEHEADS one of the men -- As the beheaded corpse falls, the other man prostrates himself. Ujio wipes the blade and sweeps it back into its scabbard. Impassively, he turns away. Algren isn't listening. As Ujio passes, he and Algren lock eyes for a moment.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Algren watches a chef artfully wield a razor-sharp blade in preparation of slivers of glistening, raw fish. Gant, meanwhile, gazes unhappily at the live squirming eel destined to be his dinner. Graham and Hasegawa sit with them, cross-legged, on the floor.

ALGREN

The blade of that sword...

GRAHAM

Indeed, the samurai test the sharpness of their blades by practicing on corpses.

ALGREN

I've never seen an edge like that.

GRAHAM

Each sword is beaten and folded and beaten a thousand times, and then a thousand more.

(pauses for a bite)

This how a man is formed into a samurai apparently. How he becomes hard and sharp as steel.

(as the waitress pours tea)

Arigato. Quite a spiritual thing, actually. They say a samurai's sword is his soul.

Hasegawa watches as Algren quaffs yet another cup of sake.

HASEGAWA

(to Algren)

Sake...

(tries English)

... Good.

ALGREN

(nods back at Hasegawa)

Ask him what kind of man this Katsumoto is?

Graham translates the question.

GRAHAM

Katsumoto in tsuite motto shiritai.

HASEGAWA

Kare wa katsu et heika no shi de ari, mottomo shinrai sareru soudan yaku deshita.

GRAHAM

(translating)

Katsumoto was [once] the Emperor's teacher and his most trusted advisor.

(editorializing now)

You must understand, for centuries it was the Samurai who guarded Japan and fought her wars. But now the creation of a modern army...

(beat)

... the Samurai, well, some have accepted the change, taken money instead. But some just couldn't bring themselves to do it. Thus, the rebellion.

ALGREN

Who supplies their weapons?

GRAHAM

Katsumoto's samurai don't use guns.

GANT

What do you mean, they don't use guns?

Graham directs the question to Hasegawa, who answers.

GRAHAM

Buki wa don na juu desuka?

HASEGAWA

Katsumoto wa samurai no michi o shirumono tachi ni agamerareteoru. Imasara tobidougu nanka tsukawan yo.

GRAHAM

To those who honor the old ways, Katsumoto is a hero. He no longer dishonors himself by touching firearms.

GANT

He used them once, but now he doesn't?

GRAHAM

He gave them up, yes. Felt they diminished Bushido, "The Way of the Warrior." A code of behavior. Very serious stuff.

Algren looks at Hasegawa, who nods back politely.

ALGREN

How well does he know him?

GRAHAM

The General and Katsumoto fought together for the Emperor.

ALGREN

He fought with the samurai?

Graham looks at Algren.

GRAHAM

He is samurai.

INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - LATER

CLOSE ON a brilliantly-colored print of a Samurai battle.

Horses rear, swords flash, severed heads litter the ground. Algren is studying it, still drinking sake.

GRAHAM

Vexing people, the samurai.

Blood-thirsty, honorable, cruel, fabulously artistic.

Wanted to write a book about them for years, but they tend to keep to themselves.

GANT

Bastards still wear armor...

GRAHAM

Yes, and when the Irish were still comporting themselves in loincloths, these chaps were already the most sophisticated warriors on earth.

ALGREN

I want detailed accounts of their battle tactics.

GRAHAM

I have several books on it.

(bows to Algren)

Just waiting to be translated.

GANT

Captain'll be speaking the lingo in no time. You should hear him blather on in Blackfoot.

GRAHAM

A fellow linguist! Come on, sir, a word or two in the savage tongue.

Algren glances disapprovingly at Gant.

ALGREN

Sorry, can't remember.

GRAHAM

Nonsense, you were among them for how long? Just "hello" or "goodbye" or "cut his tongue out and boil him in oil."

Gant sees how troubling this line of discussion is for Algren.

GANT

Early day tomorrow, Captain'darlin', time for bed, isn't it?

GRAHAM

I've always had a dread fascination with scalping. But I've never quite understood the technique.

Something changes in Algren's eyes at the mention of scalping.

GANT

Ah, the English and their love of torture.

GRAHAM

I beg your pardon --

GANT

A lovely race -- the rack, the spike, and the bloody Tower of London.

GRAHAM

I was not speaking to you, you uncivilized hooligan.

GANT

I sir am an American citizen and no longer under the boot heel of the English oppressor.

Algren interrupts them. His tone is flat and unemotional.

ALGREN

...First you need to grab a handful of hair and give it a quick jerk in order to loosen the skin. Then you saw the scalp off a little at a time because the blades are usually dull and the skin doesn't come off all at once.

The problem is getting enough leverage when your hands are bloody...and slick. And, of course, the person being scalped in generally still alive and screaming. So a knee in the back tends to quiet them down and give you the purchase you need to finish the job.

Graham stares at him in revulsion. Gant is not surprised.

ALGREN

How soon can you translate those books?

GRAHAM

(recovering)

Right away. I'm delighted you're taking such interest in the Samurai.

ALGREN

I don't give a damn about the Samurai. I want to know my enemy.

GRAHAM

I shall not sleep until it is done.

(stands; woozy)

Ah, sake...

GANT

(after Graham leaves)

You'll be all right?

ALGREN

Leave the bottle.

Gant leaves. Algren pours another shot, studies the pictures.

INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - LATER

The bottle is empty. Algren sits in a drunken stupor.

FLASHBACK - A WINDSWEPT RIDGE

A line of mounted cavalry waits atop the ridge. Algren is next to COLONEL BAGLEY. Gant is nearby. In the valley below, a peaceful Indian village.

ALGREN

Sir, let me go down and talk to Black Kettle.

BAGLEY

And lose all element of surprise?

ALGREN

I assured him his people would be safe if they stayed on the reservation.

BAGLEY

Captain, this is a punitive expedition. We're not here to assure them of anything.

ALGREN

These people had nothing to do with the raids!

BAGLEY

Then this will serve as a lesson to those who did.

Bagley pulls his sword.

ALGREN

I promised him!

BAGLEY

And we promised the settlers we'd protect them.

(to the men)

Quietly now, boys.

And slowly the horses begin to descend on the village.

INT. GRAHAM'S ROOM - SAME

A bleary-eyed Graham is still awake, translating. He hears a commotion.

ALGREN (O.S.)

I PROMISED HIM! I'M TELLING YOU, PROMISED HIM...! ... NO!

INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - SAME

Algren is now screaming curses at a terrified SERVANT. Graham hurries in.

SERVANT

(subtitles; to Graham)

He was disturbing the other guests...

ALGREN

SPEAK ENGLISH YOU LITTLE YELLOW TURD! STOP BOWING AND FIND ME SOMETHING TO DRINK! CHOP-CHOP!!!

It is more than apparent that Algren is still drunk.

GRAHAM

Captain Algren, if I may...

ALGREN

DROP DEAD YOU LIMEY NINNY! I DON'T NEED ANY MORE HISTORY LESSONS!

Algren throws the empty bottle through the paper wall. Gant enters. Graham looks at him helplessly.

GANT

Leave him be.

He indicates that the Servant should go. They leave Algren mumbling to himself in a corner.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ALGREN'S ROOM - LATER

GRAHAM

What in God's name was that?

GANT

He has trouble sleeping. He'll be all right by morning.

GRAHAM

What was all that about a promise?

GANT

He'll be all right by morning.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - NEXT DAY

The training continues. A line of recruits fires at a series of distant targets. Algren watches, more than a little hungover.

GANT

READY! AIM! FIRE!

The recruits FIRE their WEAPONS.

GANT

LOAD!

Algren frowns.

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant. Their marksmanship is appalling.

GANT

Oh, I wouldn't have thought they were that good, sir!

Algren approaches one of the recruits, tries to assist him.

ALGREN

Now, son. Butt of the rifle into the shoulder, cheek against the stock, eye down the sight. Then softly... softly... Squeeze.

N.C.O.

(translates)

Jyu o kata ni ate ho ho ni tsukeru. Nerai o sadamete yukuri... hikigane o hike.

OMURA (O.S.)

Good morning, Captain.

Algren closes his eyes as he realizes Omura and Bagley are approaching him.

BAGLEY

Nathan.

(takes Algren aside)

Katsumoto has attacked the railroad at the border of his province.

Algren looks at the soldiers continuing to take target practice.

OMURA

We cannot govern a country in which we cannot travel freely... He must be stopped now.

ALGREN

They're not ready.

BAGLEY

The rebels don't have a single rifle. They're savages with bows and arrows!

ALGREN

-- whose sole occupation for the last thousand years has been war.

Omura looks at Bagley. Who exactly is in command here?

BAGLEY

You have superior firepower and a larger force. I am ordering the regiment to move against the rebel Katsumoto. Are you prepared to obey this order?

Algren looks off for a moment, then heads back to the firing range. Omura and Bagley watch as Algren approaches a young soldier.

ALGREN

Fire at the target.
The boy takes careful aim, and misses the target a hundred feet away.

Algren shakes his head and starts to walk toward the targets -- into the field of fire. There is instant commotion as men STOP FIRING and point at Algren.

GANT

Captain?

Omura and Bagley look at each other. Algren continues walking -- calls out over his shoulder.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham, tell this man to fire at me.

GRAHAM

Excuse me -- ?

Algren unholsters his Colt as he walks.

ALGREN

Tell him, if he does not shoot me, I am going to kill him with my third round.

GANT

Captain, if we might have a word...

Algren stops, turns, raises his REVOLVER and FIRES. It WHISTLES past the young recruit's ear. Everyone freezes.

ALGREN

Tell him.

Graham hurriedly translates. The young recruit's eyes widen in disbelief. The other recruits hastily back away.

Algren now leans casually against the target.

ALGREN

Fire, damn it.

He aims his REVOLVER and FIRES again. This time it knocks the conical hat off the poor recruit's head. In fear for his life, the boy drops his ramrod, shoulders his weapon. Still he cannot bring himself to fire. Algren cocks his weapon once more and aims at the boy.

Finally, in abject terror, the recruit squeezes the trigger. A bright orange flash and a cloud of blackpowder smoke. Algren is untouched.

Just as casually, he heads back toward Bagley and Omura, touching the boy's shoulder as he passes.

ALGREN

They're not ready.

Omura and Bagley can only stare at him incredulously. Algren walks away.

BAGLEY

The regiment leaves at six A.M.

EXT. TOKYO - DAY

The Imperial Army leaves Tokyo.

EXT. SEA COAST - DAY

The Imperial Army marches along the shoreline.

EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY

A STEAM ENGINE waits as Algren, Graham, Bagley, and Hasegawa lead the army past a traditional village being torn aside for the railroad.

Houses are leveled and guards herd the displaced villagers. Algren notes the Omura symbol on the new water tower and on the headbands of the guards. Omura's bodyguard oversees the guards' work.

ALGREN

What is that sign?

GRAHAM

It's the symbol for Omura. His zaitbatsu is one of the family businesses that own everything worth owning.

ALGREN

Omura owns all of this?

GRAHAM

As soon as he can get rid of the samurai.

Algren rides past villagers kneeling before a destroyed Buddhist temple.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

The Imperial Army winds its way up a steep mountain pass. Along the trail are a series of pikes with SEVERED HEADS on top.

GRAHAM

Samurai road sign. "No Trespassing."

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - MORNING

The Imperial Army enters a deep forest.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - MORNING

A thick fog is beginning to descend. Everything is creepy. Imminent. Algren looks around, instantly wary.

ALGREN

Form a firing line. I want two squads up on that high ground, NOW!

Algren is instantly in motion, barking orders as he rides the line.

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant, deploy skirmishers.
(wheels on his horse)

I need a second line ready to fill in on my command!

The Japanese Officer follows behind, relaying his commands. Bagley doesn't like how the engagement is shaping up.

BAGLEY

Captain Algren, we're not here as combatants.

ALGREN

Then who's going to lead these men?

BAGLEY

Their own officers, for Christ's sake. Let's get to the rear.

ALGREN

We'll be there presently.

BAGLEY

Mr. Graham, you will accompany me to the rear.

GRAHAM

Of course.

Bagley leaves the front lines with Graham in tow.

Gant watches.

GANT

And, Captain-darlin', if you don't mind I'll be takin' a wee nap...

All is SILENT. Algren looks around. Sees Gant grimly checking his rifle.

ALGREN

Mr. Gant. Report to the rear and see to the disposition of the supply train.

Gant acts as if he has not heard Algren.

ALGREN

Mr. Gant. Did you hear my order?

GANT

I heard it.

ALGREN

Then you will obey it.

Gant looks at him. In Algren's eyes he can see the gravity of their situation.

ALGREN

Zeb, get out of here. NOW.

GANT

Intending no disrespect, sir, but shove it up your arse.

A DISTANT RUMBLE of HORSES, building through the fog, breaks the moment. Then the sound of DRUMS. The Japanese soldiers are literally shaking in fear. Algren peers again into the fog. Nothing. Then the sound abruptly stops. A silence broken only by the murmured prayers of some of the soldiers.

ALGREN

Fix bayonets.

GANT

FIX... BAYONETS!

ALGREN

Firing positions.

GANT

Assume firing positions.

His order is translated. One row kneels, the other stands behind them. Algren can see nothing through the dense fog. The tension is unbearable.

Then a FORM APPEARS on horseback... GHOSTLY... like some sort of medieval monster. A horned helmet. Like something from a nightmare.

And then another figure, and another.

ALGREN

Hold the line... hold the line...

The order is translated. A terrible, beautiful moment of absolute stasis.

The Samurai suddenly CHARGE, emerging from the fog in a great wave -- roaring out ancient war-cries that chill the blood -- sweeping forward like a tsunami -- swords and spears flashing --

ALGREN

FIRE!

The volley TEARS into the Samurai, knocking down men and horses -- but still they come, undaunted.

ALGREN

RELOAD AND FIRE AT WILL!

The Japanese troops try to reload their single shot rifles -- but many fumble at the task, panic and run. Chaos.

ALGREN

HOLD THE LINE, DAMN IT!

Too late -- the Samurai are on them -- They attack with an intensity few have ever seen -- many of the Japanese soldiers try to escape, turning and running in blind panic -- they are butchered -- run through by the ashigaru, run through by the naginata.

Those soldiers who try to reload are mowed down by clouds of samurai arrows. A samurai in YELLOW ARMOR gallops past, firing steadily from horseback. His name is NOBUTADA and his control and speed are astounding.

Gant uses his Winchester with deadly accuracy. Algren uses his REVOLVER -- FIRING as he turns on his horse -- when the revolver is empty he pulls his cavalry saber.

He parries the lethal blows as the Samurai hurtle past --

And then the Samurai attack from behind! Soldiers flee.

Algren calls out orders but all discipline is gone -- it is every man for himself.

Suddenly, a Samurai, wearing BLACK ARMOR, slams into Algren's horse, sending both horse and rider to the ground.

Algren scrambles to his feet, his saber nowhere to be found as another rider heads toward him carrying a lance.

Algren wrestles the lance from his grip, throws the rider to the ground, and runs him through. Gant SHOOTS another who is about to spear Algren.

In the midst of battle one samurai, wearing a BLACK FACEPIECE, is just sitting on his horse. He watches Algren fight.

Algren now wields the lance to battle the horsemen as they sweep past. He spears one and then unseats another.

When a third samurai cuts his lance in half, Algren uses the remaining half as a club to take him down.

Gant, meanwhile, is slashed by the horseman in BLOOD RED ARMOR. Algren sees his friend, dazed and helpless on the ground, and tries desperately to fight his way to the rescue. But

it's too late. The Samurai dismounts, raises his sword, and impales Gant on the ground.

Algren is attacked from behind. He whirls, just in time to parry the blow. The Masked Samurai continues to watch him. Algren fights with heroic passion, refusing to give an inch, long after those around him have fled.

It has become a rout. Those who flee are run down like prey.

Left alone, Algren finds himself confronted by ashigaru!-- samurai foot soldiers carrying pikes. He turns to discover his retreat cut off by other samuraiwielding katana -- the lethal long sword. But rather than seek any quarter, Algren launches an attack. He kills one samurai before he is STABBED in the shoulder, by a lance.

In agony, Algren fights on. He parries a blow -- which grazes his scalp. Blood flows down his face.

Algren is surrounded by samurai. A man's heroic stand against certain death is of great interest to them. As they begin to close in, Algren whirls the lance, a tattered battle-flag with TIGER INSIGNIA still dangling from the end.

The MASKED SAMURAI removes his mask. It is the JAPANESE MAN (MORI KATSUMOTO) whose dream of the tiger we glimpsed at the beginning of the story. His eyes widen in surprise, he watches his dream come to life -- the white tiger holding the men at bay.

In SLOW MOTION Algren whirls the lance, as the samurai in the blood-red armor, advances. With a murderous smile, the man draws his katana.

Algren seems spent -- he drops to one knee, swaying, on the brink of losing consciousness. But as the RED SAMURAI lets out a battle cry and propels himself forward for the death blow -- Algren suddenly LEAPS UP and propels the jagged wooden end of the broken lance into the unprotected throat of his attacker.

As the samurai falls, the rest of his comrades close in to cut Algren off.

A harsh COMMAND stops them in their tracks. The Masked

Samurai leaps from his horse. Everyone steps aside deferentially as he looks down at Algren.

Sensing that he is about to die, Algren gets to his knees, and tries to swing his saber, but like lightning, Katsumoto draws his sword and cuts it in two.

Katsumoto looks down at Algren, who now awaits certain

death. Instead, Katsumoto barks an order. Rough hands lift Algren to his feet.

As Algren is being led away, he sees samurai calmly walking among the wounded, killing them with a single stroke.

And then he sees General Hasegawa standing alone, his sword sheathed, his head lowered. He is unhurt.

Katsumoto walks over to Hasegawa. A few words are exchanged. Katsumoto bows his head in respect, seems to agree to something.

General Hasegawa kneels and pulls out a small blade. Quietly and with great ceremony, he opens his uniform, then wraps a clean handkerchief around the blade so he can grasp it, backwards, facing his belly. Closing his eyes, General Hasegawa calmly and deliberately plunges the knife into his stomach.

Algren watches, stunned, as Katsumoto arcs his sword toward his friend's bowed head.

It is seppuku -- the traditional form of samurai suicide.

Algren passes out, his wounds overcoming him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Algren is unconscious, tied to a horse. The samurai climb a steep pass, disappearing into the soaring mountains.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

Algren's horse is led in by Katsumoto and his samurai.

This is the other Japan. The Japan we have not yet seen.

After the turmoil of Tokyo, this place seems a bucolic paradise. A valley below with rice fields. The sense of harmony so markedly absent from the cities.

As they ride in, villagers gather to greet their lord and to stare in wonder and hostility at the white stranger.

Algren, barely conscious, is lifted from his horse.

Katsumoto approaches.

KATSUMOTO

What is your name?

Algren looks at him and refuses to answer.

Ujio -- the grim samurai who cut off the man's head in the street -- races forward and SCREAMS at Algren in Japanese.

UJIO

(subtitles)

You insolent swine! Answer! You, speak!

Algren doesn't move. Ujio paces back and forth like a caged panther spitting invective at Algren.

Algren doesn't move. He watches Ujio evenly. This takes incredible will.

SUDDENLY -- Ujio draws his long sword -- it slashes through the air -- the blade singing -- and stops an inch away from Algren's face!

Algren doesn't move.

Ujio brings the cutting edge into contact with Algren's cheek.

Blood runs where even this feather-light touch cuts Algren's skin. Algren doesn't move.

Katsumoto speaks.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Leave him be.

Ujio sheathes his sword and walks away. Katsumoto looks at Algren deeply, gauging him.

KATSUMOTO

This is my son's village. You cannot escape. We are deep in the mountains and winter is coming.

Katsumoto walks away. Nobutada smiles at him.

NOBUTADA

(proud of his only English)

Jolly good.

Algren watches Katsumoto walk off with his men toward an imposing edifice that rises in the distant hills above.

Then he blacks out.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Algren's eyes open...

A WOMAN is leaning close, her eyes intent on the task of sewing up his wound. She is beautiful, but he is not really conscious enough to notice, or even feel the pain.

He blacks out again.

We DISCOVER someone else in the room.

KATSUMOTO squats nearby, peering at Algren's inert form, trying to fathom this strange fulfillment of his prophecy. Laid out before him are Algren's personal effects. Katsumoto studies them, then picks up the buckskin bag containing Algren's journals.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE PORCH - DAY (RAINING)
41A

The Silent Samurai stands guard on the porch.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Algren wakes again. Outside, it is raining. His injuries are such that he can barely move.

A ten-year-old BOY appears in the doorway. He stares at

Algren with open hostility. This is HIGEN. He turns and walks away.

Algren blacks out.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Algren's eyes open...

Through the archway Algren can see Higen and his fouryear old brother, MAGOJIRO, horsing around. The beautiful WOMAN who earlier was stitching his wound

enters, crosses to them with a tray. She says one word and the boys instantly obey.

TAKA

(subtitles)

Be quiet.

Algren watches as she serves food to her sons.

She seems to sense him. Her eyes raise, meet his, then turn away. Her expression is opaque.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DUSK

Katsumoto lives in an ancient wooden compound of sweeping tile roofs of Chinese influence. Snow-capped mountains soar in the distance. He steps onto a covered porch and looks out over the sleeping village below.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

The silent guard now sits on the porch of Taka's house, oblivious to the comings and goings around him.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

The silent guard still keeps watch on Taka's porch.

45 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 45

The woman is changing the dressing on Algren's wound beneath his robe. NOBUTADA appears. He kneels beside

Algren.

NOBUTADA

(to Taka; subtitles)

He's in bad shape.

Algren has no idea what Nobutada is saying. He interrupts

with the only Japanese word he has bothered to learn:

ALGREN

Sake.

Nobutada's face breaks into a wide smile.

THE LAST SAMURAI - Rev. 1/15/03 40.

45 CONTINUED: (A1) 45

NOBUTADA

Sake?

ALGREN

Sake.

(CONTINUED)

THE LAST SAMURAI - Rev. 1/8/03 40A.

45 CONTINUED: 45

Nobutada glances to the woman. She nods, and leaves.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Taka will take care of you. How

are you feeling?

[ALT:]

ALGREN

[Sake.]

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Yes. Sake.

Taka returns bringing Algren a cup of sake. He drinks it down, the cup falling from his hand.

Algren takes the jug out of her hand. Nobutada laughs as Algren drinks it down.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

By the light of an oil lamp, Katsumoto studies Algren's journals.

ALGREN (V.O.)

"November 26, 1868. The Washita River. For twelve years I have done nothing but carry out my orders to the best of my ability."

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The guard sits silently, vigilantly, on duty.

ALGREN (V.O.)

"Tomorrow, if I do what is asked of me as a soldier-- "

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY (SEE SLATE C47)

Algren sits hunched in a corner, convulsed with shivering. His withdrawal from alcohol, his isolation and his imagined sins are devouring him.

FLASHBACK - THE WASHITA RIVER

The line of cavalry descends on the sleeping village. Algren imperceptibly begins to slow his horse, separating himself from the group. Gant realizes.

In the distance, the first shots are fired, and the pandemonium of slaughter that slowly engulfs the village can only be seen from afar.

GANT

... Captain?

Algren takes a grim breath, then as if his body weighed a thousand pounds, turns slowly to Gant and the two of them join the attack.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Just outside his room, Nobutada whispers to Taka.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Let him drink sake, Aunt.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No. [That will not do.]

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

This is my village.

TAKA

(subtitles)

This is my house.

She crosses to Algren's room and closes the door.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Algren lies on his mat, his eyes open and unfocused. He tries to drink from his flask, but it's empty.

ALGREN (V.O.)

"-- I will destroy everything I believe as a man."

FLASHBACK - THE WASHITA RIVER

Smoke from burning teepees clouds the air as Algren slowly walks among the ruined village. Bodies and animals are strewn about.

GANT

Captain, we're movin' out.

(watches him)

Captain... It was orders.

Beside a teepee, Algren sees A YOUNG BOY, not unlike Higen, holding the body of his dead mother. The boy's eyes blaze with hatred.

BACK IN THE HOUSE

The woman is asleep in her room. A piercing SCREAM shatters the night.

EXT. VILLAGE - FOLLOWING 51

The guard leaps to his feet. Lamps are lit around the village...

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

The guard and the woman hurry in. Algren is disoriented.

The woman crosses to him, kneeling at his side.

Algren lunges, grabbing her.

ALGREN

Sake! Sake!

She stares at him, the breath being squeezed out of her, not even a whisper of fear in her eyes.

ALGREN

(mumbling to himself)

Sake...

Shaken, he lets her go, and crumples to the floor.

ALGREN

Give it to me. Please...

She gently touches him.

INT. THE PORCH OF KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Ujio stands with Katsumoto. Nobutada listens attentively.

UJIO

(subtitles)

My lord, why do you spare the barbarian? He is shamed in defeat, he should kill himself.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

That is not their custom.

UJIO

(subtitles)

Then I will kill him.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Father, I don't think --

Katsumoto flashes him a look. Nobutada is too young to have an opinion.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Ujio, there will be plenty of killing to come. For now we will learn about the men we will face in battle. Keep him alive.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

A week has passed. The guard still sits out front.

Villagers pass.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

Daylight streams in, finding Algren lying on his back.

The worst of the detox is past. As he lies there, SOUNDS from outside draw him:

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The guard stands up warily as Algren comes out onto the porch, blinking in the sunlight. Algren looks at the guard, sees his boots, puts them on.

ALGREN

Good morning.

(no response)

Fine, and you?

Still no response. Algren takes a step off the porch, waiting to be stopped. He isn't. He walks on. The guard follows.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren walks through the village, his guard following at a respectful distance.

This is the first time he really sees the splendor of the setting, and the simple beauty of village life: children chase each other, clothes are washed in the river, and in the rice fields below, farmers squat as they have for thousands of years.

In his hut, the swordsmith hammers and folds the blade.

Algren turns to the grim samurai who follows silently behind him.

ALGREN

So what's your name? Name. Namai?

(no response)

You have a name, don't you?

...You have no idea what I'm saying, do you?

On a nearby hillside, the samurai train. Algren watches.

Part sacred ritual, part martial preparation, they combine athletic prowess and graceful artistry into one effortless whole.

Kendo, ("The Way of the Sword") masters practice with their wooden swords. We see Higen, and other boys his age,

working hard. Higen is reprimanded harshly for an incorrect move.

UJIO
(subtitles)

No, not that way! Raise your arms higher.

Algren stares at the boy.

UJIO
(subtitles)

Lower your hips!

NAKAO, a mountain of a man, is a Jujitsu master. He stands unarmed, four samurai facing him. They attack with wooden swords. He effortlessly defeats them – the agility of the huge man is shocking. Kyudo ("The Way of the Bow") masters use their bows for target practice. Nobutada holds a bundle of arrows. In the distance, a line of plums. Algren watches. Nobutada just seems to stand there, his eyes half-open.

And then -- in a stunning blaze of movement -- Nobutada fires the arrows -- one after another, amazingly fast -- cleanly hitting each plum. The final arrow splits the previous one as it buries itself in the tree.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

Algren opens a sliding shoji screen and discovers a small room that has been made into a shrine. Candles and incense burn but Algren's eyes are drawn to what seems like an apparition standing in the corner.

The BRIGHT RED ARMOR of the warrior Algren killed in the fog, is held upright by an unseen stand. It is almost as if the dead warrior himself is staring back at him.

Algren senses someone behind him, and turns. The woman is looking at the mud Algren has tracked across the pristine tatami mats. Algren looks down at his muddy boots, then back at the woman. She turns and walks away.

Nobutada appears with the Silent Samurai. He speaks to

Algren in Japanese, gesturing toward the door.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)

Over there. Go. You. Go. You.

Algren allows himself to be led out.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren follows the Silent Samurai through the village.

ALGREN

So where are we going?

(listens)

We're not going to a bar, by any chance... Sake?

(shakes his head)

We're not going to San Francisco, by any chance?

...Forget it.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

The Silent Samurai leads Algren into the compound.

ALGREN

You're one hell of a conversationalist, aren't you? Do you talk at all? Or was it something I said?

(no response)

I know why you don't talk. You don't talk because you're angry. You're angry because they make you wear a dress.

Without a word, Algren is led up the steps, where a sixteen-foot-tall gold Buddha looms out of the darkness. Katsumoto speaks out of the shadows.

KATSUMOTO

This temple was built by my family a thousand years ago. My name is Katsumoto. What is your name?

(no answer)

Are my words not correct?

(still no answer)

I will practice my English with you.

ALGREN

You will?

KATSUMOTO

If you would honor me.

They look at each other for a long moment.

ALGREN

You kept me alive just to speak English...

Katsumoto just stares at him.

ALGREN

Then what do you want?

KATSUMOTO

To know my enemy.

Algren is dumbstruck. These are his own words.

ALGREN

I saw what you do to your enemies.

KATSUMOTO

The soldiers in your country do not kill?

ALGREN

We don't cut the heads off defeated men on their knees.

KATSUMOTO

General Hasegawa asked me to help him end his life. A

Samurai cannot stand the shame of defeat.

I was honored to cut off his head.

Algren shakes his head at the incomprehensibility of these people.

KATSUMOTO

Many of our customs seem strange to you. The same is true of yours. For example, not to introduce yourself is considered extremely rude, even among enemies.

Algren watches Katsumoto for a moment.

ALGREN

Nathan Algren.

KATSUMOTO

(bows)

I am honored to meet you. I have enjoyed this conversation in your English.

ALGREN

I have questions.

KATSUMOTO

I have introduced myself, you have introduced yourself. This is a very good conversation.

ALGREN
I have questions.

Katsumoto stops and turns back to Algren.

KATSUMOTO
Questions come later.
ALGREN
Who was the warrior in the red armor?

Katsumoto stops, considers, relents.

KATSUMOTO
My brother-in-law. Hirotaro.
ALGREN
And the woman who cares for me?

Katsumoto understands that Algren has no idea how disrespectful he is being to someone of Katsumoto's rank and authority.

KATSUMOTO
My sister, Hirotaro's wife. Her name is Taka.
ALGREN
(incredulous)
I killed her husband?
KATSUMOTO
It was a good death.

Katsumoto walks away.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY
Algren enters the house. As he walks forward, we see he has taken his boots off. He sees the family seated at dinner. Nobutada notices and crosses to him.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
You! Come... Please...

Nobutada leads Algren to the table and pushes him gently to his knees.
Taka treats him with utter politeness. His guilt over what he has learned is overwhelming. He cannot even bring himself to look at her. She hands him a bowl of rice.
Only when she isn't looking does he glance at her for any sign of the animosity she must feel.

TAKA
(subtitles)
He is vile. And smells like the pigs. Tell my brother I cannot stand this one minute longer.
NOBUTADA
(to Taka, subtitles)
Why don't you tell him?

They look at each other in ironic sympathy.

TAKA
(subtitles)
At least make him take a bath.

Nobutada laughs.

EXT. VILLAGE - BATHING TUB - DAY

Nobutada, the Silent Samurai, and Algren are at a rotenburo, a hot mineral spring in a secluded part of the village. Algren sits in the water.

Nobutada moves to the edge of the water as a Japanese grandmother slowly approaches to bathe.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Feels good, doesn't it? Good for the shoulder. Jolly good.
Nobutada, unconcerned, chats pleasantly, remarking on Algren's old battle wounds.
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Nice and warm? How is it? See, heals the scars quickly.
The grandmother arrives at the bath. Nobutada rises and bows.
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Granny, hello.
Algren's discomfort turns to outright alarm when a toothless old grandmother appears and joins him in the tub!
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
You are strong to bear them.

Algren sinks a little lower into the water. The old grandmother smiles at him with her toothless grin.

GRANDMOTHER
(to Algren)
Konichiwa.

Nobutada laughs.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - RAINING
Algren, in uniform, walks back with Nobutada and his samurai shadow.
Higen and another boy run past training with wooden swords. As Algren approaches them, Nobutada watches his cousin proudly, murmuring details of his prowess to Algren, who has no idea what he's talking about.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
They may be children, but they are strong.

Higen is deadly serious. He spars with another boy, deftly knocking the wooden sword from his hands.
The boys immediately stop.
Algren bends and picks the sword up, offering it back to Higen's friend, but the boy backs away shaking his head.
Nobutada watches in amusement, then encourages Algren in Higen's direction.
NOBUTADA
(to Algren)
Try... Try...

Algren shakes his head politely, but Higen is ready to attack. Algren dodges one thrust, then parries another. For a little boy, Higen is remarkably dangerous and quick. And, of course, his attack is fueled by rage. Ujio approaches, barks a command in Japanese.

UJIO
(subtitles)
Put down that sword.

Suddenly, everyone goes silent. Higen backs away.

Algren turns.

Ujio is standing behind him, wooden sword in hand. It's obvious to Algren what he must mean, but Algren does nothing.

Ujio approaches Algren slowly. Algren holds the wooden sword casually, only his eyes betraying the tension of the moment.

Ujio's wooden sword FLASHES, quicker than the eye can follow. Algren's sword is knocked from his hands, then, somehow in the same fluid movement, Ujio brings the sword around and cracks Algren across the chest hard enough to knock the breath from his body and send him to his knees.

Higen's friend goes running off toward Taka's house. Algren staggers back to his feet.

Again Ujio's SWORD FLASHES. Algren parries one blow

before he is cracked across the face. Blood flows from his nose.

Ujio knocks Algren's legs out from under him, and while Algren is sprawling on the ground, Ujio kicks Algren's sword out of his hand, and starts away.

Satisfied with himself, Ujio walks away, but the expressions of the bystanders cause him to turn back: Algren is standing again, holding the sword.

Nearby, Taka watches with interest. There is some atavistic satisfaction in seeing Algren physically punished.

Higen also watches closely.

The Silent Samurai merely stares at Algren as Ujio spins kicks him in the stomach, followed by a blow to the shin.

Algren is swept off his feet face down in the mud. Gasping for breath, at least one rib broken, Algren writhes on the ground. He tries to push himself up, but Ujio slams this sword across Algren's back. He hits the ground again grasping for his sword.

The ever-enlarging crowd gasps as Algren once again struggles to get up, swiping his sword at Ujio. This time without hesitation, Ujio grabs his waving sword, pulling Algren up onto his feet.

Ujio delivers the final blows upon Algren's now defenseless body. First the shoulder, then finally the head.

Something begins to change in Taka's regard. Her appetite for vengeance is not as great as she might have imagined. Higen, too, finds himself reluctantly impressed by Algren's determination.

Algren hits the ground, unconscious, dropping the sword as he falls. Ujio reaches down, picks up the sword, throws it to Higen before walking away.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Fall. Algren is led in by the silent guard. He limps a bit.

ALGREN

I really want to thank you for looking out for me yesterday.

That's your job, right, protecting me? Good job, Bob.

(MORE)

ALGREN (CONT'D)

You don't mind if I call you Bob, do you? I knew a Bob once, but he was ugly. You're a handsome young devil. You a ladies man, Bob?

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Algren discovers Katsumoto waiting.

KATSUMOTO

Ujio is teaching you the way of the Japanese sword.

ALGREN

Is that what he's doing?

KATSUMOTO

You fought against your red Indians?

ALGREN

... Yes?

KATSUMOTO

I have read about this. Tell me of your part in them.

ALGREN

Why?

KATSUMOTO

I wish to learn.

ALGREN

Read a book.

KATSUMOTO

I would rather have a good conversation.

ALGREN

Why?

KATSUMOTO

Because we are both students of war.

(looks at him)

So you were the General of your army?

Algren shakes his head, relenting.

ALGREN

No, I was a Captain.

KATSUMOTO

This is a low rank?

ALGREN

(almost smiles)

No. It's a middle rank. I was tactical liaison to the tribal chiefs.

KATSUMOTO

Ah. And who was your General?

ALGREN

Don't you have a rebellion to lead?

KATSUMOTO

People in your country do not like conversation?

ALGREN

He was a Lieutenant Colonel. His name was Custer.

KATSUMOTO

I know this name.

(Algren looks at him)

He killed many warriors.

ALGREN

(a beat)

Yes. Many warriors.

KATSUMOTO

So he was a good general.

ALGREN

No. He was arrogant and foolhardy. And he got massacred after splitting his command and taking a single company against 5,000 angry braves.

KATSUMOTO

5,000 Indians. How many men for Custer?

ALGREN

211.

KATSUMOTO

I like this General Custer.

ALGREN

He was a murderer who fell in love with his own legend and his troopers died for it.

KATSUMOTO

I think this was a very good death.

ALGREN

Well maybe you can have one just like it someday.

KATSUMOTO

If it is my destiny.

Algren looks at him, utterly confounded by his blithe attitude toward death.

ALGREN

Look, what do you want from me?

KATSUMOTO

What do you want for yourself?

ALGREN

What are you doing, why are we having these 'conversations'?

What the hell am I doing here?

KATSUMOTO

In Spring the snows will melt and the passes will open, and the events of the world will unfold.

Until that time, you are here. Good day, Captain.

Katsumoto stands, bows, and leaves.

EXT. VILLAGE - TAKA'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Algren sits on the porch in the rain.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY - RAINING
Katsumoto continues reading Algren's journal.

ALGREN (V.O.)

November 30, 1868. The Dakota Territories. I am sickened by my life. There is no choice now but to leave the army.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK - RAINING

Algren watches the swordsmith work on the blade.

ALGREN (V.O.)

For twenty years I have rarely slept in a bed and most never in a house. The regiment is the closest thing to a family I have known.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren studies the Samurai as they train. We see almost imperceptible movement of his head as he analyzes their technique.

ALGREN (V.O.)

Such skills that I possess concern themselves with the bloody arts and have no place in polite society. Who will I be when I am no longer a soldier?

EXT. VILLAGE - HILLSIDE - DUSK

Higen walks, alone, in the long grass.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Autumn. Katsumoto watches Ujio train the men. A sudden movement of their eyes causes Ujio to stop. He turns to find:

Algren, at the end of the line, holding a wooden sword.

An imperceptible look passes between Ujio and Katsumoto, but Ujio's resentment is overruled. Ujio crosses to Algren and begins sparring with him. Algren does his best to follow as Ujio continues.

Katsumoto, the slightest hint of a smile on his face, walks away.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

Higen sits, laboring over a scroll. Algren enters holding a Japanese notebook and sits close to him. Higen looks up. Algren indicates that he wants pen and paper.

ALGREN

Pencil... [Pen...]

(gesturing)

For me... Write.

Higen hesitates, then gives it to him.

HIGEN

En pitsu.

ALGREN

En pitsu... en pitsu. Arrigato.

Algren begins to write as Higen watches him.

Algren notes Higen's curiosity and does a trick extending his arm. Then he pretends his thumb has been severed.

ALGREN (V.O.)

1876, day unknown, month unknown. I continue to live among these extraordinary people.

Taka enters with Magojiro.

TAKA

Higen.

Higen is pleased until Taka calls him away.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

Ujio practices alone on a hilltop.

ALGREN (V.O.)

From the moment they wake, they devote themselves to the perfection of whatever they pursue -- I have never seen such discipline.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Nobutada practices archery.

ALGREN (V.O.)

And yet I am confounded by their contradictions, savagery followed by mildness.

INT./EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

Ujio instructs Higen in the tea ceremony.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SHRINE ROOM - DAY (ALSO SLATE A83)

Algren passes the open screen door and sees Higen kneeling before his father's armor.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

Algren steps out of his room dressed in a Japanese hakama. The wide pants worn by all samurai warriors are a puzzle of strips and straps. Algren checks to see if anyone is looking then begins to imitate a series of kata moves.

Higen enters and watches him. Algren suddenly realizes he is not alone. Embarrassed, he bows to Higen.

ALGREN (V.O.)
I have decided to do what I can to learn their ways.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT
Algren kneels at the table with the rest of the family. They eat in silence.

ALGREN
(subtitles)
Thank you. More rice?

They stop, shocked. He has spoken Japanese! Nobutada calls for Taka to serve him more rice, then begins yammering enthusiastically in Japanese.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Taka, let him eat more. Eat a lot. Don't be polite. We have all the rice in the world.

Algren holds up his hand.

ALGREN
Not so fast!
(holds up chopsticks)
What is this?
NOBUTADA
Hashi.
ALGREN
Hashi.

Nobutada is hysterical with glee now.

NOBUTADA
Hai!!

Nobutada points to various objects, giving the Japanese words for each. Magojiro joins in. Higen watches, still removed.

MAGOJIRO
(subtitles)
Nose! Ears!
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Top knot! This is my top knot.
MAGOJIRO
(subtitles)
Mouth! Teeth! Tongue!
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
All samurai must wear a top knot!
HIGEN
(subtitles)
How can he understand?
MAGOJIRO
(subtitles)
Tongue! Tongue!
NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Do you understand?

HIGEN
(subtitles)
He can't understand. That's enough.
MAGOJIRO
(subtitles)
TONGUE!
HIGEN
(subtitles)
Be quiet.

Algren points to himself.

ALGREN
Algren.
NOBUTADA
All-gren.

Algren smiles, and Magojiro laughs, saying "All-gren!" over and over again. Algren bows, then points to them all in turn.

ALGREN
Nobutada. Magojiro. Higen.
(turns to Taka)
Taka.

She meets his eye for the slightest moment, then looks down and walks away.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY
Katsumoto is in heated conversation with Taka.

TAKA
(subtitles)
Brother, please make him leave. I cannot stand it.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
Is he so repulsive?
TAKA
(subtitles)
The shame is unbearable. I ask your permission to end my life.
KATSUMOTO
(harsh; subtitles)
You will do as you are told!

She bows her head deferentially.

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
Would you rather I kill him to avenge your husband?
TAKA
(subtitles)
... Yes.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
Hirotao died in battle. He tried to kill the American, and he was defeated. It was Karma.
TAKA
(subtitles)
I know. Forgive my weakness.
KATSUMOTO
(softens his tone; subtitles)
There must be some reason why he's here with us.
(beat)
It's God's will.

Suddenly, they look up as Algren emerges from the house.

Taka lowers her eyes, bows, and heads inside. Algren watches her go.

ALGREN

She has been very kind to care for me.

KATSUMOTO

She is honored to have my guest in her house.

Katsumoto walks away.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren trains with Ujio and the others in the snow. Nobutada and Higen are watching.

Algren's attack is easily brushed aside and he ends up on the ground. Nobutada approaches and bows.

NOBUTADA

Algren-San. Please forgive me. Too many minded.

ALGREN

Huh?

NOBUTADA

(pointing as he explains)

Mind sword, mind face, mind people watch, too many mind.

(on Algren's confused expression)

No mind.

ALGREN

No mind?

NOBUTADA

Hai! No sword. No people watch.

No enemy. No mind. You try.

Algren nods, uncertainly, and picks himself up. Again he faces Nakao, shaking off tension and trying to stay calm.

Algren attacks. And once again, he ends up in the dirt. Nobutada smiles encouragingly.

Algren can only shake his head.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

Higen sits before Hirotarō's armor. It is almost as if he is in silent conversation with the dead warrior.

Algren is passing and pauses in the doorway to look at the young boy.

ALGREN (V.O.)

Is it bestowed at birth -- ?

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

Seen from afar, Algren and Katsumoto walk through the snow deep in conversation.

ALGREN (V.O.)

I am surprised to learn that the word, Samurai, means "to serve." And that Bushido, The Way of the warrior, is much more than the study of war.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

Higen sits absolutely still, in the snow. His eyes are focused on a fixed point in the distance.

Algren squats beside him. After a moment, he opens one eye and peeks.

ALGREN (V.O.)

To the samurai, training the mind is as important as the skills of combat.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY (SHOT W/SC. 65)

Katsumoto sits before the Buddha, deep in meditation.

ALGREN (V.O.)

Zazen, or "Sitting," seems to be a kind of contemplation. Not prayer as we might know it, but rather a way of quieting the mind.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - PORCH - MAGIC HOUR

Algren sits on the porch writing in his journal. The Silent Samurai stands nearby.

EXT. VILLAGE - ANOTHER DAY

Algren is sparring with a Samurai as Nobutada and Nakao watch.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

He's getting better, no?

NAKAO

(subtitles)

Yes. But still so ugly.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

Snow outside. Algren sits by the kitchen fire with Higen and Magojiro. The boys are teaching him to speak Japanese.

ALGREN

Cold.

HIGEN

Samui.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I'm cold.

MAGOJIRO

Watashi mo samui.

(beat)

Watashi mo samui.

ALGREN

You're cold also.

HIGEN

Hi!

MAGOJIRO

(repeating)

Hi.

ALGREN

Hi. Fire.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

The branch.

ALGREN

Wood. Ede.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

The branch burns.

ALGREN

Eda ga...

HIGEN

Eda ga moeru.

ALGREN

Burns? Eda ga moeru. Burning wood.

Taka enters from outside, shaking the snow from her hair.

ALGREN (V.O.)

Everyone is polite, every nuance of behavior seems to have great meaning --

She watches Higen helping Algren before walking away.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

Taka carries a large sack of rice toward the house.

ALGREN (V.O.)

And yet I keep offending.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

Taka enters, carrying the rice. Algren goes to take it.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No, please.

ALGREN

(insistent)

Hai.

He carries the rice for her into the tent. She follows. They are alone.

TAKA

(subtitles)

Japanese men do not help with this.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I am not Japanese.

They look at each other -- it is the first time they are truly present in each other's gaze. Algren speaks in English, taking refuge in the knowledge that he cannot be understood.

ALGREN

You're always so polite. What must you be thinking [feeling]?

[Do you miss him that much?] Was he good to you?

I hope he was.

She is watching him uncomfortably. She can't understand his words, but knows something different is happening.

ALGREN

I'm sorry. Gomen n'sai.

She looks up at him, suddenly attuned.

ALGREN

Gomen n'sai... Your husband, Hirotarō.

Her eyes widen in startlement, then they start to well with tears. She knows exactly what he means, and is amazed that he would say it, or feel it.

TAKA

(subtitles)

He did his duty. You did your duty.

ALGREN

What are you saying?

TAKA

(subtitles)

I accept your apology...

Despite their mutual loneliness, they are still worlds apart. Magojiro runs into the kitchen breaking the moment. Taka turns away toward her son.

AN ICE CRYSTAL ON THE END OF A BRANCH starts to drip. SPRING has come. Villagers laugh as they go about the business of life. A man throws a sack of rice to another. Two women hurry away from a farmer who is teasing them.

MONTAGE BEATS:

Algren sits writing in his journal on a hilltop overlooking the village. The Silent Samurai stands nearby.

Algren and Higen pass by the water wheel.

Algren, Higen and the Silent Samurai climb the hillside.

Higen runs to catch up with Algren.

Algren sits in the rotenburo bath and stares into the water as it ripples over the rocks and eddies. He is trying to quiet his mind.

ALGREN (V.O.)

Spring, 1877. This marks the longest I have stayed in one place since I left home at seventeen.

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

Algren trains alone in the twilight.

ALGREN (V.O.)

There is so much here that I will never understand.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

Taka collects vegetables from the garden. Algren sees her.

EXT. VILLAGE HILLSIDE - DAY

TRAINING AREA: Ujio trains Higen in the art of sword play.

ANOTHER AREA: Algren sits meditating on a hilltop overlooking the village. The Silent Samurai watches him dutifully.

ALGREN (V.O.)

I have never been a church-going man. Indeed, what I have seen on the field of battle has led me to question God's purpose.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - DAY

Katsumoto takes an ancient sword from a wooden case.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Algren walks through the woods. He sees a stone-carved Buddha.

ALGREN (V.O.)

But there is indeed something spiritual in this place. And though it may forever be obscure to me, I cannot but be aware of its power.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren, holding a wooden sword in 1870's baseball manner, is coaxing Higen to throw the ball. Higen laughs as Algren hits it onto the next porch.

ALGREN (V.O.)

I do know it is here that I have known my first untroubled sleep in many years.

Taka watches her son. It is clear that he is growing to like Algren.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren is once again among the training warriors...

KOURA SAMURAI #1

Ujio will win in five moves.

NAKAO

In six!

He and Ujio face off, each waiting for the other to attack.

KOURA SAMURAI #1

Next in five moves.

NAKAO

In six.

Again, and again Algren is bested.

KOURA SAMURAI #1

In seven moves!

NAKAO

In eight.

Algren is furious.

But as he returns to face Ujio again, he happens to glance at Ujio's feet. With the smallest movement, he sees Ujio shift the weight from one foot to the other. Next, he focuses on Ujio's hands and sees his grip adjust slightly.

Gradually all SOUND drains away. We hear only Algren's

steady breathing. He is suddenly aware of everything.

A bird in a tree. A woman grinding rice. A plum about to fall. A gently-swaying battle flag. Slow-motion as:

Algren attacks -- no fury, just control -- Ujio deflects the blow, Algren anticipates, swings again. Ujio blocks it. Algren counters. Algren presses, Ujio counters as he retreats, but Algren won't relent. Finally both men strike at the same moment, their swords arriving simultaneously at the other's neck.

ALL SAMURAI

A draw!

A draw. The samurai are amazed. Algren bows to Ujio.

Ujio nods in respect.

EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

Katsumoto and Algren in the corral on the hilltop, watching the men train below.

KATSUMOTO

Your skill is improving.

ALGREN

I am a beginner.

KATSUMOTO

Such modesty is very Japanese...

Algren smiles, but finds himself looking at the warriors below.

KATSUMOTO

They are fine warriors.

ALGREN

I could kill all those men with a single round from a howitzer. You know this word, howitzer?

KATSUMOTO

I know this word. How quickly can they fire?

ALGREN

Three rounds a minute. Four if the crew is good. At Gettysburg, 3000 men died in fifteen minutes.

KATSUMOTO

What is their range?

ALGREN

Accurate up to a mile. Lethal at half a mile.

KATSUMOTO

It takes no courage to kill a man from a half a mile away. You should look into the eyes of your enemy when you kill him.

ALGREN

Either way, he's just as dead.

KATSUMOTO

Taking a man's life is nothing. You cannot take away his honor.

ALGREN

(shakes his head)

Honor...

KATSUMOTO

You do not believe in this?

Katsumoto slowly draws his sword.

KATSUMOTO

The Emperor gave this to my family 400 years ago. Many of my ancestors have died in his service. Our lives mean nothing!-- honor is everything.

ALGREN

In our Civil War, the South believed they were fighting for honor just as you do. And their men died by the thousands.

KATSUMOTO

Then they had a good death.

ALGREN

No they didn't have a good death! Their land was overrun, and their families were starving -- do you place no value whatsoever on human life?

KATSUMOTO

(fierce)

What do you know of human life?

You come here to kill for money. Where is your family? Your wife, your sons? What is your legacy?

ALGREN

(rising intensity)

And what is yours? Honor isn't going to stop the railroads and the cities and the machines! The South couldn't do it, the Indians couldn't, and you can't, either.

Katsumoto simply looks at him.

KATSUMOTO

I was told Americans were difficult people...

ALGREN

I was told Japanese were agreeable and polite.

The slightest smile passes between them.

KATSUMOTO

I have requested an audience with the Emperor. He is young and there are things I must say to him. I await his reply.

ALGREN

When will the passes be open?

KATSUMOTO

They are open now.

ALGREN

Do you plan on letting [allowing] me return to Tokyo?

KATSUMOTO

So that you can bring your howitzers against my samurai?

Algren is struck by the question. What will he do when he returns?

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The entire village has gathered to celebrate spring planting. Torches illuminate a small stage near Taka's house, where actors perform Kyogen, a comic form. Algren sits near the back, marveling at the laughter and spirit around him. Enjoying himself, Algren looks at Taka, Higen, and Magojuro laughing at the actors.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - SAME

Below the stage area, two samurai stand guard. They exchange a glance -- all is well. They divide and walk in opposite directions. One of them glances away for a moment...

Before he can register surprise, a black-cloaked arm grabs him around the neck, twisting sharply and he is dragged into the darkness.

HOLD ON the darkness... until our eyes adjust to -- the vaguest emerging shapes.

There is another way of combat. A way without the beauty, the philosophy, and the moral code.

Their head-to-toe black clothes are a perfect camouflage, their silence and stealth are otherworldly. They were then known as shinobi.

We know them as Ninja.

They float across the ground... complete physical control.

From the village stage area, we HEAR the sound of music and laughter.

EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE - SAME

Katsumoto steps onto the stage. He is shaking his head and laughing, secretly relishing the opportunity to cavort with the players.

Algren again looks around at the laughing villagers, at Taka and the boys, and the guards standing vigil. As always, Samurai Bob is nearby. Nakao laughs and yells out.

NAKAO

(subtitles)

My Lord, finally...

EXT. IN THE VILLAGE - SAME

Another samurai crumpled with his throat cut. Ninjas creep past.

EXT. VILLAGE HOUSE - SAME 95

The Ninjas jump and crawl up the walls like spiders. One by one they take up positions on the rooftops surrounding the square, taking small, lethal crossbows and silently arming them.

EXT. THE SQUARE - SAME

Katsumoto is an enthusiastic actor. He plays to the children in the audience. They are delighted with his broad theatrics.

Algren sits back and takes in the fullness of the moment.

His eyes are drawn to the stars above, which seem particularly bright at this moment.

Which is why he notices something odd -- a blackness darker than the sky, the slightest shifting of a shadow on a rooftop.

His eyes return to the stage, but something nags at him, and he quickly realizes what it is: the guards are now gone.

Quickly, he looks up into the darkness again, and now sees more shapes, no more than the shifting shadows on the rooftops. He jumps to his feet --

ALGREN

KATSUMOTO!

Several things happen at once:

Katsumoto turns at the sound of Algren's voice, and this act saves his life -- as a crossbow BOLT WHISTLES past where his head just was, into the mask of the actor behind him --

Villagers scream as -- Arrows and throwing stars rain down on the unprotected square -- Algren has grabbed hold of Taka and the boys and, as arrows thud all around, is propelling them toward Taka's house -- Katsumoto ducks down and rolls off the stage as bolts riddle the platform area. The samurai thrust their bodies in front of Katsumoto -- Algren pushes Taka and the boys into the house. A samurai enters the house behind them, but is struck by a shooting star just as he slides the shoji screen closed. Ujio and Nakao, swords flashing, are organizing a ring around Katsumoto, and they make their way toward Taka's house.

Nobutada grabs his bow and is already picking off Ninja from the rooftops -- The ring of samurai around Katsumoto is also moving toward Taka's house, but one by one, they are being picked off -- More Ninja have now appeared, this time on the ground -- Samurai rush to engage them, and small hand-to-hand engagements break out around the square -- The circle of Samurai mount the steps.

UJIO

(subtitles)

Lord, please go inside.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

The women, children!

Katsumoto and several of his men enter the house as Ujio, Nakao, and a few others join the silent Samurai in a defensive position, outside.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

Higen and Taka run into a corner. Algren places Magojuro beside his mother. The Samurai following them is struck by a shuriken as he closes the shoji screen. He falls to the floor as Taka comforts Magojuro.

The injured Samurai manages to drag himself next to his charges as an intruder is heard entering the house.

Algren swiftly turns ready to attack, only to see it is

Katsumoto with two more samurai. They share a look as they hear -- A terrifying SCRAPING sound from above -- like rats. The Ninja are up there.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

Ujio and his men are outnumbered by the attacking Ninja, but they will not allow the attackers to enter the house. Nearby, Nobutada is at the stage. He continues firing his bow -- the powerful arrow passes through one Ninja after Ninja.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

In the main room, for one moment Katsumoto and his men are frozen in their defensive postures -- not knowing where the next attack will come from. A SOUND from the rear of the house -- a sliding screen opening. Katsumoto and his two samurai bodyguards head toward the kitchen area.

INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME
As Katsumoto and his men rush in -- Ninjas EXPLODE into the house. Katsumoto's two bodyguards are immediately cut down -- one takes a throwing star in the face, the other is felled by a ninjato, a short sword ideal for fighting in confined spaces. Katsumoto dives and rolls across the floor. He instantly kills one Ninja, and narrowly escapes the slicing blow of another.
Another Ninja dives in through the window.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME
Nobutada is firing arrows into the backs of the Ninja trying to get into Taka's house.

INT. TAKA'S FRONT ROOM - SAME
Algren is reaching toward the sword of the dying samurai as -- The first Ninja TEARS THROUGH THE PAPER WALL, and lunges toward Algren with his sword.
Algren dodges the sword and takes a sharp kick to the stomach sending him back over a low table. From the floor, Algren kicks the table back into the Ninja's legs catching him off balance. Algren rises, catching the Ninja by the wrists, swings him violently through a wooden screen just as a second Ninja bursts through the paper shoji. Taka quickly grabs the dying samurai's sword and plunges the blade into the Ninja's stomach. Algren turns seeing she has saved him and kicks the second Ninja away just as -- A third Ninja enters -- Algren grabs the low tea table, lifting it up to avoid the blade as the Ninja's sword LODGES deep in the wood. Algren flings the table to the floor and kicks his opponent in the knee. Algren tries to reach for a dropped sword, but the Ninja is too quick and kicks it from his hand.
Algren throws himself, bodily, at his attacker. He manages to grab him by the arm and flip the Ninja to the floor. Algren elbows the Ninja and rolls, but the Ninja grabs his head, forcing his face toward the blade lodged in the table. In the melee, Higen slips away into the hall.
Taka calls out in dismay.

TAKA
Higen!

INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME
Katsumoto wields two swords. It is the first time we have seen him in action and his movements are both beautiful and deadly. More Ninjas pour in through the window. Katsumoto is now facing four attackers. One of them hurls a throwing star. With blind instinct, Katsumoto turns and takes it in the meat of his arm. His attackers circle him, looking for an opening.

INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME
Algren and the Ninja are in a death struggle on the tatami.

INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE - SAME
Higen runs to his dead father's armor, grabs the short sword

INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME 106
Meanwhile, the first Ninja assassin is coming around from his collision with the wooden screen. The Ninja again moves toward Algren, but -- Higen suddenly yells, appearing with his father's sword, to distract the much larger man -- Algren's attacker is on top of him, and pushing his face closer to the blade. Finally, Algren's hand finally seizes upon a chopstick on the floor, and he plunges it upward into the eye of his attacker.
Taka rises lifting Magojiro into her arms.

INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME
Katsumoto kills two of his attackers, but while evading the furious attack of the other two.

INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME
Higen bravely swings the sword, but the Ninja, undeterred, prepares to strike a killing blow to the boy -- Algren sees this and grabs the sword that was previously kicked from his hand, leaps across the room, plunging it deep into the Ninja's back. The Ninja falls to the floor as Higen runs to avoid the body. The young boy runs into Algren's room. Algren turns to help Taka and Magojiro inside also.

INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE - SAME
Katsumoto is breathing heavily. His kimono is shredded and bloody. He fends off the Ninjas' increasingly savage attacks as Algren enters. Algren SCREAMS, distracting them just long enough for Katsumoto to take advantage and kill one. Then, just as a Ninja is about to kill Algren, Katsumoto FLINGS his short sword -- it pinwheels across the room, hitting Algren's attacker in the back.
Without missing a beat, Algren pulls the short sword from the dying Ninja's back and uses it stab another who, thinking Algren defenseless, launches an attack.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME
Katsumoto's samurai are finally gaining the upper hand. All of them are bloody and sweaty and dirty and tired, heaving for breath, their skin flayed open, their kimonos ripped, their hands and arms and faces bloodstained.

UJIO
(subtitles)
None must escape!

INT. ANOTHER ROOM - SAME
Algren flinches beneath the raised blade. Suddenly the Ninja JACKKNIFES as if punched by an unseen hand. As he spins, dead, to the ground, we SEE an ARROW lodged between his shoulder blades. Nobutada has FIRED blindly, through the wall, killing Algren's attacker.
Algren and Katsumoto stand back to back, facing the last two remaining Ninja. Their movements are instinctively in synch as they work together to kill first one and then the last Ninja. Breathing hard, bloody and torn, they look at each other.
Comrades in arms.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY
Algren enters Katsumoto's compound. The cherry blossoms have emerged, creating a scene of intense beauty, color and serenity.
He walks toward a graveyard. Cherry blossoms float on the air. Algren stops, reaches out and touches a blossom.

KATSUMOTO (O.S.)

A perfect blossom is a rare thing...

Algren turns. Katsumoto sits, zazen-style, meditating.

KATSUMOTO

You could spend your life looking for one. And it would not be a wasted life.

ALGREN

Who sent those men to kill you?

KATSUMOTO

I am writing a poem about a dream I had. "The tiger's eyes are like my own, but he comes from across a deep and troubled sea."

ALGREN

Was it the Emperor? Omura?

KATSUMOTO

If the Emperor wishes my death, he has but to ask.

ALGREN

So it was Omura.

KATSUMOTO

I am having trouble finishing the poem. Can you suggest a last line?

Algren realizes that Katsumoto has answered the question.

ALGREN

I'm not a writer.

KATSUMOTO

Yet you have written many pages since you came here.

ALGREN

How do you know that?

(no answer)

She told you.

(no answer)

What else has she told you?

KATSUMOTO

... You have nightmares.

ALGREN

Every soldier has nightmares.

KATSUMOTO

Only one who is ashamed of what he has done.

ALGREN

You have no idea what I have done.

Katsumoto smiles ruefully. He, of all people, has some idea. He calls out an order in Japanese. A servant runs to do his bidding.

KATSUMOTO

You have seen many things.

ALGREN

I have.

KATSUMOTO

And you do not fear death.

(looks at him)

But sometimes you wish for it. Is this not so?

Algren doesn't answer right away. Katsumoto has intuited a dark truth.

ALGREN

Yes.

KATSUMOTO

I, also. It happens to men who have seen what we have seen. (looks around)

And then I come to this place of my ancestors. And I remember... like these blossoms, we are all dying.

(looks back at him)

To know life in every breath. Every cup of tea. Every life we take. That is the way of the warrior.

He takes in the beautiful orchard.

ALGREN

Life in every breath.

KATSUMOTO

That is Bushido.

(stands)

The Emperor has granted safe passage to Tokyo. We leave tomorrow.

Algren realizes his time there has come to an end. He tries not to reveal how deeply this strikes him.

ALGREN

Good.

Katsumoto cannot reveal his disappointment.

KATSUMOTO

Good.

The servant has returned. He hands Katsumoto the buckskin bag containing Algren's journals. Katsumoto hands them back to Algren.

KATSUMOTO

When I took these, you were my enemy.

EXT. ROTENBURO BATHS - DAY

Algren arrives. For a moment he watches Taka in the midst of washing her hair.

She wears only a silken gown, and he cannot help but notice the beauty of her bare arms. He watches for a long moment before she is aware of him.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

Excuse me.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No, so sorry, I am finishing.

He's uncertain whether to take off his shirt.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I must go away.

TAKA

Hai.

She wraps her hair in a towel, and starts to walk past him.

ALGREN

Taka-San.

She stops. They are standing very close together.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

You have been kind of me.
(she cannot answer)
I won't forget...

She starts to go again. Before he can stop himself, his hand has reached out and touched her arm. She takes half a step back in alarm --

ALGREN
(subtitles)
Listen --
(looks at her)
I wish...

Her eyes are unguarded for just a moment. And for once, he can see that her feelings for him are deep and complex. Then she is gone.

EXT. THE PORCH OF TAKA'S HOUSE - DAWN
Algren stands overlooking the village as the sun rises over the misty peaks.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK
Nobutada and Algren mount up. Algren looks for Taka, but she is nowhere to be found. Algren is surprised by how painful this is, and Nobutada sees it. Higen comes forward and hands the scroll and pen he has been borrowing.
Algren and Nobutada move out with Katsumoto, Ujio, Nakao and his bodyguard of several dozen Samurai. The villagers bow as they pass.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS
Taka sits alone, unable to watch him go.

EXT. MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPE - DAY
Algren, Katsumoto, and his personal bodyguard ride past towering peaks.

ALGREN
Your lands are remarkable.
KATSUMOTO
And soon they will belong to Omura. Four hundred feet on each side of all new railroad track. A good deal, isn't it?
ALGREN
You ain't whistling Dixie.
KATSUMOTO
What whistle is this?
ALGREN
(smiles)
Just an expression.

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY
Katsumoto, Algren and the samurai ride down the middle of the street. People scatter in their wake. Algren dismounts in front of his quarters. Katsumoto looks at him, then gives him the slightest bow. Algren returns the bow as Graham watches, incredulous.

EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY
Algren walks onto the parade ground.

Thousands of new Japanese troops are drilling with new bolt-action Mausers. They are precise and frighteningly mechanistic, their uniforms new and

crisp. New German advisors are barking commands. Colonel Bagley sees him.

BAGLEY
Algren! Algren, my God, you're alive. You never cease to astonish.

Bagley hurries over, but Algren turns to look at the troops.

ALGREN
Howitzers.
BAGLEY
Yes. The Germans don't have anything like this to offer. [ALT: This is just a slice of what we have to offer.]
They come to the "offer." Howitzers. U.S. officers are instructing.

BAGLEY
Soon as the Emperor signs the damn trade agreement, they get the whole package. Including this particular item.

He moves toward a pair of shiny new Gatling Guns.

BAGLEY
200 rounds a minute. The new cartridges cut down on jamming.
ALGREN
I need a bath.
BAGLEY
After living with those savages, I can only imagine.
(beat)
Welcome back, Captain.

Algren looks out to the field. The CANONS FIRE in sequence.

EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE WALKWAY
Female attendants stand discreetly by as the two men stroll.

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
You rise against me, my teacher.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
No, Highness, I rise against your enemies.
EMPEROR
(subtitles)
They are my advisors, like you.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
They advise in their own interest.
EMPEROR
(subtitles)
I need men who know the world beyond our borders, or we will be left behind, and defenseless.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
If I am no use, then I will happily end my life.
EMPEROR
(subtitles)
No. I need your voice in the Council.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
It is your voice we need, Highness. You are a living God, you can do whatever you think is right.
EMPEROR
(subtitles)
I am a living God as long as I do what they think is right.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Your Highness, forgive me for saying what a teacher must, but such a statement is pathetic. I'm not worthy of an ignorant stable boy, let alone a young man I know to have some modest intelligence.

The Emperor laughs warmly, almost happy to be scolded as he once was.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

Tell me what to do, my teacher.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

You are emperor, my Lord, not me.

You must find the wisdom for all of us.

EXT. TOKYO STREETS - DAY

Algren walks through the crowd.

EXT. TOKYO STREETS - DAY

Algren fights the crowds with Colonel Bagley and Ambassador Swanbeck. New construction everywhere.

Telegraph wires strung next to an ancient temple.

Huge billboards advertising Western goods.

ALGREN (V.O.)

May 17, 1877. How strange to be back in a city. A complete lack of the harmony I have come to think of as Japanese.

A spider's web of telegraph cables spread from a tall new brick building. The familiar Omura character is emblazoned on the side.

INT. OMURA'S OFFICE - DAY

Omura stands behind an enormous desk. On the wall, an enormous Caravaggio.

OMURA

Ah, come in.

Omura removes a gold cigarette case and lights up.

OMURA

Captain Algren, it seems you have endured your captivity with little ill-effect.

ALGREN

I was not ill-treated.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Mr. Omura, I have here a draft of the arms agreement!--

OMURA

Captain Algren, will these weapons be sufficient to defeat the rebels?

ALGREN

Sufficient? Oh, I think so.

OMURA

I am eager to know how many samurai have joined Katsumoto.

ALGREN

I'm afraid I don't know.

BAGLEY

But you spent the winter at his encampment --

ALGREN

As his prisoner.

BAGLEY

Has he fortified his position?

Has he acquired firearms? Come, man, what did you see?

ALGREN

As you said, Colonel, they are savages, with bows and arrows.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Sir, about the agreement --

OMURA

I'm sure your documents are in order, Ambassador, thank you.

If you will leave them on my desk, I will address them at the appropriate time.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

With all due respect, sir, our President's patience is wearing thin. Perhaps there is someone else we should be speaking to.

OMURA

With all due respect, Ambassador, perhaps there is someone else we should be speaking to, for instance the French. Or the English. Or any of the legations waiting in the next room...

Ambassador Swanbeck stands, swallowing his rage.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Yes, well, we look forward to hearing from you.

OMURA

Good afternoon, gentlemen. Captain Algren, perhaps you and I might have a word in private.

They go. Omura regards Algren.

OMURA

Please, sit down.

(beat)

May I offer you a whiskey?

What appears to be an innocent moment is fraught with meaning.

ALGREN

No. Thank you.

Omura can see that Algren's hands no longer shake.

OMURA

Katsumoto is an extraordinary man, is he not?

ALGREN

He is a tribal leader. I have known many.

OMURA

(smiles)

But none who are Samurai. Their ways have great appeal, do they not? Honor. Compassion. Loyalty. Unfortunately these are virtues that now stand in the way of what my country truly needs. A new kind of warrior must protect Japan.

(MORE)

OMURA (CONT'D)

Without financial strength we will be overrun, not by armies, but by the economic power of the British and the Germans and your own country.

ALGREN

I don't see how this concerns me.

OMURA

Ah, but it does. You see, you were right, Captain Algren. Last year we were not prepared to go to battle. You were right and Colonel Bagley was wrong.

Algren looks at him.

OMURA

But now we are ready. If Katsumoto is allowed to attract other Samurai to his cause, we will have a ten year rebellion.

This is something I will not allow. Either I will stop him

today at the Council, or you will lead my army against him. And with our new weapons you will crush him.

ALGREN

I appreciate the offer.

OMURA

It is not an offer.

ALGREN

Mr. Omura, my contract with you was to train your army.

OMURA

Then we will make a new contract, one that will recognize the extraordinary contribution you have made to the Emperor. (smiles)

Do we understand each other?

ALGREN

Sir, we understand each other perfectly well.

OMURA

Then I am pleased. He stands, indicating the audience is over.

OMURA

Welcome back, Captain Algren.

As Algren leaves, an AIDE steps inside. Omura turns to him.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Follow him. If he goes anywhere near Katsumoto -- kill him.

EXT. OMURA'S OFFICE - DAY

Algren leaves Omura's office to find Graham waiting.

GRAHAM

What in heaven's name is going on?

The diplomatic community's abuzz.

They say Omura has passed laws against the samurai.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham, I need a drink.

GRAHAM

If your friend Katsumoto shows up at that Council meeting armed, he's a dead man.

ALGREN

-- Not sake. Whiskey.

As they begin to walk, we SEE that they are being FOLLOWED by two of Omura's henchmen.

GRAHAM

Oh, you who tread the lofty corridors of power, tell a lowly

citizen -- is your friend Katsumoto really planning to go up against the Council this afternoon!--!?

As they round a corner, raised voices from across the street interrupt them. They see Nobutada surrounded by four Imperial Army soldiers. The soldiers are rough and imperious, drunk with power. They carry gleaming rifles. The soldiers bark orders.

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

You! What do you think you're doing?

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

Cut the top knot!

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Don't you know about the order?

Nobutada stands proudly, responding calmly.

GRAHAM

My God, it's happening already...

The situation is growing volatile -- the soldiers are pointing to Nobutada's head, screaming --

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Hey, boy, are you listening?

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

How long are you going to keep up this "samurai" pose.

(beat)

No wonder the foreigners mock you with that hairdo.

One of the soldiers SCREAMS at him -- raises his rifle -- all the soldiers raise their rifles --

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Get down! Kneel!

Algren races toward them.

GRAHAM

Algren, stay out of it!

Algren tries to push through --

ALGREN

(subtitles; re: the rifles)

Lower them! Lower them! Lower them!

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Who are you?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I'm Captain Algren.

One of the soldiers smacks Algren with a rifle butt.

Algren reels, and by the time he stands again, four others are pointing their bayonets at his face. Nobutada reaches for his sword --

ALGREN

(subtitles)

Nobutada! Don't do it. Don't...

Algren makes eye contact with Nobutada, who -- in deference to his friend -- puts his sword away.

The Japanese soldiers continue to scream at Nobutada.

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

I will cut it! Get down!

They force him to his knees. Another soldier steps forward and confiscates Nobutada's swords...

Nobutada bows his head, speaking quietly, as if praying.

Then Algren watches in horror as one of the other soldiers removes his bayonet -- another grabs Nobutada's hair, jerks his head back and begins hacking off Nobutada's traditional top-knot of hair. Brutally.

Nobutada remains kneeling, head down.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Stop!

The soldiers laugh and move off. Algren kneels by Nobutada. Nobutada looks up, blood flowing down his face, tears in his eyes. Algren helps him to his feet.

GRAHAM
If Katsumoto shows up at that meeting armed, he's a dead man.
ALGREN
(to Nobutada; subtitles)
I'll take you home.

As Algren walks away with Nobutada, we SEE that Omura's henchmen have observed it all.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - DAY
Katsumoto's house on the outskirts of Tokyo is spacious and harmonious. As Algren and Nobutada approach, Omura's Ronin followers melt into the shadows.
Several samurai stand guard, including Silent Bob.

ALGREN
(grimly)
Bob. How ya doin'? How's the family?

INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - DAY
Ujio helps dress Katsumoto in his exacting wardrobe as Algren is ushered in by the silent samurai. He smiles at the familiar, impassive, dour face.

ALGREN
Always nice talking to you.

The silent samurai is, of course, silent.

ALGREN
(seeing Katsumoto's dressing)
Excuse me.

KATSUMOTO
Stay.
(beat)

Thank you for helping my son.

ALGREN
They're about to close a trade agreement that will bring this country more weapons than you can imagine.

KATSUMOTO
Yes, if the Emperor agrees – but Omura knows the Emperor must believe there is reason for those weapons before he will sign.

ALGREN
And you are to be the reason. Omura passes laws guaranteed to start a revolt so the Emperor has no choice but to take the deal.

KATSUMOTO
And my country is sold to yours.
Elegant, isn't it?

As Katsumoto dresses, Algren notes that Katsumoto's body

is a battleground of old scars, so like his own.

KATSUMOTO
Today the Council passed two laws.
The first law takes away our topknots.

ALGREN
I know.

KATSUMOTO
The second takes away our swords.
(re: his swords)
Hand them to me, will you?

Algren picks up Katsumoto's two swords.

ALGREN
If you go there today, they will kill you.

KATSUMOTO
Like you, I am hard to kill.

ALGREN
Katsumoto-San. These are your weapons. You don't know what their weapons can do... Your beautiful village burned, your family -- Taka, Higen -- slaughtered.
(beat) For pride?

KATSUMOTO
Not for pride. For the emperor.

Algren is boiling with frustration and bile.

ALGREN
-- Your Emperor is a boy! He'll do what he is told!
KATSUMOTO
If he wishes.

Algren holds out Katsumoto's two samurai swords.

ALGREN
Katsumoto...
(beat) Lay down your swords. Is it worth it? Is it really worth it? Just for these...

KATSUMOTO
(takes the sword)
A samurai's sword is his soul. I cannot live without my soul... Can you?

Algren looks him dead in the eye.

ALGREN
I've lived without it for years.
He turns and walks out. Katsumoto watches him sadly.

INT. COUNCIL OF STATE CHAMBER - DAY
An august room. Many of the Council members wear Western clothes, smoke cigarettes. The young Emperor sits on a dais off to the side.
Omura is speaking...

OMURA
(subtitles)
We are the only country in Asia that is resisting invasion by powerful foreign countries. We must strengthen the Imperial Army and improve our methods of education immediately.

He stops... looking at something... all the Council members turn... and gape.
Katsumoto strides in, his swords proudly displayed.

OMURA

(subtitles)
Minister, you honor us.
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
It is my honor to rejoin this Council.
OMURA
(subtitles)
You are perhaps unaware of our edict regarding the wearing of swords?
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
I read every edict with singular attention.
OMURA
(subtitles)
Yet you bring weapons into this chamber?
KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
This chamber was protected by my sword when --
OMURA
(interrupting; subtitles)
We need no protection. We are a nation of laws now.
KATSUMOTO
(calm; subtitles)
We are a nation of whores.
Selling ourselves to our Western "allies."
OMURA
(subtitles)
If we are whores, it is the Samurai who have made us this way, living off the backs of our people.

Katsumoto looks to the Council, but his words are addressed to the Emperor.

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
I have not seen the Omura Zaibatsu distributing gold to the masses...
It remains safely in your pockets.

They stare at one another.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Minister Katsumoto, it is with great regret that I must ask you to remove your sword, as this body has declared in its edict.

Katsumoto's hand closes on his sword hilt.

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
With all due respect, this sword serves the Emperor, and only he can command me to remove it.

Katsumoto looks to the Emperor, as murmurs fill the room.

OMURA
(subtitles)
But the Emperor's voice is too pure to be heard in the Council of State.

One last time, Katsumoto meets the Emperor's eye. But the Emperor looks away, thus sealing Katsumoto's fate.

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
Then, I must refuse to give up my sword.

Omura looks to his associates. A silent decision is made. A group of Guards march in.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Then, regretfully, Minister Katsumoto, my guards will accompany you to your home in Tokyo. There you will await our summons.

The Guards await. Katsumoto looks to the other Council members. Katsumoto bows to the Emperor. The Guards lead Katsumoto out.

INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - DAY
Algren is packing his few belongings, a half-drunk bottle of whiskey is nearby. In his suitcase, he carefully places the calligraphy scroll given him by Higen. A KNOCK at the door. It is Bagley.

BAGLEY
Omura offers you my job and you run away. I suppose I should thank you.

He tosses an envelope into the open suitcase.

BAGLEY
Five hundred dollars a month -- including back pay for time spent "in captivity."
BAGLEY (as Algren doesn't answer)
Enough there to climb back into a bottle for the rest of your life. (as there is still no response)
You're welcome.

Algren places his sidearm and shoulder holster into the suitcase.

BAGLEY
It's all over, by the way.

Katsumoto's under arrest. Omura won't let him last the night. Algren pauses his packing momentarily, unable to completely hide his reaction.

BAGLEY
With Katsumoto dead, we'll have little trouble handling what's left of the rebellion -- even without you. Especially without you.

Algren shuts his suitcase.

BAGLEY
Just tell me one thing. What is it about your own people you hate so much?
Algren stares at him. Bagley is what he hates about his own people. He picks up the suitcase and walks out.

EXT. YOKOHAMA HARBOR - DUSK
Graham sits in a rickshaw as Algren instructs porters to carry his bags toward the gangplank.

GRAHAM
I'm heartbroken. Crushed. To think you would desert me this way.

ALGREN

You'll get over it.

GRAHAM

Who is going to listen to my pathetic drive!? I shall be surrounded by merchants and diplomats, and now I'll never get to photograph Master Samurai in his native habitat.

ALGREN

Sorry, Mr. Graham. You take care of yourself.

GRAHAM

I always do.

A moment as they look at each other.

GRAHAM

You're right to get out.

Algren offers his hand and they shake. Graham orders the rickshaw driver back to town, leaving Algren standing at the dock, looking up at the schooner as PASSENGERS board.

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

To town!

A BELL RINGS, a STEWARD gives last call:

STEWARD

All ashore that's goin' ashore!

Algren walks toward the ship. He stops, stands there. All he need do is walk up the gangplank and leave this troubled land behind. For years he has had no connection, not only to other people, but to the truest part of himself.

And yet that truest part had started to come to life in a little village high in the mountains of Japan.

A moment later he turns away from the ship. And starts back toward town. The Ronin share a purposeful look, and follow.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

Guards keep watch outside Katsumoto's house.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

Katsumoto sits on the tatami, staring straight ahead, stilling his mind. OMURA'S BODYGUARD enters.

OMURA'S BODYGUARD

(offering a short sword; subtitles)

If you want to save us the trouble...

EXT. TOKYO STREET - NIGHT

Algren walks down a shadowy street, lit only by torches.

He is being followed again, and he knows it.

Up ahead, the street appears to dead-end. A shadowy figure steps into the light, hands on swords.

Algren stops, looks behind him. The two followers are there. Algren is trapped. The Ronin begin to close in.

Algren appears to close his eyes. And the sound of the approaching footsteps fades as We HEAR ONLY the sound of his breathing. The Ronin draw their swords.

Algren gently opens his eyes. Everything has

SLOWED DOWN: a sign in the breeze, a piece of rubbish on the street, the flame of a nearby torch.

A BLUR OF MOTION.

Everything happens so fast it is hard to tell just what has taken place. In the strobing shadows, all we really know is that Algren has leapt to the attack.

Within seconds, four bodies lie in the street.

Algren holds a bloody sword.

His face is cut, a sleeve is ripped, but other than that he is unharmed. Ujio has taught him well.

As he stands, catching his breath, we HOLD on his face.

FLASHBACK - SAME SCENE - MOMENTS EARLIER

We see Algren grab one of the torches and smash it across a Ronin's face. It is the attack -- replayed in real-time.

Rolling to avoid a death-blow, he uses Higen's short sword to eviscerate attacker #2. The two remaining Ronin strike.

He parries the blow of attacker #3, whirls to slice the legs of attacker #4, whirls again to cut off the hand of attacker #1, who has returned to the attack.

Meanwhile, attacker #3 screams and charges -- just as attacker #4 is trying to stand.

Algren steps back as attacker #3 impales attacker #4.

Algren steps forward and decapitates attacker #3.

Even now, it has happened too fast to be truly appreciated.

BACK TO THE STREET

We move, closer-still on Algren's face.

FLASHBACK - SAME SCENE - MOMENTS EARLIER

And so we watch the attack again, in super-slow motion now, so we can fully appreciate its terrible beauty.

A torch smashes across a face.

A sword slices the sleeve of a coat.

Sparks fly as two swords meet.

A severed hand falls in the dirt.

Blood sprays from a decapitated head.

A sword is wiped clean.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S GATE - NIGHT

Imperial Guards, carrying rifles, stand watch.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S GATE - NIGHT

Two rickshaws pull up. Algren gets out of one, Graham the other.

ALGREN

(quietly, to Graham)

Whatever you do, don't stop.

He and Algren jump out and start heading past a guard into the compound. The guard yells in Japanese for them to stop.

GUARD

(subtitles)

Stop! Don't come any closer!

Graham turns, still moving, and adopts his most imperious tone.

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

Minister Omura has commanded us to photograph the traitor -- The Guard screams in Japanese and grabs his sword.

GUARD

(subtitles)

Stop! Somebody!

Graham and Algren keep moving forward, as Graham confidently motions to one of his bearers.

GRAHAM

(subtitles)
BRING THAT EQUIPMENT HERE NOW!!
(claps his hands)
IMMEDIATELY!!
GUARD
(subtitles)
You stop!
The guard puts himself in front of them, pulling his sword.
GRAHAM
(subtitles)
You insolent, useless son of a peasant dog! How dare you show your sword in his presence! Do you know who this is --
(pointing to Algren)
-- This is the President of the United States of America! He is here to lead our armies in victorious battle against the rebels -- Graham is now staring at a razor sharp blade poised inches from his face.

GUARD
(subtitles)
It's not my responsibility...
GRAHAM
(undaunted; subtitles)
Now get over there and help those men with their equipment!
There is a moment of doubt -- Graham has run out of steam. But the job is done -- the guard bows apologetically and turns to the other Guards.

GUARD
(to Guards; subtitles)
Carry the equipment.
(to Graham)
This way...

Graham and Algren turn to head inside.

ALGREN
(under his breath)
The President of the United States...
GRAHAM
I think I'm going to be sick...

The head Guard follows them through the gate.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT
Algren and Graham, followed by the equipment-laden Guard and one of their BEARERS, approach a doorway where two more guards stand watch. The Guard addresses them.

GUARD
Photo... graph.

The screen is pulled open to reveal Katsumoto. He looks up as if seeing an apparition.

ALGREN
How's your poem coming?
KATSUMOTO
The end is proving difficult.

The BEARER sets down the equipment, leaves and closes the screen.

ALGREN
This is Mr. Simon Graham. He would like very much to take your photograph. (Alternate: He's been very helpful in gaining permission to take your photograph.)

GRAHAM
(subtitles)
An honor. He begins to set up the equipment.

KATSUMOTO
(to Algren)
I thought you returned to America.

ALGREN
I thought I'd stay -- see if I could convince you to escape.

KATSUMOTO
And how do you plan to do that?

A THUD is heard in the adjacent room.
Algren turns and opens the screen door.
A GUARD falls to the floor dead. Another lies on the floor behind him. The BEARER stands holding a bloody sword. He removes his hat. It is Ujio.
He picks up the dead guards' swords and gives them to Algren to pass to Katsumoto.

KATSUMOTO
Mr. Graham, perhaps you would care to take pictures of my village.

Algren sees the shadow of a GUARD passing the shoji screen. Katsumoto sees it also.

GRAHAM
I would be greatly honored.

Graham hands a sword to Algren. They run out past the dead guards.

EXT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT
Algren leads out onto the porch just as the Guard emerges around the corner of the building. He raises his RIFLE to fire at the group, but Algren dives into a forward roll knocking the weapon upward just as it FIRES and slashes the Guard across the stomach with his sword. The dead guard falls into the lagoon.

The alarm has been given. Three Guards come running to the scene and raise their weapons. Katsumoto, Ujio and Graham take cover inside.
Algren runs back to join them, dodging the GUNFIRE as the Guards OPEN FIRE toward the house.
Algren dives to the floor. Katsumoto reaches out to pull him out of the line of fire.
The three Guards take aim again, but ARROWS slice out of the darkness and the Guards are dead before they can pull the trigger. Each killed by a Samurai arrow.

We REVEAL that Nobutada, Nakao, and the Silent Samurai are the other rickshaw BEARERS.
Nobutada, Nakao and the Silent Samurai run toward the bridge. Nobutada charges across yelling.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Hurry, this way!
More Guards arrive on the opposite edge of the lagoon. Silent Samurai and Nakao provide cover as Nobutada races for the house and takes cover on the porch.

Algren and Ujio run out to meet him just as shot strikes the wall beside Nobutada's head. Nobutada leans around the corner, takes aim and fires several arrows back. He beckons to Algren and the others to cross.

Algren, Katsumoto and Ujio, followed by Graham, race across the bridge dodging GUNFIRE all the way. Nobutada then runs, following them. Nakao and the Silent

Samurai try to cover his escape but MUZZLE FLASHES explode from the darkness. Nobutada is hit in the knee. He falls. Katsumoto senses what has happened and turns to go back. Ujio restrains him.

UJIO
(subtitles)
Get back!

Nobutada staggers to his feet again. Another SHOT rips into his side sending him to the floor again.

KATSUMOTO
Nobutada!

BULLETS are hitting all around them. Nobutada pulls himself along the bridge. Algren races out to help him and brings him to the tree where Katsumoto is being held by Ujio. Nobutada leans against the trunk, sliding to the ground, gravely wounded. Blood flows from his mouth.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Father. Let me do this. I can't...

Nobutada's determination is absolute. He looks at Katsumoto for the briefest moment. Katsumoto is being torn apart inside as his son bravely prepares to sacrifice himself. But he has no choice.

UJIO
(subtitles)
My Lord... There is no time.

Katsumoto pulls Nobutada to his feet. He looks at his son and then leaves, followed by Ujio. Nobutada bows to Algren who then also bows. A beat. Nobutada closes his eyes. Then he launches himself into the darkened bridge firing arrows until he has no more. He reaches for both his swords - The guards FIRE. He is HIT again and again, but still he comes, screaming, wading forward -- his sword flashing. It is a glorious death. And his sacrifice has bought the others the necessary time to race off into the darkness.

EXT. HILLS – SUNSET
Algren, Katsumoto, and the others ride over rocky ground.

ALGREN (V.O.)
May 19, 1877. I am beset by ironies. I have always fought

rebels, now I am one.

EXT. FOREST - MOUNTAINS - DAY
They climb a steep trail, mountains towering above.

ALGREN (V.O.)
And yet I ask myself... can a man truly be reborn?
Algren comes up alongside Katsumoto.

ALGREN
I am sorry about your son.

Katsumoto stares straight ahead. He will not respond.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT – NIGHT
Katsumoto stares into the fire, his face a mask of despair. Algren watches.

KATSUMOTO
In Tokyo, I was prepared to die. Now I am here and Nobutada is dead. For what purpose?

ALGREN
To preserve your people.

KATSUMOTO
For 900 years my ancestors have protected our people. Now I have failed them.

ALGREN
Not yet.

KATSUMOTO
The Emperor could not hear my words. His army will come. It is the end.

ALGREN
Make the Emperor hear you.

KATSUMOTO
He is only interested in the new ways now.

ALGREN
So what -- you're going to surrender?

KATSUMOTO
No, I will take my life.

ALGREN
In shame?

KATSUMOTO
Yes.

Algren stares into the fire. When at last he speaks, it is halting, not easy.

ALGREN
You read my journals.

(Katsumoto nods)
I promised Black Kettle his people would be safe if they listened to me. I gave him my word. But the truth is, I knew what would happen.
(remembers)

And when we rode into his camp that morning... as they lay sleeping... in that beautiful place. I just wanted to end it. The lies. The promises. I wanted it... done.

(looks into the fire)

He should have been on his pony. In his paint. With his feathers...

(closes his eyes)

It wasn't a good death.

(looks at Katsumoto)

The Samurai cannot change. If you are to live, it must be as you have always lived. As a warrior. And if you are to die, it must be as you have always died. In battle, Katsumoto studies him, as if seeing him for the first time.

KATSUMOTO

Many times I've asked myself why were you sent into my life.

Algren holds his look. The bond between them is now complete.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE – DAY

The Samurai ride in. Taka comes out onto the porch and watches them.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

Algren sits with the family in silence. Then:

ALGREN

(subtitles)

He was a good man.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

Will you fight the white men, too?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

If they come here, yes.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

Why?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

Because they come to destroy what I have come to love.

Taka looks at him, moved. Suddenly, Higen jumps up and bolts out of the room. Algren looks to Taka.

TAKA

(subtitles)

The way of Samurai is difficult for children. He misses his father.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

And he is angry because I am the cause of that.

She smiles ever so slightly at his obliviousness.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No. He is angry because he fears you will die as well.

EXT. VILLAGE – GLOAM

Higen sits on the porch, looking up at the stars.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

My father taught me it is glorious to die in battle.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

That is what he believed.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

I would be afraid to die in battle.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

So would I.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

But you have been in many battles.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

And I was always afraid.

Higen looks at him, tears welling in his eyes.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

I don't want you to go.

Algren can only put his arm on the boy's shoulder and comfort him. Nakao comes forward and bows.

NAKAO

Captain Algren. They are coming.

EXT. MOUNTAINS – DAY

Algren and Katsumoto look down into a valley. Nakao and a few others wait at a discreet distance.

Below they see the Imperial Army, thousands strong, marching across the valley toward them. Terrifying martial columns in strict formation. It is here that the final act of this inevitable drama will play out.

ALGREN

I'd say five thousand. They'll come in waves of a thousand, a few minutes apart. And they have the howitzers.

KATSUMOTO

It makes no difference.

(Algren looks at him)

Five hundred or five thousand — they will come and we will make our stand.

ALGREN

How many men will you have?

KATSUMOTO

Maybe five hundred.

(a small smile)

Like Custer, he?

ALGREN

(appreciates the irony)

There was once a battle at a place called Thermopylae. Three hundred brave Greeks held off a Persian army of a million men. A million!— you understand this number in English?

KATSUMOTO

I understand this number.

ALGREN

For two days the Greeks made them pay so dearly that the Persian army lost all taste for battle and was defeated soon after.

KATSUMOTO

(bemused)

You think we can defeat them?

ALGREN

I sure as hell want to find out.

KATSUMOTO

What do you have in mind?

ALGREN

(a slight smile)

Trickery and deceit...

KATSUMOTO

You believe a man can change his destiny?

ALGREN

No. I think a man can only do what he can, until his destiny is revealed.

(looks down at the army again)

But I do know one thing — it's gonna be a hell of a day.

Katsumoto mounts his horse. Then in a surprisingly deft imitation:

KATSUMOTO

You... ain't whistlin' Dixie...
He spurs his horse. Algren shakes his head and follows.

EXT. THE VILLAGE – DAY

Algren leads the preparations for battle. Warriors check their armor, polish their swords. In the distance we see the tents and banners of many samurai clans.

ALGREN (V.O.)

May 25, 1877. This will be the last entry in this journal. Katsumoto, Ujio and Nakao look on as Algren uses a brush and ink to outline a proposed battle plan.

Graham takes a photograph of a group of samurai. Nearby, men are fletching arrows, building odd round balls covered with pitch. A tree is felled as Algren supervises construction of wooden logs spiked together for some purpose yet to be revealed. Oxen-drawn wagons are piled high with bamboo barricades. Katsumoto proudly looks at his warriors.

ALGREN (V.O.)

My words have not been elegant, but I have endeavored to give a true accounting of what I have seen and what I have done.

Katsumoto gives his meditation beads to Higen.

ALGREN (V.O.)

But what I have seen here surpasses my ability to express in written word. So ends this day.
Nearby, Ujio dances his final kata alone.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

A wide establishing shot in which we see, from afar, the many fires of the gathered samurai clans.

INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

Katsumoto sits, deep in contemplation, before the enormous gold Buddha.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Algren comes inside. Passing through the house, he notices the shoji screen to Taka's room is open. Algren stops to watch her. Taka quietly closes her door.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAWN

The sun rises over the majestic peaks.

INT. TAKA'S HOUSE – DAWN

Algren opens his eyes. It is the day of the battle.

INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE

Algren enters the house. Taka is waiting.

TAKA

(subtitles)
Algren-san, will you come with me?

Hirotarō's armor is spread on a mat.

TAKA

(subtitles)
If you wear this, it will honor us.

He nods.

She steps to him. A moment.
She gently reaches forward and unties the sash to his kimono. A tender, silent scene as she undresses him and carefully wraps him in the armor. Her hands move gracefully around his body. His movements are gentle in response. There are tears in Taka's eyes.

EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE – DAY

Algren emerges from the house, wearing Hirotarō's armor.

UJIO

Wait!

Ujio steps forward, looking intently at him, and then adjusts Algren's armor. Katsumoto is waiting. Beside him is the swordmaker. Katsumoto holds a beautiful samurai sword.

KATSUMOTO

You will need this.

He bows his head and offers it to Algren. There are Japanese characters etched on the blade.

ALGREN

What does it say?

KATSUMOTO

"I belong to the warrior in whom the old ways have joined the new."

Katsumoto turns to the gathered samurai warriors and calls out a battle cry. The samurai respond.

TIME CUT TO: THE SAMURAI

Ride out of the village. Taka and the boys stand among the villagers watching them go.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS – DAY

The long line of samurai are joined by hundreds more. It is the first time we have seen them in their full armor since the battle in the fog. It is dazzling.
Ujio reaches over to adjust Algren's armor. Their eyes hold for a moment.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD – DAY

We MOVE ALONG the line of waiting samurai. The faces are stoic. Prepared. They have chosen a strong defensive position. Slopes on either side create a funnel ahead of them, through which the Imperial Army will have to pass. Algren stands with Katsumoto and Ujio. Graham is there, too. The silent Samurai stands near Algren, as always. They peer into the plain beyond at an awe-inspiring sight. Katsumoto's 500 samurai face a staggering 5,000 soldiers.

KATSUMOTO

What happened to those three hundred warriors at Thermopylae?

ALGREN

(a grim smile)
Dead to the last man.

Katsumoto glances at him, smiles.

ON A HILL ABOVE THEM

Higen is revealed. He looks down first at the five hundred Samurai, then sees, beyond, the overwhelming mass of the IMPERIAL ARMY. Several horsemen ride out from the Imperial line. They are met by two horsemen from the Samurai position.

IN THE VALLEY

Colonel Bagley, Omura, and several officers meet Algren and Katsumoto in the center of the field.

BAGLEY

Sir, the Imperial Army of Japan demands your surrender. If you and your fellows lay down your arms you will not be harmed.

KATSUMOTO

That is not possible. As Omura knows.

Omura meets Katsumoto's look. Bagley turns to Algren.

BAGLEY

Captain Algren, we will show no quarter. You ride against us and you are the same as they are.

ALGREN

I take that as a compliment, Colonel.
(a deadly calm)
I'll look for you on the field.

Algren and Katsumoto wheel their horses and go.

BACK ON THE BATTLEFIELD

A distant THUD followed by a HIGH-PITCHED WHINE. A MASSIVE EXPLOSION ahead of the Samurai. Artillery. Algren finds Graham at the base of a straw barricade.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham...

GRAHAM

Captain?

ALGREN

Would you please stay with the horses?

Graham would like to be brave enough to remain, but he is not a soldier.

GRAHAM

(starts off)

As you suggest.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham... Take this.

From his coat, Algren takes his journal, hands it to Graham.

ALGREN

Maybe you can use it for your book.

GRAHAM

I will.

He heads back to the relative safety of the horse corral.

EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP

Bagley, Omura and several German and Japanese officers stand atop a ridge among the cannon.

OMURA

Commence firing!

A JAPANESE LIEUTENANT translates:

JAPANESE LIEUTENANT UTE!

The HOWITZERS OPEN FIRE with a thunderous barrage.

EXT. THE SAMURAI POSITION

The samurai remain impassive as artillery is stepped in closer, the range bracketed. Then ARTILLERY ROUNDS begin to fall among them.

ALGREN

Now...

A few samurai are blown to pieces as Katsumoto BARKS a command to Ujio.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Fall back!

EXT. THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE

Bagley and Omura watch through binoculars.

OMURA

You see? Even the mighty samurai cannot stand up to the Howitzers.

Signal the attack.

BAGLEY

I advise sending in skirmishers first.

OMURA

Nonsense! Full attack!

BUGLE CALLS are heard from the Imperial Army. The RATTLE of the SNARE DRUMS. The sound of MARCHING BOOTS. And then they appear. Thousands upon thousands. The Imperial Army marching relentlessly forward in strict formation.

EXT. THE SAMURAI POSITION

The First Division of the Imperial Army moves through the smoking bamboo barricades and into the funnel, their numbers reduced by the size of the access.

As they emerge into the open, they see ANOTHER set of barricades, wooden this time.

Behind the barricades, the samurai wait. We are expecting them to open fire, but they do not. They just wait.

The Imperial soldiers are in rifle range. They stop to FIRE a VOLLEY. BULLETS begin SPLINTERING the BARRICADES, HITTING among the samurai. Many fall. The Imperial Army moves closer. Another VOLLEY. More Samurai fall.

Then, at Algren's signal, a single archer lights a flaming arrow and fires. It flies over the heads of the Imperial Army and lands among a cache of flaming pitch hidden behind the firing line. A terrifying WALL OF FLAME cuts off their escape.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Archers! Shoot! Shoot!

Finally, the Samurai fire! 500 arrows explode, instantly followed by 500 more. Like an image from Agincourt, the clouds of arrows sweep across the sky. Imperial soldiers are annihilated, the attack falters --

EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP – DAY
Through binoculars, Omura and Bagley try to peer through the smoke.

OMURA
Can you see them?

A signal man appears with a semaphore.

BAGLEY
What on earth -- ?
OMURA
What is happening?
BAGLEY
The attack has been stopped.
OMURA
How is that possible?
BAGLEY
Retreat and bring up the artillery.
OMURA
How long will that take?
BAGLEY
An hour. Less.
OMURA
He cannot be allowed to escape.

Continue the attack.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY
BUGLES. Reinforcements come at a trot, through the narrow defile, skirting the first barricade.

EXT. 2ND BARRICADE - DAY
The reinforced Imperial Army presses its attack, swarming over the hillsides surrounding the narrow defile. They step over their fallen comrades, firing as they come. Behind the barricades, the Samurai archers are being decimated. For a moment it appears all is lost -- But as the Imperial Army is about to overrun the barricades, we suddenly realize, as they do, that a long trench separates the Imperial Army from its goal.

FROM DOWN IN THE TRENCH
Katsumoto pulls his long sword. Algren does the same.
Then, like a tsunami, they rise as one, taking the Imperial Army entirely by surprise. They are so close that the rifles' advantage of the range has been taken away.
Algren and Katsumoto lead the charge. Many Samurai are cut down, but in moments swords engage bayonets in brutal hand-to-hand combat. Then:

FROM THE HILLS ON EITHER SIDE
The Samurai cavalry -- led by Ujio -- who have kept hidden

until this moment, charge, screaming into the flanks of the attacking army.

SAMURAI
(subtitles)
Attack! Prepare to die! Die...

Even rifles cannot fire in three directions at once. An Imperial soldier levels his rifle at Algren. The Silent Samurai sees it --

SILENT SAMURAI
ALGREN-SAN!

Algren wheels, more shocked to have heard him speak than anything else. He sees his protector step into the path of the bullet.

ALGREN
NO!!

The Samurai's body reels, but he wills himself forward toward his attacker. Algren can do nothing but watch, devastated, as his guardian takes bullet upon bullet until he reaches the soldier and kills him.
Ujio crouches, his back leg straight and planted, his front leg bent. Still using his bow, firing off arrows with stunning speed, refusing to budge -- Algren and Katsumoto now fight back to back, as if one person, slashing with their swords, shattering bayonets, dealing death on all sides.
ON THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE
Bagley and Omura cannot see anything.

OMURA
We must call for reserves.
BAGLEY
(furious)

The reserves are a half hour back, damn it! We've thrown three thousand men at him and he's not even armed.

IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE
A charging soldier thrusts his bayonet into Katsumoto's arm -- Katsumoto kills the soldier with his short sword but is awkwardly tangled with his body, a second soldier races toward him for the kill -- Algren spins and attacks!-- killing the second soldier -- but a third races toward Algren, bayonet flashing -- He dodges -- but the bayonet slices into his side -- then Ujio appears like a black spectral figure to save him.
All SOUND gradually FADES and is replaced by the elegiac sound of a BAMBOO FLUTE... The images of combat become fragmented and impressionistic.
But no matter how bravely the samurai fight, they are simply outnumbered...
Nakao leads the Ashigaru (infantry) to cut off the road -- throwing the Imperial Army into confusion.
He is like a cornered bear, arcing his two swords wildly around him. He is SHOT in the chest, and staggers a moment. Another soldier SHOTS him in the arm at pointblank range. Nakao's sword goes flying, so the giant Samurai leaps forward and picks up the shooter bodily, twirling him around like a wrestler, throwing him finally onto the upraised pike of a fellow Imperial soldier. But now three more soldiers have leveled their weapons, and a ruthless VOLLEY STAGGERS him again. SHOTS RAIN on him as

he tries to continue fighting, but his strength leaves him. Finally, with one last lunge, he manages to pull an Imperial soldier with him, crushing him as he falls. More fall as Algren and Katsumoto fight desperately...

An Imperial soldier holds up a rifle to protect himself, but Ujio's blade cuts through the barrel. The soldier just has time to look at the gun in amazement before a second sweep of Ujio's sword beheads him.

The tide begins to turn as Imperial Army soldiers run out of ammunition, fumble with jammed weapons, cower before the furious onslaught.

Finally, a bugler issues a call and they stumble back through the defile in a disorganized retreat.

EXT. ON CANNON HILL - MOMENTS LATER

Omura and Bagley watch as soldiers retreat back through the smoke.

OMURA

This is not possible --

BAGLEY

(almost to himself)

Son-of-a-bitch thinks he can win.

OMURA

Call up the reinforcements NOW!

EXT. PLAIN - ALMOST SUNSET

The plain before the barricade is littered with the dead and dying.

Algren and Katsumoto lean, exhausted, against the barricade. Both men are wounded. Only about a hundred samurai are still alive.

Algren looks over the decimated warriors for a moment.

Even those still alive are in bad shape as they wait for the next wave of Imperial soldiers.

Suddenly, TWO SHOTS RING OUT. A young wounded Imperial

Soldier has hit Ujio in the chest. He staggers, but refuses to acknowledge the gravity of the wound.

Katsumoto goes to him, but Ujio gruffly tells him that he is fine.

UJIO

Daijigozaran.

ALGREN

They'll move up the artillery now.

We won't be able to stop them again.

KATSUMOTO

This is not your battle. You do not have to die here.

A long beat.

ALGREN

I should have died so many times before.

KATSUMOTO

But now you live again.

ALGREN

Yes.

KATSUMOTO

It was not your time.

ALGREN

Maybe I survived just to live this one day.

(looks at him)

I'll stay.

Katsumoto looks at Algren. They are both thinking the same thing.

EXT. PLAIN – SUNSET

The hundred mounted samurai move through the smoke and flames like horsemen of the apocalypse.

Katsumoto and Algren lead them.

Barely alive, Ujio has tied himself to his saddle.

ON THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE

Bagley and Omura watch, transfixed. There is something approaching grim admiration on Bagley's face.

BAGLEY

I'm taking command down there.

And he heads down toward the rows of waiting infantry.

OMURA

(in Japanese)

Bring up the new guns!

EXT. PLAIN – SUNSET

The Samurai horsemen begin to walk forward...

And then to cantor...

Katsumoto points his sword and screams out his war cry.

And they charge.

It is suicidal.

It is glorious.

It is the end of the samurai.

The Imperial troops FIRE a VOLLEY -- samurai horsemen fall -- but still they come -- jumping over the fallen horses, pounding over the earth like something from an ancient dream

--

Bagley uses his sidearm to pick off one samurai, then another.

He FIRES at Katsumoto, wounding him in the side.

But Algren bears down upon him. Bagley is unnerved. He hits Algren once, but before he can fire again --

Algren reverses his grip on his sword and HURLS it, impaling Bagley in the chest. He races past, pulling his sword from the stunned and dying Bagley.

Fifteen or twenty of the Samurai -- including Algren and Katsumoto -- manage to fight their way through.

They break into the open, and continue riding straight toward the rear.

Algren and Katsumoto are both wounded, yet still they charge.

They have only one thought in mind -- death to their enemies.

They gallop toward Omura.

Omura looks around in abject terror.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Quickly! Quickly!

Tarps are pulled back, revealing two lethal GATLING GUNS.

Algren and Katsumoto are near enough to see them. Yet

they will not be deterred.

They charge on.

The Gatling guns are not yet ready to fire. Soldiers slam ammo belts into the chambers.

Algren, Katsumoto and those still alive have almost reached their goal.

Omura cowers in fear, but there is nowhere to hide.

OMURA

Fire!!!!!! Fire!!!!!!

The GATLING GUNS finally FIRE RIPPING into the samurai -- Destroying them -- One after another is hit -- and still they come -- their voices raised in glorious cries of triumph -- Graham watches from a hilltop, tears in his eyes.

Katsumoto is hit, blood explodes -- his horse falls -- he spills off -- Then Algren is hit. He, too, falls -- The remaining samurai still charge -- And still the GATLING GUNS TEAR through them -

And still they charge -- Until they are all down. Algren drags himself to Katsumoto, BULLETS EXPLODING everywhere --

EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP - SUNSET

A JAPANESE OFFICER orders the Gatling guns to cease.

JAPANESE OFFICER
(subtitles)
Stop firing!

Omura screams at him to continue firing!

OMURA
(subtitles)
Idiots, keep on firing!

The Japanese officer barks out a response. Refusing.

JAPANESE OFFICER
(subtitles)
Stop firing! Stop!

Omura sees all the samurai are dead or dying. But he also sees Algren dragging Katsumoto away. He screams at the Japanese officer to resume fire!

OMURA
(subtitles)
Shoot! Kill Katsumoto! Kill the American!

The Japanese officer refuses. He just looks over the plain of dying samurai for a moment. Then he does the most remarkable thing. He slowly kneels and touches his head to the dirt. Then a soldier near him does the same thing. Then another and another. And then by the thousands. They kneel and touch their heads to the dirt. Honoring the last samurai.

EXT. PLAIN - SUNSET
Algren drags the dying Katsumoto to a copse of cherry trees nearby...

EXT. CHERRY TREES - SUNSET
Both men are bleeding profusely.

KATSUMOTO
Help me up...
ALGREN
Don't move.
KATSUMOTO
Help me up.

Algren helps him to stand.

KATSUMOTO
My sword...
ALGREN

No.
KATSUMOTO
You have your honor again. Let me die with mine...

Algren looks at him, deeply moved. Katsumoto manages to pull out his short sword.

KATSUMOTO
You must help me. Hold it firmly...

Algren supports Katsumoto as he holds the sword's point to his stomach.

KATSUMOTO
Are you ready?

In Algren's eyes, a resolute and calm acceptance of death.

ALGREN
Yes.

Katsumoto looks at him deeply, warmly.

KATSUMOTO
I will miss our conversations.

Katsumoto embraces Algren firmly -- the small sword impales him -- Algren holds him tightly. Katsumoto is looking over Algren's shoulder as he is dying. A look of joy and absolute peace comes to his features.

KATSUMOTO
(whispers)
It is perfect... They are all perfect.

His eyes close. He is dead. Algren gently kneels with Katsumoto's body. As he holds him, he turns to see what Katsumoto was looking at. Cherry blossoms. A display of perfect beauty. Algren looks up and sees the Imperial soldiers moving toward him. With great difficulty he stands and faces them, open-armed.

ALGREN
(quietly)
Go on. Do it. Do it now.

But they don't shoot. Instead, they approach tentatively, even gently, and begin tending to him. His face is its own battleground of conflicting emotion -- relief, shame, amazement. He is destined to live.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY
Swanbeck and Omura are presenting the treaty documents for signature. The Emperor sits restively on his throne.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK
On behalf of the United States of America, the signing of this treaty will usher in an era of unprecedented prosperity and cooperation between our two great nations.
OMURA
And on behalf of the Emperor, we are pleased to have successfully concluded this negotiation.
As an AIDE hands Swanbeck a folder, a servant comes and whispers into the Emperor's ear.

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
Algren is here?

OMURA
(subtitles, to the guards)
Do not allow that man in here!
EMPEROR
Omura --

He shakes his head, gestures to open the doors.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Highness, if we could just conclude the matter at hand...

Algren enters with Graham. He is limping and a bloodstain is beginning to seep through his shirt. He carries something wrapped in a blanket. It is Katsumoto's long samurai sword. He prostrates himself at the Emperor's feet. Algren unwraps the bundle and remains prostrate with his head bowed as he offers up the sword.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Emperor, I must warn you, this man is your enemy.

The Emperor is silent. He is torn in this moment, whether to heed Omura or to follow his instincts.

ALGREN
(ignoring Omura)
This is Katsumoto's sword. He would have wanted you to have it -- that the strength of the samurai be with you always.
OMURA
(subtitles)
Enlightened One, we all weep for Katsumoto's loss, but we must look to the future now, and our nation's future lies in signing this treaty --
ALGREN
-- He hoped, with his last breath, that you would remember all the ancestors who held this sword, and what they died for.

Slowly, as if drawn by Algren's words, the Emperor comes forward and sits on the floor before the sword. He cannot help but notice as blood seeps from beneath Algren's sleeve.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Your Highness --

The Emperor cannot look away from the sword and the blood. When he speaks, it is in English -- to everyone's astonishment.

EMPEROR
(to Algren)
You were with him at the end.
ALGREN
Hai.

OMURA
Emperor, this man fought against you.
ALGREN
Your Highness, if you believe I am your enemy -- command me -- and I will gladly take my life.
The Emperor is stunned to hear this from a Westerner. Then he makes a decision that will change his life. He stands.
EMPEROR
My ancestors have ruled Japan for 2,000 years. For all that time we have slept. During my sleep I have dreamed. I dreamed of a unified Japan. Of a country strong and independent and modern...
(touches the sword lovingly)
And now we are awake. We have railroads and cannon and Western clothing. But we cannot forget who we are. Or where we come from.

The Emperor looks up at the gathered dignitaries.

EMPEROR
Ambassador Swanbeck, I have concluded that your treaty is not in the best interests of my people.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK
Sir, if I may --

EMPEROR
So sorry, but you may not. From this moment on, economic investment from every nation will be considered equally.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

This is an outrage -- !
The Emperor watches as Ambassador Swanbeck and his Aide exit. Omura steps closer to the Emperor.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Enlightened One, we should discuss this --

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
Omura, you have done quite enough.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Everything I have done, I have done for my country.

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
Then you will not mind when I seize your family's assets and present them as my gift to the people.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Enlightened One, you disgrace me. The Emperor finally looks up from the sword.

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
If your shame is too unbearable... I offer you this sword.

Omura bows and steps back, relegated to a place among the lesser advisors.
The Emperor looks at Algren, still kneeling before him.

EMPEROR
The Samurai is gone. The spirit of samurai lives forever.
(a beat) Tell me how he died.

Algren looks at the Emperor.

ALGREN
I will tell you how he lived.

We slowly FADE, as Algren begins to speak...

EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

Algren rides off through the crowd.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SOME TIME LATER

A Samurai helmet rusts in the sun. A broken sword.

The

tattered remnant of a battle flag blows across the ground. A HAND reaches down and picks it up. We

HEAR Graham's voice:

GRAHAM (V.O.)

... And so the days of the Samurai had ended.

INT. LECTURE HALL (ENGLAND) - DAY

Graham stands at a lectern on a book tour. A

well-dressed

audience listens attentively. A banner proclaims, "The Last Samurai," by Simon Graham.

GRAHAM

And in the years to come the Rising Sun of Imperial Japan would fly in triumph over Korea, over Russia, even over China. Nations, like men, it is sometimes said, have their own destiny.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

FEET walk along a dusty road. They move with a noticeable limp. In the distance, a railroad engine plumes smoke into the sky.

GRAHAM (V.O.)

As for the American Captain, no one knows what became of him. All that is left is his journal -- which I have published, according to his last request.

We PAN FROM the feet TO Algren's back as he walks through a bamboo forest.

GRAHAM (V.O.)

Some say he died of his wounds, others that he returned to his own country...

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Algren climbs a rise. He stops. We FOLLOW his gaze to discover:

The village below.

GRAHAM (V.O.)

But I like to think he may have found at last some small measure of the peace we all seek, but few of us ever find.

Villagers go about their daily routine. And then we see:

Taka working in the garden. Higen and Magojiro work with

her. Sensing something, Taka turns to see: Algren, looking at her. A smile of quiet joy spreads across his face.

FADE OUT.