

Peter Eötvös: THE GOLDEN DRAGON
Libretto

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)

(Squats center stage. The other 4 singers are standing downstage and introducing themselves.)

TENOR 1

A Young Man.

(takes a bow)

MEZZO

A Woman Over Sixty.

(takes a bow)

TENOR 2

A Man Over Sixty.

(takes a bow)

BARITONE

A Man.

(takes a bow)

TENOR 1/ MEZZO/ TENOR 2/ BARITONE

(they all point at THE LITTLE ONE)

The Little One

THE LITTLE ONE

(Stands up, looks at the others and does not move.)

(Short Pause, then they suddenly all turn around and quickly go into the kitchen.)

PART I

SCENE 1

Kitchen

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

(Stirring in the Wok with a spoon)

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)

(Cutting a giant cucumber)

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

(cutting big, white turnips with a knife)

AN ASIAN (Baritone)
(Whipping with a whisk.)

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)
(Cutting vegetables with a knife on a wooden board.)

THE MAN (Baritone)
(spoken)
Early evening. Five Asians in the tiny kitchen of the...

YOUNG ASIAN
Thai -

OLD ASIAN
Chinese -

OLD COOK
Vietnamese -

THE MAN
...fast food restaurant. "The Golden Dragon"

THE YOUNG WOMAN (Soprano)
(speaking in a friendly tone)
A young Chinese man, beside himself with toothache.
(grimace, only one side of the mouth is open)

THE LITTLE ONE
(with a crooked mouth)
It hurts. It hurts. It hurts, it hurts.

THE MAN
(reminiscing THE LITTLE ONE)
- panic! -

THE LITTLE ONE
It hurts. It hurts. It hurts, it hurts.

YOUNG ASIAN
(kindly)
Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry

THE LITTLE ONE
(crying)
It hurts so much, the tooth hurts so much.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)
He's in pain. He's in pain.

OLD COOK
(sighing)
He's in pain. He's in pain.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)
The boy's got toothache.

THE LITTLE ONE
hào tong a
("It hurts a lot" in Chinese)

YOUNG ASIAN
Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry,
(to the Cook)
Keep stirring! Keep stirring!

THE MAN
(Covers the mouth of THE LITTLE ONE with his hand.)
(Lets him go.)
The old cook fries the noodles in Wok. It hisses.

THE LITTLE ONE
My tooth hurts so much...

THE MAN
The boy is in pain.

THE LITTLE ONE
...my tooth hurts so much.

AN ASIAN
Don't scream!

THE MAN
but he is screaming and how he's screaming
THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY/ YOUNG ASIAN/
OLD ASIAN/ AN ASIAN
We are standing in the tin...
(The men are leaving and taking The Little One with them.)

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY
...tiny kitchen of the Chinese-Thai-Vietnamese restaurant around the little boy.

THE YOUNG MAN
Out front, at the window table, number eleven, two flight attendants sit down.

THE WAITRESS (Tenor 1)

Hello.

THE MAN

The first flight attendant [stewardess?] says:

INGA (Baritone)

Hello.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

The second stewardess [flight attendant?] says:

EVA (Tenor 2)

Hello.

THE WAITRESS

How are you? Can I get you something to drink?

SCENE 2

Granddaughter At Grandfather's

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

(Simply telling a story)

A mild evening in late summer. An old man, maybe sick, stands on the balcony of his flat. His granddaughter has been visiting him,

(not imitating)

Grandfather, Grandfather.

GRANDDAUGHTER (Mezzo)

Grandfather...

THE YOUNG MAN

She lives upstairs in the same building with her boyfriend and now... and now she wanted to tell her grandfather,... She wanted to tell him something very special, something very, very special, but she doesn't tell him yet. Below them: the Chinese-Thai-Vietnamese restaurant "The Golden Dragon". Everyone working in the kitchen apparently Vietnamese. But whether that's true? The old man says: If I could have just one wish.

GRANDFATHER (Tenor 1)

If I could only have one wish.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

Next to the old man a young woman, not yet nineteen years old. She is strikingly young, and she is strikingly beautiful. She says: What, Grandfather, what would you wish for?

GRANDFATHER

My Granddaughter. You are so beautiful. You look so wonderful.

GRANDDAUGHTER

Do you think, Grandfather? When I get to be old like you, what am I going to look like then?

GRANDFATHER

he-he-he-he, ha-ha-ha-ha, ho-ho-ho; I'm laughing. I'm not going to live to see that.

he-he-he, he-he, he-he-he, he-he, I'll be dead and...

he-he-he, he-he, buried a long time before that

I'll be dead and buried a long time before that, long time.

he-he-he, he-he, he-he-he, he-he-he, he-he, he-he-he, he-he

GRANDDAUGHTER

You're laughing

GRANDFATHER

he-he-he-he, ha-ha-ha-ha, ho-ho-ho

GRANDDAUGHTER

But what were you going to say? You were going to say, that: If I could have just one wish.

GRANDFATHER

Yes. I said that. If I could only have one wish.

THE ENSEMBLE

(softly spoken)

Pause.

SCENE 3 **Kitchen**

THE MAN (Baritone)

In the kitchen to the...

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

Thai -

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

Chinese -

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

Vietnamese -

THE MAN

restaurant,

THE MAN/ THE YOUNG MAN/
THE MAN OVER SIXTY/ THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY
“The Golden Dragon”.

AN ASIAN (Baritone)
(laughing)
It is cramped,

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)
(laughing)
It is cramped,

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)
(laughing)
It is cramped,

AN ASIAN
it is too cramped,

OLD ASIAN
it is very cramped.

YOUNG ASIAN
it is way too cramped.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)
it is very cramped.

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)
hào tong a

AN ASIAN
there’s no room, but there are still five Asian cooks working here.

THE LITTLE ONE
hào tong a

AN ASIAN
One of them has a toothache: The Little One, the new one. The one who’s looking for his sister.

THE LITTLE ONE
it hurts, oh it hurts so much, it hurts...

OLD ASIAN
Stop screaming! Stop screaming! Stop screaming!

THE LITTLE ONE
hurts, hurts, hurts, hurts, mmm

THE MAN

We call him The Little One, because he's new.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

Because he hasn't been here for that long. And he's got no money. And he's got no papers. That's why a dentist is out of the question.

THE LITTLE ONE

It hurts so much!

OLD COOK

Don't scream so loud my boy.

THE WAITRESS (Tenor 1)

One apple juice. And one glass of white wine. The drinks for the two flight attendants.

THE LITTLE ONE

It hurts.

OLD ASIAN

The tooth must come out.

THE LITTLE ONE

But how, how?

AN ASIAN

Get it out, there's no other way.

THE LITTLE ONE

But how?

AN ASIAN

There's no other way.

THE LITTLE ONE

How?

OLD COOK

Out with it, out!

SCENE 4

The Tale Of The Cricket And The Ant

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

The tireless ant diligently collected all summer long provisions, while his neighbor, the cricket, all day and all night did nothing else just made music. The tireless ant just worked and worked and worked and worked while the song of the cricket across the field wafted. But then winter arrived. And the winter was cold. There came the frost, followed by the snow. And the cricket found

nothing to eat. She was starving. No music anymore. Finally the cricket went to the ant. Where else could she go. And asked him for something to eat.

THE CRICKET (Tenor 1)

...something to eat. ...something to eat. ...something to eat.

I need something to eat. Please. Can't you give me something, something to eat, please!

THE ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

No answer.

THE ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

THE CRICKET

Please, I need something to eat. Please, please, I haven't eaten for days.

THE ANT (Mezzo)

I'm giving you nothing. You did not work a day all summer. Not one day. All summer not a single day. You get nothing. I'm giving you nothing. I'm giving you nothing. For all I care you can die of hunger.

THE ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

SCENE 5 **Kitchen**

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)

Oh it hurts so much, it hurts, it hurts...

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

Show me, show me the tooth,

THE LITTLE ONE

hurts, hào tong a, hào tong a

OLD ASIAN

oh God, oh God! It's black! Black! It must come out. Out!

WAITRESS (Tenor 1)

The flight attendants at the table by the window ordered Number Twenty-five and Number Six.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

Number Twenty-five: Pad Thai Gai: fried rice noodles with eggs, chicken, vegetables, and spicy peanut sauce, medium. And the Thai soup: Number Six.

OLD ASIAN

Oh God, oh-god-oh-god-oh-god-oh-god-oh God, oh God.

THE LITTLE ONE

hào tong a

OLD ASIAN

Black. All black.

THE LITTLE ONE

Oh it hurts so much, hào tong a

OLD ASIAN

Show me. Show me. Stop screaming! Stop screaming! Stop screaming!

AN ASIAN

We need a dentist.

THE LITTLE ONE

hào tong, hào tong

OLD ASIAN

What kind of dentist? A dentist is out of the question. And he's got no money and no papers.

SCENE 6

Hans And The Cricket

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

Next to the "Golden Dragon" a small grocery store. The owner, shopkeeper Hans went to the "Golden Dragon" to get some food to take home: Number One-O-Three, as always: twice fried beef with peppers, hot. Extra hot.

THE CRICKET (Tenor 1)

(appears with the sound of the Gong)

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

The Ant asks him, she asks the Cricket what she can do. Whether she can do something special.

HANS (Mezzo)

What can you do?

(The Cricket bounces around.)

Dance, aha. Dance for me then.

(The Cricket bounces two more times then stops.)

Come on. Do it.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

The Cricket dances.
(The Cricket dances)

HANS

Yeah: yeah yeah yeah nice, pretty, but what use is that to me? It's quite nice, the way you can dance. Nice but I'm not really interested in dancing at all. Cleaning, you could clean the house. Do some cleaning. You know what? That gives me an idea.

SCENE 7

Kitchen. Schnaps. Spanner.

THE MAN (Baritone)

In the kitchen of the Thai-Chinese-Vietnamese fast-food restaurant: "The Golden Dragon".

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

Drink, drink, drink my boy.

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)/ OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

Drink some, drink some, drink some Schnaps!

(They all try to pour schnapps into The Little One's mouth.)

OLD COOK

Drink, drink.

YOUNG ASIAN/ OLD ASIAN

Drink some, drink some, drink some Schnaps!

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

The thin man pours Schnaps into the wide open mouth of the boy.

AN ASIAN (Baritone)

gli-glu-glu-glu-glug, gli-glu-glu-glu-glug.

THE LITTLE ONE

Ah...

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

(slightly drunk)

The little Chinese is screaming and screaming and (hiccup) Schnaps he's not used to drinking.

THE LITTLE ONE

The toothache is unbearable...

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)
The tooth must come out.

OLD COOK
Out. Out with it.

THE YOUNG MAN
Under the small sink there is the toolbox, in it the red spanner needed all the time for the gas-cooker...

THE LITTLE ONE
Not the spanner, please not the spanner, please don't!

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)
Don't be afraid, my friend, don't be afraid.

AN ASIAN
Open up! Open up!

OLD ASIAN
Open up!

THE LITTLE ONE
No!

YOUNG ASIAN
Open up!

THE LITTLE ONE
No!

OLD COOK
Open up your mouth, boy!

THE LITTLE ONE
No-(A)... A... A...

THE MAN
Let me pour some more Schnaps in his mouth, that helps,

OLD COOK/ YOUNG ASIAN/ OLD ASIAN
that helps, it helps,

THE MAN
it helps,

OLD COOK/ YOUNG ASIAN/ OLD ASIAN/ THE MAN
drink it, swallow, drink it, swallow!

OLD ASIAN

Which one is it? This one, this here?

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

The fat man knocks on the tooth with the spanner.

OLD ASIAN

Or that one, that one, or that one, the right incisor, it's not looking good, or the left one, it's not looking good either!

THE MAN

They both look nasty.

PART II

SCENE 8

Granddaughter And Her Boyfriend

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

Two young people in their roof apartment, they are a couple. They've only been living for a for a couple of months together.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

A wonderful time, a time they will never forget.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

The young woman has just come back from visiting her grandfather, who lives in the same building. Her boyfriend says: How, how could this... How could it happen. How could this, how could...

GRANDDAUGHTER

I don't know, I don't know.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

I can't believe it, ah I can't believe it!

GRANDDAUGHTER

don't know how, I don't know how it happened.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

You said it, you told me, you said nothing could happen.

GRANDDAUGHTER

Yes, I know, I know, I really have no idea how it could have happened.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

This is a complete disaster. This is a complete and total disaster. Everything was going so well, so well, and the money... where are we going to... the flat's too small for three, for three... a complete and total disaster!

SCENE 9
Kitchen

(The Old man is drilling in the tooth hole with a wooden satay stick while getting the spanner ready.)

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)
hào tong a, hào tong a

THE MAN (Baritone)
In Chinese-Thai-Vietnamese takeaway “The Golden Dragon”.

THE LITTLE ONE
hào tong a, hào tong a

A MAN
The old man takes a small wooden stick and probes inside the hole in the tooth.

THE YOUNG MAN
The wooden stick like we use for Number Thirteen, a satay stick, is in the tooth hole.

THE LITTLE ONE
hào tong a, hào tong a

OLD COOK (Mezzo)
He’s in pain, he’s in pain. He’s in pain, he’s in pain.

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)
Completely hollow. That’s the one.

OLD COOK
Is that it?

OLD ASIAN
That’s the one.

OLD COOK
That?

THE LITTLE ONE
It hurts so much, the tooth hurts so much.

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)
Pst, pst, do not cry. Do not cry. Stop screaming, not so loud, it is almost done.

THE MAN
The Old Man grabs the spanner.

SCENE 10
The And Rents Out The Cricket (couplet)

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

The evil ant rents out the Cricket to all the other ants. The evil ants are fetch after the Cricket. They think she is vulgar. They think she is hot. For the ants the Cricket is a dirty slapper. These evil ones, the ants do whatever they like with the Cricket. They take her roughly. They fuck her ragged. A lot, one after another. In exchange afterwards the Cricket receives something to eat. Small bits of dead flies. Then the evil ants tell the Cricket she should be glad that the merciful ants don't send her back. Back into the snow. Back to China.

THE ENSEMBLE

Short Pause.

SCENE 11
Kitchen

THE MAN (Baritone)

The Old Man tightens the spanner.

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)

No, please not the spanner.

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

Open up.

(He hammers the boy's tooth with the spanner.)

This one... or that... This doesn't look good, doesn't look good,

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

It's not that easy, 'cause the boy keeps jerking his head.

OLD ASIAN

Don't be afraid my friend, don't be afraid.

THE LITTLE ONE

Not the spanner, please not the spanner.

OLD ASIAN

Watch it, or I'll pull the wrong tooth out by accident, a healthy one.

THE ASIAN (Baritone)

(pours Schnaps in the Little One's mouth)

glu-glu-glu-glug, glu-glu-glu-glug, glu-glu-glu-glug,

THE YOUNG WOMAN (Soprano)

(spits)

He snaps the tooth out of the mouth.

ENSEMBLE

Long pause.

THE LITTLE ONE

He pulls it out of me,

ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

THE LITTLE ONE

he snaps it off Aaa...

THE MAN

And the tooth flies through the air.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

And the bloody, half rotten tooth flies through the air.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

High through the air, the tooth, the tooth flies, the tooth

THE YOUNG WOMAN

The tooth flies, the tooth, the tooth flies, the tooth

THE YOUNG MAN

Ant the tooth flies through the air!

THE MAN

And flies and flies through the tiny kitchen of the "Golden Dragon".

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

flies and flies and lands in the wok.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

What's that, what is that? You are crazy, you are all crazy!

THE MAN

She is sixty-nine years old, almost seventy, now she takes a large spoon to get the tooth out of the wok.

WAITRESS (Tenor 1)

Still waiting for Number Six. The Thai soup with chicken breast.

OLD COOK

Out with the tooth of the wok!

THE MAN

And at this shoots the tooth out of the wok,

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

flies and flies and flies until it lands in the bowl.

THE MAN

The Thai soup Number Six is on its way,

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

it's just being carried out...

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

In the front there are two flight attendants by the window, table number eleven. One has dark brown hair, the other one is blond, the brunette ordered Number Twenty-five, Bami Pat, and the other ordered number Six, the Thai soup, both of them are tired, they've both been on a long flight from Chile. And the pretty waitress brings them their food. One Number Twenty-five...

WAITRESS (Tenor 1)

Number Twenty-five: Pad Thai Gai

THE YOUNG MAN

and one order of Number Six...

WAITRESS

Number Six... Thai soup with chicken breast and spicy peanut sauce, medium. Can I get you something to drink right now?

THE MAN OVER SIXTY/ THE MAN

And they're both quietly eating.

SCENE 12

Grandfather's Visit To The Cricket

HANS (Mezzo)

She's not bad, that little girl, you've got to give it a try. She'll do anything. For something to eat, believe me, she'll do anything.

ENSEMBLE (Winds only)

Short pause.

HANS

Anything.

ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

HANS

Really, I do mean anything.

ENSEMBLE

Short pause.

HANS

Anything. Anything you want.

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

An old man came to the cricket and told her:

GRANDFATHER (Tenor 1)

If I could have just one wish, just one. Do me. Come on. Do me. I want to be young again.

THE YOUNG MAN

But it did not work. The cricket did what she could, but the old man couldn't be young again, no matter what the cricket was doing. He said nothing for a long time, then he got very angry. The old man got very angry with himself; with old age; he got angry, because he could not be young anymore and in the end he got angry with the cricket.

GRANDFATHER

I thought you knew what to do. I thought you knew what to do.

THE YOUNG MAN

And because the old man was so angry, he was unfair, and he was rough. Violent. He couldn't be young anymore because he was still strong, strong and heavy. And he tore one of the cricket's feelers out.

SCENE 13 **In The Restaurant**

THE MAN (Baritone)

It wasn't such a good idea, after such a long flight to go for a meal together. What have you got left to say to each other.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

Nothing new, I'm afraid.

INGA (Baritone)

Whenever I fly across the Atlantic, I always think of sharks.

EVA (Tenor 2)

But when you look down out of the window, you don't see much.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY/ THE MAN

And then they fall silent again.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

As they were flying over Gabon and Angola, as far as Gambia and Senegal, Inga said:

INGA
Look down there...

EVA
What is it?

INGA
Look down there!

EVA
I see nothing, it's just water.

INGA
Look there! Is that not a boat?

EVA
A boat? How can you see that from up here?

INGA
Yes, a boat! A boat full of people, can't you see?

EVA
(mocking)
From ten kilometers up...

THE MAN OVER SIXTY/ THE MAN
And then they fall silent again.

THE MAN
Sometimes their eyes fall on the carpet on the wall, on the Chinese carpet which shows a golden dragon on a red background, the waitress asks: Can I get you something to drink right now?

THE WAITRESS (Tenor 1)
Can I get you something to drink right now?

EVA
No thank you!

WAITRESS
Smile,

WAITRESS/ EVA/ INGA
all three of them smile,

WAITRESS
the waitress goes back.

INGA

Would you like to try this, Eva?

EVA

Yes Inga, sure thing.

THE MAN

and then finds Inga in the bottom of the soup bowl between the Thai ginger and the lemongrass a tooth, a decayed, bloody tooth, lying in the bottom of the bowl a tooth, an entire tooth, bloody, a decayed incisor, the tooth of a human, that's disgusting, says the brunette, I'm not eating any more.

EVA

(in panic)

That's disgusting, that's just disgusting. I'm not eating any more, a tooth, a big, bloody tooth in the soup bowl, in the soup bowl, in the soup bowl a half rotten tooth, a tooth, I cannot eat another bite this is disgusting! Let's go! Let's go! Are you coming?

THE MAN

The blond woman, Inga, stays sitting. In the spoon in front of her a tooth with a gruesome hole. She keeps looking, just looking at the tooth.

SCENE 14 **Kitchen**

THE MAN (Baritone)

The hole where the boy's tooth was would not stop bleeding.

THE YOUNG MAN (Soprano)

It's really bleeding. It's been bleeding the whole time.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

Show me, let's see, perhaps we should sing the hole, sing it so it stops bleeding.

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

It's not looking good. It's not looking good.

AN ASIAN (Baritone)

What if we just put the tooth back in the hole? Where is the tooth, the tooth?

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)

The tooth is gone, the tooth is gone.

THE MAN

Gone?

YOUNG ASIAN

Gone?

OLD ASIAN

Where is the tooth where is the tooth, didn't it drop on the floor, it must be somewhere.

THE MAN

Inside the handbag of a blond woman. A lipstick, a door key, Aspirin, there wrapped in a red paper napkin an incisor of a human, severely decayed.

SCENE 15
A Call From China

THE YOUNG MAN (Tenor 1)

The cricket waits in the ant's burrow for winter to end, for winter to finally end. She's waiting and waiting, but she's lost all sense of time, she's lost it since she can't see the sun anymore, she can't say how long she has been here. Sometimes she thinks: maybe the winter was long over. Maybe, maybe outside it's summer again.

THE MAN (Baritone)

The boy puts his head back, and the old man tries to plug the whole in the upper jaw. The old man says: What is that?

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

What is that? This cannot be!

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)

What?

OLD ASIAN

There is someone... There is someone there.

AN ASIAN (Baritone)

Where?

OLD ASIAN

In the hole!

THE LITTLE ONE

What?

OLD ASIAN

There is someone there.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

In the hole where the young Chinese boy's tooth was, a group of people sitting in a circle.

THE CHINESE UNCLE (Baritone)

Why do you never call?

THE CHINESE MOTHER (Mezzo)

Why do you never call?

THE CHINESE UNCLE (Baritone)
You should call us.

THE CHINESE AUNT (Tenor 1)
You should call us.

THE CHINESE UNCLE/ THE CHINESE AUNT/ THE CHINESE MOTHER
We've been waiting so long for your call.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (Soprano)
In the hole where the tooth was sits my mother, my father, my uncle, my aunt.

THE CHINESE UNCLE/ THE CHINESE AUNT/ THE CHINESE MOTHER
Why do you never call? Call us, please!

THE CHINESE MOTHER
I am worried.

THE YOUNG WOMAN
Says the mother.

THE CHINESE MOTHER
I would at least like to know if you have arrived, my son.

THE CHINESE UNCLE/ THE CHINESE AUNT
I would like to know.

THE YOUNG WOMAN
And my father says: I'd at least like to know, my son if you have arrived.

THE CHINESE FATHER
Where are you, my son?

THE LITTLE ONE
I'm in the "Golden Dragon", in the kitchen, and Uncle has pulled out one of my teeth.

THE CHINESE UNCLE
A tooth, that's terrible.

THE CHINESE AUNT
Terrible.

THE CHINESE MOTHER
Terrible.

THE CHINESE UNCLE
Tell us...

THE LITTLE ONE

yes, it's terrible...

THE CHINESE MOTHER

And what about your sister? have you found your sister yet?

THE LITTLE ONE

I've got to go now...

THE CHINESE AUNT

Have you found your sister yet?

THE LITTLE ONE

No, I have not found her yet, but I don't know where I'm supposed to look. I've got to go.

THE CHINESE AUNT

Good bye, boy, and look after yourself.

THE LITTLE ONE

I'm so sorry, it's bleeding so much...

SCENE 16

Hans And The Granddaughter's Boyfriend

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)

The boyfriend of the granddaughter in the grocery store next to the "Golden Dragon drinks. He's drinking beer with he shopkeeper, Hans.

THE GRANDDAUGHTERS BOYFRIEND (Tenor 2)

How could this happen... How could this happen, this is a disaster, this is a complete disaster.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

Hans says:

HANS (Mezzo)

It's not worth to get upset over a woman. Anyway I've got something very special for you. Come with me. You are my friend. Come with me.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

A bit later the young man was alone with the little cricket in the room.

HANS

Dance a little.

(The Cricket bounces twice the stops.)

Come on. Do it!

(The Cricket dances and bounces around.)

THE GRANDDAUGHTER'S BOYFRIEND

You, you, you do come from China? You, you look like a Chinese grasshopper.

(He goes to her.)

You know, my girlfriend, she has left me.

(He blindfolds the Cricket but she keeps dancing.)

My girlfriend is pregnant, she's got pregnant and I didn't want the child.

(He ties her hands but she keeps dancing.)

And since she has been pregnant, I could not touch her anymore. I find it repulsive.

(He stuffs a piece of clothes in her mouth, but she keeps dancing.)

I believe, I deserve something for myself.

(He even ties her legs now.)

I believe, that I deserve something really special for myself, and I'm going to have it.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY

And then he treated the cricket not like a cricket, but like a thing, a thing that doesn't matter if it gets broken. He probably treated the cricket the way he would have liked to have treated his pregnant wife.

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY

And as the ant saw what the young man has done to the cricket, he said:

HANS

Are you crazy? look what you've done to her, look at her, she is bleeding, oh God, oh God, oh my God, she's not an animal.

THE GRANDDAUGHTER'S BOYFRIEND

I am sorry, I am very sorry.

HANS

Oh God, what have you done to her — are you drunk, or what? You've completely ruined her, completely, she's totally trashed... Listen, my boy, you will pay for this, for this you have to pay me triple. The poor thing.

SCENE 17

Inga With The Tooth

THE MAN (Baritone)

The tooth lies in front of the blond woman on the table. The woman puts the tooth in her mouth. The tooth tastes a bit like the Thai soup, and it tastes a bit like blood. Her tongue can feel for the hole in the strange tooth. Now what can she do with the tooth?

INGA (Baritone)

Now what can I do, I can't throw it away, but there's no way that I can keep it either.

SCENE 18
The Little One Dies

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)
If —If we could find the tooth.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)
The tooth is gone.

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)
I'm so cold. I feel so cold. So cold but in here it's always warm.

OLD COOK
Warm, warm, in here it's warm.

THE LITTLE ONE
In here it's cold.

THE MAN (Baritone)
Then the boy falls off his stool.

OLD COOK
The boy is white as snow.

AN ASIAN (Baritone)
White like a lily.

YOUNG ASIAN
White like a cherry blossom.

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)
He is dead.

OLD COOK
He's just bled to death. Oh, my boy, oh, my boy.

THE YOUNG WOMAN (Soprano)
The Chinese boy had bled to death and he's lying next to the red and blue gas-bottles on the floor in the kitchen.

THE MAN OVER SIXTY (Tenor 2)
In the kitchen lies the little Chinese, who was looking for his sister, dead on the floor next to the gas-bottles.

OLD COOK
How are we, how...

YOUNG ASIAN
He can't stay there—

AN ASIAN

No, he can't stay here—

YOUNG ASIAN

He can't stay lying down there.

OLD COOK

Oh, my poor boy, oh, my poor boy.

THE YOUNG WOMAN

They wrap the dead Chinese boy in a carpet. This is the carpet with the golden dragon, which they took off the wall out front and which the boy always wanted to take a closer look at, because there aren't any carpets like that where he is coming from. And now it's too late.

OLD COOK

Oh, my poor boy, oh, my poor boy.

SCENE 19
On The Bridge

THE WOMAN OVER SIXTY (Mezzo)

The four Asians and the dead young man, rolled up in the carpet. On a bridge. Over a river.

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)

It's a warm night.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)

You really want to throw him in the river?

AN ASIAN (Baritone)

Where else can we take him?

OLD COOK

I don't know, somewhere, this isn't right.

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)

Are we supposed to just leave him lying somewhere in the street?

THE LITTLE ONE

I hope they're not going to throw me off the bridge, I'm wondering what it's like to fall off this bridge.

AN ASIAN

No, don't leave him lying in the street,

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)

What's going to happen if we leave him in the street —

OLD COOK
Poor boy —

THE LITTLE ONE
I hope they're not going to throw me off the bridge.

AN ASIAN
Let's just throw him off the bridge —

YOUNG ASIAN
Off the bridge?

OLD ASIAN
Yes, we'll throw him off the bridge.

SCENE 20
The Trip Home (Monologue)

THE LITTLE ONE (Soprano)
They heave the carpet up on the railing of the bridge, and then they unroll it. There it is again, the Golden Dragon. I always wanted to get a good look at it, now the carpet flutters briefly in the wind. Farewell, farewell, farewell, farewell. I fall from the bridge into the water, my head plunges into the cold river. The water riches inside me through the hole left by the tooth, and I swim for home now. The river picks me up and carries me along, mile after mile. It flushes me into the North Sea, a current carries me northwards past Norway and the Finland and Russia, it carries me into the icy Arctic Sea past the whole of Russia, the whole of Siberia, it is a long journey, I will be home soon. Past Japan in the distance in the grey light of dawn and shortly before evening the same day, finally: China, China. I'm there, I'm almost home now. It was a long journey. It was a very long journey. But what do I look like? No flesh left on my bones. A few algae. I'm happy to be back home again. Hello, dear honored uncle, I am sorry, all the money all those notes you'll never see it again. I am sorry. But the return trip I did for nothing, nothing at all, and all on my own. My sister, no, no, my sister I did not find. I am sorry, it was not easy. I don't know what happened to her, I don't know how I could find the girl, who knows where she is, and what she has to do there for her money. Maybe she's cleaning somewhere, or she is dancing, has she never called? I always had the feeling she was really close by. Perhaps she is well. And how am I? Fine. All-right. It was a long way. And I have only lost tooth.

SCENE 21
Inga On The Bridge

THE MAN (Baritone)
The blond woman, Inga, inga, the blond flight attendant. She takes the tooth from the table and she leaves the apartment. She is soon on the bridge. The Chinese come towards her.

INGA (Baritone)
Good evening.

OLD COOK (Mezzo)
Good evening.

INGA
Still up at this time?

OLD ASIAN (Tenor 2)
Yes, yes, going for a bit of a walk.

YOUNG ASIAN (Tenor 1)
And you, still up? It's late.
INGA
Yes, it's late. But I'm not tired yet.

THE MAN
Inga could now say, look, I found this tooth in my soup today, in the Thai soup, Number Six, but she doesn't say this.

OLD ASIAN
Yes, well have a nice evening now...

THE MAN
Yes, thank you, you too, good night.

OLD COOK
Good night.

THE MAN
The Chinese people have disappeared. She stops on the bridge, right in the middle and looks down into the black water. She takes the tooth and puts it in her mouth one more time. It no longer tastes of blood and no longer of Thai soup. The woman on the bridge spits the tooth out, like a cherry stone, I spit the tooth in the river.

THE ENSEMBLE
Short pause.

THE MAN
(He spits the tooth in the river.)
The tooth has gone. As if it had never been there.

THE ENSEMBLE
Long pause.

