

WALKABOUT YEOLHA
열하일기만보
(excerpt)
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SCENE 1

(At rise: An abandoned factory warehouse. Cracked windows in the background reveal a city torn to pieces.

Perhaps this city was once prosperous and wealthy, but not anymore. Has it been destroyed by war? A recession? Outsourcing?

Human clothing and tools are scattered on the ground—some of it, recently used.

A rumbling is heard. Is it rats? Squatters? Survivors? No, it is a sandstorm, blowing through the stage.

A bell rings at a distance.

YEON-AHM enters amidst a great whirlwind of sand.)

YEON AHM: In the not-so-distant past,
the Village Seniors gathered the people of Yeolha
and prophesized change:

“The sands of time are blowing!
You are fucked!” they said.

Yeolha was a prosperous city,
but its Villagers,
not aware that a new Empire was rising,
remained blind to the Outsider’s
mergers and bail-outs,
downsizes and buy-outs,
until everyone was left stranded
amidst these concrete walls, with
nothing but empty space.

Everyone’s jobs were swapped for
votes and pork-belly,
all labor out-sourced and off-shored!

From what remained, a new
Yeolha was built, as the sandstorms
mercilessly blur the lines between
land and sky.

*(While speaking, Yeon-Ahm turns into a
four-legged beast.)*

A beast is fully grown and
her Master, Mr. Young,
decides to put a yoke on her and
gag her.

The beast is
too small for a horse,
too big for a pony—
She has chinky eyes,
her hair’s sparkling red,

her ears—let's not go there.
Let's just say, she's an
eccentric four-legged beast.

She is,

I am,

*(At this point, the transformation from
Yeon-Ahm to "beast" is complete.)*

...an ass.

(Yeon-Ahm, or "the beast" lies on the ground in despair.

Mr. Young enters breathless, carrying a bucket of horse-feed.)

YOUNG: Chi! Chi!
You ass: eat something before you starve.

(The beast looks away.

Barbara enters wearing high-heels.)

BARBARA: Mr. Young!

YOUNG: Barbara?
What are you doing here?

BARBARA: Help me—I'm stuck!

YOUNG: What sandstorms!

BARBARA: I can't see a thing!

(While Young unscrews Barbara's heels from the ground:)

BARBARA: Is she dead yet?

YOUNG: No, not yet.

BARBARA: *(petting the beast.)* Chi:
what's the matter with you?

(The Village Boys enter: Aaron, Birley, and Zephyr.)

ZEPHYR: Has she?

AARON: Did she?

BIRLEY: Will she?

BARBARA: No.

ZEPHYR: But it's been two weeks!

AARON: Fifteen days!

BIRLEY: With no food, no sleep!

ZEPHYR: What a freak!

YOUNG: What's all this excitement about?
That she's dying?

BOYS: (*nodding.*) It's fun!

YOUNG: "Fun?"
I'm constipated by my own anxiety
and you consider this fun?
Go find some other "fun" stuff to do.

AARON: But there isn't anything else to do in Yeolha.

BIRLEY: I'm bored to death.

BARBARA: (*to the boys.*) Hey, I play with you.

AARON: (*to Barbara.*) Yeah, us and everyone else.

BIRLEY: That's not special.

ZEPHYR: How come no one wanders
into Yeolha this year?
Remember the machine-man that
showed up last spring?

YOUNG: How do you know about him?
The Seniors hid him in their dugout—

ZEPHYR: Fuck the Seniors/!

AARON: We saw him every night!

BIRLEY: You saw him?
Without me?

AARON: You would have told on us, Birley—

BIRLEY: No, I wouldn't!

ZEPHYR: He told us such weird stories—

BIRLEY: Really? Like what?

AARON: None of your business, fuck-face.

BIRLEY: Fuck you, you fucking fuck!
Zephyr: tell me what he said to you, or
I'm going to tell the Seniors
that you talked to him!

AARON: *(to Zephyr.)* You see?
I knew he would tell on us!

BIRLEY: You know what the Seniors say:
anyone from the Outside
is an enemy spy.

YOUNG: Were you careful with what you said to him?

BIRLEY: I doubt it!

(The Village Women enter: Corbett, Tama, and Deirdre.)

TAMA: *(calling, sing-songy.)* Mr. Young?

CORBETT: *(sing-songy.)* Has she?

DEIRDRE: *(sing-songy.)* Did she?

YOUNG: No! Not yet.

DEIRDRE: *(disappointed.)* Oh.

CORBETT: Do you think she's pretending to be sick,
so that she doesn't have to work?

TAMA: Or be gagged?

DEIRDRE: Or be beaten?

YOUNG: Ladies—

CORBETT: We're just concerned.
That's all.

YOUNG: Thanks, but there's no need to worry.
She's not going to die.

CORBETT: Speaking of death,
—which, by the way,

is just awful,
awful—
can I have her tail when she dies?
Eating tails helps prevent hair loss.

TAMA: I call her feet!

DEIRDRE: Ribs!

YOUNG: No!
If Chi dies:
I'm going to cremate her and
throw her ashes into the air.

CORBETT: What?
You're not going to share her with us—?

YOUNG: What I do with my pet
is none of your business.

TAMA: Hey, that's not fair!

CORBETT: That's right!

DEIRDRE: Where did your "pet" get all those
peas and carrots that she devoured?
She got them from *our* gardens in *our* village—

*(Enter the Village Chief, Nebibi, and the Village Men: Mr. Brogan, Mr. Greyfell,
Mr. Kader, and Mr. Dagwood.)*

NEBIBI: *(storming in.)* Has she?
Did she?

DAGWOOD: Her whinnying is keeping me up all night.
You've got to do something about this!

YOUNG: I'm trying, I'm trying—

DAGWOOD: I told you:
your ass is horny.
You've got to find her a mate.

YOUNG: But I already took her to
Mr. Brogan's horse,
Mr. Greyfell's mule,
Mr. Kader's donkey.
You saw what Chi did to them...

BROGAN: Oh, yeah. She's a fighter.

GREYFELL: She kicked all of my mule's
front teeth/!

KADER: ...my donkey ran away/.

DAGWOOD: Coward: just like its owner.

KADER: *(to Dagwood.)* Hey, shut your mouth!
My donkey was being smart:
he knew better than to mess around with that one!

BROGAN: Chief Nebibi: what's the matter with her?

NEBIBI: *(inspecting the beast.)*
I don't know.
Even on close inspection,
I don't see anything wrong with her—

DAGWOOD: Well, then we should eat her
before she loses more weight!

YOUNG: Eat your wife, Dagwood!

DAGWOOD: What did you say?

YOUNG: You heard me.
There's no point in keeping *her* alive.
She's completely incoherent—a loony.

DAGWOOD: Mr. Young!
Just because you know the truth,
doesn't mean that you should say it.

YOUNG: *(to Yeon-Ahm.)* Chi: what's wrong with you?

DEIRDRE: That's not Chi—

CORBETT: She's not your son!

TAMA: Maybe you should leave her out in the fields.
Let nature take care of her.

GREYFELL: I know what to do!
If you want to fix her,
you have to whack her
with a stick!

YOUNG: I'm not going to whack her!
Look at her eyes:
they're filled with tears,
begging me not to—

CORBETT: (*disapprovingly.*) Tsk tsk.
Mr. Young's a softy.

GREYFELL: Then, give *me* a rod.
I'll whip her back into shape—

KADER: No! Wait!
I know what's wrong with her.
I recognize her symptoms.

NEBIBI: You do?
Well, what is it?

KADER: Depression.

EVERYONE: Depression?

KADER: Yes, depression.
Depression aggravated
by insomnia and anorexia.

DAGWOOD: Well, we know how to fix that!
When you were depressed,
your father beat the hell outta' you—

KADER: But it didn't cure me.
(*traumatic whimper.*)
Not at all!

CORBETT: If this is depression,
what the hell is causing it?

KADER: I don't know.
(*traumatic whimper.*)
My father beat the reason out of me.
I'm ruined!

GREYFELL: Oh, shut up, Kader.
The beatings made you who you are!
I say we beat the hell outta' that ass
until she's got no room left
for depression.

KADER: (*to Young. explosive:*)

This is all your fault!
You caused her depression!
Just look at yourself,
 all scrappy and skinny!
All you do is droop around her
 with your filthy face!
No wonder she's like this, you
 loser, asshole!

YOUNG: Do you think so?

KADER: I know so.
 A beast takes after her owner.
 But the owner shouldn't take after his beast!
Try smiling at her.
Try making her laugh.
 Smile—be happy!

(Medora, Dagwood's wife, calls for him off-stage. Medora speaks in gibberish, and her intended lines are marked between parentheses.)

MEDORA: Ra,ra! Ah, ah, ah, ah!
Roma, roma ma!
(Dagwood! Dagwood!
Where the hell are you, you twat! I'm gonna' break your legs!)

(All the Villagers are startled.)

DAGWOOD: I'm here, my darling!

(Dagwood exits off-stage. We hear domestic disturbance off-stage, with plates smashing on the floor and the likes.)

TAMA: *(in a panic.)* Well, look at that time!

CORBETT: *(whispering.)* Let's get out of here!

GREYFELL: *(exiting. To Young.)* Listen: a kick in the ass always does the job.

KADER: *(exiting. To Young.)* Laugh: make her laugh!

CORBETT: *(exiting. To Young.)* I still want her tail.

TAMA: *(exiting. To Young.)* Ribs!

DEIRDRE: *(exiting. To Young.)* Feet!

TAMA/
BROGAN: Oh God, here she comes!

there were cuts all over her face!
Completely exhausted, and
increasingly suicidal,
she laid her chin on the stable-posts and
looked up to the sky.
Out, into the night,
she stared at
the whirlpool of constellations above her,
asking herself:
“What the fuck is wrong with me?”
From this one question,
time cracked open and
the beast began *to think*.

(Yeon-Ahm continues her monologue, but in the background, we see Mr. Young softly petting the beast, singing to it a lullaby.

As Mr. Young gently sings, the Villagers enter the stage and enact the Beast’s thoughts—or, the “brief story of Buddhist Enlightenment, or the fall of an angel.”

YOUNG: *(softly sung.) Hush-a-bye don’t you cry,
Go to sleep-y, little baby.
When you wake you shall have
All the pretty lil’ horses.
Black and bays, dapple and grays,
Coach and six white horses.
Hush-a-bye don’t you cry,
Go to sleep-y little baby.)*

YEON AHM: *(continued from the previous monologue.)*
Numerous questions followed, and
eyes wide open, the beast wondered
how many of us have
set foot on this earth, without
learning the world’s
fundamental truths.
Are there fundamental truths?
Suppose there was at least *one*,
and that this *one* truth
descended upon the beast.
On her seventh day
—or, last week-end—
the beast became enlightened.
Her spirit transcended time and space,
roamed between past and future;
and she became transfixed
in her memories.
If only Mr. Young had been a little more patient,
the countless memories rattling

in her head would have
vanished—kaput!—
but Mr. Young's merciless beating
forced her to hold on
to her reminiscences.

(Mr. Young begins to beat the beast.)

YEON-AHM: The beast looked at the old man, and
amidst the pains and pangs of
her sturm and drang,
she recognized herself in him.
Unexpectedly, and for the first time,
she chose to stay with him.

(The Beast loses her balance from the beatings and falls.)

YOUNG: Look at you:
legs all in a knot!
Up!
Get up now!
If you fall, you'll never get up again.

YEON-AHM: Mr. Young?

YOUNG: *(looking off-stage.)* Who's there?
Dagwood, is that you?

YEON-AHM: There's something terribly fucked up with me.

YOUNG: *(stares at the Beast blankly.)*

YEON-AHM: My body,
there's something wrong with my body.
I was in the middle of a story but—
(falling to the ground.)
Look!
Look!
I've fallen and can't get up!

YOUNG: *(muttering gibberish.)*

YEON-AHM: What are you muttering to yourself,
like some madman?
Come here and help me!

(Mr. Young punches the beast and knocks its lights out.)

YOUNG: *(exiting.)* Monster!

It's a monster!
Help!
Somebody help me!

(Blackout.)

SCENE 2

(In the dark, bells start ringing and rumors spread across the village.

The Villagers gather to gossip, including the Village Women.)

CORBETT: Mr. Young is crazy!
What kind of man doesn't allow women to get some ass?

TAMA: It's October:
people go crazy this time of year!

CORBETT: Who was it last fall?

DEIRDRE: Martin's Grandpa'.
He said that his tea pot sang!

TAMA: Our Seniors told him to throw that thing away—

DEIRDRE: He did—and he never came back.

CORBETT: That's when Gabby's Grandma disappeared.

TAMA: She didn't disappear.
Those two had a little *something, something* going on.

DEIRDRE: Really?

TAMA: Oh, yeah!
Those two didn't come back, because
they *chose* not to come back!

(The Women giggle. Brogan rushes in out of breath.)

BROGAN: *(out of breath.)*
She talks!
She talks!

TAMA: Brogan, what is it?

BROGAN: That horse, or mule—whatever she is,
she talks!

CORBETT: *Shut up*—this is real life.
Not Dr. Doolittle!

DEIRDRE: What did she say?

BROGAN: *(shrugging.)* I don't know.

She said things too intellectual for me—

DEIRDRE: Everything's too intellectual for you—

TAMA: Whoa there, Deirdre!

DEIRDRE: How do we know that he's not lying—?

TAMA: My husband's not a liar!

DEIRDRE: Well, he's not tricking me into
feeding your funky-chickens again!

BROGAN: If you don't believe me,
go hear her yourselves!
That ass started talking last night and
she just goes on and on—

CORBETT: I've got to see this.
Come on, ladies, let's go!

(The Women and Brogan exit off-stage.)

Aaron, Birley, and Barbara enter.

Aaron and Birley get in a line and offer their small sacks of grain to Barbara.

Barbara takes the sack from Aaron and lies in a sexual position on the ground.)

AARON: No, I don't like that.
Get on all fours.

BARBARA: Aaron, if we do it your way,
the sand will bruise your knees and
I'm going to get sand on my unmentionables—

AARON: I don't care!
I'm sick of that position.

BIRLEY: Wait a minute.
If you get sand all over Barbara,
what am I going to do?

AARON: You're going to deal with it, dummy!

*(Aaron throws himself on Barbara and they have sex. It's neither lustful nor
guilty—it's more like an exercise.)*

BARBARA: What did Chi say today?

BIRLEY: Her name's not Chi anymore.
It's Yeon-Ahm.

BARBARA: OK.
What did Yeon-Ahm say?

AARON: A lot of things.

BARBARA: Like what?

AARON: Stop talking.
I'm trying to concentrate.

BARBARA: Alright, you concentrate.
Birley:
 you tell me what Yeon-Ahm said.

BIRLEY: He said that in the past,
 Mr. Young was a stable boy and that
 Yeon-Ahm was his Master.
They walked by Yeolha and
saw it covered with birches.

BARBARA: Birches?
My mother used to talk about birches—

AARON: Hello?
 Don't talk about mothers.

BARBARA: My mother said that
 she saw birches
 when she was my age.

AARON: Barbara!
I said, don't talk about—
(*He stops.*)
Damn it!
My inspiration's gone.

BIRLEY: (*teasing Aaron.*) Ha,ha!

AARON: Birley, don't you dare tell my mother!
Tell her that I lasted the entire lesson.

BIRLEY: But that's not believable.

AARON: Just do it, you douche-bag!

BIRLEY: Don't call me a douche-bag, you fucktard!

AARON: Birley—please!
You know my mother beats me when I don't do well in school!

BARBARA: Boys, no fighting!
Birley: your tuition.

(Birley gives his sack to Barbara.

Aaron gets dressed while Barbara and Birley have sex.)

BARBARA: My mother said birches are
yellow and red,
like flames from a fire—

BIRLEY: No,
birches are like the moonlight.
White and translucent—

BARBARA: You think so?

BIRLEY: —and birches sing lullabies/—

AARON: Hurry up, you fuckhead,
or we're going to miss
Yeon-Ahm's story.

BIRLEY: Yeon-Ahm sang a song today.

BARBARA: Did he?
Sing it to me.

BIRLEY: *(singing.)* I looked over Jordan and what did I see
Comin' for to carry me home
A band of angels comin' after me
Comin' for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet child,
Comin' for to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot
Comin' cummin'
Comin' for to carry me
hooooooooooooooooommmmmmmmmmm!

(Birley cums. He gets off Barbara and gets dressed again.)

BARBARA: *(getting ups.)* Where's Zephyr?
Why doesn't he come to class, anymore?

AARON: *(shrugs.)*
Zephyr's acting weird.

He's talking gibberish and shit.
Are you coming to hear Yeon-Ahm's story?

BIRLEY: We'll catch you up
 on the way to Mr. Young's house.

BARBARA: No, I'd better stay here.
 (teacher-like.) You're dismissed.

BIRLEY: Alright, then!
 Let's go!

(Aaron and Birley run off-stage.)

(From the opposite side of the stage, Zephyr enters.)

BARBARA: Zephyr...
 I saw you lurking back there.
 (gets herself in a sexual position.)
 What took you so long?
 Don't worry about your tuition.
 Today, your lesson's for free.

ZEPHYR: Barbara, have you thought about my offer?
 I know that your teachings are for everyone, but
 I want you for me,
 and no one else.

BARBARA: You know that's impossible—

ZEPHYR: But don't you like me?

BARBARA: Of course, I like you!
 But I also like Aaron.
 And Birley.
 What will they do without their lessons?

ZEPHYR: They have their fiancées.

BARBARA: So do you.

ZEPHYR: I'll tell Gabby to find someone else—

BARBARA: No. Don't!
 You're all she's got.

ZEPHYR: Barbara—

BARBARA: No, Zephyr, we can't—

ZEPHYR: Why not?!

BARBARA: Before my mother died,
she told me that it was my duty
to teach the boys of Yeolha
how to be sexually satisfying.
That's the only way
the chastity of your women
can be rewarded on their wedding nights!
And as an educator,
which is what I am,
I must be fair to my students.
Everyone must have equal access
to education—

ZEPHYR: But this isn't fair to you!
You're not an animal.

BARBARA: Of course, I'm not an animal.
I'm an educator!

ZEPHYR: Yeon-Ahm was right.
When one's finished changing,
one's finished.

BARBARA: What?

ZEPHYR: I told Yeon-Ahm about you,
and you know what he did?
He cried.
His tears made me realize
how much I,
how much I...

BARBARA: ...how much what, Zephyr?
...
Zephyr...

you're confusing me—
ZEPHYR: (*snapping.*) This is torture!
Barbara:
I can't sleep!
I can't eat!
I want to punch Gabby's Grandma
in the genitals!

BARBARA: That's because you haven't been studying!
Now, let me give you your lesson, alright?
You might change your mind after this.

ZEPHYR: No, I'm not the one that needs to change!
You need to change!
Barbara: I'm going to get you out of this shithole.
Just promise me you won't sleep with anyone else
until I come back for you.
Do you promise...?
Promise me!

(Barbara exits to her home.

Zephyr exits to the opposite side of the stage.

Meanwhile, Medora crosses the stage.)

MEDORA: Pappa-pappa?
Pappa-pappa?

(Dagwood runs towards Medora.)

DAGWOOD: I'm right here, my darling.

(Medora slaps Dagwood squarely in the face: hard and fast.)

MEDORA: WHERE.THE.HELL.HAVE.YOU.BEEN?

DAGWOOD: At Mr. Young's house. His ass is talking.

MEDORA: And what's that got to do with you?!

DAGWOOD: *(surprised.)* You can hear me?

MEDORA: Yes. *It's weird.*
I can hear stuff, and see things.
Why is this happening?

DAGWOOD: Oh, Medora!
You can see me!

MEDORA: Yeah, and you're looking like shit.

DAGWOOD: This is a miracle!

MEDORA: Miracle, my patootie!
I almost got lost in that sandstorm
and you're out there, doing—
who knows what you're doing!
Grab my hand!
Dagwood, take me home!
I'm so dizzy,

all these sights and sounds
are making me wanna' vomit.

DAGWOOD: What sounds?

MEDORA: Don't you hear that?

DAGWOOD: Hear what?

MEDORA: It sounds like a stone mill.
Or a thunderstorm.

DAGWOOD: I don't hear anything.

MEDORA: Listen.
Closer.

It's like all these sounds are
swirling through my body!

DAGWOOD: *(covering Medora's ears.)*
Maybe there's sand in your ears.
Is that better?

MEDORA: What is that?
What is this?

(As Dagwood and Medora exit,

Enter Nebibi, the Village Chief, and the Village Seniors, Zadok and Porcius. Nebibi carries Zadok on his back.)

PORCIUS: Who's telling stories in Yeolha
without my permission?
I'm Yeolha's storyteller!

ZADOK: Chief Nebibi,
you should have informed us
of this scandal immediately!

NEBIBI: It was such nonsense,
I thought it'd go away.

ZADOK: *(accusatory.)* So you've heard her?

NEBIBI: Just once.

PORCIUS: You know that's considered treason!

NEBIBI: Yes, but—

ZADOK: What did that *ass* have to say?

NEBIBI: Nothing to worry about, Honorable Zadok.
The things she utters are so
unexpected and uncontrollable,
her stories are neither here nor there.
It's just that sometimes,
what she says, can smack you
like a can of whoop-ass—

PORCIUS: I can smack you, if that's what you want.

NEBIBI: My concern is:
once you *think* about what she says,
her words seem to contain some sort of
substance.

PORCIUS: Substance?
What kind of substance?

NEBIBI: Well, it's hard to explain.
But when you listen to her, you believe her.

PORCIUS: Believe her?!

NEBIBI: Well, not me!
Most certainly not me!
...but the others do.

PORCIUS: This is an emergency!

ZADOK: Call for a Village Meeting.

(Porcius and Nebibi ring the bells.)

PORCIUS: Village Meeting!
Village Meeting!

(Blackout.)

THIS PLAY HAS BEEN PRODUCED.

**IF YOU'D LIKE TO READ THE REST, PLEASE EMAIL ME AT
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THANKS!