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# HWARANG and KUMIHO

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by  
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## Introduction

Dear reader,

The story you're about to read takes place in ancient Korea and specifically in the Shilla kingdom – one of the three ancient Korean kingdoms. Smallest of all Shilla became a state model for culture and military art and overcame the other two kingdoms starting a golden age for the Korean nation.

Korea's ancient history is quite interesting for there facts are mixed with myths and legends. As an example I'll retell in short the story of Pak Hyokosse – the founder of Shilla.

He is said to have been born from a giant golden egg brought to the earth by mare which descended on a beam of light.

Most Koreans believe in that story even now. The important thing about this particular story is that the protagonist whose actions will be determined by you is a knight hwarang. What is a knight – hwarang? Literary “hwarang” means “flower youths” or the “the flower warriors” originating from Shilla. They were formed in order to increase the country's military strength and there were admitted young boys from good families with high moral. The basis of their education were Buddhism, ethics, Confucianism, logic, poetry, music and state government. Later intense military training was also included and the hwarang became the military elite in Shilla. They were trained in horse riding, swordsmanship, bow mastery, spear mastery, climbing and martial arts – the hwarangdo (which is not to be mistaken with taekwon-do). It's not a secret that in their ranks were many illegitimate sons of high magistrates and even kings.

Their ethics code includes five postulates:

- Loyalty to the king and the country
- Respect and love to the family and teachers
- Thrust among friends
- No retreat in battle
- Never take life without a just reason

While you read the story keep in mind that the hwarang Kim Gee Soo will follow these rules always and at all costs – it's his way of life.

At the last page you will find a dictionary of the used Korean terms explaining their meaning. Now I believe it's about time to start at the Prologue.

## Prologue

The market day in So Wul was reaching its peak. The enormous marketplace was crowded with all sorts of people, gathered from all parts of the Koryo kingdom. The merchants were yelling praises of their goods or were citing as a mantra selling phrases. With bows to the ground they were sweetly cooing high-class passers by to touch that silky soft linen or try that exquisite jewel.

As colorful as the crowd of faces was so various were the scents enveloping the marketplace. The smell of fish was mixing with the sweet and spicy one of the different sorts of kimchi. The scent of aromatic herbs, candy fruits and perfume oils was mingling with the stench of horse and human sweat, of manure and decomposing garbage, all of these blending into such an incredible mix that could make one dream for a heavily perfumed handkerchief or at least a blessed breeze. All the while the cacophony of sounds, screams, clanking, clattering, babbling of water, rattling of carriages, wailing of steam engines, screeching of mechanical tools and the monotonous murmur of hundreds of voices were forming a deep and persistent note that could easily induce an avalanche down the slopes of the towering above the city Azure Mountain.

There somewhere among the nest of wasping people, maddening sounds and scents one kwangde with an outfit as knitted together from all sorts of different rags was trying to earn his living.

"Heheheeee! Gather around people! Young and old, rich and poor, honest and not quite so, come and listen to tails that no one else can tell and no one else can play as the famous Soo Yang - the best kwangde ever to walk the land of our beloved kingdom! Heheheeee!"

Some passers by looked at him with a mix of wonder and nuisance which was quite inadequate as he thought to himself and started anew.

"Hohohoooo! Come one, come all and listen to stories of honorable kings and queens, of scholars and historians. Tales of bravery and foolishness, of love and betrayals, of magics and heroes that are long gone but their glory remains!"

A small group of people was beginning to crowd around him.

"Hohoheeee! Don't be shy and have no fear! Come closer and I will tell you the story of the brave kiseng Min Yong and how she managed the quench the lust of the naughty magistrate Mu Gwa! Come and you will learn how the brave villager outsmarted the greedy tax-collector Bu Dang!"

Regretfully the pied market goods were starting to win the attention of the people once more.

"Come then and hear about the hero Kwang Gi Ri and the river dragon!"

"We know these stories kwangde! Don't waste our time if you know no others!", a mocking yell came somewhere from the crowd.

"Ha! Ahaha! What sound has reached my ears! Somebody dares to challenge the great Soo Yang! Aigoooho! Blasphemy! Very well then you infidels! Come closer and I will tell you the tale of the knight-hwarang Kim Gee Soo and kumiho!", a melodramatic pause followed, the silence of it interrupted by fearful sighs and enthusiastic shouts.

"This tale is very old – from the time of the glorious Shilla kingdom when the brave hwarang warriors – the flower knights were numerous and respected and every boy dreamed of becoming one and serve the king, the country and the truth. This story took place at a time when shamans and magicians roamed our lands, the evil spirits did not fear the daylight and demons were walking among us in human form. It came to pass at a time when gods were descending from the heavens and the earth trembled underneath their feet, the good buddhas protected the pure-hearted, the faith of the monks was still strong and true and the heroes of the legends walked among ordinary men."

The crowd had enlarged notably and the people continued to gather as their curiosity was rising with every word of the kwangde.

"Then lived the brave hwarang Kim Gee Soo! His feats are many and his heroic deeds beyond count but at that time he was still young. His glory however was already known throughout the kingdom! He was like a cold morning in the mountain, handsome and proud and many maidens sighed trembling at his looks. With his smile he could melt ice and tame a beast. Eagle's Charm he was

called. It is said that he is an illegitimate son of the old king begotten from his favorite kiseng – the king's concubines. Thence his fairness originated.

His mother was afraid of the jealous queen and since cradle she used to put drops of different poisons in his milk so he became immune to all. A Snake's Brother he was called.

His mother had knowledge of the spirit world – her grandmother was a renown shaman and thought her whatever she could of the art before becoming concubine. Whatever she remembered she passed to her son. That's why Kim Gee Soo had the by-name the Shaman Knight.

Nothing could throw him off balance and breach his concentration – neither emotion, nor rage, nor pain or maidens' smile. "The Unyielding he was also known as and further as the Fate's Darling for his outstanding luck which saved him from many a hopeless situations.

He was able to catch an arrow in the midst of flight or a swirling blade between his palms – the Lightning's Shadow he was. The hwarang was master of the bow, bested by none in the whole kingdom. He could shoot off the wings of flying mosquito from hundred feet distance. For his mastery he was known as the Death from the Sky. His sword mastery was equal – the Blade Dancer he was called as he could overcome four adversaries with three moves of his sword.

So it came to be that the son of a renown magistrate heard of a maiden from distant village whose beauty was praised by the kwangde at the time. He fell in love with her only from the tales he heard. He wished and dreamed and longed for her and no sleep could come to him. He wanted her as his wife. For worst of luck however it was said that the maiden was cursed. All her wooers that came to her father's house to ask for her hand died the very next morning. But that did not bother the magistrate's son – he was fading of love ache. Rice he did not eat, water he did not drink. He only drank sodju from dusk till dawn and from dawn till dusk. His father seeing his son withering day after day was forced to seek help. That same magistrate did a graet favor to Kim Gee Soo by putting down the false claims of a jealous kiseng. So he went to the brave hwarang asking for help – to find out if there is truly a curse upon the fair maiden and if so to find out its origins and dispel it if possible.

Gee Soo could not refuse as he was in great debt and prepared to leave for the village of the cursed maiden."

Continue to Rules of Play.

## Rules of Play

Despite the praise that kwangde heaped on the various abilities of hwarang Kim Gee Soo, it is widely known that kwangde often exaggerate. In this story the hwarang posses three of the mentioned skills to a certain extent but he is legendary skilled in only one and only one of his nicknames hold truth behind it. He is also master in one of the abilities and specialist in another. He can not use the rest. In the table below you will find all the skills and you can mark the level that hwarang posses them as you choose. Just remember the rules above. There is no bad choice as all of the skills are important for the game.

### Abilities:

| Ability         | Skilled | Specialist | Master | Legendary nickname        |
|-----------------|---------|------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Sword mastery   |         |            |        | <b>Blade Dancer</b>       |
| Bow mastery     |         |            |        | <b>Death from the Sky</b> |
| Reflex          |         |            |        | <b>Lightning's Shadow</b> |
| Luck            |         |            |        | <b>Fate's Darling</b>     |
| Shamanism       |         |            |        | <b>Shaman-Knight</b>      |
| Charisma        |         |            |        | <b>Eagle's Charm</b>      |
| Self-control    |         |            |        | <b>Unyielding</b>         |
| Poison immunity |         |            |        | <b>Snake's Brother</b>    |

Ki Energy : 5

Endurance : 5

Knowledge : 0

Mind : 1

Code Words:

As it was mentioned you can use three of the abilities of hwarang. What you have to be aware of is the price their use takes. Each use of ability subtracts the inner force of hwarang - his ki energy. You begin the story with 5 points of ki energy.

The use of a legendary ability does not subtract the ki-energy of hwarang.

The use of mastered ability costs 1 point, the use of a specialized ability costs 2 points.

During the game there are very few occasions where you could regain ki energy so be careful in its use. If you manage to loose all your ki-energy you can not use other abilities but the legendary one.

Next are your endurance points - if they reach 0 this means that Kim Gee Soo has perished and you have to restart the story from section 1 though it will not be specifically mentioned in the text. You begin with 5 endurance points. Be careful - as powerful as he is the hwarang is not immortal.

Next is your knowledge - it shows the extent of the information for the supernatural your character gathers along the adventure. You start with 0 points.

Last is the Mind of your character - it shows your ability to withstand magical and psychic attacks. If your Mind points reach 0 - the hwarang has perished and you have to restart the story from section 1 though it will not be specifically mentioned in the text. You begin with 1 Mind point.

The graph code words is where you can write down the code words you will gather along the adventure - do this carefully as it is an important part of the game process.

Now that you have chosen the level of your abilities you can correct your Knowledge and Mind points depending on that which ability you have marked as legendary.

**Legendary abilities bonuses:**

Poison Immunity +1point Knowledge

Bow Mastery + 1 Mind point

Sword Mastery + 1 Mind point

Self-Control + 1 Mind point

Shamanism +1point Knowledge

Now you can begin your adventure from section 1.

## 1.

Kim Gee Soo followed the road with even pace. It was summer – the season of rapidly changing showers and beating sun and the nature around him was deeply green. The air was heavy with moist of the evaporating water from the last shower and saturated with the fragrance of flowers and the specific scent of rotting vegetation.

The road was leading to the village Yo Soo, the home of the cursed maiden. The hwarang sighed and replayed in his mind the conversation with magistrate Kang who had sent him on this fools errand once more.

“Help your old friend, Gee Soo! My boy lingers day by day and is beginning to look and act like a ghost!” the magistrate had said thinking at the same time “The damned ne’er-do-well is drunk day and night and is embarrassing me greatly! I will lose my job and my reputation because of his atrocities!”

“I would very much like to help you, magistrate Kang”, the hwarang had started his excuse but was cut immediately.

“And you will! You do remember last year when you were falsely accused of trying to dishonor the daughter of magistrate Lee it was I who helped justice triumph! Do I ask too much in return?”, to that Kim Gee Soo could only reply, “Yes, honorable and just magistrate!”, and grinding his teeth while bowing added, “It would be the highest honor to help your pious heir!”, and thought to himself, whose piety is legendary throughout the capitols’ brothels, or so I hear.”

“Besides after you perform this noble and heroic deed generations of kwangde will praise your glory!”, added the magistrate putting much effort in hiding his smile of relief.

“As if the damnedest shouting all-colored jesters are not pouring countless taradiddles on my account!”, thought Gee Soo bowing even lower to hide his infuriated face.

And so he was shortening with even pace the distance to his objective. To find out why all wannabe husbands of the cursed maiden were found dead the very next morning after announcing their intentions and if it’s humanly possible to lift the curse so that the magistrate’s son would ask her hand and finally stop the methodical and persistent destruction of the available liquor in the capitol and his fathers’ reputation alike.

He had no idea how but he had to do his best. He was going to be the joke among his fellow hwarang-warriors so the least he could do was try and succeed in the humiliating task.

The dark mood overwhelming him was in strong contrast with the beautiful landscape around. Suddenly he heard sharp cries which brought him back to reality.

Choose the section to proceed to:

2,3 or 4.

## 2.

Suddenly a few bearded, tattered and discerningly unwashed men jumped up from the surrounding high grass, armed with cudgels, axes, butcher knives and even one rusty sword. Two poorly crafted bows with sharpened arrows loaded were pointed at him. The guys were trying very hard to look scary and were taking themselves seriously. Kim Gee Soo did not want to spoil the obviously hard trained scary poses so he quenched his laughter in his hand and stood still. The scary guys took his gesture as a sign of fear and started yelling unintelligibly to make him freeze with terror. They almost succeeded as the hwarang had to put up his other hand to his mouth, shaking visibly. One of them, their leader probably approached him and roared “Quickly now, richly boy, pass along your money and weapons if you value your life!”, the others also came closer forming a circle around him. Obviously he was ambushed by a band of thieves. Kim Gee Soo put down his hands keeping as far away from his torso as possible.

“Well, guys, about the money their not much but you can have them.”

“The weapon first!”, replied the leader.

"Alright, alright! Just don't get overexcited!"

Hwarang took off his sword and threw it on the ground. The bandit leaned to pick it. In the meantime Gee Soo put his bow in one hand and his money pouch in the other. While the bandit was reaching for the sword he tossed his untied pouch the coins within scattering towards the leader's face and he lifted his hands in surprised defense.

If you want to use hwarang's:

sword mastery go to 5

bow mastery go to- 6

shamanism - 7

If he doesn't have these abilities- go to 9.

### 3.

"Leave me be! Damn you!", an old man's voice was touting. "No! No! Not the scroll! You'll ruin it! You mishaps! What use is it to you? You probably can't read!"

Among the rude laughter that followed a deep and rough voice rose, "We can't old man but it looks valuable. We'll get good money out of it!"

"It's valuable to me, not you! You worm-brained brutes! May you be reborn as dogs you...ahhhhh!", the curse ended with a pitiful cry.

"Shut it gramps! Or you'll bite the dust sooner than necessary!"

"You'll bite it also sooner or later you idiots and Buddha will judge your crimes! NO! Careful with that potion! Arghhhh! I hope you break that leg!"

"You don't shut it and I'll break it in your skinny buttocks, bone-bag!"

Kim Gee Soo climbed the small hill and witnessed a strange and in other case funny view. Six tattered men armed with primitive weapons had surrounded an old wondering monk who was circling around them and waving his bony hands in unsuccessful attempts to catch a scroll which the men were tossing between them. The monk was cursing uncontrollably which earned him a kick in the butt every now and then. The hwarang was watching a band of thieves robbing an old monk. He had to try and help him.

Their location was in his advantage as he was behind the group that formed a half-circle around the crazed monk.

"Give me back my belongings, you fools! I'm an enchanter-monk! I've spent years studying the esoteric secrets! ", the monk stopped and waved his fist threateningly - "If you don't come to your senses I'll bring upon you demons from the most terrifying circle of the Seventh Hell!"

The thieves burst in laughter.

"Fine then! You asked for it!", the monk raised his hands to the sky began to chant - "Shinayanthra, maharava, omnavashyvaya!"

if the hwarang posses and decides to use his:

Sword mastery - go to 13

Bow mastery - go to 14

shamanism - go to 15

If he doesn't have these abilities or doesn't want to use them write down code word "theft" and go to 13.

### 4.

The hwarang heard children's laughter and dog's squeals that went to frightened barking only to rise to a squeal again. He fastened his pace and before his eyes revealed one of the most horrific things he had ever seen in his life. A gang of rascal kids had trapped a skinny dog between two rocks and were throwing small pebbles at it with slings. The poor animal was darting insanely trying to evade the next volley but every escape was cut off as the rascals had formed a mid-circle around it. On top of



that they had somehow managed to tie his tail to one of its back legs. Righteous anger filled his heart and he started towards the little sadists to do justice.

"Hey! You! Brats! Stop this immediately! Why do you torment this animal?" The kids did not bother answering and shot another volley at the dog which had given up the escape attempts and was awaiting his cruel destiny. "Get away at once! I'll snap your ears!", Gee Soo was infuriated. In response one stocky kid turned against him and shot him with his sling. The hwarang dodged the poorly aimed shot and bolted towards the rascals. They interrupted their evil deed at once and seeing the turn of tides darted towards the village.

"Get back here you imps! You can't hide from me! I'll find out who you are and see that you get what you deserve!", shouted Kim Gee Soo as reached the place of the terrifying deed. The dog had come to his senses and was watching his savior with a mix of wonder and gratitude.

"Eiishhhh", hwarang blurted one last curse and faced the dog which squealed pleadingly and moved to him. He knelled and freed its tail and leg, as the animal was licking his hand in gratitude.

"OK,OK! You don't have to thank me! Go on now! Leave here and stay away from kids in he future! They only look cute!".

He rose and continued on to the near village but after a few steps found that the dog was following him.

"Oo, no! Come on! Leave now", the dog did not move - "Get away! Shoo!", it looked at him guilty and started liking his hands again.

"Cut it out! What am I to do with you? You're lucky I don't eat dogs! I inform you that I won't feed you and you'll be on your own! If want it so much - follow me! Let's see how long you'll last!", the animal squealed with happiness and peed the grass.

"Great! From today I'll probably be also known as the Dog Master or the Defender of the Fourfeeted!", he growled and continued to village Yo Soo his new friend trotting behind.

**Write down that you have a dog.**

*Go to 12.*

## 5.

At that moment the hwarang threw himself forward took his sword, rolled over and stabbed the bandit in the midriff with sword's handle. He swung upwards and the weapon flew in the air watched by the rest of the thieves frozen in surprise. At the same time he was a whirlwind of movements, knocking bows out of the bowman's hands with the empty scabbard. He rolled back stretching his arm theatrically and caught the falling sword. Snapping his wrist he cut the leader's beard with two inches moved slightly forward and rested the weapon at his throat. The ill-fated thief was visibly grey with fear despite the dirt covering his face.

Go to 96.

## 6.

In the same time Gee Soo, fast as lighting took an arrow from the quiver fell on one knee and shot. His arrow split in two the enemy's arrow shot at him continued its flight and shot off the thief archer's hat. He rolled and made a twin shot towards the other archer. He stood up and loaded a third arrow stretched inches from the face of the leader grey in aghast.

"This arrow's type is called flying ram", announced the hwarang. "It's so because of the weight of its tip – about 200 grammes. Such an arrow could burst through reinforced gate leaving a hole big enough to put your arm through it. Imagine what it could do to your head if you or any of your buddies move."

Go to 96.

## 7.

While doing so Gee Soo had finished a simple spell he knew – one that thickens mist. Before the coins dropped all the steam evaporating from the moist ground in a ten meter radius thickened into a milky mist where one found it hard to see his own hands in front of his face. He could hold the spell only for a couple of seconds but it was enough. During that time he disarmed the archers, took his sword from the hands of the leader, released it from the scabbard and when the mist lifted the thief was frozen in aghast feeling the tip of the sword on his throat.

“Magic!”

“ Exactly!”, confirmed the hwarang

Go to 96.

## 8.

If your knowledge points are three or more go to 10

If not go to 11.

## 9.

At the same moment Gee Soo was a whirlwind of movement. He threw himself forward took his sword, rolled over and stabbed the bandit in the midriff with sword's handle then swirled him in mid-circle and tossed him towards the two archers. Using the gathered speed he threw himself against the rest of the thieves. They had by the time found out that they are in serious trouble and gave their very best to move their feet as fast as possible running head over heels in different directions. He turned to face the leader and the archers thrown down by the latter but all three of them were already raising themselves in wild panic and darted away also on twos and fours. The hwarang gathered his scattered coins and continued on his way. It would be a while before the unfortunate thieves dare to come back here.

Go to 12.

## 10.

The bandit took out a small, tightly knitted, leather pouch.

“One good monk gave it to us. If you throw it hard at something it makes “KABOOM!” and the something disappears in a cloud of smoke and dust! Please, accept it!”

“ Thank you! Now beat it!”

“Sure thing, sir we're leaving alright! See you s... I mean farewell!”

The bandits backed away slowly and after twenty meters darted head over heels.

Kim Gee Soo finally burst into laughter and it took him a while to calm himself and continue down the road.

Write down code word “ember” and go to 12.

## 11.

The bandit took out a small earthen flask.

“One good monk gave it to us. It clears the mind this liquid. Please accept it!”

“Thank you! Now beat it!”

“Sure thing, sir we’re leaving alright! See you s... I mean farewell!”

The bandits backed away slowly and after twenty meters darted head over heels.

Kim Gee Soo finally burst into laughter and it took him a while to calm himself and continue down the road.

Increase your Mind points by one and got to 12.

## 12.

Kim Gee Soo arrived at the village in the afternoon. The thick mist had hidden the roofs of the village houses. The air was saturated with the scent of green tea and so humid it seemed to stick to his hands and face. He looked at the twin hills frozen like silent keepers of the village. They were evenly terraced and sown with the aromatic bushy plant whose yield was the villager’s main source of income. The view of the green steps of the hills disappearing in the milky wall of mist brought a strange sense of mysticism and timelessness. It seemed that where the hilltops vanished began the infinity of the universe and the end of the world. That landscape was beautiful and forbidding at the same time where known and unknown merged. The hwarang remained absorbed by the view for some time seized by controversial feelings of peace and uneasiness.

He heard nearing footsteps, turned and saw an old woman passing by.

“Are you in peace?”, he offered his greetings.

“There is no longer peace in our village, young man!”, she replied. “Ever since she began to entrance our lads there’s no peace for us! Yesterday we buried Ji Won Hyang. She ended him too. We’re cursed and we know no peace. Leave stranger and don’t ever come back!”, her voice was fading while she passed and her figure blurred in the mist.

Kim Gee Soo was too astounded by that reply to say anything in return. He wasn’t expecting warm welcome but such a sinister warning left him shaken. Something was definitely wrong in the village. For a while he stood alone in the mist.

Then he decided to...

ask around the village about what’s happening – go to 20.

Look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

Head straight for the cursed maiden’s house – go to 22.

## 13.

In the meantime Gee Soo rushed at the closest bandit, who had risen his cudgel with the intention to bludgeon the pesky monk. The hwarang kicked him in the knee joint and the thief fell on his back with roar more of terror than pain. He knocked the monk’s belongings of the hands of the puzzled thugs with two strikes of his sword and with two more disarmed the others.

Go to 97.

## 14.

At the same instant Gee Soo shot at the closest bandit, who had risen his cudgel with the intention to bludgeon the pesky monk. The hwarang hit him in the knee joint and the thief fell on his back with roar more of terror than pain. He knocked the monk’s belongings of the hands of the puzzled thugs with two more shots.

Go to 97.

## 15.

In the same moment Gee Soo performed a simple spell he knew – he rose mist around the group of men. He could hold it for a few seconds only but were enough.

Go to 13.

## 16.

You can ask one additional question.

I would like to know more about:

that strange shaman – go to 62.

Hyo Sa Gwa – the cursed maiden – go to 63.

Hyo Won Jin – the cursed maiden's father – go to 64.

## 17.

“Regretfully those idiots, may Buddha curse them with one thousand reincarnations as worms, took all my possessions and I have nothing to repay my life debt. Unless you spare some of your time and allow me to share some secrets of the esoteric and supernatural that I've learned through the years. For beginners, of course!”

Regretfully his ethics code obliged Kim Gee Soo to agree and he spent the next half hour patiently listening to the bothersome lecture of the monk. He learned a few interesting things, nonetheless, he had to admit.

After the lesson was over the old man thanked him again and followed his rout cursing quietly the thieves. The hwarang himself continued to the village.

Increase your Knowledge points by one and go to 12.

## 18.

“That scroll which the scoundrels tried to steal from me!”, declared the monk not too enthusiastic.

“It's very valuable for it contains several basic tractates on the esoteric. I give it to you because I know you're able too appreciate it's worth!”

“ I can't accept such precious gift from you, generous monk! I'm not worthy of such wisdom!”, replied the hwarang overly enthusiastic because he didn't quite want to become the new owner of a scroll full of rapt and dry writings and wanted even less to have to weigh its worth by reading it. “You will!”, snapped the old man.

“ Otherwise I'll have karma to you! I know every word in it by hard! Do you want to interfere with my next reincarnation?”

“Not the least bit devout monk!”, unwillingly replied Gee Soo.

“In that case it would be the greatest honor to accept this valuable source of wisdom and knowledge from you! May Buddha bless you as a boddhi in your next life for your kindness in the present!”, he finished ceremonially and took with both hands the scroll from the monk.

“May Buddha watch over the success of your endeavors, brave hwarang!”, replied the monk alike. After that he thanked him once again and followed his own path cursing quietly the thieves. The hwarang continued to the village.

Increase your Knowledge points with two and go to 12.

## 19.

"This flask which the thieves tried to steal from me!", declared the monk not too enthusiastic.-  
 "This potion is made from a bouquet of secret ingredients and clears the mind. I give it to you because I know you'll appreciate its worth!"

"I can't accept a gift of such value, generous monk!", replied the hwarang overly enthusiastic for he didn't want to carry around strange potions and wanted even less to taste them.

"You can and will!", snapped the monk .

"Otherwise I'll have karma to you Do you want to interfere with my next reincarnation?"

"Not the least bit devout monk!", unwillingly replied Gee Soo..

"In that case it would be the greatest honor to accept this enlightening gift from you! May Buddha bless you as a boddhi in your next life for your kindness in the present!", he finished ceremonially and took with both hands the flask from the monk.

"May Buddha watch over the success in your duties, brave hwarang!", replied the monk alike.

"Now drink!"

"Well,... I intended to save it for emergency cases..."

"Drink!", ordered the old man.

Gee Soo removed the plug, held his breath, gathered all his courage and poured the liquid in his mouth. Only the hardly trained knight-hwarang self-control and iron will stopped him from emptying his stomach at the monk's feet. The liquid tasted like week-long dead, dried rats.

"Do you feel the rush, son?", asked the monk reverently.

"Mhmm!", Gee Soo somehow mumbled for he felt no rush yet, the urge was still too strong to risk opening his mouth.

"Can you feel your mind closer to nirvana!"

"Mhmm!"

"Well, I thank the good fortune you've rid me of that menace! Be in peace and may Buddha strengthen your arm and mind", said the monk and prepared to leave.

"Mhmm.", replied the hwarang.

The monk thanked him once again and followed his own path cursing quietly the thieves while Gee Soo continued to the village. Soon the obnoxious taste in his mouth disappeared and he realized quite surprised that his mind is actually quite clear. He suspected the effect was due to the terrible taste of the potion and not its ingredients but who was he to judge.

Increase your Mind points with one and go to 12.

## 20.

Kim Gee Soo decided that it would be best to gather some information from the villagers about what was happening. He had a couple of options and he was trying to figure out where to begin from.

He could pay a visit to the local mayor where he could present his official order giving him jurisdiction to "unfold the false vindications marking the name of an innocent maiden" and ask for information and support the local governing official. (Unless he had already done that) - go to 52.

On the other hand he could go to the local tavern. Those places were always a source of infinite information, he just had to scruff it off the rumors that went along. (Unless he had already done that) - go to 53.

Or maybe it was best to visit the local shaman. In the end if something supernatural was happening she should at least have a slight knowledge of it.(Unless he had already done that) - go to 54.

If you have changed your mind he could:

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 21.

You could check the tea hills unless you've already been there— go to 65.

If haven't written code word "bracelet" you could go to the nearby lake unless you've already been there – go to 66.

If you haven't written code word "water" you could go to the village graveyard unless you've already been there – go to 67.

If you've explored everything you could go and gather information in the village (20) or head for the cursed maiden's house (22).

## 22.

The hwarang found the would-be cursed maiden's house rather easy. It was big for the village standards and obviously owned by a wealthy family. It still bore signs of tidiness yet it seemed that it lacked proper care. As if the housekeeper was either ill or gone. A couple of smaller houses neighbored it but their barred doors and windows kept Gee Soo from trying to contact the neighbors. He neared the main door and knocked. (*If the hwarang is accompanied by a dog it starts bark angrily as he approaches the house and realizing that he will enter the house runs away.*) The door was opened by a large man in his fifties with silvery hair and beard.

"What do you want?", he asked angrily.

"Are you in peace?", greeted the hwarang.

"I am hwarang Kim Gee Soo."

"I'm Hyo Won Jin. What can I do for you?", the man's voice eased a bit.

"Actually Mr. Hyo, I'm here to try to help you.", the man's eyebrows raised.

"You see, word has come to the capitol that a curse has befallen your daughter and also that this rumor has set a wave of uneasiness in the area and there's a potential for riots.

That's why I've been sent to investigate the matter and put the people's minds at ease.

And if your beloved daughter is truly cursed then my task is to find a way to dispel it."

Hyo Won Jin blinked a couple of times and his expression changed from suspicious through astounded to bewildered.

"Come inside, honorable hwarang, where we can speak freely.", he finally invited him in.

They entered the guest room and Hyo ordered tea to be served. The two spoke on various topics and Gee Soo was pleased to realize that his host was well educated and interesting company. After a while Hyo finally asked the question bothering him all along.

"Gee Soo, please tell me the real reason for your visit! I believe what you've said outside, I've seen your credentials and I'm grateful for the help you're offering, but let's be honest. As beautiful as my Sa Gwa is and as ill her fate may be – that alone couldn't be the reason for you to be here."

The hwarang decided the man deserved some honesty.

"Well, the truth is the son of a magistrate heard of the flawless beauty of your daughter and wants to marry her. He also heard the rumor for the curse and dares not declare officially his interest until he's sure if there is one it's been lifted."

"I see", Won Jin nodded in understanding, then fell silent.

Dinner time had approached and he asked the servant to serve the food and call his daughter downstairs. Soon Hyo Sa Gwa shyly entered the room. For a minute Gee Soo forgot to breathe. The rumors for her beauty were not even close to the truth. The maiden was enchanting. Not a mot of make-up spoiled her perfect face with lush small lips, deep black eyes, thin eyebrows that no penman could draw and small, slightly pugged nose.

She raised her gaze, looked quickly at him and lowered her eyes again.

" Good evening! Are you in peace?", she spoke with deep and resonant, soft and sensuous voice which didn't suit her age but enlightened the room.

"G...good evening! And you?", he replied and almost blushed.

"My dear, that's hwarang Kim Gee Soo. He's come all the way from the capitol to try to help you."

"Oh, father! Has my dark fate unsettled the spirits even there? Poor me.", she cried out softly and the hwarang's heart also wept.

"It'll be alright soon, my child. Mr. Gee Soo will see to it."

"If it wasn't for you, dear father, what it would be like now?"

"Sa Gwa, please! Don't start again!"

"I didn't start anything father! I only suffer! You and mother started this!"

"Sa Gwa! If you don't stop you'll remain without dinner!"

"Excuse us, please! My daughter still blames me for her mother's death and claims I've caused some evil power to curse her!"

The maiden didn't say anything but gave Gee Soo a secret look filled with challenge.

He stood up, drew his sword and said:

"I, hwarang Kim Gee Soo swear that while I breathe, I'll seek and find a way to release these people of the evil befallen them. Let this be my promise and challenge to whatever evil force that may be!"

After that theatrical stand the father was like slapped on the face and the maiden strangely braced herself and spoke quietly:

"Beware what you say, hwarang! It may be beyond you to keep your word."

"I doubt that.", he said and sat back.

The three dined in silence and Gee Soo found it hard not to look at the fairy creature in front of him.

After dinner they parted and the hwarang said that tomorrow morning he starts his investigation. The servant led him to a comfortable and spacious room facing the garden with an artificial pond. He was prepared to sleep when he heard a quiet knock on the door.

"Come in!", he said expecting the servant, but it was Sa Gwa. She wore a beautiful silk hanbok and held a small tray.

"I was afraid to stay alone in my room.", she said and after it was obvious he couldn't make his mouth reply continued.

"So I decided to stay with you awhile."

"Sa Gwa it's not decent! What would your father say?"

"He's asleep. And what's to say, anyway? We'll simply talk, if you don't mind of course!"

"No I don't. Actually. Come in!"

The young woman did so and put the tray on the only table in the room.

"I've brought some wine – to give you courage and to dissipate my fears.", she offered him one cup.

He was looking at it with distrust suddenly remembering everything he heard till now. It was a simple cup of green porcelain. He looked then at her innocent and unsuspecting eyes and was wavered. After all it was just a cup of wine. After a moment he decided...

to drink the cup – go to 41.

to decline the offered drink – go to 46.

## 23.

While he was wondering suddenly the dog accompanying him started to bark wildly and sprinted ahead. He blinked in surprise a couple of seconds then with a curse started after the animal.

"Damnedest dog! Where'd you go! Get back here! What's with you! If you think I'm...", Gee Soo stopped in mid-sentence his mouth opened in surprise. The dog had found a well hidden hole in the base of the hill and barked madly at the entrance. He decided to trust its instinct and went through the opening wide just enough to squeeze through.

Go to 27.

## 24.

While he was wondering around the base of one of the tea hills suddenly something drew his attention. A remote sense of evil, of something not right drew him to the right. Something in the landscape was wrong. He couldn't tell what exactly but decided to go closer. When he reached the spot that drew his attention he found it to be a well covered entrance to a hole wide enough to squeeze through. Looking to quench his curiosity and hoping not to find himself in a tiger's den he went in.  
Go to 37.

## 25.

Go to 70.

## 26.

Choose where to continue – 29 or 24.

## 27.

He went half in and found that the hole widens further then crawled back and lighted a small oil lamp he always carried. Then he went back inside. Few steps further the soil was replaced by solid rock and he soon found himself in a small cave. There was a big round stone in its middle that resembled a strange altar. He approached it and found signs of ash and soot. Filled with suspicion he decided to look for other traces.

If you have the ability "Shamanism" or "Luck" and you want to use it go to 31.

If not go to 33.

## 28.

The vision was a quick kaleidoscope of shots from a past memory, clearly not his own. There was a sight of a young woman so beautiful he couldn't bear to look at her face. His heart was pounding fast at her presence and he knew he lived only for the pleasure of seeing her smile. Then a picture of a foreboding man he had to ask permission for something. He didn't know what but he was trembling with terror at the possibility of being rejected. His life depended on it. Then came the moment of overwhelming joy that the permission was given. It was the happiest moment in his life. Then it was night. He was walking at the village outskirts unable to sleep from agitation and counted the seconds till morrow. Then there she was standing alone at the shore beckoning to him. He hurried towards the smile that gave his life a meaning. He could almost touch her.

Then came the beast. It clawed at his face shredding half of it. The pain was immense. Yet nothing to compare with the iron hot claws that tore through his chest and ripped out his liver in seconds. He was agonizing. With a final blow he was sent in the waters of the lake. He couldn't breathe. He was dying. Because of a smile he would never see again. Then came the darkness and the anguish.

The hwarang opened his eyes and found himself laying alone on the shore of the lake. There was no sign of the ghost and he wasn't quite sure whether his experience was real.

Write down code word "water". Increase your knowledge points with one.

He got up and decided to...

return to the village and ask around – go to 20.

check the outskirts – go to 21.

go to the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.



## 29.

Gee Soo roamed the outskirts for an hour but except for the beautiful nature he found nothing else of use for his investigation. The sense of inner piece induced by the view was spoiled by the annoying rain drenching his clothes. Unwillingly he admitted he wasted one hour and headed back to the village.

There he decided to:

ask around if he hadn't already done it – go to 20.

head to the cursed maidens' house – go to 22.

If haven't written code word "bracelet" you could go to the nearby lake unless you've already been there – go to 66.

If you haven't written code word "water" you could go to the village graveyard unless you've already been there – go to 67.

## 30.

First you offer something to the dead, then you take from them. Gee Soo remembered the old saying and put a coin on the ground before picking up the bracelet.

"I see you're aware of honoring the dead and the rituals, hwarang." a voice startled him and he turned hand on his sword.

"Who are you?"

Go to 69.

## 31.

After a thorough search during which he counted more on luck and instinct than the dim light of the lamp he found several strange things. In the far end of the cave he found shallow buried broken bones he felt almost certain to be human. In the opposite end he found half-rotten shreds of clothes.

If your knowledge points are more than two – go to 32.

If not go to 33.

## 32.

Though he didn't find more, he was convinced that this place was used for performing demonic rituals. Most probably metamorphosis. Whoever the last visitor was he made sure to cover his tracks, yet not too carefully. His heart pace quickened he left the cave.

Add two knowledge points. Write code word "cave". If you have code word "vial" or "magick" go to 29. If not go to 35.

## 33.

Though he didn't find more, he was convinced that this place was used for performing unclean rituals. He couldn't make out what exactly without more details.

Whoever the last visitor was he made sure to cover his tracks, yet not too carefully. His heart pace quickened he left the cave.

Add one knowledge point. Write code word "cave". If you have code word "vial" or "magick" go to 29. If not go to 35.

## 34.

Walking out the cave he found that the rain had stopped and the mist had become so dense he couldn't see more than a few feet ahead. Deathly silence covered the area even the birds were quiet as if the animals waited for some unseen danger to pass by. He was headed back to the village when he heard footsteps and muttering ahead in the mist. Gee Soo hid behind a large rock with a good view towards the coming steps and waited. One can't be too careful. Soon out of the mist materialized hunched and limping old woman which murmured something.

If you have a dog go to 37.

If not go to 95.

## 35.

Choose where to continue – 29 or 34.

## 36.

Despite his rage Gee Soo overcame the urge to attack the creature. He didn't know much about kumiho, but remembered one thing of the scary stories about it – it can't be hurt by ordinary weapon. So he fought the emotions and watched it behind the rock. Meanwhile the demon approached the dead dog tore his chest open and ate its heart. Then as if she came to her senses and looked around madly her gaze passing the rock behind which he was hiding.

"Hark! The dog smelled of man. Somebody's been here. Hark! The next fool to give me his soul!"

The fox went to the shred clothes and rummaged them. Soon she took something white round and polished and began to investigate it.

"It's a bit hammered. I'll have to fix it.", she took the object in her mouth and with a huge jump landed on a large flat rock opposite to the hwarang. She took the object in its paws and started to scratch it against the rock while uttering incantations including fox wailing and barking and sounds unutterable for human or animal. In a while she put the object on her head and Gee Soo realized it was a human skull.

"It still doesn't fit right. The dog jagged it badly. A little more."

More demonic chanting followed while as she scratched the skull again. At each scratch the dry bone gave a specific screeching sound which sounded as the dying cry of the victim.

The kumiho put it on again, made a few short and sharp sounds her shape blurred and where she'd stood materialized the limping, horribly ugly old woman.

"That's better! A bit more and I'll be able to leave that terrible old woman's shape.", she said while she approached the cave entrance.

She went in surprisingly deftly and the hwarang neared the entrance very carefully, all ears.

"Let's taste the soul of the next wannabe husband, hark. Hark!"

He waited a while and very cautiously peeked in the hole. A dim light lit the place.

The kumiho old woman stood in front of the altar her back towards Gee Soo. At the altar she had placed a small pearl gleaming with soft light which seemed to flow into her mouth.

He moved back quickly and using the cover of the thick mist headed in quiet run towards the village.

Obviously the creature was using the maiden which she was supposed to heal to get the vital power from the souls of the would be husbands.

Add two knowledge points. Write down code word "shaman".

With that knowledge he entered the village and...

decided to ask around and see if someone had an idea what was actually happening – go to 20.

decided to head to the house of the maiden and try to find a way and rid her of the demon-fox – go to 22.

If haven't written code word "bracelet" you could go to the nearby lake unless you've already been there – go to 66.

If you haven't written code word "water" you could go to the village graveyard unless you've already been there – go to 67.

### 37.

At the sight of the old woman his four-legged friend began to growl and started to her faster than he believed possible. Before he could he could scream the dog attacked her with barking with rage. She fell on the ground with a shriek. The hwarang was still dumbstruck of the happening and before he could rise from behind the rock the dog had tore a large piece of her clothing. Before it could attack again she hit it with inhuman strength and swung it back a couple feet. It fell heavily and gave a painful wail but in a second jumped again and with a baleful growl attacked again. An unbelievable sight revealed before him. The old woman stood up and began to shake making short coughing sounds. Her shape blurred and she transformed into a huge white nine-tailed fox. The hwarang froze in terror – a kumiho. That creature was a kumiho. A thousand year-old evil demon fox which aimed to suck the vital powers of enough men to reach half-godly state of power. A creature from the fairy tales embodying everything evil. A mythical demon with immense magical powers and master of metamorphosis. While he struggled to comprehend what he saw the dog attacked the beast which intercepted it in mid-air and closed its jaws around the dog's neck . His four-legged friend died instantly and the kumiho threw his body on the ground.

"Hark! Hark! Die, damned dog!", barked the demon-fox.

If you possess the ability "self-control" and you want to use it go to 36.

If not go to 39.

### 38.

If your knowledge points are three or more go to 70.

If not go to 98.

### 39.

The hwarang's eyes filled with tears of grief and rage at the sight of the grisly death of his four-legged friend. He'd saved his life to be taken in another horrific way. That creature, for sure was at the root for everything happening at the village. This had to stop. He had to rid the villagers of the demon.

That's why he unsheathed his sword and decided to finish this here and now. Go to 40.

Despite that he decided to wait hidden behind the stone and watch the creature. Go to 36.

### 40.

That's why he unsheathed his sword and decided to finish this here and now.

"You die, demon!", he screamed and slashed the kumiho. She jumped back with a shriek of pain and rage but her deadly wound closed before his eyes.

"I knew the foolish owner of the foolish animal would be around! Now it's your time to die, young

man!", she barked.

Gee Soo fought long and brave but while her wounds closed up in seconds his remained and slowly but surely weakened him. In the end she breached his defense her teeth sank in his chest and in a second they reached his still beating heart.

*"That's how died Kim Gee Soo, the brave but foolish hwarang who didn't know that an ordinary weapon can't hurt a demon-fox.", kwangde finished his story and looked triumphantly expecting coins and applause to rain on him. Instead he received a volley of eggs and rotten fruits.*

*The end.*

#### 41.

He took the cup and for a second touched the silky soft skin of her hand. The touch awoke an embarrassing warm urge below his diaphragm. To hide it he emptied the cup at once, while Sa Gwa was looking at him with a warm, sparkling smile.

If the hwarang possesses the ability Immunity to poison and you want to use it – go to 55.

If you have code word "vial", go to 45.

Otherwise continue to 44.

#### 42.

Gee Soo was fading in the embrace of the beauty. He felt cold. It was difficult to breathe. The sweet caress of death was close. Then came the darkness.

Go to 92.

#### 43.

"Tell me, how did everything begin?", asked Gee Soo.

"Well, soon after mother passed away, or so my father said for I don't remember much. Sometimes I think I remember almost nothing of my life before my illness." - her look became distant.

"Then one day I awoke as if from deep slumber. Soon one boy asked for my hand but he died the next morning! Since then I feel the cold and sticky fingers of the curse! I'm cursed Gee Soo! Cursed! So many men died because of me! Oh, I'm so scared!", she burst into tears and pressed herself to his shoulder. He gently patted her back. She was so small and tender in his arms.

"Don't worry Sa Gwa. I'll find a way to help you, I promise!"

"I hope you do, hwarang. I hope you do.", she caressed his arm.

"Your arms are so strong and gentle at the same time. I feel safe here."

He blushed. He knew he should let go but couldn't, wouldn't.

"It's alright. It'll be alright."

"Really?", she looked at him and in her eyes he saw her feelings reflected. Her large black and deep eyes were enchanting him, drawing him. He couldn't resist them.

"Really?", she repeated with a moan which put his groin aflame.

She gently caressed his cheek and that was the tenderest touch he ever felt.

She leaned on his shoulder and began to caress his chest, while her silken breath tickled his neck. His breathing quickened. She gently pushed him to lay on the bed and he couldn't find the strength to resist.

Her tender hands were studying his body and her soft lips on his neck brought a quiet moan.

If you have code word "magick", go to 47.

If you don't but you have the ability of self-control and you want to use it go to 48.

If you Mind points are three or more go to 48.

In any other case continue to 49.

## 44.

He suddenly felt very tired and sat on the bed as his feet couldn't hold him any longer.

"Are you weary, brave hwarang?", Sa Gwa sounded satisfied. His gaze was blurring.

"Come handsome, lay down. Let me take care of you.", she gently pushed him to lay on the bed. He felt her arms massaging his body.

"Sa Gwa! What are you doing!", he sputtered. Something was wrong. His limbs felt like lead and his eyelids were sticking together.

"Stop! Don't...", the next moment he felt her warm lips on his own and fell asleep.

Write down code word "slumber". There was a strong opiate in the wine which dulls and confuses the senses. Go to 72.

## 45.

The wine was good but had a strange aftertaste. Gee Soo noticed that she didn't touch her cup. Sa Gwa kept staring at him as if expecting something and he sat on the bed.

"Are you weary, brave hwarang?"

"Well, a little. It was a long day. But we could talk if you want."

Go to 43.

## 46.

Gee Soo gently declined the offered cup.

"I'm sorry Sa Gwa but I can't. I want my mind clear tonight. I need to think."

"About me?", she giggled and put away the cups. He turned aside to hide his blushed face.

"I've insulted you!", said the maiden with sincere sadness.

"Pardon me. I only wanted to talk. I'll leave you to rest."

"No, no! I'm sorry! We can talk if you wish.", he sat on the bed and the young woman shyly but graciously joined him on decent stance.

Go to 43.

## 47.

Something disturbed his subconscious while his body burned with passion. With the last remains of his will he uttered the spell that the wise Che had taught him.

"Shhhhhh", whispered Sa Gwa and covered his lips with hers.

Nothing happened at first and Gee Soo was about to lift his last resistance to the sweet torment brought by the tender tongue of the beauty.

Then another shape started to overlap with the one of the maiden. One which made him freeze in terror. Behind the enchanting eyes of Sa Gwa watched sly, yellow animal eyes.

Through her soft caressing hand there was a reddish paw with sharp nails. The tongue which was exploring his mouth suddenly felt too long to be human.

Go to 71.

## 48.

With the last remains of his self-control he resisted and gently but firmly pushed her back.

"We shouldn't Sa Gwa. That's not how I intend to help you. You very beautiful but I can't. It's not right."

The young woman stood up confused and all blushed.

"Forgive me, hwarang! I don't what's begotten me. Please don't tell father!"

"I won't.", promised Gee Soo.

The embarrassed beauty apologized again, wished good night and quietly walked out, somewhat disappointed.

Gee Soo couldn't make his hands stop shaking for a long time. In such rare situations he sometimes wished to be an ordinary man and not a hwarang bound by code of ethics. Engulfed by such thoughts of self pity he was overcome by sleep.

Go to 50.

## 49.

Something disturbed his subconscious while his body burned with passion but he was about to lift his last resistance to the sweet torment brought by the tender tongue of the beauty.

If you have the code word "shaman" or your knowledge points are three or more go to 71.

If not go to 51.

## 50.

Kim Gee Soo was dreaming.

Choose where to continue – 82, 83 or 84.

## 51.

If you have a dog and it's still alive go to 90. If not – go to 91.

## 52.

The villagers were either quite scared or not quite hospitable. With a lot of asking and muttered ambiguous directions he finally found the home of mayor Kang Dje Hee. It was in the southern part of the village and definitely one of the largest and most beautiful houses. It was typical for that part of the kingdom L-shaped, covered with wooden chiseled tiles with wide garden, its premises surrounded by tall fence. It was obviously a yangban house – rather strange for a village the size of Yo Soo. The hwarang entered through the gate and was fronted by coldly polite servant.

"How can I help you, honorable sir?"

"Good day. I am hwarang Kim Gee Soo and I would to speak with mayor Kang about a matter of utmost importance. I'm send personally by one of the king's advisors."

"I see,sir! I wiil inform the mayor immediately. Please follow me!"

The servant led him to a fancy pavilion in the middle of the garden and asked him to wait. After quite a while he reappeared, bowed and said – "Mayor Kang would like to see your letter of credit."

"Pardon me?!"

"Mayor Kang would like to see your letter of credit!", repeated the servant with the same

uninterested tone.

Such insolence was a bit too much for the hwarang. Somehow he managed not withhold his anger and with a expressionless mask handed the document to the servant. He took it with trembling hands because of the scary quietness of the warrior. After another ten-minute test of his patience the servant pattered back and announced in shaky voice.

"The mayor shall see you, hwarang!"

Gee Soo didn't reply. With the same expressionless face he rose and followed the servant. They entered the house and he knocked fearfully on a beautifully ornamented door.

"Yes?", a voice from the inside asked.

"Hwarang Kim Gee Soo is here, mayor!", whispered the servant.

"Let him enter!", allowed the voice.

Gee Soo entered the parlor where the writing table was the only furnishing.

"Please, sit down!"

He chose not to. The mayor looked strangely familiar to hwarang. He was still reading the document brought by Gee Soo. An order for support of its carrier in five lines. Finally he rose his head, sighed without even an attempt to hide his boredom and asked:

"How could I support you, hwarang?"

With ill-hidden despise he answered:

"If it's not too much trouble, could spare some of your precious time and brief me on what's going on at Yo Soo village?" and after a pause added "honorable mayor."

"Nothing.", replied the mayor. "Nothing that would request the attention of the highly respected magistrate, or of a hwarang with your status. Nothing we can't handle."

"Would you be more specific about that nothing, especially in the part where you can handle it? I heard that there was another death yesterday. That makes six for the past year. Probably I could help with handling that "nothing" as you addressed it. That way you could relocate your efforts to more important matters – such as this years' tea harvest. The magistrate hopes you would not allow drop for another year if the case is quickly solved."

"Whence such interest in Yo Soo's green tea production?", asked the mayor. "As I recall we provide less than one percent of the countries' total production."

"Whence such curiosity about decision taken from the highest authority?", offered evenly Gee Soo.

"Especially from a mayor of a village the size of Yo Soo?"

Mayor Kang's efforts to bite his tongue were visible.

"What would you like to know?"

"Everything you do!"

"Very well. Hyo Won Jin – the father of the ill-fated maiden is a respected member of our community and he is the head of one of the wealthiest families here. As far as I know him he is a hard working man of common sense, yet lately he refutes the latter with his actions. Everything began when his wife died two years ago. After her mother's death Hyu Sa Gua became a secluded 14 year-old and did not leave the house for a year. Then she was completely changed. She began innocently enough but firmly to provoke the interest of the village's young men. She is truly very beautiful and several lads became bound to her charms. One by one they went to ask her hand from her father and the very next morning were found dead. One was intoxicated after drinking too much soju, another had drowned in the near lake – after having too much alcohol again, ended up eaten by the fish. Same stupidity of the nowadays' youth. But the people here are superstitious and rumors of curses and evil spirits began to roam. They are simple village people - - you can't blame them for their fears. But the rumor spread outside our village and went around the province. That's when it became uncontrollable. Several lads from near towns and villages came enamored by the talks of the enchanted maiden and ended up dead. With the help of local jealous wooers if you ask me, but I haven't gathered the needed proof yet.

In the end the whole story became hysteric and even such a man of stature as Hyo Won Jin asked the help of some unknown shaman which he got from Buddha knows where. That same hag is now

walking around the village, scaring the people and every day performs strange rituals with doubtful outcome in his house.", the mayor paused to catch his breath.

"That's all I know, honorable hwarang and honestly I don't appreciate your presence here. The people are scared enough and my authority shaken. I don't have enough men to deal with riots. So I wish you success in your task, for if you don't succeed I'll be forced to call the kings' militia to deal with what you leave behind."

"I understand your fears, mayor Kang, but be at ease – I will reach the bottom of this and my presence will reassure the people. Thank you for your time. I'll bother you no more.", Gee Soo prepared to leave.

"How fares your mother, hwarang Gee Soo?"

He froze in mid step.

"She passed a couple of years ago. Why do you ask?"

"I knew her, long time ago. While I was in service at the capitol. I am filled with sorrow to hear such sad news.", the mayor answered with no feelings in his voice.

"I appreciate your condolences.", said the hwarang in cold voice. He realized why mayor Kang was so familiar to him. Years ago mayor Kang was magistrate Kang, who by the queen's influence had risen false accusations against his mother and who after the king himself interfered was exiled somewhere in the country as a small clerk. Obviously as a mayor of Yo Soo.

"I am glad to see that you have put the differences you had with her aside. Now she could rest at ease. I see that you have reconciled for what you've done after accepting me so openly and informed me so readily and thoroughly.", his every word was like a whip. - "You can be sure that the capitol shall hear of your cooperation."

"Thank you, hwarang!", replied Kang with open bale and worry. - "Is there anything else I can do for you?"

If you the hwarang has the ability Self-Control and you want to use it go to 16.

If not go to section 20 and ask for another way to gather info.

To look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

To head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

### 53.

Kim Gee Soo found the local tavern rather easily and entered. The place was dark, moist, not too clean and consisted of few low tables and a wooden counter. The air was stale and smelled of mold, alcohol and old meals. A few young men were seated around one of the tables looking challengingly at him. The only other visitor was sitting alone at a distant table and was pouring cup after cup of soju in his mouth with abruptness and after every gulp his face twisted as if he drunk by coercion. The owner was standing behind the counter looking at Gee Soo with cold curiosity mixed with fear and suspicion.

The hwarang took a moment trying to decide whom to talk to:

The owner – go to 59.

The group of young men – go to 60.

The lonely guy drinking hard in the corner – go to 61.

### 54.

Kim Gee Soo decided to local for the local shaman – the wise Che. One not too unfavorable villager directed him to her house. It was at the end of the village. One couldn't miss it. His nose should lead his feet. When he neared the hut he found the directions to be true – the smell coming from it couldn't be mistaken and formed an almost visible way point in the air. The hut itself was rather tidy but still a



hut and the mess around it complete. All sorts of tools and gadgets formed something of a fence around it. Next to it raised the shaman's tree – covered with all sorts of rags and totems – the source of power for every settled shaman. Strange enough, behind the hut there was a small but well kept vegetable garden and a few fruit trees. There was no living stock, for every shaman doesn't eat meat or milk or eggs. He approached and knocked politely on the door.

On the third knock that almost crumbled the hut he decided that either the wise Che isn't home or she is completely deaf. After a slight consideration he pushed the door which was left unlocked. He entered and froze in mid step at the terrible site that befell his eyes.

If you have the code word “shaman”, go to 55.

If not go to 56.

### 55.

The old shaman was laying in the middle of the hut, her limbs spread unnaturally with sightless frozen gaze. There was blood everywhere. So much blood. In her chest there was a whole the size of a fist. He came closer and hair raised – her heart was ripped out. He was starting to realize what did that to her. He whispered a prayer to the spirits to accept her tormented soul and gave a silent promise to avenge her death. Then he took a firebrand from the fireplace lit the hut on fire. Its cleansing power would be an honorable funeral for the old woman. He left quietly and made sure that nobody saw him.

Afterwards with dark determination he decided to:

head to the local tavern to gather more information, if he hadn't done that already – go to 53.

look for the mayor and ask him for information, unless he had done it already – go to 52.

go straight to the cursed maiden's house and finish this once and for all – go to 22.

Check the village outskirts – go to 21.

### 56.

The wise Che, obviously a large woman, was bent over a boiling pot showing the glory of her backsides which filled a serious part of the hut.

"How much longer it would take you to close the door?", her rich voice brought the hwarang out of the stupor and he closed the door. She was still bent over the pot and he began wandering how to avoid the view.

"Sit down. I've been waiting for you all day.", he did as bid.

"Young man, didn't your mother told you it's not polite to stare?", snapped the shaman raising suddenly.

Though she was a large woman and quite old, remains of her long past beauty were still present. One thing astonished him – her eyes were covered with a milky white walleye.

"Excuse me, madam!"

"You're welcome, my boy! Your mother couldn't have told you that women actually not always dislike being stared at. I'm glad that at my age I'm still catching young men's eyes!", laughed the woman.

"Sure, madam! It's quite hard for you to remain unappreciated!", the hwarang tried to end the embarrassing conversation.

"Aiiigooo! A gallant one, are you? You're so sweet blushing like that!"

"How did you..."

"How did I see you're blushing? I saw you. Not with my eyes, though. I am a shaman, remember?"

"No, no! I just...", he coughed embarrassed.

"Do you have a cold? Want some tea?"

"No,no! Look, madam Che..."

"How do you know I'm a madam? You insult for the second time. The one come to ask for help!"

"Forgive me, miss Che!"

"That's better. And better yet just Che."

"Look, mis... wise Che, I'm here..."

"Like I said, dear boy, I know why you're here! You've come to ask for Hyo Sa Gwa – the cursed maiden. And how to lift the curse. Right?"

"Correct."

"Good. Now listen and don't interrupt me. Hyo Won Jin – the girl's father invited the evil in his house. It began three years ago when he brought a young woman he had saved returning from a business trip which he made a servant. His wife loved him dearly but became jealous of the servant. Until one day, it's rumored, she caught them cheating. She beat her almost to death. Some claim she poisoned her that same evening but I would've known. The servant just disappeared. One month later his wife fell ill and soon died. She lingered in front of me and I couldn't even ease her pain, let alone cure her. Hyo was devastated but the horror didn't end here. After her mother died Sa Gwa also fell ill with grief. She stopped feeding, talking, stopped living – she just existed. As if her soul went with her mother and nothing could bring her back. I've tried everything to help the poor child, fought for months but failed. Something was sucking the life out of her. Until one day she was suddenly alright. She began to eat, to speak again. But that wasn't Sa Gwa anymore. It was something else. Something horrible.", the old shaman shivered at the memory.

"I've tried to tell her father but he wouldn't listen. He showed me out and told me to keep away from his daughter. The thing in Sa Gwa had begun to change her body to its liking. She gradually became the most beautiful young woman that village, that area, had ever seen. She began to charm the lads like an experienced kiseng. Soon one asked to marry her. He was found dead the next morning, his tongue blackened as if poisoned. I'll never forget his death gaze – overjoyed – as if in his death he had felt extreme pleasure. The mayor proclaimed he died of alcohol intoxication. Most believed. But not me. Something had killed that lad. It had sucked his soul out and made it feel like the most pleasurable thing in the world. The next lad was found torn in the near lake – by the fish they said. Bhah! I haven't seen a fish able to eat the liver of a man and leave everything else untouched. Something had killed him – the same thing that killed the first. Then Hyo brought from somewhere a creature that's pretending to be a shaman – the old Gunn. It is not human, my boy! Keep away from her! She's evil! Evil in human form! But the thing that possessed Sa Gwa still gains strength. Maybe you'll be able to defeat it. I don't know what it is. I can only hope that an able young man like you could deal with it and if possible to free the poor child trapped in its own body."

Gee Soo remained silent his neck hair risen.

"I can't help you with much, but I could..."

If the hwarang has the abilities "shamanism" or "charisma" at at least master level, or if his knowledge points are three or more – go to 57.

If not go to 58.

57.

"... teach you a simple spell for you have the gift to cast it. It reveals things for what they truly are – not how your senses perceive them. "

Gee Soo spent the next hour on studying by hard the meaningless, at least for him, couple of words that invoked the spell. When the shaman was satisfied of the result finally left him be. Part of the training was citing the words backwards, in jumbled order and with mouth full of water. He felt he could cite the spell in his sleep. The old woman wished him luck and sent him on his way making a small spell that recovered some of his ki-energy.

After leaving her hut he decided what to do next.

Write down code word "magick". Increase your mind, knowledge and ki-energy points with one. Every time you are asked if you wish to use the spell remember that it takes 1 ki-energy point to use it and subtract it accordingly.

You can:

head to the local tavern to gather more information, if he hadn't done that already – go to 53.

look for the mayor and ask him for information, unless he had done it already – go to 52.

go straight to the cursed maiden's house and finish this once and for all – go to 22.

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

## 58.

"... give you that potion. It tastes terrible but it's a strong poison cure. It removes the poison immediately and its cleansing effect starts the next day. I strongly suggest that you do not plan any traveling that same day – your plans will be ruined."

The old woman gave him a small flask with terribly looking liquid. She sent him on his way making a small spell that recovered some of his ki-energy.

After leaving her hut he decided what to do next.

Write down code word "vial" and increase your knowledge and ki-energy points with one.

You can:

head to the local tavern to gather more information, if he hadn't done that already – go to 53.

look for the mayor and ask him for information, unless he had done it already – go to 52.

go straight to the cursed maiden's house and finish this once and for all – go to 22.

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

## 59.

Kim Gee Soo decided to speak with the owner of the tavern who seeing him approaching frowned even more.

"Are you in peace",greeted the hwarang.

" Yes. Are you?"

"Thank Buddha, yes."

"What do want?"

"A cup of soju for a start. What's cooking? The smell is delicious!"

"Kimpap with smoked fish. Want some?"

"Yes, I'm famished."

"Great! Four king wons – money first",announced the innkeeper.

Gee Soo rummaged through his money pouch and offered a coin equal to five king wons.

" Keep the change, good innkeeper!"

When he looked at the coin and realized the shown generosity the guys face lightened up. Surely the offered price was at least two times the fair one and the tip was handsome. The innkeeper suddenly changed his attitude.

"Thank you, good sir! You probably come from afar and are tired. Come and sit here!",he led him to a secluded and clean table. – "Rest here while I bring your food and drink!"

After two minutes he was served with cold soju and a plate with fine smelling slices of kimpap sided with a big bowl of rice.

"Eat well, good sir! Should you need anything else..."

"Actually, I do.",interrupted him the hwarang. "Could honor me with your company while I eat? We could exchange some talk. It's been a while since I had good company."

"Well...",he hesitated.

"I insist! Bring a cup for yourself!", the innkeeper grinned in answer.

In a minute he came back and seated uneasily against hwarang. Gee Soo put a slice of kimpap in his mouth and began to chew loudly showing his respect to the meal.

"Tell me, good innkeeper, how's this years' green tea harvest?"

"It's been a generous year. Our tea's the best in Shilla. Are you a merchant, good sir?"

"I see. And does the mayor look his business conscientiously?"

"Our wise mayor Kang Dje Hee is strict and just official. Are you an inspector?"

"I see.", Gee Soo burped loudly. – And your live stock? Is it healthy? Does it multiply?

"Our animals are fine and well, sir! They multiply and we have everything we need even have some to trade. You must be a tax collector!", the guy was becoming suspicious.

"No, no – thank Buddha, no!", the other visibly relaxed.

"Than why asking all these questions?"

"Well, because the people here seem anxious, sullen, pensive – even scared. As I entered the village an old woman told me that there is no peace in the village anymore. Why is that? If the harvest is rich, the mayor just and the live stock fine, then what's bothering the good people? I am puzzled! "

The innkeeper became silent for a minute.

"What can I tell you, sir! The essence of our trouble's different. Haven't you heard of the curse that befell our beautiful Hyo Sa Gwa?"

"No! Tell me honest innkeeper, what are talking about?"

"All troubles in our village originate from the curse of Sa Gwa. She is the fairest of all maidens in the region - in the whole kingdom if you ask me. As fair as she is as ill-fated is she also. She comes from a good family but with bad karma. Her father is one of the biggest producers and traders of green tea in the area and her mother was smart, beautiful and modest. Yes, her mother died two years ago. Since then the fate turn ill for our village. Sa Gwa became sick from grief and didn't leave her home for a year. Then she came back to life. Only she was no more a shy girl. She was a beautiful young woman that began to flirt innocently with the village lads. A few went to ask her hand but were found dead the next morning. One of them intoxicated from alcohol. Another drowned in the near lake. I was also blamed - imagine that! Obviously the maiden is cursed and the commoners began to fear for their well-being. But the rumors instead as a warning were like kimchi in a hot day to the young man in the region. A few came to ask her hand but curse our fate, were found dead the next morning again. One thorn by wolves, the other jumped from a cliff, the third..."

In the end Hyo Won Jin - her father found an unknown shaman and that hag of an old woman roams the village, frightens the people and performs ghastly rituals at the house of the maiden.", the man stopped to catch his breath and gulped a cup of soju.

"That's our trouble, good sir!", while the two spoke, the group of lads had left the tavern and the drunkard had fallen asleep, his face on the table.

"Well, we had a nice chat indeed.", said the innkeeper and started raising to his feet.

"Just a moment, good keep! You truly are an intelligent and wise man and I believe I could confide in you. Can I ask you something? Can you keep a secret?", the hwarang tried to put his most sincere expression.

The man's eyes shone with curiosity and he nodded impatiently.

"For sure, good sir!"

"I knew I wasn't mistaken! Look...", he leaned towards the innkeeper who also leaned instinctively closer - "what I tell you must not tell anyone under the threat of treason.", the guy gasped and tried to back away but the hwarang grabbed his shoulder.

"I'm here on a secret government mission. To find out who or what's behind the deaths or murders and put an end to all of it. You are a watchful man who also almost took charges from all this. You've certainly noticed something that others could not or reached a conclusion the rest are not capable of. If you're willing to share that knowledge with me I'll be in your debt. The government would be in your debt. And I'll see that the debt is repaid handsomely.", Gee Soo clattered his money pouch pointedly. If you the hwarang has the ability Charisma and you want to use it go to 16.

If not the innkeeper does not want to have any further part in the matter and you have to go to section 20 and ask for another way to gather info. Or:

To look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

To head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 60.

The hwarang headed for the group of young men.

"Are you in peace?", he greeted.

"Yes.", one replied while the others looked at him with a mix of curiosity, suspicion and hostility.

"Do you mind if I join you, friends? I've traveled long and alone I'm longing for a cheerful company to share my meal and drink.", he asked politely.

"Well, if meal and drink you wish to share, be our guest!", another answered and the others visibly relaxed.

"Hey, innkeep! You've a famished and thirsty customer here while we have an unquenchable thirst... for chatter!", the lads laughed heartily and Gee Soo joined them cheered by the joke.

He ordered a round of soju and three portions of kimpap, paid the innkeeper and sat comfortably between the company.

"Tell us, fellow, what brings you in our cosy village?"

" Oh, nothing interesting, I'm just passing. And you,lads, tell me everybody here is so sullen?"

"Really? Look at us! Are we sullen?"

"Right! You're joyous lads! But I heard stories of curses, of maidens..."

Suddenly all of them went silent and looked angrily at the hwarang.

"Or they're not just stories?", he added.

"Who are you exactly, stranger?"

"And what's your business here?"

"You going to ask for Sa Gwa's hand also?"

"We're tired of people like you!"

"You'd better gather your staff and go your way!"

The young men began to rise from their places.

"Relax, all of you!", shouted Gee Soo.

"Sa Gwa – is that the name your cursed maiden? I'm here because of her, yes! But

"Why then?"

"To find the truth of it."

"Bhah! You believe you're hwarang Woo Gwan Han, don't you?"

"Now that you've mentioned it, he's a good friend of mine.", the guy's mouth widened.

"Sure, you must be Kim Gee Soo, then. Right?"

"Remarkable! You've heard of me!"

The lads burst into laughter.

"Alright, you're a good joker – we give you that! Now tell us what's your business here!"

He slowly took off his sheathed sword and showed it to the young men.

"Can any of you read?", he asked.

"I can!", one answered. "A little."

"Great! Can you read what's written here – on the hilt?"

The hwarang's sword was a masterpiece of blacksmith's art. It's custom made for its bearer his weight, height and strengths and weaknesses reflected in the weapon to give advantage. Each such sword carried its bearer name on the hilt.

" Well.. K...I...M", the lad was having a hard time. "G..N.., no no E. Yes! Kim Gee Soo!", he exclaimed but realizing what he just read became pale. Suddenly all the youths dropped to their knees and started begging for forgiveness for their insolence.

"Get on your feet!", snapped the hwarang.

"No harm will befall you as long my presence here remains a secret.", he looked around but the innkeeper was in the back room and the lonesome drunkard was sleeping face down on the table.

"Now sit back, have a drink and tell me what do you know of all these rumors."

"The old men claim that Sa Gwa is to blame for the troubles in the village but it isn't so. Her fathers' responsible for the curse."

"No, it's not him!", another interrupted.

"That hag - the old Gunn is to blame!"

"No she's not!", third one disagreed. "It's Sa Gwa! She brought this upon herself!"

"Hold on! Speak one at a time and don't interrupt each other! Why did you say her father's responsible for the curse?", interfered Gee Soo.

" You see, Mr. Won Jin is important important around here - a rich man. His green tea manufacture is prospering. But since his wife died two years ago everything went wrong. Sa Gwa was still a girl then and fell ill with grief. His father instead of trying to cheer her up by inviting her girlfriends locked her in the house for a year thinking he will be able to exorcize the illness demon. And exactly a year after the sickness befell her Sa Gwa was healthy again or so it seemed. She began walking out again. And what a beauty she had become. When you see her you can forget where you were going and what you business you had to do. And if she happened to smile you couldn't move even if your life depended on it. You just sit and giggle until somebody snaps you out of your daydreams So a month passed and the first man of courage asked her hand. Nobody knows exactly what happened but the poor guy was found drunk to death the next morning. In a another month or so another one tried. He was found drowned in the near lake the fish feasting on his body. Then it became clear that because he would not let her marry anybody Mr. Won Jin had enraged the illness demon and the poor Sa Gwa is taking the blame of it."

"I see. And you! Why did you say Sa Gwa is to blame for this?"

"Why? Well, everything was as my friend told you except that after she recovered Sa Gwa had changed not only her looks but her behavior also. She became flirtatious, of course in a most innocent way, but in doing so she enraged the illness demon. No self-respecting young woman should behave like that."

"You say so only because she laughed at your large nose!", a third youth commented.

"My nose is not large! It is expressed!"

The others laughed.

"Alright, alright!", the hwarang tried to remain serious.

"Now tell me who is the old Gunn?"

"The old Gunn is some shaman which Hyo Won Jin brought from somewhere after two more lads died. She is a horrifying woman, I tell you! Even the dogs run away from her! She alone cursed Sa Gwa! She's in her house every day! Every day she strengthens the curse, I'm sure!", the lad paused to catch his breath.

"So that's all there is, honorable hwarang, or most of it."

"I see."

The young men tried to busy themselves eating and drinking.

"Thank you for your cooperation, lads. But I think watchful boys like you have probably noticed something deeper in this strange story."

They looked at each other uncomfortably and on said.

"Well, we might have...but..."

"But?"

"We'll tell you only if show us an interesting sword strike!"

"Or a kick!"

"Or a block!"

The hwarang sighed. Obviously if he wanted any additional informational he would've had to earn it with making a fool out of himself.

If Kim Gee Soo possesses the ability of sword mastery or bow mastery go to 16.

If he does not have these abilities but he would like to learn the information it would cost him three ki-energy points. If you decide to spend them go to 16.

If he does not possess the and/or does not wish to spend his valuable ki-energy he declines the request and leaves the tavern.

You have to go to section 20 and ask for another way to gather info. Or:

To look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

To head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 61.

Kim Gee Soo headed to the lonely man and sat on his table.

"Do you mind if I join you?"

The other didn't even look at him and just grunted. The hwarang chose to understand this as an invitation. He called the innkeeper and ordered two portions of kimpap and a bottle of soju. The man grunted in satisfaction and began to destroy the food and drink.

"Rather strange folk around here. ", declared the hwarang.

"Suspicious and sullen. Tell me, friend, why so?"

He received another grunt as answer. He poured another cup to the stranger who still didn't meet his eyes.

"Strange rumors I hear. Of curses and such. Probably just made up stories. Have you heard them?"

The guy still didn't look up. He was beginning to lose patience. Was he talking to a retarded?

"Ill fate was upon a maiden from here, I've heard. All lads that wanted her hand died. You must have heard of that."

The man looked at him for the first time horror filling his eyes and energetically shook his head in denial. He started rising from the table to leave. The hwarang looked around quickly. The innkeeper was in the back room and the young men had left the tavern. He grabbed the guy and brought him back down.

"Look, buddy – I fed you and poured your drink. In return I just want you to tell me what you know."

The man continued to stare at him wildly and to shake his head.

"Come on, man! Calm down and tell me what you know!"

"Khwi.. Khwishin!", the man mumbled and he saw that his tongue was cut off. He regretted his outburst immediately.

"I am sorry, friend! I did not know of your fate. Please excuse my behavior!"

He took twenty coins out of his money pouch.

"There – please accept this! It will make your life a bit easier. And don't spend them all on drinking!"

The man's eyes filled with tears of gratitude he took the money with shaky hands and started for the door bowing to Gee Soo at every step whose eyes felt watery too.

"Khwi...shin!", the guy muttered one last time and left.

The hwarang emptied his cup at one gulp and tried to put himself together though he still felt remorse. Khwishin the man had said. Khwishin – evil spirit. Could it be true? Probably the guy was just terrified. That was a creature from the folk tales with which the grannies used to scare naughty children. No more. The poor soul, he thought again and left the empty tavern. Finding himself on the street he gave some thought on what he should do next.

Increase your knowledge points with one.

He could go to the local shaman and talk to her if he had not done that already – go to 54.

He could talk to the mayor – go to 52.

He could look around the village's outskirts – go to 21.

Or he could head to the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 62.

Kim Gee Soo was told that the shaman was in the village for some time. Hyo – the girls' father brought her to help his daughter. The old Gunn had been behaving rather strange – always muttering under her nose and making strange coughing sounds when laughing on the jokes she used to tell herself. She used to stay all day in his house but nobody knew where she slept and nobody really wanted to find out. The village dogs went in frenzied barking every time they sensed her but whenever she came closer they fearfully hid – maybe because of the smell. Or because of her looks – she was terribly ugly, even ghastly and one would not want to meet her after dark. He was also told that the local shaman – the wise Che couldn't stand her colleague and kept away from her.

If you don't have the code word “shaman” increase your knowledge with one point.

Now you could go to section 20 and look for another way to gather info. Or you could:

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 63.

Kim Gee Soo was told that Sa Gwa was a nice and shy girl who dearly loved her mother. When she had died two years ago it was devastating for her. She had been constantly ill and hadn't left her house for a year. The local shaman had put many efforts to heal her and it had seemed that she did for an year after her mother had died Sa Gwa began to return to the living. Her behavior had changed drastically, however. She had begun avoiding her past friends and started flirting with the local lads like an experienced kiseng. Her looks had also changed – she had turned into a flawless beauty and little remained of the girl everybody used to know.

She became the cause of a few fistfights and scandals. Until the first lad died. Most claimed he had died of intoxication but some eyewitnesses claim that his tongue was black and swollen as if he had been poisoned. The next lad drowned in a lake and found half-eaten by the fish but some say his insides were torn out.

That's when everything went out of control and her father brought that ghastly shaman – the old Gunn. There was also something else that was strange. Before her illness Sa Gwa loved dogs and now she was afraid and even detested them.

More strange even, her own dog began to dislike her and soon it was found torn by wild animals.

If you don't have the code word “tail” increase your knowledge with one point.

Now you could go to section 20 and look for another way to gather info. Or you could:

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

## 64.

The hwarang was told that Hyo Won Jin – the cursed maiden's father – was a respected and well-faring green tea manufacturer. An honest and man of common sense who loved his wife and daughter dearly. It happened so that after his return from a business travel about three years ago he brought home a young woman which he made servant in the house. How and when had he met her was unknown. Everything was fine until one day his wife decided that he is cheating with the servant girl. She spent her wrath on the girl who died the next morning. But one evil leads to another and soon Won Jin's wife fell ill and passed away. His daughter who loved her mother very much was ill stricken with grief. He spent a lot of money and efforts to bring her back to life but when she did she was totally changed. She had become an astonishing beauty who became flirting with the village lads. The trouble started when the first lad to ask her hand was found dead the next morning. Then the second.



That spent what was left of the common sense of her father. He lost faith in the abilities of the local shaman and brought from somewhere the old Gunn – a terrible old woman which performs rituals every day in his house. With little success because all the would be husbands continued to perish.

Increase your knowledge points with one.

Now you could go to section 20 and look for another way to gather info. Or you could:

look around the village outskirts – go to 21.

head for the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

#### 65.

The hwarang decided to look around the village outskirts. He headed for one of the tea hills. Quiet rain began to dissipate the mist and made the air thick with moist. Somewhere ahead in the misty whiteness he could hear bird songs which made the landscape fairy.

He thought one day he would spend his old-age in meditation and rest in a place like this, away from the clamor of the capitol.

If you have a dog go to 23.

If you have "Luck" or "Shamanism" and you want to use it go to 24.

Otherwise – go to 26.

#### 66.

The hwarang reached the lake. While getting there thick mist fell enveloping everything in white cocoon. He stood at the shore of the calm lake and watched the water and mist blend in the distance. It was an eerie view which made him feel like he was in a dream and his vision blurred from the whiteness. The sounds were hushed and the air thick with moist. Through the dense wall of fog he saw someone walking on the far end of the lake. He started walking to the blurry figure, but froze in place at halfway. The dim figure wasn't on the other shore. It appeared to be floating over the water at the middle of the lake standing on the smoke clouds. Then the figure started to flow towards him and he saw it was a man in torn, drenched clothes. As he approached, Gee Soo felt shivers on the back of his neck as the man's face was terribly chewed and rotten, his skin grey as dead fish and there was a terrible hole where his stomach should be, his insides missing. Floating a foot over the water he neared him and the hwarang realized he could actually see through him.

The eerie figure extended his hands as if to grab him.

If you have the skill "shamanism" and you want to use it – go to 70.

If you don't you could attack the creature – go to 38.

Stand still and wait – go to 25.

#### 67.

Gee Soo reached the graveyard. It was unnaturally quiet as if nothing dared to violate the silent sleep of the dead. Mist was enveloping the place with cloudy white walls and it seemed as if it was a timeless and unearthly sanctuary barred from the solitudes of life. He walked carefully through the last resting beds of the people past. He started to ask himself what he was actually doing here. Could the dead provide answers to the questions he had? Engulfed in thoughts he had reached a fresh grave. Ji Won Hyang the mark said. The young man buried yesterday. He heard a strange noise behind the tombstone. Hand on his sword he carefully looked. A sudden clasp of wings startled him and a crow flew scared, dropping something on the grave. It was a bracelet. The hwarang was curious and leaned to pick it up.

If you have the skill “shamanism” and you want to use it – go to 30.  
 If not you can take the bracelet – go to 8.  
 Or you could leave something on the grave and then pick it up – go to 100.

68.

Gee Soo was about to pick up the bracelet, then he suddenly remembered something important. Go to 100.

69.

Before him stood a man in the middle of his twenties. He wore the unmistakable, yet a bit strange clothes of a shaman and he lacked some prerequisites such as the shaman hat and mallet.

“My name is Jo Shin Ho and I’m a shimbang – a wondering shaman. I’m on my initiation journey.”, the stranger presented himself.

“What are you doing here?”

“Nothing specific. I’m wondering in search for people that may use my abilities. I need to perform five successful rituals to finish my initiation and become a true shimbang. I sensed great evil here and decided to look closely. I see, however, that it’s not my bidding to deal with it. Not yet at least. I believe it’s yours, hwarang.”

“Hwarang Kim Gee Soo. I’m honored to meet you, shimbang and wish you success in your initiation journey.”, he answered respectfully as the shimbangs were the most powerful shamans. While ordinary shamans went through a long period of studying, shimbangs were born with the gift. They didn’t need to learn in order to communicate with the world of the dead, they lived in both worlds.

“I’m honored to meet you, hwarang Kim Gee Soo. Something tells me we will meet again in the future. Until then I wish you luck in your task as you’re facing a formidable adversary. I’ll give you a small tip as the spirits allow me no more. Show no mercy.”

With these words the shimbang stepped into the mist and disappeared. Gee Soo thought over his encounter and suddenly remembered the bracelet. He opened his palm and looked at it. It was an ordinary bracelet, nothing fancy or valuable. There was some inscription on the back. It said “Sa Gwa”.

Write down code word “bracelet”. Increase your knowledge with one point.

Now you could...

return to the village and ask around – go to 20.

check the outskirts – go to 21.

go to the cursed maiden's house – go to 22.

70.

While his instincts screamed to defend himself his mind whispered to stand still. The creature was hideous indeed yet its careful approach didn’t show ill intentions. It stood still and after a second it changed to a handsome young man his face full of sorrow. He extended one arm and waited. Without thinking Gee Soo reached out and touched his hand. Then the vision revealed. Go to 28.

## 71.

*If you have the code word "slumber", you now have the abilities chosen at the beginning of the adventure.*

Kim Gee Soo painstakingly managed to shred the daze and clear his mind. He felt soft lips on his own and a tender tongue exploring his mouth. The sensation was intoxicating. It was Sa Gwa, he realized. She was rolling something small and round in and out of his mouth. Suddenly he realized that the tongue was too long to be human.

He clenched his teeth and bit off its tip holding the round object with it. The maiden gave a shriek which was definitely not human and pulled back instinctively. He grabbed the collar of her nightgown and tore the dress. The young woman fell on the ground half naked. He spat the blooded stump and a small pearl glowing in green fell with it.

In that instant the Sa Gwa's body became blurry while she was moaning with pain, pressing her mouth with her blooded hands. Seconds later on the floor before him laid a huge white fox with six tails tossing in agony. The yellow eyes above the fox muzzle were gleaming with hatred and pain.

A kumiho! The realization terrified him. A demon-fox whose purpose is suck the vital power of the men she seduces. That was killing the young men! Only that one had six tails instead of nine. She still hadn't reach her full strength.

While his thoughts raced he drew his sword and crushed the glowing pearl on the floor extracting another maddening shriek from the creature. The cold steel at her throat made the demon quiet.

"It's time to die, demon!", said Gee Soo through clenched teeth.

"No!", the spawn spoke with the voice of Sa Gwa.

"Please, hear me first! I'm powerless – you destroyed my source of magic.", she nodded towards the shards of the pearl.

"Hear me out and then judge me!"

"Speak quickly!", hissed the hwarang disgusted. That thing put its tongue in his mouth!

"Three years ago when I was a young fox just beginning to grasp my abilities Hyo Won Jin saved my life. I've just made my first human shape-shift when a band of thugs attacked me and tried to rape me. They tied my hands and I was unable to defend myself. Then he showed up and chased them away. I swore to serve him until his death without doing any harm to him. He made a servant in the house and I followed my oath. But his wife became jealous of me. I gave no reason for that but somehow she sensed I wasn't what I seemed to be. One night as Won Jin and I spoke alone his wife entered the room and seeing us alone went mad. She attacked me and when he tried to stop her she broke a vase in his head and he fell senseless. I couldn't hurt the wife of my savior so I tried to explain that there's no reason for her jealousy. She wouldn't listen. She would've beaten me to death if not for the other servants. That same night I gathered my last strength and called my mother. She's an old nine-tailed demon fox with great power. She was enraged seeing me half-dead. Before taking me away to cure me she cursed Won Jin's wife. They say she died in a month. While she healed me she learned how I allowed all this. That's how she heard of Sa Gwa. One day after a weeks absence she came and said she had killed Sa Gwa. She made take her shape to steal the life source of the wooers. It took an year before I completed the shift. The local shaman didn't make my task easier. Then my mother took the shape of a shaman – the old Gunn and convinced him to rid of her and use her abilities instead. That's my story hwarang! Now I'll accept your judgment whatever it is!"

"Where's Sa Gwa's body, demon!", growled Gee Soo.

"In a cave under one of the tea hills.", replied the creature and looked pleadingly at him.

"Demon! You may have been treated unjustly, but that doesn't give you or your mother the right to take the life of an innocent girl and then kill helpless lads."

You lose two endurance points because of the power drain.

He decided to...

kill the creature – go to 73.

spare her life upon the condition that she and her mother leave the country and swear never to return. - go to 74.

## 72.

Due to the opiate's properties the hwarang can not use the skills chosen in the beginning of the adventure. You have to choose another three from the list of skills. You can't have their bonus mind and knowledge points however. You also lose one endurance point. After making all changes go to 50.

## 73.

The pleads for mercy didn't make him hesitate.

"How many more lives you've taken in this room, you abomination!", he screamed and cut the demon's throat with a swing of his sword. When the creature fell dead on the floor he saw a dagger clenched in one of its paws. That would've been his award had he shown mercy.

Go to 99.

## 74.

The pleads for mercy made him reconsider.

"Despite your evil deeds I'm ready to spare you if you and your cursed mother swear to leave the kingdom and never to return!"

"I swear honorable hwarang!", cried the demon.

Gee Soo lowered his sword but at that instant the kumiho attacked him with inhuman speed with a dagger she's hidden in one paw. That was the gratitude for his mercy.

If you possess the ability reflex and you have the ki-energy points to use it go to 75.

If not choose between 76 and 77.

## 75.

His lightning reflexes and luck helped him dodge the attack of the treacherous creature and the dagger only scratched his arm. The demon-fox hissed in rage and jumped back with stunning speed ready to attack again. You lose two endurance points. If you're still alive go to

If you have the code word "ember", go to 80.

If you don't but you possess the ability

blade mastery – go to 78.

bow mastery – go to 79.

luck **and** reflex **or** your knowledge points are 4 or more – go to 81.

In any other case go to 77.

## 76.

The dagger of the demon-maiden bit his flesh and he pushed her back screaming a curse of pain. He managed to lift his sword and cut her throat. Then his strength was spent and he tumbled over her dead body. Seconds later Won Jin charged into the room, saw the dead bodies and fainted. Gee Soo's last thought was that at least he had rid the village of the demon.

*"So the given mercy was awarded with death.", kwangde finished his story and looked around triumphantly expecting coins and applause to rain on him. The crowd spared just a few coppers and left. Apparently there was no place for him in So Wul he thought sadly and decided to leave tomorrow and look for a smaller city for his stories.*

77.

Go to 75.

78.

His fighting skills helped him resist the inhuman speed of the kumiho. They exchanged savage hits too quick to be clearly seen. Both counted on flair and instinct than thought or sight. The battle lasted no more than twenty seconds but they seemed eternity for Gee Soo. Finally with a last feint he breached the demon's defense and buried his sword in its body. Life left the kumiho with a long moaning cry.

"Moootheeerr!"

Go to 99.

79.

Dodging another stab Gee Soo made a wide arc with his sword forcing the demon to jump quite back. At the end of the swing he used the inertia and threw the weapon at her its point piercing one paw, nailing it to the wall. The creature shrieked with pain and started frantically to pull his pinned arm. Meanwhile the hwarang had taken his bow, took the first arrow he happened upon and while the demon was jumping at him he shot it from pint blank. It happened to be a ramming arrow whose point weighed 200 grammes. It tore through the demon's body making a whole the size of the fist, went through the wall behind it to stop at an old tree in the garden. Life left the kumiho with a long moaning cry.

"Moootheeerr!"

Go to 99.

80.

Dodging another stab Gee Soo made a wide arc with his sword forcing the demon to jump quite back. At the end of the swing he used the inertia and threw the weapon at her its point piercing one paw, nailing it to the wall. The creature shrieked with pain and started frantically to pull his pinned arm. Meanwhile he grabbed the pouch the bandits gave him and threw himself out the window at the garden outside being careful not to fall on it. He rolled over his shoulder and stood up. The demon had freed his arm and jumped after him. The hwarang threw the pouch at her hitting her at the middle of the jump. Instead of a roaring sound he heard a strange hissing but soon she was engulfed in flames. The demon fox gave a mad shriek thrashing wildly trying to put out the flames.

Life left the kumiho with a long moaning cry.

"Moootheeerr!"

Go to 99.

81.

Go to 78.

## 82.

The hwarang was dreaming. He was in the village outskirts, close to one of the tea hills. Unnaturally thick mist covered everything, revealing just a few steps of the area around him. He was walking but where to he didn't know. Suddenly he was at the graveyard where a freshly dug out grave drew his attention. He approached and read its mark. "Hwarang Kim Gee Soo.". Shivers ran down his spine and he jumped back horrified. At the same time one ghastly white hand broke out of the grave and reached for him. He screamed terrified and jumped further back. Something tripped him. Another hand from a neighboring grave had clutched his leg. He kicked it and stood up to witness a macabre view. Out of the mist appeared walking dead who were approaching him clumsy steps, their rotten hands reaching to grab him and their worm eaten jaws grotesquely widened in inhuman hunger. Gee Soo drew his weapon and prepared to sell expensively his life.

Gee Soo was fighting valiantly the living dead but they were rising again and again. Weariness began to slow his hand and weaken his strikes. Shivers of despair began to sneak in. He fell berserk and attacked madly shouting in rage.

Write down code word "zombie".

If you have code word "magick", go to 89.

If you don't but you have code word "ember", go to 88.

If you don't have these code words but you posses one of the abilities "sword mastery", "bow mastery" or "shamanism" or two of the following "reflex", "luck" or "self-control" and you have the ki-energy points to use them go to 85.

In any other case go to 93.

## 83.

The hwarang was dreaming. He was in a small cave with a stone altar in the middle. Strange light coming from nowhere lighted the space. There was someone laying on the altar. A beautiful young woman watching him with wide open, dead eyes. He walked towards her but with the first step from the floor began to emerge and hide sword blades. He jumped back and something whistled past his ear. He realized that sheer luck had saved him from the arrow shot from a hole in the opposite cave wall. He heard a crumble above him and instinctively jumped back. A large rock crushed on the floor where he had been a second ago. At the same time a blade came up between his legs. Thanks to his luck and self-control along with hard trained fighting instincts and lightning speed he managed to avoid all death traps while approaching the altar. His movements looked like a crazy dance with death.

Write down code word "trap".

If you have the code word "magick", go to 89.

If you don't put you posses the ability "reflex" or two of the abilities "luck", "self-control", "sword mastery" or "shamanism" and you have the ki-energy points to use them - go to 86.

In any other case go to 94.

## 84.

The hwarang was dreaming. He was in front of a magnificent palace. He knocked at the gate and unexpectedly an adorable woman opened it. She thanked him for saving from an impending curse and invited him in with a smile.

There was nobody else in the palace. She opened a gate to reveal a huge bedroom with wide bed and a table full of food and drinks. They talked and ate and afterwards the beauty led him to the bed where she massaged his stiff shoulders. Her hands slowly reached his chest she pressed her body to

his and started to kiss his neck passionately. Gee Soo was gasping. She pushed him on the bed and sat atop him. She took off her clothes while her lips found his. While the passion ruled him he felt as if she was draining his strength with her lips. Yet he couldn't and wouldn't resist. He was agree to die in her embrace.

Write down code word "passion".

If you have the code word "magick", go to 89.

If you don't but you posses the ability "self-control" or two of the abilities "charisma", "shamanism", "reflex" or "luck" and you have the ki-energy points to use them - go to 87.

In any other case go to 42.

85.

Suddenly everything ended and he returned to reality.

Go to 71.

86.

Dodging the last arrow he was at the altar. He jumped next to the dead young woman and... Suddenly everything ended. He shook the slumber and returned to reality.

Go to 71.

87.

With the last remains of his will he pushed away the woman and stood up. She fell off with a shriek, but instead of her a horrible slime monster raised back. The thing extended one tendril towards him. Gee Soo shouted in horror, reached for his sword and... Suddenly everything ended. He shook the slumber and returned to reality.

Go to 71.

88.

He cleared a space before him and climbed a large rock. Something poked him through his pocket. He put in his hand and brought out the pouch given him by the thieves. Thanks to Buddha he still had in his nightmare. The dead were clustered below the rock and were trying to climb up. He threw the pouch at the rotting bodies and took cover. A mighty blast released him from the slumber and he was back in reality.

Go to 71.

89.

In his desperation he remembered the spell that he learned from the shaman and uttered the words. Nothing changed. The next moment he was released from the nightmare and slowly came back to reality.

Go to 71.

## 90.

Suddenly maddened barking released Gee Soo from the nightmarish slumber. His brave four-legged friend came back to his aid despite his fear and was now barking madly below the window. He found out that the animal had saved his life.

Go to 81.

## 91.

His strength faded and he gave up. In slumber he felt one tender tongue exploring his mouth and rolling something round and small in and out. With every roll a part of his vital energy left him. Soft warm tongue. Too long to be human thought Gee Soo. Then darkness came.

Kumiho Sa Gwa drew the last drop of energy from the breathless hwarang and laughed. What a great amount of strength she had received from that last fool.

*"So died Kim Gee Soo. The brave but foolish, naïve and lustful hwarang without realizing that a kumiho had killed the maiden and used her shape to suck out the souls of fools like him.", kwangde finished his story and looked triumphantly expecting coins and applause to rain on him. Instead he received a volley of eggs and rotten fruits.*

*The end.*

## 92.

*Reduce your mind points with one. If they are 0 – the adventure ends here.*

*If you have the code word "slumber", erase the previously chosen abilities and choose new ones excluding the ones you just erased.*

*If you have code word*

*"passion", choose where to continue – 82 or 83.*

*"trap", choose where to continue – 82 or 84.*

*"zombie", choose where to continue – 83 or 84.*

*"passion" and "trap" go to 82.*

*"passion" and "zombie" go to 83.*

*"trap" and "zombie" go to 84.*

*If you've written all three code words go to 51.*

## 93.

However soon his strength was drained and the living dead ripped his weapon. They began to beat him with their rotting fists and when he was powerless they dragged him to the fresh grave. He screamed when they dropped him in. Then came the darkness.

Go to 92.

## 94.

A moment before reaching the altar he heard the familiar now sound of a falling rock and realized that this he couldn't avoid it. A moment before the impact darkness surrounded him.

Go to 92.



## 95.

Strange but at the sight of the old woman he decided to remain hidden behind the rock. She was terribly ugly and acted rather creepy muttering under her nose. He strained his hearing.

"Hark! Smells of men. Somebody's been here. Hark! The next fool to give me his soul!", she sniffed the air and for a second looked towards his hiding place but passed by.

"A little while and I'll be able to leave that terrible old woman's shape.", she said while she approached the cave entrance.

She went in surprisingly deftly and the hwarang neared the entrance very carefully, all ears.

"Let's taste the soul of the next wannabe husband, hark. Hark!"

He waited a while and very cautiously peeked in the hole. A dim light lit the place.

The old woman stood in front of the altar her back towards Gee Soo. At the altar she had placed a small pearl gleaming with soft light which seemed to flow into her mouth.

Obviously the creature was using the maiden which she was supposed to heal to get the vital power from the souls of the would be husbands.

Add one knowledge points. Write down code word "shaman".

With that knowledge he decided to...

Head back to the village and ask around to see if someone had an idea what was actually happening – go to 20.

decided to head to the house of the maiden and try to find a way and rid her of the demon-fox – go to 22.

If haven't written code word "bracelet" you could go to the nearby lake unless you've already been there – go to 66.

If you haven't written code word "water" you could go to the village graveyard unless you've already been there – go to 67.

... attack the demon-fox and end this here and now – go to 50.

## 96.

"Well, buddy! You wanted my money and weapon – you got them. Need anything else?", asked hwarang in cold voice.

"Well, sir..ummm, there seems to be a mistake! Ummm, you see, we thought you're a bandit! They say, you see, that such were roaming around here and ummmm...you see, me and the boys decided to scare them away. Ummm, right, to show them how bad it is to scare the honorable travelers and people from village nearby. But, you see, it seems we messed up a bit!", the others started nodding so vigorously that their heads almost disjuncted with the effort.

"Aha! I do see! So you think that I'm a bandit, eh? A miserable thief! Right", yelled Kim Gee Soo. "N-n-n-no! no, no, no, no, no! Nothing like that, sir! W-we couldn't see you well from the grass and besides I'm short-sighted and cross-eyed!", the bandit joined his eyes as if he suddenly saw a wart on his nose.

"L-l-look, you've dropped your coins...ummmm, put away the weapon so I could help you gather them! Please?", he was still watching his nose intently.

The hwarang removed the weapon and the guy dropped on all fours and started gathering the coins.

"They were exactly thirty two.", he informed the panicked thief.

In ten seconds he gathered the coins, rubbed them off the dirt and grass and put them in Gee Soo's pouch, trembling as if they have suddenly become red hot.

"There, good sir! Exactly thirty two! Please excuse us once again! Please let us go!", the bandit began to step back slowly. Gee Soo let him make two steps and shouted "Stop". The guy rooted himself. "I believe you said you're cross-eyed!"

" I-I-I was actually looking sideways, sir", his teeth began to clatter.

"I only wanted to inform you, boys that I'm hwarang Kim Gee Soo – you've probably heard of me. I happen to have some business in the near village, so I'll be around. You don't have to worry about those bandits any more. Now that I know of them I'll look at the matter myself. So you can go home and rest easy. If you happen to meet those ne'er-do-wells – leave them be. Just tell them that if they value their lives they'd better leave this place for I'm coming for them!"

"Y-yes, brave hwarang! We shall do so! Right, boys?"

"Yes!" "Yes", rose a choir of trembling but assuring voices.

"Good boys!"

"Ummm, sir ...you see..."

" Yes?"

"Well, we...ummm, wanted to offer a little help in your honorable task and...as a sign of apology we would like to present you this modest gift!"

If hwarang posses the ability Luck and you want to use it – go to 10.

If not – go to 11.

## 97.

The rest of the bandits looked at him with pure terror and started running as their lives depended on that. Gee Soo turned towards the fallen thief but he was also running, limping with one leg, screaming on the top his lungs "DEEEMOOOONNN!"

The old man was still standing with his arms extended to the sky staring at the hwarang. Gee Soo put away his weapon and stepped towards the monk.

"Don't come any closer, demon!", shouted the old man and jumped two feet back. "Go back to the hell pit you crawled from, spawn!"

"Honorable monk, I'm hwarang Kim Gee Soo.."

"Stay where you are!", squawked the oldster – "Kim Gee Soo! never heard of such a demon before!"

"I'm not a demon, old man!", the hwarang replied insulted.- "I am hwarang Kim Gee Soo!", stressing on "hwarang".

"Put out your tongue!"

"I beg you pardon?!"

"Do it! If you're a demon your tongue will be purple!"

Kim Gee Soo looked around carefully and when he was assured there is no one else to witness his humiliation maliciously put out his tongue to the satisfaction of the crazy monk.

"There! Are you convinced now?", The old man was staring at him still but now even his mouth was opened and he was blinking in disbelief.

"And I thought that my incantation worked out.", he blurted with disappointment and finally put his arms down.

"I was passing nearby, heard your screams and decided to aid you as my honor and hwarang code demand. Why do you insult me so?"

The monk smoothed his clothes in an unsuccessful attempt to regain his self-control.

"Honorable hwarang", he bowed low. – "I am Pak Yon Wol – wandering enchanter-monk, adept in the esoteric secrets... well... obviously not so adept after all. Please accept my deepest apologies for me calling you... you know...I mean... these scoundrels scared me a bit and... I wasn't myself that's why I...". the old man even managed to flush out of uneasiness. "Anyway!"

If you have the code word "theft", go to 17.

If you don't have that code word but the hwarang has the ability luck and you would like to use it – go to 18

If you don't have that code word and you don't have that ability or don't want to use it – go to 19.

## 98.

The hwarang unsheathed his sword and swung at the ghost. The blade went through it as would through air without causing any harm. The creature stood still then in a second his expression became malicious and before Gee Soo could react it clawed its fingers in his temples. The hwarang wanted to shrink from the pain but couldn't move. Then the vision revealed.

Reduce your mind points with one. Reduce your endurance points with two.  
Go to 28.

## 99.

Seconds later Hyo Won Jin charged into the room, saw the dead creature and fainted. Gee Soo brought the poor man to senses and told him the truth. He wasn't himself from grief.

"Hananim! Heavenly God! Did I myself invited the evil in my home? Daughter, wife! Will you ever forgive me?"

After he recovered he gathered the men from the village and found the cave with the remains of Sa Gwa. They searched the outskirts for the old Gunn – the nine-tailed fox, but she'd vanished.

Despite the victory Gee Soo wasn't in a mood for feasts and the villagers shocked of the outcome didn't organize any.

Early in the morning the hwarang began his trip back to the capitol to report the magistrate of what happened and that regretfully his son would have to look for another would-be wife.

*So the brave hwarang Kim Gee Soo rid Yo Soo village of the kumiho and returned as a hero in the capitol. The villagers entombed the dead kumiho in the cave where her mother had hidden the body of Sa Gwa and from that day on village Yo Soo was also known as Fox Den.", the crowd gave surprised gasps as this was the name of a real village five days trip away from the capitol.*

*In the same time on the road to the capitol limped one awfully ugly old woman. "Damn you, hwarang", she cursed on and on. "Damn you! You've taken my daughter – my most precious thing! So be damned! Now I'll take what's most precious to you – your honor!" - the crowd had stopped breathing in anticipation.*

*"That, however is another story for another time.", disappointed cries came from the people.*

*"But if you've enjoyed this one – show me now and tomorrow I'll be back to tell you how the old kumiho took the shape of the queen of Shilla, killed the king and brought the country to shambles. And also how the brave hwarang Kim Gee Soo after barely escaped with his life performed the most heroic of his deeds and along with the wise monk Pak Yon Wol freed the country from the demon's tyranny."*

*Wave of applause washed him and coins rained on him generously. He was going to get rich here!  
The end.*

## 100.

First you offer something to the dead, then you take from them. Gee Soo remembered the old saying and put a coin on the ground before picking up the bracelet.

"I see you're aware of honoring the dead and the rituals, hwarang.", a voice startled him and he turned hand on his sword.

"Who are you?"

Go to 69.

**Dictionary of the Korean terms:**

kimchi – traditional Korean fermented dish made of vegetables and various seasonings  
kwangde – a wandering artist, singer, bard, actor, clown, entertainer  
kiseng – highly paid concubine, the Korean geisha  
hwarang – an ancient Korean order of knights which gave the origins to the samurai  
soju – traditional Korean alcohol drink  
kimpap – traditional Korean meal which gave the origins to the sushi  
yangban – a Korean nobleman  
hanbok – traditional Korean outfit  
Aigoo! - exclamation, Oh, dear!