

Mishima Yukio

Hanjo

PERSONS

HANAKO, a mad girl

JITSUKO, a spinster

YOSHIO, a young man

Jitsuko's atelier. Autumn. From afternoon until evening. The room is in disorder with evident preparations for a journey. Jitsuko, seated in an easy-chair, reads a newspaper. She puts down the newspaper, stands up impatiently, only to sit again and read.

Scene One. (Jitsuko)

Jitsuko (to herself): It's come to nothing, to nothing, all that I've been through. I could tear this newspaper into shreds. . . . But tearing it up would do no good. No, the best thing for me would be to read it aloud the way people do, with animation and interest, as if it happened to someone else. I should read in a manner befitting the esteemed daughter of a father who believes that his is the only household unvisited by

human unhappiness and a mother who is convinced that her husband is the only man in the world, as a devoted daughter might read to her parents by way of entertainment after dinner. (*As if there are others present.*) Generous father, the richest man in town, mother dear, your esteemed daughter, whom you still send money for her painting lessons and who is unmarried at forty, will now read you an interesting article. (*She reads.*) "Tragic love of mad girl. Old-fashioned romance at station of Inogashira Line. . . . A beautiful mad girl may be seen every day, rain or shine, sitting on a bench in the waiting-room of a certain station with a fan in her arms. She peers into the face of every man who alights at the station, only to return each time disappointed to her bench. In reply to a reporter's questions she said that this was Hanjo's fan. A man she met at a certain place exchanged fans with her as a pledge that they should meet again. The mad girl

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: *Hanjo* is an attempt, one of several, by the author Mishima Yukio (born 1925) to write a new play in a form similar to that of the Nō dramas of the 15th century. He has borrowed both the title and some of the incidents of the drama written by Seami Motokiyo (1363-1443), but very freely, as an outline of Seami's work will show. In it, a Captain Yoshida meets at a country inn a young courtesan named Hanako and falls in love with her. When they part they exchange fans in token of their love. Hanako, who refuses to have anything to do with other men, is driven from the inn by the mistress and goes mad. Later, when Yoshida returns for her she has already gone. He goes to Kyoto where he meets her by chance at a shrine. She regains her sanity and the play, most remarkably for a Nō drama, ends in the bliss of the reunited lovers.

Hanjo itself is the name of a Chinese court lady of ancient times whose fan is celebrated in poetry.—DONALD KEENE.

holds a man's fan with a snow-scene painted on it. The faithless man has her fan with a moon-flower design. The man has never returned, and the girl has gone mad with longing. Her name is Hanako, and, according to a station attendant, she lives at the house of the lady artist Miss Honda Jitsuko, at number 35 of X Street."

Living at the house of Miss Honda Jitsuko, did it say? All I've gone through up to now has been so much foam on the water. It was useless for me never to have submitted to an exhibition any of the pictures I painted of Hanako, preferring people not to see them. If I had submitted the pictures as I painted them, they might have been selected or even won prizes, but ever since I've known Hanako I've only sent the other pictures, the ones I didn't put myself into, and every time they have been rejected. And it has been for nothing. After all I have been through I thought that Hanako would never leave my hands. And in spite of that—(*frantically cutting with scissors the newspaper into tiny snowflake-like fragments*). I suppose that it was fated to happen sooner or later. I could not tie Hanako. If I had tied her, her life would undoubtedly have long since faded away, like a cricket one buys from an insect-seller, and puts in a cage to give one pleasure for four or five days. I had no choice but to do what I did.

Sooner or later people are bound now to start talking about the beautiful mad girl with the fan, and next it will come to the ears of Yoshio, that faithless man. (*She rises wildly.*) The only thing is to go on a trip somewhere. The only thing to do is to run away without a moment's delay, for as long as possible, just the two of us, and hide until the sensation dies down. If he were utterly devoid of any feeling for her there would not be so much to be afraid of, but vanity may call him back, for all I know. We'll leave tonight. Nothing else can be done. Just the two of us, for some far-away place. . . . Then, if we are overtaken (*she laughs*) it won't matter much if I die. Yes, that will be quite all right. (*She*

begins again to make preparations for the journey.)

Scene Two. (Hanako, Jitsuko)

Jitsuko (pretending to be calm): Oh, you're back already.

Hanako (enters. Extremely beautiful but heavily made up, and overdressed in a somewhat soiled costume. She holds against her breast, opened, a large fan with a snow-scene painted on it): It will be all right, won't it, if I leave the door open? So that if Yoshio comes he can go right in.

Jitsuko: Yes, leave it open. For now—but winter is coming on.

Hanako: It's autumn, isn't it. An autumn fan, an autumn fan, a fan for autumn. (*She weeps.*)

Jitsuko (putting her arms about Hanako's shoulders): There's no need to cry. Yoshio will surely come for you one day.

Hanako: Today I waited again at the station, all day long, all day long. I think that I've come to life through waiting for him. I looked at the faces of the people getting off the train. None of them was like his. They were all faces of other people. I don't think anyone has a living face except Yoshio. The faces of all the other men in the world are dead. They are all skeletons. Many many people with skulls instead of heads and briefcases in their hands got off at the station. I was so tired. Jitsuko, I waited all day today, too.

Jitsuko: I have never once waited for anything.

Hanako: It doesn't matter with you. There's no need for you to wait. But some people must wait. *My* body is filled with waiting. The evening dusk always comes to the moon-flower and the morning to the morning-glory, but I wait, I pine, yes, my body is filled with prickling pine-needles. Don't they say that human beings go on living by waiting and making other people wait? If you gave your whole life to waiting, how would it be? (*She points to her body.*) Is this my body? Am I an unshut window? An unshut door? (*She points to the door.*) Like that door. . . . Can I go on

living without sleeping? Am I a doll that does not sleep?

Jitsuko: You are beautiful. I can't believe that there is anyone in the world more beautiful than you. Everybody opens many windows too widely, thinking to improve the ventilation, only to lose everything as a result. But you have only one window, and through that window everything in the world enters you. You are the richest person in the world.

Hanako (not listening): Today, too, I sat all day on a wooden bench. How hard that bench is. I had intended waiting for him on soft grass. When he came I would jump up and he would brush my dress for me. "Oh, see how your dress is stained by the grass."

Jitsuko: I love to see you naked. I have never seen nakedness as pure and rich as yours. Your breasts, your belly, your thighs. . . . It was worth waiting.

Hanako: What do you say?

Jitsuko: Because you waited you possess all the beautiful things in the world. A woman somewhere one morning lost her breasts, and then they were shining on your body, like medals of flesh, wonderfully fragrant. What men have fought to win, you have won by waiting.

Hanako (not listening): Spring, summer, autumn. . . . Which comes first, summer or autumn? If the fan were here now and alive, wouldn't summer come? (*Playing with the fan, opening and shutting it.*) How happy I'd be if the snowflakes in this design would suddenly melt away! (*She shuts the fan.*)

Jitsuko: Hanako, let's go on a trip.

Hanako (shielding her face with an exaggerated gesture): Why? Why?

Jitsuko: We'll go look for Yoshio. Why don't we leave as soon as possible, tonight even? You'll never find him by waiting that way. Let's go all through Japan looking for him. From village to village, from town to town, travelling the two of us—how enjoyable it will be. Soon it will be the season of coloured leaves. The mountains will all turn crimson. I want to see how healthy

you look when the autumn tints are reflected on the paleness of your face. If we go, I'll help you with all my heart to search for him. On the train I'll ask every young man if he is Yoshio.

Hanako: No . . . no . . .

Jitsuko: Why don't you want to go?

Hanako: Isn't it like running away from something?

Jitsuko (starting): Running away?

Hanako: It's because you don't wait, because you're a person who never waits. People who don't wait run away. I shall wait here. I won't listen to another word you say. Don't be angry, will you? If only I had stayed in that town and not gone away, he might have come again. But you dragged me here. . . . (*She notices the scraps of newspaper on the floor.*) What's this?

Jitsuko (paling): It isn't anything.

Hanako: It's snow! I'm sure it's snow. Dirty snow. . . . (*For a few minutes she scoops up the paper, then scatters it around her.*) See! The snow has fallen. (*With the cunning of the insane.*) The snow has fallen, it's winter already. We don't have to go on any trip. Just pretend that we've been travelling since autumn, and now that winter's come we've returned.

Jitsuko: No, it's no use. Hanako, we must go away.

Hanako: No, no.

Jitsuko: Do you understand? (*She pushes Hanako into a chair, and leaning over her she speaks in a persuasive tone.*) You have waited long enough. You have waited enough and become so beautiful that if he should meet you he would never be able to leave you again. Do you understand? You must stop waiting and go to look for him.

Hanako: No, I will not move from here. I will not move for the rest of my life. The world is so big that no matter how much I search for him it won't do any good. I will wait here and not stir. As long as I stay still, he in his wanderings will surely come to me. The motionless star and the moving star meet.

Jitsuko: What if he is also waiting and not moving?

Hanako: You don't know men.

Jitsuko: Hanako, please don't be unreasonable. I beg of you.

Hanako: Oh, I am tired. You don't have any consideration for how tired I am, do you, Jitsuko? Every day I must sit on a hard wooden bench waiting for him. Day after day. I am tired. I don't look it perhaps. I suppose that I look like a bright, large, glossy rose. But I am really very tired. I'll rest for a while. It will do me good to lay my head a little on the pillow and sleep for an hour or two. Then I shall look like a little island fast asleep. Like a little island sunken in sleep while it waits, day after day, its harbour turned to the broad sea, wondering if one of the sailboats off the shore, transparent in the scarlet of the setting sun, will not head to port. Even in the day the moon appears, and even at night the sun shines. On that island there is no need for clocks. Today I shall throw away my clock.

Jitsuko (sadly): Why?

Hanako: Then the train will never leave.

(Exit Hanako. Jitsuko stands still for a moment. She looks at the scraps of paper and begins to sweep them together towards the door with a broom. She is about to throw them away when she notices a man standing in the door.)

Scene Three. (Yoshio, Jitsuko)

Jitsuko: Who is it?

Yoshio: Is Hanako here?

Jitsuko (drawing herself up): There's nobody here by that name.

Yoshio: I'm sure that she's here. *(He produces a newspaper from his pocket.)* I read about her in this morning's newspaper.

Jitsuko: The newspaper must be going in for misinformation, as usual.

Yoshio (stepping farther in): Please let me see Hanako.

Jitsuko (already realising, but asking anyway): Who are you?

Yoshio: If you say that Yoshio is here, she'll know who I am.

Jitsuko: That name has been familiar to me

for a long time. A hateful name with a disagreeable ring to it.

Yoshio remains silent.

Jitsuko: In the first place I have no way of knowing whether or not you are the real Yoshio.

Yoshio: If you have any doubts, look at this. It's her fan, with moon-flowers painted on it.

Jitsuko: I wonder where you could have picked it up.

Yoshio: I thought that you would say something like that. Now, if you would be so kind as to take me to her. . . .

Jitsuko: When you saw the newspaper article you suddenly fancied yourself the hero of a love story and came rushing here—wasn't that it? To a woman you had abandoned for three years.

Yoshio: I managed things extremely badly, I know. But about a year ago I at last became free, and I went to that town. She was no longer there. People said that after she had gone out of her mind and couldn't appear any more as a geisha, her contract was bought out by a lady artist, who took her off to Tokyo. That was all I could find out. The artist was you, wasn't it?

Jitsuko: Yes, it was I, a spinster painter on the verge of forty. I went to that town about a year and a half ago on a sketching trip. The geishas were talking about her at a restaurant to which I was invited. One summer, they said, she and a young customer from Tokyo met. The man promised to come again, and exchanged fans with her by way of a pledge. Every day she would look at the fan and think of him, and her days were spent waiting for his return. She stopped performing for customers, and was so tormented by the madame that the poor thing finally lost her mind. When I heard this story I begged for a meeting with her. She sat in a room like a dark prison, her eyes cast down, clutching a fan in her white small hands, apparently unaware even when I entered. When I spoke she at last lifted her face. The beauty of that innocent face, like the moon with a ring round it. I fell in love at

the first look. I bought out Hanako's contract and returned with her to Tokyo. At the time I made a vow to myself never to let her be robbed from me by that faithless man.

Yoshio: Since then, for the past year and a half, she has been in your care, I take it.

Jitsuko: I'll thank you not to adopt that manner of speech, exactly as if you had left one of your belongings in my keeping.

Yoshio: Then you won't let me see her. . . . In other words, her happiness is not what you desire.

Jitsuko: What I desire is the same as what she desires. She has no desire whatever for happiness.

Yoshio (with a defiant smile): Then, just supposing I came here in order to make her unhappy again. . . .

Jitsuko: Her unhappiness is beautiful and perfect. No one can meddle in her unhappiness.

Yoshio: Then there is no need to be so afraid of letting me see her.

Jitsuko: Afraid? Yes, I value my good fortune.

Yoshio: At last you've come out with the truth.

Jitsuko: You have no understanding of what my good fortune is. I am a woman who has never been loved by anyone, even when I was a child. I never have waited for anything. To this day I have always been alone. And that is not the worst. If by a remote chance someone were to love me, I have come to think that I would probably hate him in return. I can't allow any man to love me. . . . That was why I began my life of dreaming—dreaming of making a captive of someone who was very deeply in love, but not with myself. What do you think of that? Someone who would live, most beautifully, in place of me, my helpless love. As long as that person's love is unrequited, the heart is mine.

Yoshio: Is that what your good luck involves?

Jitsuko: Yes.

Yoshio: People who aren't loved think up horrible things, don't they?

Jitsuko: All love is horrible, for there are no

rules. Even a love as free of pain as yours some day will experience the same horror. I like each day to light a flame of hope on the all but extinguished wick of her faint desires. But do not expect me to have hopes of my own.

Yoshio: One thing clear to me at any rate is that you and I are enemies in love. Well then, what do you give her? Is it hope? By making a decoy of me? That would seem to be all. I think that I can give her the world.

Jitsuko: You lie. All you can do is to steal the world from her. Her world has come in pieces, and it would amount only to being tied to you—a stupid and, what's more, deceitful husband.

Yoshio: That may be for all I care. You can't tell unless you've tried.

Jitsuko: I won't let her be tried any further. She is a flawless, immovable gem. A deranged gem. There must be someone more suitable for rubble like you.

Yoshio: Come out with it plainly. You're afraid to let me see her.

Jitsuko: You don't know, do you, what stratagems an unloved woman will go to so as not to be left alone? You are obviously a person who has never once been alone.

Yoshio: Come now, take me to Hanako.

Jitsuko: As a special favour, please don't shout.

Yoshio: If you don't take me to her, I'll go to her myself.

Jitsuko: Youth, passion—in fact, a complete set of equipment to put in your pocket, and the confidence that any lock can be opened. I'm no match for you. Look at these travel preparations. I was just thinking that we should escape from you by going off on a journey.

Yoshio: Did you say that Hanako wants to go away?

Jitsuko: No. She was acting peevishly and went off to have a nap.

Yoshio: She still has her wits about her.

Jitsuko: No, it is a sign of her madness.

Yoshio: You certainly try your best to make Hanako out to be insane. I suppose that suits your convenience.

Jitsuko: I have only known Hanako since she lost her mind. That has made her supremely beautiful. The commonplace dreams she had when she was sane have now been completely purified and become precious, strange jewels that lie beyond your comprehension.

Yoshio: Say what you will, flesh is in those dreams.

Jitsuko: Flesh! Please do not make me think of things I dislike.

Yoshio: I am not trying to make you think of anything.

Jitsuko (suddenly intense): Please go at once.

Yoshio: What new suggestion is this after all we've gone over?

Jitsuko: I am afraid. I am afraid.

Yoshio: I can well understand that you would be.

Jitsuko: Just supposing she should return to her senses.

Yoshio: Compared to you any madman is in his senses.

Jitsuko: If she should go off and abandon me. . . .

Yoshio: I will make her abandon you.

Jitsuko: I shall die.

Yoshio: You die? I don't think that will make Hanako unhappy. Now if I were to die. . . .

Jitsuko: You think Hanako would at once be stricken with grief? No—that would be the best thing you could do. Please do die. That will give her a reason to go on living.

Yoshio: Which will give you a reason for living. No, thank you kindly. (*He goes towards the bedroom.*)

Jitsuko: Don't go there!

Yoshio: Hanako, I've come!

Jitsuko: Go away, please. After killing me.

Yoshio: Hanako! Hanako!

Jitsuko (crouching before him): Go away, go away.

Yoshio (softly, sidestepping her): Hanako! Here's the fan. The fan with the moon-flowers. (*He opens the fan and goes towards the bedroom door.*)

Jitsuko: Ohhh! (*She cowers on the floor, hiding her face.*)

(*The door of the bedroom opens and*

Hanako appears. She holds against her breast the fan with the snow-scene.)

Scene Four. (Hanako, Yoshio, Jitsuko)

(*A long pause. Hanako slowly approaches Yoshio.*)

Yoshio: It's I, Yoshio. I've kept you waiting for me a long time. I'm sorry, Hanako. I've taken good care of your fan.

Hanako: My . . . fan. . . .

Yoshio: Yes, with the moon-flowers on it. And that fan you have with the snow-scene is mine.

Hanako: My fan . . . your fan. What happened to the fan? Were you looking for a fan?

Yoshio: No. For you. For Hanako.

Hanako: I . . . the fan. . . .

Yoshio: Don't you understand me? Hanako! (*He places his hand on her shoulder and shakes her. As he does so Jitsuko, having recovered her strength, stands and stares motionless at them.*)

Hanako: Yoshio?

Yoshio: Yes, I am Yoshio.

Hanako (A long pause. She shakes her head almost imperceptibly): No you are not. You are not.

Yoshio: What are you saying? Have you forgotten me?

Hanako: You look very much like him. Your face is exactly like his, just as I've seen it in dreams. And yet you are different. The faces of all the men in the world are dead, and only Yoshio's face was alive. You are not Yoshio. Your face is dead.

Yoshio: What!

Hanako: You too are a skeleton. Your face is only bones. Why do you look at me that way with your hollow eyes of bone?

Yoshio: Look steadily. Look at me steadily.

Hanako: I am looking. I am looking more steadily than you. (*To Jitsuko*) Jitsuko, you're trying to deceive me again, aren't you? To deceive me and take me away with you on a trip against my wishes. You sent for this total stranger and got him to say that he was Yoshio. You're trying to make me give up the idea of waiting,

yesterday, today, tomorrow, waiting the same way—aren't you? But I won't give it up. I'll wait longer. I still have in me the strength to wait a long, long time. I am alive. I can tell a dead man's face as soon as I see one.

Jitsuko (to Yoshio, gently): Please go. You had best resign yourself to it.

Yoshio (longingly): Hanako!

(Hanako, without turning back, walks to an easy-chair where she sits, facing the audience. Yoshio watches her. A long pause. Yoshio suddenly rushes out.)

Scene Five. (Jitsuko, Hanako)

Hanako: Come here.

Jitsuko: Yes.

(It begins to grow dark outside.)

Hanako: It's evening already, isn't it?

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: In the evening the morning sun shines and the cocks crow, don't they? On an island you don't need a clock.

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: Jitsuko, why do we have to go on a trip?

Jitsuko: We don't have to go any more. We'll stay here always.

Hanako: Will we? Oh, I'm so glad. . . . Jitsuko.

Jitsuko: Yes?

Hanako: That man who came here before. Who was he?

Jitsuko: Did someone come?

Hanako: Yes, I'm sure someone came. He had some business, I think.

Jitsuko: Yes.

Hanako: He was saying something in a loud voice. I hate people who talk in such a loud voice.

Jitsuko: Yes, I hate them too.

Hanako (playing with the fan again): That's what waiting is. Waiting, waiting . . . and soon the day ends.

Jitsuko: You wait. I'm not waiting for anything.

Hanako: I wait.

Jitsuko: I wait for nothing.

Hanako: I wait . . . and today has grown dark too.

Jitsuko (her eyes flashing): Oh, wonderful life!

(translated by Donald Keene)

Letter from Paris

Princes and Powers

THE Conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists (*Le Congrès des Ecrivains et Artistes Noirs*) opened on Wednesday morning, September 19th, 1956, in the Sorbonne's Amphitheatre Descartes, in Paris. It was one of those bright, warm days and by ten o'clock the lecture hall was already unbearably hot, people choked the entrances and covered the wooden steps. It was hectic with the activity attendant upon the setting up of tape recorders, with the testing of ear-phones, with the lightning of flash-bulbs. Electricity, in fact, filled the hall. Of the people there that first day, I should judge that not quite two-thirds were coloured.

Behind the table at the front of the hall sat eight coloured men. These included the American novelist Richard Wright; Alioune Diop, the editor of *Présence Africaine*, and one of the principal organisers of the conference; the poets Leopold Senghor, from Senegal, and Aimé Césaire, from Martinique; and the poet-novelist, Jacques Alexis, from Haiti. From Haiti, also, came the President of the Conference, Dr. Price-Mars, a very old and very handsome man.

It was well past ten o'clock when the conference actually opened. Alioune Diop, who rather resembles, in his extreme sobriety, an old-time Baptist minister, made the opening address. He referred to the present gathering as a kind of second Bandung. As at Bandung, the people gathered together here held in common the fact of their subjugation to Europe, or, at the very least, to the European vision of the world. "History," he said, "has treated the blacks in a rather cavalier fashion. I would even say that history has treated black men in a resolutely spiteful fashion were it not for the fact that this history with a large H is nothing more, after all, than the Western interpretation of the life of the world." He referred to the variety of cultures the conference represented, saying that they were genuine cultures and that the ignorance of the West regarding them was largely a matter of convenience. And, in speaking of the relation between politics and culture, he pointed out that the loss of vitality from which all Negro cultures

were suffering was due to the fact that their political destinies were not in their hands. A people deprived of political sovereignty finds it very nearly impossible to recreate, for itself, the image of its past, this perpetual recreation being an absolute necessity, if not, indeed, the definition of a living culture.

His speech won a great deal of applause. Yet, I felt that among the dark people in the hall there was, perhaps, some disappointment that he had not been more specific, more bitter, in a word, more demagogical; whereas, among the whites in the hall, there was certainly expressed in their applause a somewhat shamefaced and uneasy relief. And, indeed, the atmosphere was strange. Everyone was tense with the question of which direction the conference would take. Hanging in the air, as real as the heat from which we suffered, were the great spectres of America and Russia, of the battle going on between them for the domination of the world. The ultimate resolution of this battle might very well depend on the earth's non-European population, a population vastly outnumbering Europe's, and which had suffered such injustices at European hands. With the best will in the world, no one now living could undo what past generations had accomplished. The great question was what, exactly, *had* they accomplished: whether the evil, of which there had been so much, alone lived after them, whether the good, and there had been some, had been interred with their bones.

OF THE messages from well-wishers which were read immediately after Diop's speech, the one which caused the greatest stir came from America's W. E. B. DuBois. "I am not present at your meeting," he began, "because the U.S. government will not give me a passport." The reading was interrupted at this point by great waves of laughter, by no means good-natured, and by a roar of applause, which, as it clearly could not have been intended for the State Department, was intended to express admiration for DuBois' plain speaking. "Any American