

THE LAST SAMURAI

by

John Logan

revisions by

Edward Zwick & Marshall Herskovitz

FINAL SHOOTING DRAFT

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FADE IN:

1 A WHITE TIGER 1

Surrounded by dark shapes with spears. The TIGER's eyes burn as he lunges at one tormentor, claws at another. Suddenly, the TIGER leaps over them all and BURSTS INTO FLAME.

2 THE FACE OF A JAPANESE MAN 2

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

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS OVER the FAINT SOUND of a BRASS BAND.

WINCHESTER REP (V.O.)

And now Ladies and Gentlemen, the moment you've been waiting for... Winchester, America's leader in all forms of armament used by the United States Army, celebrates our Nation's centennial by bringing you a true American hero.

3 INT. CONVENTION HALL (SAN FRANCISCO) - DAY 3

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

WINCHESTER REP

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

LITTLE TIN SOLDIERS line up in a diorama. A troop of Union cavalry facing brightly-painted Indian Braves on horseback.

(CONTINUED)

WINCHESTER REP

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

A smattering of polite applause. The rep looks around. No Captain Algren.

WINCHESTER REP

Captain Nathan Algren!

(beat)

Yes!... Yes!

(still no Algren)

[Where is he -- ?]

(to the audience)

One moment, Ladies and Gentlemen...

He heads behind the stage where he comes upon a man leaning against a wall, half-asleep on his feet -- CAPTAIN NATHAN ALGREN, U.S. Army, ret. The rep attempts to awaken him, but Algren barely opens his eyes before shutting them again. Next, the rep makes the mistake of shaking him.

WINCHESTER REP

Algren. Hey --

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

WINCHESTER REP

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

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

WINCHESTER REP

(collecting himself)

Damn it, man, you're on.

ALGREN

...Right.

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

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED: (1A)

3

WINCHESTER REP
This company has an image to
uphold, you know.

ALGREN
I'm upholding. I'm upholding.

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

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

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

ALGREN

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

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

ALGREN

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

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

ALGREN

... Many's the time I've found myself surrounded by a swarm of angry hostiles -- with nothing but this rifle between me and a certain... and gruesome death. But let me tell you, folks, when you need a friend, Winchester is by your side.

As he tries to recall the speech, the little Indian braves begin sliding up the metal hill. At a nearby exhibition, a STEAM CALLIOPE begins to PLAY.

ALGREN

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

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

ALGREN

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

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (3)

3

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

WINCHESTER REP

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

ALGREN

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

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

ALGREN

Come on, now... To the Seventh!

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

ALGREN

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

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

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

WINCHESTER REP

-- Thank you, Captain Algren.
Thank you.

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

ALGREN

[Excuse me, I am speaking of the dead.]

(back to the audience)

Corporal William Teeman. Private Benjamin F. Brown --

Abruptly, Algren stops. Eventually, the audience stops, too. He looks out at them.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (4)

3

However burnt-out and dissipated, Algren is a man accustomed to command.

ALGREN
[I AM SPEAKING OF THE DEAD!]

The terrified Winchester Rep backs away. Nearby, the CALLIOPE BEGINS again. So does the BELL. Grimly shaking his head, Algren reaches into his pocket for a handful of cartridges.

Algren begins loading the Winchester. The rep turns to his associate.

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

KID ASSISTANT
Un-huh.

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

ALGREN
(looks out at the audience)
The Model '73 lever-action "Trapper." 7-shot capacity. One round-per-second, accurate at 400 yards.
(to a boy in the audience)
Son, you ever seen what this can do to a man? Why this beauty will blow a hole six inches wide in your daddy's chest.
(to another audience member)
That's right, Missy. You'll kill yourself five, six, seven times without ever having to reload.
(finishes loading)
-- You'll note the patented loading port and smooth cocking action.

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

ALGREN
... Let's just see here --

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (5)

3

Algren adjusts the aim over the heads of the crowd. KA-BOOM!!! Ladies scream. The calliope is forever silenced. KA-BOOM!!! A hole in the boiler sends a cloud of steam billowing near the cowering Winchester Rep. KA-BOOM!!! The incessant bell has been blasted into oblivion.

Suddenly the crowd is silent. He commands their undivided attention.

ALGREN

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

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

ALGREN

(looks out at them)

Mr. McCabe is here to take your
orders.

(throws him
the gun)

God bless you all.

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

4 INT. ALGREN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

4

Algren lifts his head from the wash basin into which Gant has forced him in an effort to sober him up. He looks vaguely like a drowned rat.

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED:

4

ALGREN

Thank you.

GANT

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

ALGREN

I've been busy.

GANT

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

ALGREN

Who's asking you?

GANT

You've got a gift for melodrama, Nathan.

ALGREN

You're a critic now?

GANT

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

ALGREN

Thanks, but it was me saved your sorry ass.

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

ALGREN

When'd you get out?

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (1A)

4

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

GANT

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

ALGREN

I have a job.

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

ALGREN

I'm not wearing that uniform again.

GANT

Did I say a U.S. uniform?

5 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

5

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

ONE-ARMED MAN

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

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

BAGLEY

Nathan, been a while. Good to see
you.

Bagley extends his hand. Algren doesn't take it. Instead he gives Gant a murderous look.

GANT

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

ALGREN

(flat)
Colonel Bagley, what a surprise.

BAGLEY

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

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

ALGREN

Whiskey.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

BAGLEY

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

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

BAGLEY

Washington insists we only serve as advisors, not combatants -- help them with training, tactics, and the like.

(raises his glass)

And if we play our cards right, the Emperor gives the U.S. exclusive rights to import arms.

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

ALGREN

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

Omura suddenly speaks. His English is flawless.

OMURA

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

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

ALGREN

Five.

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

ALGREN

And another five hundred as a bonus when the job is done.

(pleasantly)

How many other genuine heroes you got lined up?

(looks around)

What does a man have to do to get a drink around here?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

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

OMURA'S ASSISTANT

(subtitles)

He's rude.

OMURA

(subtitles)

That's how it is here. A land of cheap traders.

GANT

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

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

OMURA

His name is Katsumoto Moritsugu. He is samurai.

GANT

Samurai?

OMURA

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

BAGLEY

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

ALGREN

Does he?

BAGLEY

He's even read your book.

(to Omura)

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

Algren looks at Bagley, and then starts to laugh.

OMURA

Please excuse, what is funny?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

ALGREN

Nothing. The old corps together again. It's just so inspiring.

(stands up)

Excuse me. I need to use the necessity.

Algren stands and starts out. Bagley also stands.

BAGLEY

This isn't a problem. I'll just talk to him.

OMURA

Colonel Bagley, we contacted you because you were Captain Algren's superior officer --

BAGLEY

I'm aware of that.

OMURA

And you assured us of his participation.

BAGLEY

He'll do it. Just give me a minute.

5A IN THE FOYER

5A

Bagley catches up to Algren.

BAGLEY

Nathan... They know all about you. And reputation is very important to them.

(Algren stares at him)

This is a real opportunity, so what do you say we put the past behind us...?

(Algren doesn't respond)

I did what I was ordered to do out there. And I have no remorse.

(Algren glances up)

Nathan, you were the finest officer ever to serve under me. Now look at you.

ALGREN

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

BAGLEY

We're not killing anybody --

(CONTINUED)

5A CONTINUED:

5A

ALGREN

(ignores the interruption)

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

(leans close)

But keep one thing in mind... I'd happily kill you for free.

BAGLEY

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

Algren burps loudly. And walks away.

6 EXT. SHIP (OCEAN) - DAY

6

A steamship churns its way across the great Pacific.

ALGREN (V.O.)

July 22, 1876. Twentieth day at sea. Somewhere out there is Japan.

Algren looks out into the endless waves.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

7 INT. ALGREN'S TINY CABIN - NIGHT

7

Algren opens his suitcase. Inside is a brand new U.S. Army uniform without insignia. He puts on the jacket and studies himself in the small mirror.

8 A BRIEF, SILENT FLASHBACK - A WINDSWEPT RIDGE

8

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

9 BACK TO THE TINY CABIN 9

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

10 OMITTED 10
& &
11 11

12 EXT. YOKOHAMA HARBOR - DAY 12

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

13 EXT. DOCK (YOKOHAMA) - DAY 13

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

OMURA

Colonel Bagley, would you care to join me?

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

GRAHAM

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

(offers his hand)

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

ALGREN

Nathan Algren. And Zebulon Gant.

GRAHAM

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

GANT

I'll see to the luggage.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

Algren climbs into a rickshaw beside Graham.

ALGREN

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

GRAHAM

I'm afraid it's all in Japanese.

ALGREN

You're a translator, right?

The rickshaw sets off.

14 INT./EXT. RICKSHAW/TOKYO STREETS - DAY

14

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

GRAHAM

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

(smiles)

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

(off Algren's look)

I had an unfortunate tendency to tell the truth in a country where no one ever says what they mean. So now I very accurately translate other people's lies.

14A EXT. GUEST QUARTERS - DAY

14A

Algren, Graham and Gant enter an ancient courtyard.

GRAHAM

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

(CONTINUED)

14A CONTINUED:

14A

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

GRAHAM

Oh, just a moment -- So sorry...
(slips his shoes off)
I'm afraid we're expected to leave
our shoes out here.

GANT

In the street?

GRAHAM

I'm afraid so.

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

15 OMITTED

15

16 EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

16

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

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

General.

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

HASEGAWA

Youkoso okoshikudasai mashita.
Stachi o mite morai massho.

Graham translates:

GRAHAM

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

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

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

HASEGAWA

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

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

Ask him what training they've had.

Graham speaks to General Hasegawa, then translates.

GRAHAM

Imamade donna kunren o
shitanodesuka to kiiteimasu.

HASEGAWA

Sukunakutomo, mikatawa utsuna to
oshiemashita.

GRAHAM

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

Hasegawa gives Algren a wry look.

16A EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

16A

Algren and Gant study the Japanese soldiers.

GANT

Jesus, Mary, and the Saints...

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant, have the men stand
to attention.

GANT

Sir.

(turns)

Imperial Army, Atten-tion!

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

Dai ichi rentai, kyotsuke!

(CONTINUED)

16A CONTINUED:

16A

ALGREN

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

GANT

(roars)

ALL RIGHT YOU LITTLE BASTARDS
STAND UP STRAIGHT OR I WILL SHIT-
KICK EVERY ONE OF YOU GOD DAMN
COCKSUCKERS!! ATTEN-TION!

The soldiers jump to attention.

GANT

Sir.

ALGREN

Well done, Sergeant.

GANT

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

We begin a montage:

Gant marches alongside the recruits, chiding them.

Nearby, Algren uses a blackboard to teach formations to a
group of young officers.

16AA INT./EXT. ALGREN'S TENT - DAY

16AA

Algren writes in his journal.

16AB EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

16AB

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

16B EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

16B

Algren introduces them to their rifles.

ALGREN

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

(CONTINUED)

16B CONTINUED:

16B

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

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

16C EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY

16C

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

ALGREN

Once again, this is a battle line.
 On my command, the first rank
 assumes a kneeling position.
 Rifles at the ready.
 (demonstrating)
 The second rank moves half a step
 to the right and half a step
 forward.

Gant's N.C.O. translates:

N.C.O.

(translates)

Mo ichi do, kore wa senretsuda.
 Shirei de zenretsu wa katahiza o
 tsuke. Jyu o kamae.
 (demonstrating)
 Koretsu wa hanpo migi e soshite
 hanpo mae e.

ALGREN

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

N.C.O.

(translates)

Zenretsu hiza o tsuke zenin kame
 nerai ute.

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

ALGREN

Shoulder arms!

N.C.O.

(translates)

Ninaetsutsu.

(CONTINUED)

16C CONTINUED:

16C

Algren turns away from the recruits.

ALGREN

Take over, Zeb.

GANT

(under his breath)

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

(beat; ad lib)

First rank, STAND!

(ALT. OF SC. 27)

TIME CUT:

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

ALGREN

What can the General tell me about
this man Katsumoto?

Graham translates the question.

GRAHAM

Katsumoto in tsuite motto
shiritai.

HASEGAWA

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

GRAHAM

(translating)

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

(editorializing)

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

ALGREN

(studying the
recruits)

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

(back to Hasegawa
and Graham)

Who supplies their weapons?

(CONTINUED)

16C CONTINUED: (2)

16C

Graham directs the question to Hasegawa, who answers.

GRAHAM

Karera no buki wa dare ga kyokyu
shiteiru noka?

HASEGAWA

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

GRAHAM

Katsumoto no longer dishonors
himself by using firearms.

ALGREN

No firearms?

GRAHAM

(confirming)

Jyu wa...?

HASEGAWA

... Tsukawanyo.

GRAHAM

(adding a flourish)

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

Algren looks at Hasegawa, who nods back politely.

ALGREN

How well does he know him?

GRAHAM

The General and Katsumoto fought
together for the Emperor.

ALGREN

He fought with the Samurai?

Graham looks at Algren.

GRAHAM

He is samurai.

17 OMITTED
thru
21

17
thru
21

22 EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAYS LATER

22

The army has shaped-up considerably. Gant marches them in review past a pavilion where a garden party has assembled to see them. They applaud politely. A brass band plays Yankee tunes as Algren and Bagley, in dress uniform, are being congratulated by DIPLOMATS representing all the powers currently trying to devour Japan: Russia, England, Germany, France.

DIPLOMAT

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

Graham comes to Algren's rescue.

GRAHAM

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

He steers Algren away.

ALGREN

Excuse me. My thanks, Mister Graham.

GRAHAM

I wouldn't accept if I were you, he's likely to poison your soup.
(looks around)
Oh, the vultures are out in force today.

Graham greets each passing diplomat.

GERMAN DIPLOMAT

Mein Herr Graham, warum marschieren sie nicht?

GRAHAM

Ah, mein Herr Graham, guten tag...
(to Algren;
sotto voce)
Beats his wife.

FRENCH DIPLOMAT

(to Algren)
Felicitacion, Monsieur Le Capitan!

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

GRAHAM
D'accord, mon vieux.
(to Algren)
Pederast.

RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT
(to Algren)
Pri Krazna.

GRAHAM
Spaseba, Minster.
(to Algren)
He's a complete drunk.

As he continues on and mutters to Algren.

GRAHAM
You're a very popular boy.
Everybody wants to get a good look
at the competition.

ALGREN
This trade agreement must be worth
a pretty penny.

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

Omura separates himself from his entourage.

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

ALGREN
Mister Omura, any army can march.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (1A)

22

OMURA

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

GRAHAM

I made that assumption.

OMURA

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

GRAHAM

A bestseller, I'm sure...

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2) 22

OMURA

(looks at him)

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

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

23 EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY 23

Algren, Graham and Bagley approach the ancestral palace.

GRAHAM

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

24 INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - STEPS - LATER 24

They climb the majestic approach.

GRAHAM

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

25 INT. IMPERIAL COURT - THRONE ROOM - DAY 25

Algren, Bagley and Graham approach.

GRAHAM

(to Algren & Bagley)

And, bow.

(closer)

Bow.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

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

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

OMURA

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

The Emperor speaks in Japanese.

OMURA

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

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

ALGREN

[Yes] I have seen them.

Graham translates.

GRAHAM

Hai... Mimashita.

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

OMURA

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

BAGLEY

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

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

OMURA

(subtitles)

Emperor, must you ask this now?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (1A)

25

EMPEROR
(subtitles)

Just ask.

OMURA

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

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (A2)

25

This strikes a chord in Algren but he buries it.

ALGREN

They are very brave.

The Emperor nods and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

EMPEROR
(accented English)
Thank...you...very...much.

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

GRAHAM
(to Algren & Bagley)
Step back... Step back... Step
back... and, turn.

Algren, Bagley and Graham turn to leave.

26 EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

26

Tokyo is a city in chaos. Everything seems out of balance. Dystopic. A collision of Eastern and Western. Algren and Gant watch as Graham prepares to take a photograph of an old merchant in front of his store.

GRAHAM
(subtitles)
Hold still while I count to
three... One... Two... Three.

Algren silently watches the passers-by. Something draws his attention:

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

UJIO's proud gait and rigid, imperious manner intrigue Algren. Most of the people on the sidewalk instantly step out of the way, bowing in deference. But two YOUNG JAPANESE in Western dress do not.

Ujio stands before them, waiting for them to move. They don't. Tense words are exchanged.

YOUNG MAN #1
(subtitles)
Oh, look. There's a man who's
still wearing a kamishomo [formal
samurai outfit].

YOUNG MAN #2
(subtitles)
You're still wearing a top knot.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

ALGREN
(almost to himself)
Samurai.

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

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

YOUNG MAN #1
(subtitles)
Not to mention two swords.

YOUNG MAN #2
(subtitles)
They're probably bamboo swords.

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

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

UJIO
(subtitles)
And you call yourself Japanese.

They laugh in response.

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

YOUNG MAN #1
Your time is past...

Like lightning -- Ujio pulls out his long samurai sword. It flashes -- with two precise strokes, he cleanly BEHEADS one of the men --

As the beheaded corpse falls, the other man prostrates himself. Ujio wipes the blade and sweeps it back into its scabbard. Impassively, he turns away.

Algren isn't listening. As Ujio passes, he and Algren lock eyes for a moment.

27 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

27

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

ALGREN

The blade of that sword...

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

I've never seen an edge like that.

GRAHAM

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

(pauses for a bite)

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

(as the waitress

pours tea)

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

Hasegawa watches as Algren quaffs yet another cup of sake.

HASEGAWA

(to Algren)

Sake...

(tries English)

... Good.

ALGREN

(nods back at
Hasegawa)

Ask him what kind of man this Katsumoto is?

Graham translates the question.

GRAHAM

Katsumoto in tsuite motto shiritai.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

HASEGAWA

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

GRAHAM

(translating)

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

(editorializing now)

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

(beat)

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

ALGREN

Who supplies their weapons?

GRAHAM

Katsumoto's samurai don't use
guns.

GANT

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

Graham directs the question to Hasegawa, who answers.

GRAHAM

Buki wa don na juu desuka?

HASEGAWA

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

GRAHAM

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

GANT

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

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (1A)

27

GRAHAM

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

Algren looks at Hasegawa, who nods back politely.

ALGREN

How well does he know him?

GRAHAM

The General and Katsumoto fought together for the Emperor.

ALGREN

He fought with the samurai?

Graham looks at Algren.

GRAHAM

He is samurai.

28 INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - LATER

28

CLOSE ON a brilliantly-colored print of a Samurai battle. Horses rear, swords flash, severed heads litter the ground. Algren is studying it, still drinking sake.

GRAHAM

Vexing people, the samurai. Blood-thirsty, honorable, cruel, fabulously artistic. Wanted to write a book about them for years, but they tend to keep to themselves.

GANT

Bastards still wear armor...

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

I want detailed accounts of their battle tactics.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

GRAHAM

I have several books on it.
(bows to Algren)
Just waiting to be translated.

GANT

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

GRAHAM

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

Algren glances disapprovingly at Gant.

ALGREN

Sorry, can't remember.

GRAHAM

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

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (1A)

28

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

GANT

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

GRAHAM

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

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

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

GANT

Ah, the English and their love of torture.

GRAHAM

I beg your pardon --

GANT

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

GRAHAM

I was not speaking to you, you uncivilized hooligan.

GANT

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

Algren interrupts them. His tone is flat and unemotional.

ALGREN

...First you need to grab a handful of hair and give it a quick jerk in order to loosen the skin. Then you saw the scalp off a little at a time because the blades are usually dull and the skin doesn't come off all at once. The problem is getting enough leverage when your hands are bloody...and slick. And, of course, the person being scalped is generally still alive and screaming. So a knee in the back tends to quiet them down and give you the purchase you need to finish the job.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (3)

28

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

ALGREN

How soon can you translate those books?

GRAHAM

(recovering)

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

ALGREN

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

GRAHAM

I shall not sleep until it is done.

(stands; woozy)

Ah, sake...

GANT

(after Graham leaves)

You'll be all right?

ALGREN

Leave the bottle.

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

29 INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - LATER

29

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

30 FLASHBACK - A WINDSWEPT RIDGE

30

A line of mounted cavalry waits atop the ridge.

Algren is next to COLONEL BAGLEY. Gant is nearby. In the valley below, a peaceful Indian village.

ALGREN

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

BAGLEY

And lose all element of surprise?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

ALGREN

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

BAGLEY

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

ALGREN

These people had nothing to do with the raids!

BAGLEY

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

Bagley pulls his sword.

ALGREN

I promised him!

BAGLEY

And we promised the settlers we'd protect them.

(to the men)

Quietly now, boys.

And slowly the horses begin to descend on the village.

31 INT. GRAHAM'S ROOM - SAME

31

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

ALGREN (O.S.)

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

32 INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - SAME

32

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

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

SERVANT

(subtitles; to Graham)

He was disturbing the other guests...

ALGREN

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

It is more than apparent that Algren is still drunk.

GRAHAM

Captain Algren, if I may...

ALGREN

DROP DEAD YOU LIMEY NINNY! I
DON'T NEED ANY MORE HISTORY
LESSONS!Algren throws the empty bottle through the paper wall.
Gant enters. Graham looks at him helplessly.

GANT

Leave him be.

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

33 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ALGREN'S ROOM - LATER

33

GRAHAM

What in God's name was that?

GANT

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

GRAHAM

What was all that about a promise?

GANT

He'll be all right by morning.

34 EXT. PARADE GROUND - NEXT DAY

34

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

GANT

READY! AIM! FIRE!

(CONTINUED)

34

CONTINUED:

34

The recruits FIRE their WEAPONS.

GANT

LOAD!

Algren frowns.

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant. Their marksmanship is appalling.

GANT

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

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

ALGREN

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

N.C.O.

(translates)

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

OMURA (O.S.)

Good morning, Captain.

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

BAGLEY

Nathan.

(takes Algren aside)

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

Algren looks at the soldiers continuing to take target practice.

OMURA

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

ALGREN

They're not ready.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (1A)

34

BAGLEY

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

ALGREN

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

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

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

BAGLEY

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

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

ALGREN

Fire at the target.

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

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

GANT

Captain?

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

ALGREN

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

GRAHAM

Excuse me -- ?

Algren unholsters his Colt as he walks.

ALGREN

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

GANT

Captain, if we might have a word...

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

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (3)

34

ALGREN

Tell him.

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

Algren now leans casually against the target.

ALGREN

Fire, damn it.

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

Algren cocks his weapon once more and aims at the boy.

Finally, in abject terror, the recruit squeezes the trigger. A bright orange flash and a cloud of black-powder smoke.

Algren is untouched.

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

ALGREN

They're not ready.

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

BAGLEY

The regiment leaves at six A.M.

35 EXT. TOKYO - DAY

35

The Imperial Army leaves Tokyo.

35A EXT. SEA COAST - DAY

35A

The Imperial Army marches along the shoreline.

36 EXT. RUINED VILLAGE - DAY

36

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

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

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

ALGREN

What is that sign?

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

Omura owns all of this?

GRAHAM

As soon as he can get rid of the samurai.

Algren rides past villagers kneeling before a destroyed Buddhist temple.

37 EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

37

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

GRAHAM

Samurai road sign. "No Trespassing."

37A EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - MORNING

37A

The Imperial Army enters a deep forest.

38 EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST - MORNING

38

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

ALGREN

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

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

(CONTINUED)

ALGREN

Sergeant Gant, deploy skirmishers.
(wheels on his horse)
I need a second line ready to fill
in on my command!

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

BAGLEY

Captain Algren, we're not here as combatants.

ALGREN

Then who's going to lead these men?

BAGLEY

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

ALGREN

We'll be there presently.

BAGLEY

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

GRAHAM

Of course.

Bagley leaves the front lines with Graham in tow. Gant watches.

GANT

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

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

ALGREN

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

Gant acts as if he has not heard Algren.

ALGREN

Mr. Gant. Did you hear my order?

(CONTINUED)

GANT

I heard it.

ALGREN

Then you will obey it.

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

ALGREN

Zeb, get out of here. NOW.

GANT

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

A DISTANT RUMBLE of HORSES, building through the fog, breaks the moment. Then the sound of DRUMS. The Japanese soldiers are literally shaking in fear.

Algren peers again into the fog. Nothing.

Then the sound abruptly stops. A silence broken only by the murmured prayers of some of the soldiers.

ALGREN

Fix bayonets.

GANT

FIX... BAYONETS!

ALGREN

Firing positions.

GANT

Assume firing positions.

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

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

And then another figure, and another.

ALGREN

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

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

38

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

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

ALGREN

FIRE!

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

ALGREN

RELOAD AND FIRE AT WILL!

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

ALGREN

HOLD THE LINE, DAMN IT!

Too late -- the Samurai are on them --

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

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

Gant uses his Winchester with deadly accuracy. Algren uses his REVOLVER -- FIRING as he turns on his horse -- when the revolver is empty he pulls his cavalry saber. He parries the lethal blows as the Samurai hurtle past --

And then the Samurai attack from behind! Soldiers flee. Algren calls out orders but all discipline is gone -- it is every man for himself.

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

(CONTINUED)

Algren scrambles to his feet, his saber nowhere to be found as another rider heads toward him carrying a lance. Algren wrestles the lance from his grip, throws the rider to the ground, and runs him through. Gant SHOOTs another who is about to spear Algren.

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

Algren now wields the lance to battle the horsemen as they sweep past. He spears one and then unseats another. When a third samurai cuts his lance in half, Algren uses the remaining half as a club to take him down.

Gant, meanwhile, is slashed by the horseman in BLOOD RED ARMOR. Algren sees his friend, dazed and helpless on the ground, and tries desperately to fight his way to the rescue. But it's too late. The Samurai dismounts, raises his sword, and impales Gant on the ground.

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

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

Left alone, Algren finds himself confronted by ashigaru-- samurai foot soldiers carrying pikes. He turns to discover his retreat cut off by other samurai-wielding katana -- the lethal long sword.

But rather than seek any quarter, Algren launches an attack. He kills one samurai before he is STABBED in the shoulder, by a lance.

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

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

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

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (5)

38

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

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

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

A harsh COMMAND stops them in their tracks. The Masked Samurai leaps from his horse. Everyone steps aside deferentially as he looks down at Algren.

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

Katsumoto looks down at Algren, who now awaits certain death. Instead, Katsumoto barks an order. Rough hands lift Algren to his feet.

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

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

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

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

Closing his eyes, General Hasegawa calmly and deliberately plunges the knife into his stomach.

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

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

Algren passes out, his wounds overcoming him.

39 EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

39

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

40 EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

40

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

This is the other Japan. The Japan we have not yet seen. After the turmoil of Tokyo, this place seems a bucolic paradise. A valley below with rice fields. The sense of harmony so markedly absent from the cities.

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

Algren, barely conscious, is lifted from his horse. Katsumoto approaches.

KATSUMOTO

What is your name?

Algren looks at him and refuses to answer.

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

UJIO

(subtitles)

You insolent swine! Answer! You, speak!

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

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

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

Algren doesn't move.

Ujio brings the cutting edge into contact with Algren's cheek. Blood runs where even this feather-light touch cuts Algren's skin. Algren doesn't move.

Katsumoto speaks.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
Leave him be.

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

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

Katsumoto walks away. Nobutada smiles at him.

NOBUTADA
(proud of his
only English)
Jolly good.

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

41 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

41

Algren's eyes open...

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

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

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

41A

The Silent Samurai stands guard on the porch.

42 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

42

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

A ten-year-old BOY appears in the doorway. He stares at Algren with open hostility. This is HIGEN. He turns and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

Algren blacks out.

42A OMITTED

42A

43 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 43

Algren's eyes open...

Through the archway Algren can see Higen and his four-year-old brother, MAGOJIRO, horsing around.

The beautiful WOMAN who earlier was stitching his wound enters, crosses to them with a tray. She says one word and the boys instantly obey.

TAKA
(subtitles)
Be quiet.

Algren watches as she serves food to her sons.

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

43A EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DUSK 43A

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

44 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK 44

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

44A EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY 44A

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

45 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 45

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

NOBUTADA
(to Taka; subtitles)
He's in bad shape.

Algren has no idea what Nobutada is saying. He interrupts with the only Japanese word he has bothered to learn:

ALGREN
Sake.

Nobutada's face breaks into a wide smile.

45 CONTINUED: (A1)

45

Sake? NOBUTADA

Sake. ALGREN

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

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

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Taka will take care of you. How
are you feeling?

[ALT:]

ALGREN

[Sake.]

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Yes. Sake.

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

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

45A OMITTED

45A

46 INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

46

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

47 EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

47

The guard sits silently, vigilantly, on duty.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

47A INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY (SEE SLATE C47)

47A

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

47B FLASHBACK - THE WASHITA RIVER

47B

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

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

GANT

... Captain?

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

47C INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

47C

Just outside his room, Nobutada whispers to Taka.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Let him drink sake, Aunt.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No. [That will not do.]

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

This is my village.

TAKA

(subtitles)

This is my house.

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

48 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

48

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

49 OMITTED

49

49A FLASHBACK - THE WASHITA RIVER

49A

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

GANT

Captain, we're movin' out.

(watches him)

Captain... It was orders.

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

50 BACK IN THE HOUSE

50

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

51 EXT. VILLAGE - FOLLOWING

51

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

52 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING

52

The guard and the woman hurry in. Algren is disoriented. The woman crosses to him, kneeling at his side. Algren lunges, grabbing her.

ALGREN

Sake! Sake!

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

ALGREN

(mumbling to himself)

Sake...

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

ALGREN

Give it to me. Please...

She gently touches him.

53 INT. THE PORCH OF KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

53

Ujio stands with Katsumoto. Nobutada listens attentively.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

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

KATSUMOTO
 (subtitles)
 That is not their custom.

UJIO
 (subtitles)
 Then I will kill him.

NOBUTADA
 (subtitles)
 Father, I don't think --

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

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

54 OMITTED
 thru
 57

54
 thru
 57

58 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

58

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

59 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

59

Daylight streams in, finding Algren lying on his back. The worst of the detox is past. As he lies there, SOUNDS from outside draw him:

60 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - MORNING

60

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

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

ALGREN

Good morning.

(no response)

Fine, and you?

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

61 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

61

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

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

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

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

ALGREN

So what's your name? Name.

Namai?

(no response)

You have a name, don't you?

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

On a nearby hillside, the samurai train. Algren watches. Part sacred ritual, part martial preparation, they combine athletic prowess and graceful artistry into one effortless whole.

Kendo, ("The Way of the Sword") masters practice with their wooden swords. We see Higen, and other boys his age, working hard. Higen is reprimanded harshly for an incorrect move.

UJIO

(subtitles)

No, not that way! Raise your arms higher.

Algren stares at the boy.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

UJIO
(subtitles)
Lower your hips!

NAKAO, a mountain of a man, is a Jujitsu master. He stands unarmed, four samurai facing him. They attack with wooden swords. He effortlessly defeats them -- the agility of the huge man is shocking.

Kyudo ("The Way of the Bow") masters use their bows for target practice. Nobutada holds a bundle of arrows. In the distance, a line of plums. Algren watches. Nobutada just seems to stand there, his eyes half-open.

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

62 OMITTED
&
62A62
&
62A

63 INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

63

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

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

Algren senses someone behind him, and turns. The woman is looking at the mud Algren has tracked across the pristine tatami mats. Algren looks down at his muddy boots, then back at the woman. She turns and walks away. Nobutada appears with the Silent Samurai. He speaks to Algren in Japanese, gesturing toward the door.

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)
Over there. Go. You. Go. You.

Algren allows himself to be led out.

64 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

64

Algren follows the Silent Samurai through the village.

ALGREN

So where are we going?

(listens)

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

(shakes his head)

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

65 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

65

The Silent Samurai leads Algren into the compound.

ALGREN

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

(no response)

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

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

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

KATSUMOTO

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

(no answer)

Are my words not correct?

(still no answer)

I will practice my English with you.

ALGREN

You will?

KATSUMOTO

If you would honor me.

They look at each other for a long moment.

ALGREN

You kept me alive just to speak English...

Katsumoto just stares at him.

ALGREN

Then what do you want?

KATSUMOTO

To know my enemy.

Algren is dumbstruck. These are his own words.

ALGREN

I saw what you do to your enemies.

KATSUMOTO

The soldiers in your country do not kill?

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

General Hasegawa asked me to help him end his life. A Samurai cannot stand the shame of defeat. I was honored to cut off his head.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (1A)

65

Algren shakes his head at the incomprehensibility of these people.

KATSUMOTO

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

Algren watches Katsumoto for a moment.

ALGREN

Nathan Algren.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

65

KATSUMOTO

(bows)

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

ALGREN

I have questions.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

I have questions.

Katsumoto stops and turns back to Algren.

KATSUMOTO

Questions come later.

ALGREN

Who was the warrior in the red armor?

Katsumoto stops, considers, relents.

KATSUMOTO

My brother-in-law. Hirotaro.

ALGREN

And the woman who cares for me?

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

KATSUMOTO

My sister, Hirotaro's wife. Her name is Taka.

ALGREN

(incredulous)

I killed her husband?

KATSUMOTO

It was a good death.

Katsumoto walks away.

66 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

66

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

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

You! Come... Please...

Nobutada leads Algren to the table and pushes him gently to his knees.

Taka treats him with utter politeness. His guilt over what he has learned is overwhelming. He cannot even bring himself to look at her. She hands him a bowl of rice.

Only when she isn't looking does he glance at her for any sign of the animosity she must feel.

TAKA

(subtitles)

He is vile. And smells like the pigs. Tell my brother I cannot stand this one minute longer.

NOBUTADA

(to Taka, subtitles)

Why don't you tell him?

They look at each other in ironic sympathy.

TAKA

(subtitles)

At least make him take a bath.

Nobutada laughs.

67 EXT. VILLAGE - BATHING TUB - DAY

67

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

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

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Feels good, doesn't it? Good for the shoulder. Jolly good.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (A1)

67

Nobutada, unconcerned, chats pleasantly, remarking on Algren's old battle wounds.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Nice and warm? How is it? See,
heals the scars quickly.

The grandmother arrives at the bath. Nobutada rises and bows.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Granny, hello.

Algren's discomfort turns to outright alarm when a toothless old grandmother appears and joins him in the tub!

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

You are strong to bear them.

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

GRANDMOTHER

(to Algren)

Konichiwa.

Nabutada laughs.

68 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY - RAINING

68

Algren, in uniform, walks back with Nobutada and his samurai shadow.

Higen and another boy run past training with wooden swords. As Algren approaches them, Nobutada watches his cousin proudly, murmuring details of his prowess to Algren, who has no idea what he's talking about.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

They may be children, but they are
strong.

Higen is deadly serious. He spars with another boy, deftly knocking the wooden sword from his hands.

The boys immediately stop.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

Algren bends and picks the sword up, offering it back to Higen's friend, but the boy backs away shaking his head.

Nobutada watches in amusement, then encourages Algren in Higen's direction.

NOBUTADA

(to Algren)

Try... Try...

Algren shakes his head politely, but Higen is ready to attack.

Algren dodges one thrust, then parries another. For a little boy, Higen is remarkably dangerous and quick. And, of course, his attack is fueled by rage.

Ujio approaches, barks a command in Japanese.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

UJIO
(subtitles)
Put down that sword.

Suddenly, everyone goes silent. Higen backs away. Algren turns.

Ujio is standing behind him, wooden sword in hand.

It's obvious to Algren what he must mean, but Algren does nothing.

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

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

Higen's friend goes running off toward Taka's house.

Algren staggers back to his feet.

Again Ujio's SWORD FLASHES. Algren parries one blow before he is cracked across the face. Blood flows from his nose.

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

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

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

Higen also watches closely.

The Silent Samurai merely stares at Algren as Ujio spins kicks him in the stomach, followed by a blow to the shin. Algren is swept off his feet face down in the mud.

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

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

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

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

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

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

69 OMITTED

69

70 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

70

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

ALGREN

I really want to thank you for
looking out for me yesterday.
That's your job, right, protecting
me? Good job, Bob.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

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

71 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

71

Algren discovers Katsumoto waiting.

KATSUMOTO
Ujio is teaching you the way of
the Japanese sword.

ALGREN
Is that what he's doing?

KATSUMOTO
You fought against your red
Indians?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

ALGREN

... Yes?

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Why?

KATSUMOTO

I wish to learn.

ALGREN

Read a book.

KATSUMOTO

I would rather have a good
conversation.

ALGREN

Why?

KATSUMOTO

Because we are both students of
war.

(looks at him)

So you were the General of your
army?

Algren shakes his head, relenting.

ALGREN

No, I was a Captain.

KATSUMOTO

This is a low rank?

ALGREN

(almost smiles)

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

KATSUMOTO

Ah. And who was your General?

ALGREN

Don't you have a rebellion to
lead?

KATSUMOTO

People in your country do not like
conversation?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

ALGREN

He was a Lieutenant Colonel. His name was Custer.

KATSUMOTO

I know this name.
(Algren looks at him)
He killed many warriors.

ALGREN

(a beat)
Yes. Many warriors.

KATSUMOTO

So he was a good general.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

5,000 Indians. How many men for Custer?

ALGREN

211.

KATSUMOTO

I like this General Custer.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

I think this was a very good death.

ALGREN

Well maybe you can have one just like it someday.

KATSUMOTO

If it is my destiny.

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

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (3)

71

ALGREN

Look, what do you want from me?

KATSUMOTO

What do you want for yourself?

ALGREN

What are you doing, why are we having these 'conversations'? What the hell am I doing here?

KATSUMOTO

In Spring the snows will melt and the passes will open, and the events of the world will unfold. Until that time, you are here. Good day, Captain.

Katsumoto stands, bows, and leaves.

72 OMITTED
thru
74

72
thru
74

75 EXT. VILLAGE - TAKA'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY
Algren sits on the porch in the rain.

75

75A INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY - RAINING
Katsumoto continues reading Algren's journal.

75A

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

75B EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK - RAINING

75B

Algren watches the swordsmith work on the blade.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

75C EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 75C

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

75CA EXT. VILLAGE - HILLSIDE - DUSK 75CA

Higen walks, alone, in the long grass.

75D OMITTED 75D
& &
75E 75E

75F EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 75F

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

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

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

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

75G INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY 75G

Higen sits, laboring over a scroll. Algren enters holding a Japanese notebook and sits close to him.

Higen looks up. Algren indicates that he wants pen and paper.

ALGREN

Pencil... [Pen...]
(gesturing)
For me... Write.

Higen hesitates, then gives it to him.

(CONTINUED)

75G CONTINUED:

75G

HIGEN

En pitsu.

ALGREN

En pitsu... en pitsu. Arrigato.

Algren begins to write as Higen watches him.

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

Taka enters with Magojiro.

TAKA

Higen.

Higen is pleased until Taka calls him away.

75H EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

75H

Ujio practices alone on a hilltop.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

75J EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

75J

Nobutada practices archery.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

75JA OMITTED

75JA

75K INT./EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

75K

Ujio instructs Higen in the tea ceremony.

75L INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SHRINE ROOM - DAY (ALSO SLATE A83)

75L

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

76 OMITTED 76

76A INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY 76A

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

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

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

76B OMITTED 76B

76BA INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 76BA

Algren kneels at the table with the rest of the family. They eat in silence.

ALGREN
(subtitles)
Thank you. More rice?

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

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

Algren holds up his hand.

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

NOBUTADA
Hashi.

ALGREN
Hashi.

(CONTINUED)

76BA CONTINUED:

76BA

Nobutada is hysterical with glee now.

NOBUTADA

Hai!!

(CONTINUED)

76BA CONTINUED:

76BA

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

MAGOJIRO

(subtitles)

Nose! Ears!

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Top knot! This is my top knot.

MAGOJIRO

(subtitles)

Mouth! Teeth! Tongue!

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

All samurai must wear a top knot!

HIGEN

(subtitles)

How can he understand?

MAGOJIRO

(subtitles)

Tongue! Tongue!

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Do you understand?

HIGEN

(subtitles)

He can't understand. That's enough.

MAGOJIRO

(subtitles)

TONGUE!

HIGEN

(subtitles)

Be quiet.

Algren points to himself.

ALGREN

Algren.

NOBUTADA

All-gren.

(CONTINUED)

76BA CONTINUED: (2)

76BA

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

ALGREN

Nobutada. Magojiro. Higen.
(turns to Taka)

Taka.

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

76BB EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

76BB

Katsumoto is in heated conversation with Taka.

TAKA

(subtitles)

Brother, please make him leave. I cannot stand it.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Is he so repulsive?

TAKA

(subtitles)

The shame is unbearable. I ask your permission to end my life.

KATSUMOTO

(harsh; subtitles)

You will do as you are told!

She bows her head deferentially.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Would you rather I kill him to avenge your husband?

TAKA

(subtitles)

... Yes.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Hirotao died in battle. He tried to kill the American, and he was defeated. It was Karma.

(CONTINUED)

76BB CONTINUED:

76BB

TAKA
(subtitles)
I know. Forgive my weakness.

KATSUMOTO
(softens his tone;
subtitles)
There must be some reason why he's
here with us.
(beat)
It's God's will.

Suddenly, they look up as Algren emerges from the house. Taka lowers her eyes, bows, and heads inside. Algren watches her go.

ALGREN
She has been very kind to care for
me.

KATSUMOTO
She is honored to have my guest in
her house.

Katsumoto walks away.

76C EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

76C

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

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

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

ALGREN
Huh?

NOBUTADA
(pointing as
he explains)
Mind sword, mind face, mind people
watch, too many mind.
(on Algren's
confused
expression)
No mind.

ALGREN
No mind?

(CONTINUED)

76C CONTINUED:

76C

NOBUTADA

Hai! No sword. No people watch.
No enemy. No mind. You try.

Algren nods, uncertainly, and picks himself up. Again he faces Nakao, shaking off tension and trying to stay calm. Algren attacks. And once again, he ends up in the dirt. Nobutada smiles encouragingly.

Algren can only shake his head.

77 OMITTED
thru
8377
thru
83

83A INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

83A

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

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

Is it bestowed at birth -- ?

83B OMITTED

83B

84 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY

84

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

84A OMITTED

84A

84B EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

84B

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

(CONTINUED)

84B CONTINUED: 84B

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

84C INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY (SHOT W/SC. 65) 84C

Katsumoto sits before the Buddha, deep in meditation.

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

84CA EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - PORCH - MAGIC HOUR 84CA

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

84D EXT. VILLAGE - ANOTHER DAY 84D

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

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

He's getting better, no?

NAKAO

(subtitles)

Yes. But still so ugly.

85 OMITTED 85
thru thru
88A 88A

88B INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY 88B

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

ALGREN

Cold.

(CONTINUED)

88B CONTINUED: (A1)

88B

HIGEN

Samui.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I'm cold.

MAGOJIRO

Watashi mo samui.

(beat)

Watashi mo samui.

ALGREN

You're cold also.

HIGEN

Hi!

MAGOJIRO

(repeating)

Hi.

ALGREN

Hi. Fire.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

The branch.

ALGREN

Wood. Ede.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

The branch burns.

ALGREN

Eda ga...

HIGEN

Eda ga moeru.

ALGREN

Burns? Eda ga moeru. Burning
wood.

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

She watches Higen helping Algren before walking away.

88C EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

88C

Taka carries a large sack of rice toward the house.

ALGREN (V.O.)

And yet I keep offending.

88D INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

88D

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

TAKA
(subtitles)
No, please.

ALGREN
(insistent)
Hai.

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

TAKA
(subtitles)
Japanese men do not help with this.

ALGREN
(subtitles)
I am not Japanese.

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

ALGREN
You're always so polite. What must you be thinking [feeling]? [Do you miss him that much?] Was he good to you? I hope he was.

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

ALGREN
I'm sorry. *Gomen n'sai*.

She looks up at him, suddenly attuned.

ALGREN
Gomen n'sai... Your husband,
Hirotao.

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

TAKA
(subtitles)
He did his duty. You did your duty.

(CONTINUED)

88D CONTINUED:

88D

ALGREN
What are you saying?

TAKA
(subtitles)
I accept your apology...

Despite their mutual loneliness, they are still worlds apart.

Magojiro runs into the kitchen breaking the moment. Taka turns away toward her son.

88E AN ICE CRYSTAL ON THE END OF A BRANCH

88E

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

MONTAGE BEATS:

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

Algren and Higen pass by the water wheel.

Algren, Higen and the Silent Samurai climb the hillside. Higen runs to catch up with Algren.

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

ALGREN (V.O.)
Spring, 1877. This marks the
longest I have stayed in one place
since I left home at seventeen.

88F EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

88F

Algren trains alone in the twilight.

ALGREN (V.O.)
There is so much here that I will
never understand.

88FA EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

88FA

Taka collects vegetables from the garden. Algren sees her.

88G EXT. VILLAGE HILLSIDE - DAY 88G

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

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

88H INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - DAY (SHOT AS SC. 87A) 88H

Katsumoto takes an ancient sword from a wooden case.

88J EXT. WOODS - DAY (SHOT AS SC. 77A) 88J

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

88K EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 88K

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

ALGREN (V.O.)

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

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

89 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 89

Algren is once again among the training warriors...

KOURA SAMURAI #1

Ujio will win in five moves.

NAKAO

In six!

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (AA1)

89

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

KOURA SAMURAI #1
Next in five moves.

NAKAO
In six.

Again, and again Algren is bested.

KOURA SAMURAI #1
In seven moves!

NAKAO
In eight.

Algren is furious.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (A1)

89

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

Gradually all SOUND drains away. We hear only Algren's steady breathing. He is suddenly aware of everything. A bird in a tree. A woman grinding rice. A plum about to fall. A gently-swaying battle flag.

Slow-motion as:

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

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

ALL SAMURAI

A draw!

A draw. The samurai are amazed. Algren bows to Ujio. Ujio nods in respect.

90 EXT. VILLAGE - LATER

90

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

KATSUMOTO

Your skill is improving.

ALGREN

I am a beginner.

KATSUMOTO

Such modesty is very Japanese...

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

KATSUMOTO

They are fine warriors.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

I know this word. How quickly can they fire?

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

What is their range?

ALGREN

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

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Either way, he's just as dead.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

(shakes his head)

Honor...

KATSUMOTO

You do not believe in this?

Katsumoto slowly draws his sword.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

Then they had a good death.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

(fierce)

What do you know of human life? You come here to kill for money. Where is your family? Your wife, your sons? What is your legacy?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2)

90

ALGREN

(rising intensity)

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

Katsumoto simply looks at him.

KATSUMOTO

I was told Americans were difficult people...

ALGREN

I was told Japanese were agreeable and polite.

The slightest smile passes between them.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

When will the passes be open?

KATSUMOTO

They are open now.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

So that you can bring your howitzers against my samurai?

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

91 EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

91

The entire village has gathered to celebrate spring planting. Torches illuminate a small stage near Taka's house, where actors perform *Kyogen*, a comic form.

Algren sits near the back, marveling at the laughter and spirit around him.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

Enjoying himself, Algren looks at Taka, Higen, and Magojiro laughing at the actors.

92 EXT. THE VILLAGE - SAME 92

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

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

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

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

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

We know them as Ninja.

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

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

93 EXT. THE VILLAGE SQUARE - SAME 93

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

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

Nakao laughs and yells out.

NAKAO
(subtitles)
My Lord, finally...

94 EXT. IN THE VILLAGE - SAME 94

Another samurai crumpled with his throat cut.

Ninjas creep past.

95 EXT. VILLAGE HOUSE - SAME

95

The Ninjas jump and crawl up the walls like spiders.

One by one they take up positions on the rooftops surrounding the square, taking small, lethal crossbows and silently arming them.

96 EXT. THE SQUARE - SAME

96

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

Algren sits back and takes in the fullness of the moment. His eyes are drawn to the stars above, which seem particularly bright at this moment.

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

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

Quickly, he looks up into the darkness again, and now sees more shapes, no more than the shifting shadows on the rooftops.

He jumps to his feet --

ALGREN

KATSUMOTO!

Several things happen at once:

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

Villagers scream as --

Arrows and throwing stars rain down on the unprotected square --

Algren has grabbed hold of Taka and the boys and, as arrows thud all around, is propelling them toward Taka's house --

Katsumoto ducks down and rolls off the stage as bolts riddle the platform area.

The samurai thrust their bodies in front of Katsumoto --

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

Algren pushes Taka and the boys into the house. A samurai enters the house behind them, but is struck by a shooting star just as he slides the shoji screen closed.

Ujio and Nakao, swords flashing, are organizing a ring around Katsumoto, and they make their way toward Taka's house.

Nobutada grabs his bow and is already picking off Ninja from the rooftops --

The ring of samurai around Katsumoto is also moving toward Taka's house, but one by one, they are being picked off --

More Ninja have now appeared, this time on the ground --

Samurai rush to engage them, and small hand-to-hand engagements break out around the square --

The circle of Samurai mount the steps.

UJIO
(subtitles)
Lord, please go inside.

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
The women, children!

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

97 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

97

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

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

Algren swiftly turns ready to attack, only to see it is Katsumoto with two more samurai.

They share a look as they hear --

A terrifying SCRAPING sound from above -- like rats. The Ninja are up there.

98 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 98

Ujio and his men are outnumbered by the attacking Ninja, but they will not allow the attackers to enter the house.

Nearby, Nobutada is at the stage. He continues firing his bow -- the powerful arrow passes through one Ninja after Ninja.

99 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 99

In the main room, for one moment Katsumoto and his men are frozen in their defensive postures -- not knowing where the next attack will come from.

A SOUND from the rear of the house -- a sliding screen opening. Katsumoto and his two samurai bodyguards head toward the kitchen area.

100 INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 100

As Katsumoto and his men rush in --

Ninjas EXPLODE into the house. Katsumoto's two bodyguards are immediately cut down -- one takes a throwing star in the face, the other is felled by a ninja-to, a short sword ideal for fighting in confined spaces.

Katsumoto dives and rolls across the floor. He instantly kills one Ninja, and narrowly escapes the slicing blow of another.

Another Ninja dives in through the window.

101 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 101

Nobutada is firing arrows into the backs of the Ninja trying to get into Taka's house.

102 INT. TAKA'S FRONT ROOM - SAME 102

Algren is reaching toward the sword of the dying samurai as --

The first Ninja TEARS THROUGH THE PAPER WALL, and lunges toward Algren with his sword.

Algren dodges the sword and takes a sharp kick to the stomach sending him back over a low table. From the floor, Algren kicks the table back into the Ninja's legs catching him off balance.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

Algren rises, catching the Ninja by the wrists, swings him violently through a wooden screen just as a second Ninja bursts through the paper shoji.

Taka quickly grabs the dying samurai's sword and plunges the blade into the Ninja's stomach. Algren turns seeing she has saved him and kicks the second Ninja away just as --

A third Ninja enters --

Algren grabs the low tea table, lifting it up to avoid the blade as the Ninja's sword LODGES deep in the wood.

Algren flings the table to the floor and kicks his opponent in the knee. Algren tries to reach for a dropped sword, but the Ninja is too quick and kicks it from his hand.

Algren throws himself, bodily, at his attacker. He manages to grab him by the arm and flip the Ninja to the floor. Algren elbows the Ninja and rolls, but the Ninja grabs his head, forcing his face toward the blade lodged in the table.

In the melee, Higen slips away into the hall. Taka calls out in dismay.

TAKA

Higen!

103 INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME

103

Katsumoto wields two swords. It is the first time we have seen him in action and his movements are both beautiful and deadly.

More Ninjas pour in through the window. Katsumoto is now facing four attackers. One of them hurls a throwing star. With blind instinct, Katsumoto turns and takes it in the meat of his arm. His attackers circle him, looking for an opening.

104 INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME

104

Algren and the Ninja are in a death struggle on the tatami.

105 INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE - SAME

105

Higen runs to his dead father's armor, grabs the short sword --

106 INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME 106

Meanwhile, the first Ninja assassin is coming around from his collision with the wooden screen. The Ninja again moves toward Algren, but --

Higen suddenly yells, appearing with his father's sword, to distract the much larger man --

Algren's attacker is on top of him, and pushing his face closer to the blade. Finally, Algren's hand finally seizes upon a chopstick on the floor, and he plunges it upward into the eye of his attacker.

Taka rises lifting Magojiro into her arms.

107 INT. THE BACK OF TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 107

Katsumoto kills two of his attackers, but while evading the furious attack of the other two.

108 INT. THE FRONT ROOM - SAME 108

Higen bravely swings the sword, but the Ninja, undeterred, prepares to strike a killing blow to the boy --

Algren sees this and grabs the sword that was previously kicked from his hand, leaps across the room, plunging it deep into the Ninja's back. The Ninja falls to the floor as Higen rolls to avoid the body. The young boy runs into Algren's room. Algren turns to help Taka and Magojiro inside also.

109 INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE - SAME 109

Katsumoto is breathing heavily. His kimono is shredded and bloody. He fends off the Ninjas' increasingly savage attacks as Algren enters.

Algren SCREAMS, distracting them just long enough for Katsumoto to take advantage and kill one.

Then, just as a Ninja is about to kill Algren, Katsumoto FLINGS his short sword -- it pinwheels across the room, hitting Algren's attacker in the back.

Without missing a beat, Algren pulls the short sword from the dying Ninja's back and uses it stab another who, thinking Algren defenseless, launches an attack.

110 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - SAME 110

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

UJIO
(subtitles)
None must escape!

111 OMITTED 111
& &
112 112

113 INT. ANOTHER ROOM - SAME 113

Algren flinches beneath the raised blade. Suddenly the Ninja JACKKNIFES as if punched by an unseen hand. As he spins, dead, to the ground, we SEE an ARROW lodged between his shoulder blades. Nobutada has FIRED blindly, through the wall, killing Algren's attacker.

Algren and Katsumoto stand back to back, facing the last two remaining Ninja. Their movements are instinctively in synch as they work together to kill first one and then the last Ninja.

Breathing hard, bloody and torn, they look at each other. Comrades in arms.

114 OMITTED 114
& &
115 115

116 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - DAY 116

Algren enters Katsumoto's compound. The cherry blossoms have emerged, creating a scene of intense beauty, color and serenity.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

He walks toward a graveyard. Cherry blossoms float on the air. Algren stops, reaches out and touches a blossom.

KATSUMOTO (O.S.)

A perfect blossom is a rare thing...

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

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Who sent those men to kill you?

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Was it the Emperor? Omura?

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

So it was Omura.

KATSUMOTO

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

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

Algren realizes that Katsumoto has answered the question.

ALGREN

I'm not a writer.

KATSUMOTO

Yet you have written many pages
since you came here.

ALGREN

How do you know that?

(no answer)

She told you.

(no answer)

What else has she told you?

KATSUMOTO

... You have nightmares.

ALGREN

Every soldier has nightmares.

KATSUMOTO

Only one who is ashamed of what he
has done.

ALGREN

You have no idea what I have done.

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

KATSUMOTO

You have seen many things.

ALGREN

I have.

KATSUMOTO

And you do not fear death.

(looks at him)

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

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

ALGREN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED: (2)

116

KATSUMOTO

I, also. It happens to men who
have seen what we have seen.

(looks around)

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

(looks back at him)

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

He takes in the beautiful orchard.

ALGREN

Life in every breath.

KATSUMOTO

That is Bushido.

(stands)

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

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

ALGREN

Good.

Katsumoto cannot reveal his disappointment.

KATSUMOTO

Good.

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

KATSUMOTO

When I took these, you were my
enemy.

117 EXT. ROTENBURO BATHS - DAY

117

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

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: (A1)

117

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

ALGREN

(subtitles)

Excuse me.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No, so sorry, I am finishing.

He's uncertain whether to take off his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

ALGREN
(subtitles)
I must go away.

TAKA
Hai.

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

ALGREN
Taka-San.

She stops. They are standing very close together.

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

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

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

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

118 EXT. THE PORCH OF TAKA'S HOUSE - DAWN

118

Algren stands overlooking the village as the sun rises over the misty peaks.

119 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

119

Nobutada and Algren mount up. Algren looks for Taka, but she is nowhere to be found. Algren is surprised by how painful this is, and Nobutada sees it.

Higen comes forward and hands the scroll and pen he has been borrowing.

(CONTINUED)

- 119 CONTINUED: 119
- Algren and Nobutada move out with Katsumoto, Ujio, Nakao and his bodyguard of several dozen Samurai. The villagers bow as they pass.
- 119A INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 119A
- Taka sits alone, unable to watch him go.
- 120 EXT. MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPE - DAY 120
- Algren, Katsumoto, and his personal bodyguard ride past towering peaks.
- ALGREN
Your lands are remarkable.
- KATSUMOTO
And soon they will belong to Omura. Four hundred feet on each side of all new railroad track. A good deal, isn't it?
- ALGREN
You ain't whistling Dixie.
- KATSUMOTO
What whistle is this?
- ALGREN
(smiles)
Just an expression.
- 121 EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY 121
- Katsumoto, Algren and the samurai ride down the middle of the street. People scatter in their wake. Algren dismounts in front of his quarters.
- Katsumoto looks at him, then gives him the slightest bow. Algren returns the bow as Graham watches, incredulous.
- 122 EXT. PARADE GROUND - DAY 122
- Algren walks onto the parade ground.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

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

New German advisors are barking commands.

Colonel Bagley sees him.

BAGLEY

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

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

ALGREN

Howitzers.

BAGLEY

Yes. The Germans don't have anything like this to offer. [ALT: This is just a slice of what we have to offer.]

They come to the "offer." Howitzers. U.S. officers are instructing.

BAGLEY

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

He moves toward a pair of shiny new Gatling Guns.

BAGLEY

200 rounds a minute. The new cartridges cut down on jamming.

ALGREN

I need a bath.

BAGLEY

After living with those savages, I can only imagine.

(beat)

Welcome back, Captain.

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

123 OMITTED

123

124 EXT. IMPERIAL PALACE WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

124

Female attendants stand discreetly by as the two men stroll.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

You rise against me, my teacher.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

No, Highness, I rise against your enemies.

(CONTINUED)

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

They are my advisors, like you.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

They advise in their own interest.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

I need men who know the world
beyond our borders, or we will be
left behind, and defenseless.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

If I am no use, then I will
happily end my life.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

No. I need your voice in the
Council.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

It is your voice we need,
Highness. You are a living God,
you can do whatever you think is
right.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

I am a living God as long as I do
what they think is right.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

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

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

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

Tell me what to do, my teacher.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2) 124

KATSUMOTO
(subtitles)
You are emperor, my Lord, not me.
You must find the wisdom for all
of us.

124A EXT. TOKYO STREETS - DAY 124A
Algren walks through the crowd.

125 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - DAY 125
Algren fights the crowds with Colonel Bagley and
Ambassador Swanbeck. New construction everywhere.
Telegraph wires strung next to an ancient temple. Huge
billboards advertising Western goods.

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

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

126 OMITTED 126

127 INT. OMURA'S OFFICE - DAY 127
Omura stands behind an enormous desk. On the wall, an
enormous Caravaggio.

OMURA
Ah, come in.

Omura removes a gold cigarette case and lights up.

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

ALGREN
I was not ill-treated.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

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

OMURA

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

ALGREN

Sufficient? Oh, I think so.

OMURA

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

ALGREN

I'm afraid I don't know.

BAGLEY

But you spent the winter at his
encampment --

ALGREN

As his prisoner.

BAGLEY

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

ALGREN

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

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Sir, about the agreement --

OMURA

I'm sure your documents are in
order, Ambassador, thank you. If
you will leave them on my desk, I
will address them at the
appropriate time.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

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

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: (2)

127

OMURA

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

Ambassador Swanbeck stands, swallowing his rage.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

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

OMURA

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

They go. Omura regards Algren.

OMURA

Please, sit down.
(beat)
May I offer you a whiskey?

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

ALGREN

No. Thank you.

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

OMURA

Katsumoto is an extraordinary man, is he not?

ALGREN

He is a tribal leader. I have known many.

OMURA

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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: (3)

127

OMURA (CONT'D)

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

ALGREN

I don't see how this concerns me.

OMURA

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

Algren looks at him.

OMURA

But now we are ready. If Katsumoto is allowed to attract other Samurai to his cause, we will have a ten year rebellion. This is something I will not allow. Either I will stop him today at the Council, or you will lead my army against him. And with our new weapons you will crush him.

ALGREN

I appreciate the offer.

OMURA

It is not an offer.

ALGREN

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

OMURA

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

(smiles)

Do we understand each other?

ALGREN

Sir, we understand each other perfectly well.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: (4)

127

OMURA

Then I am pleased.

He stands, indicating the audience is over.

OMURA

Welcome back, Captain Algren.

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

OMURA

(subtitles)

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

127A EXT. OMURA'S OFFICE - DAY

127A

Algren leaves Omura's office to find Graham waiting.

GRAHAM

What in heaven's name is going on?
The diplomatic community's abuzz.
They say Omura has passed laws
against the samurai.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham, I need a drink.

GRAHAM

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

(CONTINUED)

127A CONTINUED:

127A

ALGREN

-- Not sake. Whiskey.

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

GRAHAM

Oh, you who tread the lofty
corridors of power, tell a lowly
citizen -- is your friend
Katsumoto really planning to go up
against the Council this
afternoon--?

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

The soldiers bark orders.

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

You! What do you think you're
doing?

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

Cut the top knot!

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Don't you know about the order?

Nobutada stands proudly, responding calmly.

GRAHAM

My God, it's happening already...

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

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Hey, boy, are you listening?

(CONTINUED)

127A CONTINUED: (2)

127A

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

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

(beat)

No wonder the foreigners mock you
with that hairdo.

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

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Get down! Kneel!

Algren races toward them.

GRAHAM

Algren, stay out of it!

Algren tries to push through --

ALGREN

(subtitles;

re: the rifles)

Lower them! Lower them! Lower
them!

ARMY SOLDIER #1

(subtitles)

Who are you?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

I'm Captain Algren.

One of the soldiers smacks Algren with a rifle butt.
Algren reels, and by the time he stands again, four
others are pointing their bayonets at his face.

Nobutada reaches for his sword --

ALGREN

(subtitles)

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

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

The Japanese soldiers continue to scream at Nobutada.

ARMY SOLDIER #2

(subtitles)

I will cut it! Get down!

(CONTINUED)

127A CONTINUED: (3)

127A

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

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

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

NOBUTADA
(subtitles)

Stop!

The soldiers laugh and move off.

Algren kneels by Nobutada. Nobutada looks up, blood flowing down his face, tears in his eyes. Algren helps him to his feet.

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

ALGREN
(to Nobutada;
subtitles)
I'll take you home.

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

128 OMITTED

128

129 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - DAY

129

Katsumoto's house on the outskirts of Tokyo is spacious and harmonious. As Algren and Nobutada approach, Omura's Ronin followers melt into the shadows.

Several samurai stand guard, including Silent Bob.

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

129A OMITTED

129A

130 INT. KATSUMOTO'S CHAMBER - DAY

130

Ujio helps dress Katsumoto in his exacting wardrobe as Algren is ushered in by the silent samurai. He smiles at the familiar, impassive, dour face.

ALGREN

Always nice talking to you.

The silent samurai is, of course, silent.

ALGREN

(seeing Katsumoto's
dressing)

Excuse me.

KATSUMOTO

Stay.

(beat)

Thank you for helping my son.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

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

As Katsumoto dresses, Algren notes that Katsumoto's body is a battleground of old scars, so like his own.

KATSUMOTO

Today the Council passed two laws. The first law takes away our top-knots.

ALGREN

I know.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

KATSUMOTO

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

Algren picks up Katsumoto's two swords.

ALGREN

If you go there today, they will
kill you.

KATSUMOTO

Like you, I am hard to kill.

ALGREN

Katsumoto-San. These are your
weapons. You don't know what
their weapons can do... Your
beautiful village burned, your
family -- Taka, Higen --
slaughtered.

(beat)

For pride?

KATSUMOTO

Not for pride. For the emperor.

Algren is boiling with frustration and bile.

ALGREN

-- Your Emperor is a boy! He'll
do what he is told!

KATSUMOTO

If he wishes.

Algren holds out Katsumoto's two samurai swords.

ALGREN

Katsumoto...

(beat)

Lay down your swords. Is it worth
it? Is it really worth it? Just
for these...

KATSUMOTO

(takes the sword)

A samurai's sword is his soul. I
cannot live without my soul... Can
you?

Algren looks him dead in the eye.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: (2) 130

ALGREN

I've lived without it for years.

He turns and walks out. Katsumoto watches him sadly.

131 OMITTED 131

132 INT. COUNCIL OF STATE CHAMBER - DAY 132

An august room. Many of the Council members wear Western clothes, smoke cigarettes. The young Emperor sits on a dais off to the side.

Omura is speaking...

OMURA

(subtitles)

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

He stops... looking at something... all the Council members turn... and gape.

Katsumoto strides in, his swords proudly displayed.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Minister, you honor us.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

It is my honor to rejoin this Council.

OMURA

(subtitles)

You are perhaps unaware of our edict regarding the wearing of swords?

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

I read every edict with singular attention.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

132

OMURA

(subtitles)

Yet you bring weapons into this chamber?

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

This chamber was protected by my sword when --

OMURA

(interrupting;
subtitles)

We need no protection. We are a nation of laws now.

KATSUMOTO

(calm; subtitles)

We are a nation of whores.
Selling ourselves to our Western "allies."

OMURA

(subtitles)

If we are whores, it is the Samurai who have made us this way, living off the backs of our people.

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

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

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

They stare at one another.

OMURA

(subtitles)

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

Katsumoto's hand closes on his sword hilt.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

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

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (2)

132

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

OMURA

(subtitles)

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

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

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Then, I must refuse to give up my
sword.

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

OMURA

(subtitles)

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

The Guards await. Katsumoto looks to the other Council
members.

Katsumoto bows to the Emperor. The Guards lead Katsumoto
out.

132A OMITTED

132A

132B INT. ALGREN'S QUARTERS - DAY

132B

Algren is packing his few belongings, a half-drunk bottle
of whiskey is nearby. In his suitcase, he carefully
places the calligraphy scroll given him by Higen.

A KNOCK at the door. It is Bagley.

BAGLEY

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

He tosses an envelope into the open suitcase.

BAGLEY

Five hundred dollars a month --
including back pay for time spent
"in captivity."

(MORECONTINUED)

132B CONTINUED: (A1)

132B

BAGLEY (CONT'Das Algren
doesn't answer)
Enough there to climb back into a
bottle for the rest of your life.
(as there is still
no response)
You're welcome.

Algren places his sidearm and shoulder holster into the
suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

132B CONTINUED:

132B

BAGLEY

It's all over, by the way.
Katsumoto's under arrest. Omura
won't let him last the night.

Algren pauses his packing momentarily, unable to
completely hide his reaction.

BAGLEY

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

Algren shuts his suitcase.

BAGLEY

Just tell me one thing. What is
it about your own people you hate
so much?

Algren stares at him. Bagley is what he hates about his
own people. He picks up the suitcase and walks out.

133 EXT. YOKOHAMA HARBOR - DUSK

133

Graham sits in a rickshaw as Algren instructs porters to
carry his bags toward the gangplank.

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

You'll get over it.

GRAHAM

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

ALGREN

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

GRAHAM

I always do.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

A moment as they look at each other.

GRAHAM

You're right to get out.

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

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

To town!

A BELL RINGS, a STEWARD gives last call:

STEWARD

All ashore that's goin' ashore!

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

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

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

A133A EXT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

A133A

Guards keep watch outside Katsumoto's house.

133A INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

133A

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

OMURA'S BODYGUARD

(offering a short sword;
subtitles)

If you want to save us the
trouble...

134 EXT. TOKYO STREET - NIGHT

134

Algren walks down a shadowy street, lit only by torches. He is being followed again, and he knows it.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

134

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

Algren stops, looks behind him. The two followers are there. Algren is trapped.

The Ronin begin to close in.

Algren appears to close his eyes. And the sound of the approaching footsteps fades as We HEAR ONLY the sound of his breathing.

The Ronin draw their swords.

Algren gently opens his eyes. Everything has SLOWED DOWN: a sign in the breeze, a piece of rubbish on the street, the flame of a nearby torch.

A BLUR OF MOTION.

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

Within seconds, four bodies lie in the street.

Algren holds a bloody sword.

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

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

135 FLASHBACK - SAME SCENE - MOMENTS EARLIER

135

We see Algren grab one of the torches and smash it across a Ronin's face.

It is the attack -- replayed in real-time.

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

The two remaining Ronin strike.

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

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

(CONTINUED)

- 135 CONTINUED: 135
Algren steps back as attacker #3 impales attacker #4.
Algren steps forward and decapitates attacker #3.
Even now, it has happened too fast to be truly appreciated.
- 136 BACK TO THE STREET 136
We move, closer-still on Algren's face.
- 137 FLASHBACK - SAME SCENE - MOMENTS EARLIER 137
And so we watch the attack again, in super-slow motion now, so we can fully appreciate its terrible beauty.
A torch smashes across a face.
A sword slices the sleeve of a coat.
Sparks fly as two swords meet.
A severed hand falls in the dirt.
Blood sprays from a decapitated head.
A sword is wiped clean.
- 138 OMITTED 138
- 139 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S GATE - NIGHT 139
Imperial Guards, carrying rifles, stand watch.
- 140 OMITTED 140

141 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S GATE - NIGHT

141

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

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

ALGREN

(quietly, to Graham)

Whatever you do, don't stop.

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

GUARD

(subtitles)

Stop! Don't come any closer!

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

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

Minister Omura has commanded us to photograph the traitor --

The Guard screams in Japanese and grabs his sword.

GUARD

(subtitles)

Stop! Somebody!

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

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

BRING THAT EQUIPMENT HERE NOW!!

(claps his hands)

IMMEDIATELY!!

GUARD

(subtitles)

You stop!

The guard puts himself in front of them, pulling his sword.

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

You insolent, useless son of a peasant dog! How dare you show your sword in his presence! Do you know who this is --

(pointing to Algren)

-- This is the President of the United States of America! He is here to lead our armies in victorious battle against the rebels --

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED: (2)

141

Graham is now staring at a razor sharp blade poised inches from his face.

GUARD
(subtitles)
It's not my responsibility...

GRAHAM
(undaunted; subtitles)
Now get over there and help those men with their equipment!

There is a moment of doubt -- Graham has run out of steam. But the job is done -- the guard bows apologetically and turns to the other Guards.

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

Graham and Algren turn to head inside.

ALGREN
(under his breath)
The President of the United States...

GRAHAM
I think I'm going to be sick...

The head Guard follows them through the gate.

142 INT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

142

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

GUARD
Photo... graph.

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

ALGREN
How's your poem coming?

KATSUMOTO
The end is proving difficult.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

142

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

ALGREN

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

GRAHAM

(subtitles)

An honor.

He begins to set up the equipment.

KATSUMOTO

(to Algren)

I thought you returned to America.

ALGREN

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

KATSUMOTO

And how do you plan to do that?

A THUD is heard in the adjacent room.

Algren turns and opens the screen door.

A GUARD falls to the floor dead. Another lies on the floor behind him. The BEARER stands holding a bloody sword. He removes his hat.

It is Ujio.

He picks up the dead guards' swords and gives them to Algren to pass to Katsumoto.

KATSUMOTO

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

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

GRAHAM

I would be greatly honored.

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

143 EXT. KATSUMOTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

143

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

The alarm has been given. Three Guards come running to the scene and raise their weapons.

Katsumoto, Ujio and Graham take cover inside.

Algren runs back to join them, dodging the GUNFIRE as the Guards OPEN FIRE toward the house.

Algren dives to the floor. Katsumoto reaches out to pull him out of the line of fire.

The three Guards take aim again, but ARROWS slice out of the darkness and the Guards are dead before they can pull the trigger. Each killed by a Samurai arrow.

We REVEAL that Nobutada, Nakao, and the Silent Samurai are the other rickshaw BEARERS.

Nobutada, Nakao and the Silent Samurai run toward the bridge. Nobutada charges across yelling.

NOBUTADA

(subtitles)

Hurry, this way!

More Guards arrive on the opposite edge of the lagoon. Silent Samurai and Nakao provide cover as Nobutada races for the house and takes cover on the porch.

Algren and Ujio run out to meet him just as shot strikes the wall beside Nobutada's head.

Nobutada leans around the corner, takes aim and fires several arrows back. He beckons to Algren and the others to cross.

Algren, Katsumoto and Ujio, followed by Graham, race across the bridge dodging GUNFIRE all the way.

Nobutada then runs, following them. Nakao and the Silent Samurai try to cover his escape but MUZZLE FLASHES explode from the darkness.

Nobutada is hit in the knee. He falls.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

Katsumoto senses what has happened and turns to go back. Ujio restrains him.

UJIO
(subtitles)
Get back!

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

KATSUMOTO
Nobutada!

BULLETS are hitting all around them. Nobutada pulls himself along the bridge.

Algren races out to help him and brings him to the tree where Katsumoto is being held by Ujio.

Nobutada leans against the trunk, sliding to the ground, gravely wounded. Blood flows from his mouth.

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

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

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

Katsumoto pulls Nobutada to his feet. He looks at his son and then leaves, followed by Ujio. Nobutada bows to Algren who then also bows.

A beat. Nobutada closes his eyes.

Then he launches himself into the darkened bridge firing arrows until he has no more. He reaches for both his swords --

The guards FIRE.

He is HIT again and again, but still he comes, screaming, wading forward -- his sword flashing.

It is a glorious death.

And his sacrifice has bought the others the necessary time to race off into the darkness.

144 OMITTED 144

145 EXT. HILLS - SUNSET 145

Algren, Katsumoto, and the others ride over rocky ground.

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

146 EXT. FOREST - MOUNTAINS - DAY 146

They climb a steep trail, mountains towering above.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

ALGREN (V.O.)

And yet I ask myself... can a man
truly be reborn?

Algren comes up alongside Katsumoto.

ALGREN

I am sorry about your son.

Katsumoto stares straight ahead. He will not respond.

147 EXT. ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

147

Katsumoto stares into the fire, his face a mask of
despair. Algren watches.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

To preserve your people.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Not yet.

KATSUMOTO

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

ALGREN

Make the Emperor hear you.

KATSUMOTO

He is only interested in the new
ways now.

ALGREN

So what -- you're going to
surrender?

KATSUMOTO

No, I will take my life.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

147

ALGREN

In shame?

KATSUMOTO

Yes.

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

ALGREN

You read my journals.

(Katsumoto nods)

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

(remembers)

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

(looks into the fire)

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

(closes his eyes)

It wasn't a good death.

(looks at Katsumoto)

The Samurai cannot change. If you are to live, it must be as you have always lived. As a warrior. And if you are to die, it must be as you have always died. In battle.

Katsumoto studies him, as if seeing him for the first time.

KATSUMOTO

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

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

148 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

148

The Samurai ride in. Taka comes out onto the porch and watches them.

149 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DUSK

149

Algren sits with the family in silence. Then:

ALGREN

(subtitles)

He was a good man.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

Will you fight the white men, too?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

If they come here, yes.

HIGEN

(subtitles)

Why?

ALGREN

(subtitles)

Because they come to destroy what
I have come to love.

Taka looks at him, moved. Suddenly, Higen jumps up and bolts out of the room. Algren looks to Taka.

TAKA

(subtitles)

The way of Samurai is difficult
for children. He misses his father.

ALGREN

(subtitles)

And he is angry because I am the
cause of that.

She smiles ever so slightly at his obliviousness.

TAKA

(subtitles)

No. He is angry because he fears
you will die as well.

150 EXT. VILLAGE - GLOAM

150

Higen sits on the porch, looking up at the stars.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

HIGEN
 (subtitles)
 My father taught me it is glorious
 to die in battle.

ALGREN
 (subtitles)
 That is what he believed.

HIGEN
 (subtitles)
 I would be afraid to die in
 battle.

ALGREN
 (subtitles)
 So would I.

HIGEN
 (subtitles)
 But you have been in many battles.

ALGREN
 (subtitles)
 And I was always afraid.

Higen looks at him, tears welling in his eyes.

HIGEN
 (subtitles)
 I don't want you to go.

Algren can only put his arm on the boy's shoulder and
 comfort him. Nakao comes forward and bows.

NAKAO
 Captain Algren. They are coming.

151 OMITTED

151

152 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

152

Algren and Katsumoto look down into a valley. Nakao and
 a few others wait at a discreet distance.

Below they see the Imperial Army, thousands strong,
 marching across the valley toward them. Terrifying
 martial columns in strict formation. It is here that the
 final act of this inevitable drama will play out.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

ALGREN

I'd say five thousand. They'll come in waves of a thousand, a few minutes apart. And they have the howitzers.

KATSUMOTO

It makes no difference.
(Algren looks at him)
Five hundred or five thousand -- they will come and we will make our stand.

ALGREN

How many men will you have?

KATSUMOTO

Maybe five hundred.
(a small smile)
Like Custer, he?

ALGREN

(appreciates
the irony)
There was once a battle at a place called Thermopylae. Three hundred brave Greeks held off a Persian army of a million men. A million -- you understand this number in English?

KATSUMOTO

I understand this number.

ALGREN

For two days the Greeks made them pay so dearly that the Persian army lost all taste for battle and was defeated soon after.

KATSUMOTO

(bemused)
You think we can defeat them?

ALGREN

I sure as hell want to find out.

KATSUMOTO

What do you have in mind?

ALGREN

(a slight smile)
Trickery and deceit...

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED: (2)

152

KATSUMOTO

You believe a man can change his destiny?

ALGREN

No. I think a man can only do what he can, until his destiny is revealed.

(looks down at the
army again)

But I do know one thing -- it's gonna be a hell of a day.

Katsumoto mounts his horse. Then in a surprisingly deft imitation:

KATSUMOTO

You... ain't whistlin' Dixie...

He spurs his horse. Algren shakes his head and follows.

153 EXT. THE VILLAGE - DAY

153

Algren leads the preparations for battle. Warriors check their armor, polish their swords. In the distance we see the tents and banners of many samurai clans.

ALGREN (V.O.)

May 25, 1877. This will be the last entry in this journal.

Katsumoto, Ujio and Nakao look on as Algren uses a brush and ink to outline a proposed battle plan.

Graham takes a photograph of a group of samurai.

Nearby, men are fletching arrows, building odd round balls covered with pitch. A tree is felled as Algren supervises construction of wooden logs spiked together for some purpose yet to be revealed. Oxen-drawn wagons are piled high with bamboo barricades.

Katsumoto proudly looks at his warriors.

ALGREN (V.O.)

My words have not been elegant, but I have endeavored to give a true accounting of what I have seen and what I have done.

Katsumoto gives his meditation beads to Higen.

(CONTINUED)

153 CONTINUED: 153

ALGREN (V.O.)

But what I have seen here
surpasses my ability to express in
written word. So ends this day.

Nearby, Ujio dances his final kata alone.

154 OMITTED 154
& &
155 155

A155A EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT A155A

A wide establishing shot in which we see, from afar, the
many fires of the gathered samurai clans.

155A INT. KATSUMOTO'S COMPOUND - NIGHT 155A

Katsumoto sits, deep in contemplation, before the
enormous gold Buddha.

155B OMITTED 155B

155BA INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 155BA

Algren comes inside. Passing through the house, he
notices the shoji screen to Taka's room is open. Algren
stops to watch her. Taka quietly closes her door.

155C EXT. VILLAGE - DAWN 155C

The sun rises over the majestic peaks.

156 INT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAWN 156

Algren opens his eyes. It is the day of the battle.

157 OMITTED 157

157A INT. HIROTARO'S SHRINE - FOLLOWING 157A

Algren enters the house. Taka is waiting.

(CONTINUED)

157A CONTINUED:

157A

TAKA
(subtitles)
Algren-san, will you come with me?

Hirotarō's armor is spread on a mat.

TAKA
(subtitles)
If you wear this, it will honor us.

He nods.

She steps to him. A moment.

She gently reaches forward and unties the sash to his kimono.

A tender, silent scene as she undresses him and carefully wraps him in the armor. Her hands move gracefully around his body. His movements are gentle in response.

There are tears in Taka's eyes.

158 EXT. TAKA'S HOUSE - DAY

158

Algren emerges from the house, wearing Hirotarō's armor.

UJIO
Wait!

Ujio steps forward, looking intently at him, and then adjusts Algren's armor. Katsumoto is waiting. Beside him is the swordmaker. Katsumoto holds a beautiful samurai sword.

KATSUMOTO
You will need this.

He bows his head and offers it to Algren. There are Japanese characters etched on the blade.

ALGREN
What does it say?

KATSUMOTO
"I belong to the warrior in whom
the old ways have joined the new."

Katsumoto turns to the gathered samurai warriors and calls out a battle cry. The samurai respond.

TIME CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: 158

THE SAMURAI

Ride out of the village. Taka and the boys stand among the villagers watching them go.

159 EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY 159

The long line of samurai are joined by hundreds more. It is the first time we have seen them in their full armor since the battle in the fog. It is dazzling.

Ujio reaches over to adjust Algren's armor. Their eyes hold for a moment.

160 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 160

We MOVE ALONG the line of waiting samurai. The faces are stoic. Prepared.

They have chosen a strong defensive position. Slopes on either side create a funnel ahead of them, through which the Imperial Army will have to pass.

Algren stands with Katsumoto and Ujio. Graham is there, too. The silent Samurai stands near Algren, as always. They peer into the plain beyond at an awe-inspiring sight. Katsumoto's 500 samurai face a staggering 5,000 soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

160

KATSUMOTO

What happened to those three
hundred warriors at Thermopylae?

ALGREN

(a grim smile)

Dead to the last man.

Katsumoto glances at him, smiles.

161 ON A HILL ABOVE THEM

161

Higen is revealed. He looks down first at the five
hundred Samurai, then sees, beyond, the overwhelming mass
of the IMPERIAL ARMY. Several horsemen ride out from the
Imperial line. They are met by two horsemen from the
Samurai position.

162 IN THE VALLEY

162

Colonel Bagley, Omura, and several officers meet Algren
and Katsumoto in the center of the field.

BAGLEY

Sir, the Imperial Army of Japan
demands your surrender. If you
and your fellows lay down your
arms you will not be harmed.

KATSUMOTO

That is not possible. As Omura
knows.

Omura meets Katsumoto's look. Bagley turns to Algren.

BAGLEY

Captain Algren, we will show no
quarter. You ride against us and
you are the same as they are.

ALGREN

I take that as a compliment,
Colonel.

(a deadly calm)

I'll look for you on the field.

Algren and Katsumoto wheel their horses and go.

163 BACK ON THE BATTLEFIELD

163

A distant THUD followed by a HIGH-PITCHED WHINE. A MASSIVE EXPLOSION ahead of the Samurai. Artillery.

Algren finds Graham at the base of a straw barricade.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham...

GRAHAM

Captain?

ALGREN

Would you please stay with the horses?

Graham would like to be brave enough to remain, but he is not a soldier.

GRAHAM

(starts off)

As you suggest.

ALGREN

Mr. Graham... Take this.

From his coat, Algren takes his journal, hands it to Graham.

ALGREN

Maybe you can use it for your book.

GRAHAM

I will.

He heads back to the relative safety of the horse corral.

163A EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP - CONTINUOUS

163A

Bagley, Omura and several German and Japanese officers stand atop a ridge among the cannon.

OMURA

Commence firing!

A JAPANESE LIEUTENANT translates:

JAPANESE LIEUTENANT

UTE!

The HOWITZERS OPEN FIRE with a thunderous barrage.

163B EXT. THE SAMURAI POSITION - CONTINUOUS

163B

The samurai remain impassive as artillery is stepped in closer, the range bracketed. Then ARTILLERY ROUNDS begin to fall among them.

ALGREN

Now...

A few samurai are blown to pieces as Katsumoto BARKS a command to Ujio.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Fall back!

163C EXT. THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE - CONTINUOUS

163C

Bagley and Omura watch through binoculars.

OMURA

You see? Even the mighty samurai cannot stand up to the Howitzers. Signal the attack.

BAGLEY

I advise sending in skirmishers first.

OMURA

Nonsense! Full attack!

BUGLE CALLS are heard from the Imperial Army. The RATTLE of the SNARE DRUMS. The sound of MARCHING BOOTS. And then they appear. Thousands upon thousands. The Imperial Army marching relentlessly forward in strict formation.

164 EXT. THE SAMURAI POSITION - CONTINUOUS

164

The First Division of the Imperial Army moves through the smoking bamboo barricades and into the funnel, their numbers reduced by the size of the access.

As they emerge into the open, they see ANOTHER set of barricades, wooden this time.

Behind the barricades, the samurai wait. We are expecting them to open fire, but they do not. They just wait.

The Imperial soldiers are in rifle range. They stop to FIRE a VOLLEY.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

BULLETS begin SPLINTERING the BARRICADES, HITTING among the samurai. Many fall.

The Imperial Army moves closer. Another VOLLEY. More Samurai fall.

Then, at Algren's signal, a single archer lights a flaming arrow and fires. It flies over the heads of the Imperial Army and lands among a cache of flaming pitch hidden behind the firing line. A terrifying WALL OF FLAME cuts off their escape.

KATSUMOTO

(subtitles)

Archers! Shoot! Shoot!

Finally, the Samurai fire!

500 arrows explode, instantly followed by 500 more.

Like an image from Agincourt, the clouds of arrows sweep across the sky. Imperial soldiers are annihilated, the attack falters --

165 EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP -- DAY

165

Through binoculars, Omura and Bagley try to peer through the smoke.

OMURA

Can you see them?

A signal man appears with a semaphore.

BAGLEY

What on earth -- ?

OMURA

What is happening?

BAGLEY

The attack has been stopped.

OMURA

How is that possible?

BAGLEY

Retreat and bring up the artillery.

OMURA

How long will that take?

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: 165

BAGLEY

An hour. Less.

OMURA

He cannot be allowed to escape.
Continue the attack.

166 OMITTED 166

167 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 167

BUGLES. Reinforcements come at a trot, through the narrow defile, skirting the first barricade.

168 EXT. 2ND BARRICADE - DAY

168

The reinforced Imperial Army presses its attack, swarming over the hillsides surrounding the narrow defile. They step over their fallen comrades, firing as they come.

Behind the barricades, the Samurai archers are being decimated. For a moment it appears all is lost --

But as the Imperial Army is about to overrun the barricades, we suddenly realize, as they do, that a long trench separates the Imperial Army from its goal.

FROM DOWN IN THE TRENCH

Katsumoto pulls his long sword. Algren does the same. Then, like a tsunami, they rise as one, taking the Imperial Army entirely by surprise. They are so close that the rifles' advantage of the range has been taken away.

Algren and Katsumoto lead the charge. Many Samurai are cut down, but in moments swords engage bayonets in brutal hand-to-hand combat. Then:

169 FROM THE HILLS ON EITHER SIDE

169

The Samurai cavalry -- led by Ujio -- who have kept hidden until this moment, charge, screaming into the flanks of the attacking army.

SAMURAI

(subtitles)

Attack! Prepare to die! Die...

Even rifles cannot fire in three directions at once.

An Imperial soldier levels his rifle at Algren. The Silent Samurai sees it --

SILENT SAMURAI

ALGREN-SAN!

Algren wheels, more shocked to have heard him speak than anything else. He sees his protector step into the path of the bullet.

ALGREN

NO!!

The Samurai's body reels, but he wills himself forward toward his attacker. Algren can do nothing but watch, devastated, as his guardian takes bullet upon bullet until he reaches the soldier and kills him.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

Ujio crouches, his back leg straight and planted, his front leg bent. Still using his bow, firing off arrows with stunning speed, refusing to budge --

Algren and Katsumoto now fight back to back, as if one person, slashing with their swords, shattering bayonets, dealing death on all sides.

170 ON THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE

170

Bagley and Omura cannot see anything.

OMURA

We must call for reserves.

BAGLEY

(furious)

The reserves are a half hour back, damn it! We've thrown three thousand men at him and he's not even armed.

171 IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE

171

A charging soldier thrusts his bayonet into Katsumoto's arm -- Katsumoto kills the soldier with his short sword but is awkwardly tangled with his body, a second soldier races toward him for the kill -- Algren spins and attacks -- killing the second soldier -- but a third races toward Algren, bayonet flashing --

He dodges -- but the bayonet slices into his side -- then Ujio appears like a black spectral figure to save him.

All SOUND gradually FADES and is replaced by the elegiac sound of a BAMBOO FLUTE... The images of combat become fragmented and impressionistic.

But no matter how bravely the samurai fight, they are simply outnumbered...

Nakao leads the Ashigaru (infantry) to cut off the road -- throwing the Imperial Army into confusion.

He is like a cornered bear, arcing his two swords wildly around him. He is SHOT in the chest, and staggers a moment. Another soldier SHOTS him in the arm at point-blank range.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

Nakao's sword goes flying, so the giant Samurai leaps forward and picks up the shooter bodily, twirling him around like a wrestler, throwing him finally onto the upraised pike of a fellow Imperial soldier. But now three more soldiers have leveled their weapons, and a ruthless VOLLEY STAGGERS him again. SHOTS RAIN on him as he tries to continue fighting, but his strength leaves him. Finally, with one last lunge, he manages to pull an Imperial soldier with him, crushing him as he falls.

More fall as Algren and Katsumoto fight desperately...

An Imperial soldier holds up a rifle to protect himself, but Ujio's blade cuts through the barrel. The soldier just has time to look at the gun in amazement before a second sweep of Ujio's sword beheads him.

The tide begins to turn as Imperial Army soldiers run out of ammunition, fumble with jammed weapons, cower before the furious onslaught.

Finally, a bugler issues a call and they stumble back through the defile in a disorganized retreat.

171A EXT. ON CANNON HILL - MOMENTS LATER

171A

Omura and Bagley watch as soldiers retreat back through the smoke.

OMURA

This is not possible --

BAGLEY

(almost to himself)

Son-of-a-bitch thinks he can win.

OMURA

Call up the reinforcements NOW!

172 EXT. PLAIN - ALMOST SUNSET

172

The plain before the barricade is littered with the dead and dying.

Algren and Katsumoto lean, exhausted, against the barricade. Both men are wounded. Only about a hundred samurai are still alive.

Algren looks over the decimated warriors for a moment. Even those still alive are in bad shape as they wait for the next wave of Imperial soldiers.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: (A1)

172

Suddenly, TWO SHOTS RING OUT. A young wounded Imperial Soldier has hit Ujio in the chest. He staggers, but refuses to acknowledge the gravity of the wound.

Katsumoto goes to him, but Ujio gruffly tells him that he is fine.

UJIO

Daijigozaran.

ALGREN

They'll move up the artillery now.
We won't be able to stop them
again.

KATSUMOTO

This is not your battle. You do
not have to die here.

A long beat.

ALGREN

I should have died so many times
before.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: 172

KATSUMOTO
But now you live again.

ALGREN
Yes.

KATSUMOTO
It was not your time.

ALGREN
Maybe I survived just to live this
one day.
(looks at him)
I'll stay.

Katsumoto looks at Algren. They are both thinking the
same thing.

173 EXT. PLAIN - SUNSET 173

The hundred mounted samurai move through the smoke and
flames like horsemen of the apocalypse.

Katsumoto and Algren lead them.

Barely alive, Ujio has tied himself to his saddle.

174 ON THE OPPOSING HILLSIDE 174

Bagley and Omura watch, transfixed. There is something
approaching grim admiration on Bagley's face.

BAGLEY
I'm taking command down there.

And he heads down toward the rows of waiting infantry.

OMURA
(in Japanese)
Bring up the new guns!

175 EXT. PLAIN - SUNSET 175

The Samurai horsemen begin to walk forward...

And then to cantor...

Katsumoto points his sword and screams out his war cry.

And they charge.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED:

175

It is suicidal.

It is glorious.

It is the end of the samurai.

The Imperial troops FIRE a VOLLEY -- samurai horsemen fall -- but still they come -- jumping over the fallen horses, pounding over the earth like something from an ancient dream --

Bagley uses his sidearm to pick off one samurai, then another. He FIRES at Katsumoto, wounding him in the side.

But Algren bears down upon him. Bagley is unnerved. He hits Algren once, but before he can fire again --

Algren reverses his grip on his sword and HURLS it, impaling Bagley in the chest. He races past, pulling his sword from the stunned and dying Bagley.

Fifteen or twenty of the Samurai -- including Algren and Katsumoto -- manage to fight their way through.

They break into the open, and continue riding straight toward the rear.

Algren and Katsumoto are both wounded, yet still they charge. They have only one thought in mind -- death to their enemies. They gallop toward Omura.

Omura looks around in abject terror.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Quickly! Quickly!

Tarps are pulled back, revealing two lethal GATLING GUNS.

Algren and Katsumoto are near enough to see them. Yet they will not be deterred.

They charge on.

The Gatling guns are not yet ready to fire. Soldiers slam ammo belts into the chambers.

Algren, Katsumoto and those still alive have almost reached their goal.

Omura cowers in fear, but there is nowhere to hide.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: (2)

175

OMURA

Fire!!!! Fire!!!!

The GATLING GUNS finally FIRE.

RIPPING into the samurai --

Destroying them --

One after another is hit -- and still they come -- their voices raised in glorious cries of triumph --

Graham watches from a hilltop, tears in his eyes.

Katsumoto is hit, blood explodes -- his horse falls -- he spills off --

Then Algren is hit. He, too, falls --

The remaining samurai still charge --

And still the GATLING GUNS TEAR through them --

And still they charge --

Until they are all down.

Algren drags himself to Katsumoto, BULLETS EXPLODING everywhere --

176 EXT. OPPOSING HILLTOP - SUNSET

176

A JAPANESE OFFICER orders the Gatling guns to cease.

JAPANESE OFFICER

(subtitles)

Stop firing!

Omura screams at him to continue firing!

OMURA

(subtitles)

Idiots, keep on firing!

The Japanese officer barks out a response. Refusing.

JAPANESE OFFICER

(subtitles)

Stop firing! Stop!

Omura sees all the samurai are dead or dying.

(CONTINUED)

176 CONTINUED:

176

But he also sees Algren dragging Katsumoto away. He screams at the Japanese officer to resume fire!

OMURA

(subtitles)

Shoot! Kill Katsumoto! Kill the American!

The Japanese officer refuses.

He just looks over the plain of dying samurai for a moment. Then he does the most remarkable thing.

He slowly kneels and touches his head to the dirt.

Then a soldier near him does the same thing. Then another and another. And then by the thousands.

They kneel and touch their heads to the dirt.

Honoring the last samurai.

177 EXT. PLAIN - SUNSET

177

Algren drags the dying Katsumoto to a copse of cherry trees nearby...

178 EXT. CHERRY TREES - SUNSET

178

Both men are bleeding profusely.

KATSUMOTO

Help me up...

ALGREN

Don't move.

KATSUMOTO

Help me up.

Algren helps him to stand.

KATSUMOTO

My sword...

ALGREN

No.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

178

KATSUMOTO

You have your honor again. Let me
die with mine...

Algren looks at him, deeply moved. Katsumoto manages to
pull out his short sword.

KATSUMOTO

You must help me. Hold it
firmly...

Algren supports Katsumoto as he holds the sword's point
to his stomach.

KATSUMOTO

Are you ready?

In Algren's eyes, a resolute and calm acceptance of
death.

ALGREN

Yes.

Katsumoto looks at him deeply, warmly.

KATSUMOTO

I will miss our conversations.

Katsumoto embraces Algren firmly -- the small sword
impales him --

Algren holds him tightly. Katsumoto is looking over
Algren's shoulder as he is dying.

A look of joy and absolute peace comes to his features.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: (2)

178

KATSUMOTO

(whispers)

It is perfect... They are all perfect.

His eyes close. He is dead.

Algren gently kneels with Katsumoto's body.

As he holds him, he turns to see what Katsumoto was looking at.

Cherry blossoms.

A display of perfect beauty.

Algren looks up and sees the Imperial soldiers moving toward him. With great difficulty he stands and faces them, open-armed.

ALGREN

(quietly)

Go on. Do it. Do it now.

But they don't shoot. Instead, they approach tentatively, even gently, and begin tending to him. His face is its own battleground of conflicting emotion -- relief, shame, amazement. He is destined to live.

179 INT. IMPERIAL PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

179

Swanbeck and Omura are presenting the treaty documents for signature. The Emperor sits restively on his throne.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

On behalf of the United States of America, the signing of this treaty will usher in an era of unprecedented prosperity and cooperation between our two great nations.

OMURA

And on behalf of the Emperor, we are pleased to have successfully concluded this negotiation.

As an AIDE hands Swanbeck a folder, a servant comes and whispers into the Emperor's ear.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED:

179

EMPEROR
(subtitles)
Algren is here?

OMURA
(subtitles, to
the guards)
Do not allow that man in here!

EMPEROR
Omura --

He shakes his head, gestures to open the doors.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Highness, if we could just
conclude the matter at hand...

Algren enters with Graham. He is limping and a bloodstain is beginning to seep through his shirt. He carries something wrapped in a blanket.

It is Katsumoto's long samurai sword.

He prostrates himself at the Emperor's feet. Algren unwraps the bundle and remains prostrate with his head bowed as he offers up the sword.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Emperor, I must warn you, this man
is your enemy.

The Emperor is silent. He is torn in this moment, whether to heed Omura or to follow his instincts.

ALGREN
(ignoring Omura)
This is Katsumoto's sword. He
would have wanted you to have it
-- that the strength of the
samurai be with you always.

OMURA
(subtitles)
Enlightened One, we all weep for
Katsumoto's loss, but we must look
to the future now, and our
nation's future lies in signing
this treaty --

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (2)

179

ALGREN

-- He hoped, with his last breath,
that you would remember all the
ancestors who held this sword, and
what they died for.

Slowly, as if drawn by Algren's words, the Emperor comes forward and sits on the floor before the sword. He cannot help but notice as blood seeps from beneath Algren's sleeve.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Your Highness --

The Emperor cannot look away from the sword and the blood. When he speaks, it is in English -- to everyone's astonishment.

EMPEROR

(to Algren)

You were with him at the end.

ALGREN

Hai.

OMURA

Emperor, this man fought against
you.

ALGREN

Your Highness, if you believe I am
your enemy -- command me -- and I
will gladly take my life.

The Emperor is stunned to hear this from a Westerner. Then he makes a decision that will change his life. He stands.

EMPEROR

My ancestors have ruled Japan for
2,000 years. For all that time we
have slept. During my sleep I
have dreamed. I dreamed of a
unified Japan. Of a country
strong and independent and
modern...

(touches the sword
lovingly)

And now we are awake. We have
railroads and cannon and Western
clothing. But we cannot forget
who we are. Or where we come
from.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (2A)

179

The Emperor looks up at the gathered dignitaries.

EMPEROR

Ambassador Swanbeck, I have concluded that your treaty is not in the best interests of my people.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

Sir, if I may --

EMPEROR

So sorry, but you may not. From this moment on, economic investment from every nation will be considered equally.

AMBASSADOR SWANBECK

This is an outrage -- !

The Emperor watches as Ambassador Swanbeck and his Aide exit. Omura steps closer to the Emperor.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Enlightened One, we should discuss this --

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

Omura, you have done quite enough.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Everything I have done, I have done for my country.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

Then you will not mind when I seize your family's assets and present them as my gift to the people.

OMURA

(subtitles)

Enlightened One, you disgrace me.

The Emperor finally looks up from the sword.

EMPEROR

(subtitles)

If your shame is too unbearable... I offer you this sword.

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: (3)

179

Omura bows and steps back, relegated to a place among the lesser advisors.

The Emperor looks at Algren, still kneeling before him.

EMPEROR

The Samurai is gone. The spirit
of samurai lives forever.

(a beat)

Tell me how he died.

Algren looks at the Emperor.

ALGREN

I will tell you how he lived.

We slowly FADE, as Algren begins to speak...

179A EXT. TOKYO STREET - DAY

179A

Algren rides off through the crowd.

180 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SOME TIME LATER

180

A Samurai helmet rusts in the sun. A broken sword. The tattered remnant of a battle flag blows across the ground. A HAND reaches down and picks it up. We HEAR Graham's voice:

(CONTINUED)

180 CONTINUED: 180

GRAHAM (V.O.)
... And so the days of the Samurai
had ended.

181 INT. LECTURE HALL (ENGLAND) - DAY 181

Graham stands at a lectern on a book tour. A well-dressed audience listens attentively. A banner proclaims, "The Last Samurai," by Simon Graham.

GRAHAM
And in the years to come the
Rising Sun of Imperial Japan would
fly in triumph over Korea, over
Russia, even over China. Nations,
like men, it is sometimes said,
have their own destiny.

182 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 182

FEET walk along a dusty road. They move with a noticeable limp. In the distance, a railroad engine plumes smoke into the sky.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
As for the American Captain, no
one knows what became of him. All
that is left is his journal --
which I have published, according
to his last request.

We PAN FROM the feet TO Algren's back as he walks through a bamboo forest.

GRAHAM (V.O.)
Some say he died of his wounds,
others that he returned to his own
country...

183 EXT. VILLAGE - DAY 183

Algren climbs a rise. He stops. We FOLLOW his gaze to discover:

The village below.

(CONTINUED)

183 CONTINUED:

183

GRAHAM (V.O.)

But I like to think he may have
found at last some small measure
of the peace we all seek, but few
of us ever find.

Villagers go about their daily routine. And then we see:

Taka working in the garden. Higen and Magojiro work with
her. Sensing something, Taka turns to see:

Algren, looking at her. A smile of quiet joy spreads
across his face.

FADE OUT.

THE END