

Lost in the Bamboo Forest

*A bamboo forest, filled with bamboo trunks shooting high into the sky. To the side of the forest are 11 figures - the **Chorus**, dressed in long cloaks and wearing haunting masks.*

*Some are humming, the others are chanting, creating continuous, but melodic drone that will score the action throughout. The **Chorus** will also perform all sound effects in the action, and play musical instruments to support song and performance sequences.*

*A young woman, **Meng**, bursts into the forest, she has a large bag on her back and is tightly clutching a small cloth bag; she is panicked, looking all around her, hoping she isn't being chased. She starts to run between the trunks. Light is blasting through the forest, casting long shadows of the bamboo that look like prison bars.*

*The shadows on the wall begin to take shape, becoming more clear as the light moves around, creating figures, the **Chorus** begin to make sounds of marching, forcing her to stop dead and stare at the shadows, terrified; then the light destroys the shadow and sounds of marching stop. She calms, looks around, and runs off.*

*A **Man**, previously unseen, jumps down from the highest point of a bamboo trunk; wearing a long cloak similar to that of the **Chorus**. He watches her run off, then looks towards the audience.*

Man. Lost in the Bamboo Forest. With a title like that we don't need an establishing scene. This *is* a bamboo forest and she is lost -- She's Chinese by the way, I don't know if you noticed, speaks Mandarin. That could cause some problems. Unless you're a

Mandarin speaker, then it's me who's going to make tonight difficult -- But she's lost, we all are -- not you -- Well I hope not, I hope you're supposed to be here -- But we are all lost - me, Meng, and there are more; none of them have met each other yet. Until now.

He hears her coming; he quickly jumps up a bamboo shoot and watches her. She comes in, panicked, she stops, angry with herself, she hits her head hard three times as if to knock something out of it; she crumbles to the floor; too tired to run. The man jumps down quietly behind her, the woman looks over, alert; she doesn't see him and turns away; he sneaks off.

She takes a moment to catch her breath and looks at her surroundings. She takes her big bag and pulls out a large sheet, some wood and a small stove. She begins to hum/ sing 'Mo Li Hua' as she sets up a small camp.

*All set up, she relaxes and drifts off to sleep as she finishes the song... -- She bolts upright as the lights dim and shadows of a hundred soldiers march on the walls around her, the **Chorus** providing the march as well as sounds of war. She doesn't panic, she tries her best to fight through the fear. She clutches her bag tight to her chest and closes her eyes; they slowly disappear...*

*Left standing in the shadows is a... beast? A large man? It's hard to tell. She opens her eyes in calm at the new peace and looks up -- INSTANT TERROR. The man, **Bearskin**, takes a step into the light; it is a man, a huge man, badly hunched, his body moving up and down with heavy breath, he has a bear-hide wrapped around him; his hair and beard are so long you can hardly see his face. He walks slowly towards her, she scurries back against some bamboo, terrified.*

Bearskin. Please, I didn't mean to startle you. I just --

Meng (In Mandarin). Please, leave me. Please don't...

不要，别过来

Bearskin. I'm not going to hurt you. Please, just give me food.

Meng pulls a large knife out of her bag and thrusts it towards him, he stops his approach. He looks at the knife, then at Meng; his instinct is to kill her, but he fights it.

He holds his hands in the air - peace. He then puts his hands in his pockets, Meng comes closer to him with the threat of the knife to get him to stop.

Bearskin. Get the knife out of my face.

Meng (In Mandarin). Please, just leave. 求你离开吧。

He continues to place his hands in his pocket, then slowly takes them out, filled with gold coins, he offers them to her.

Meng (In Mandarin). I don't want it. 我不想要。

He reaches his hand out further towards her.

Bearskin. I just want some food. And warmth. *(He pours the coins at her feet and gets more out of his pockets)* You can have as much as you want. *(He waits a moment)* I'm going to sit down. Okay?

He does. Meng wants to stop him, but doesn't know how. She follows him and sits opposite, watching Bearskin as he warms himself.

Bearskin. This isn't your forest. It's not for you to decide who can sit where?

Meng (In Mandarin). How did you end up here? 你是怎样来到这里的? You're not from here. 你不是这里的人。 Are you an invader? 你是侵略者吗?

Bearskin. Can I please have some food? *(She doesn't respond, he puts his hand to his mouth)* Food.

She hesitates, then takes a bowl, and pours him some soup. He takes it and drinks it in one.

Bearskin. I came here because I heard you singing. It was beautiful. Will you sing again? *(Gestures)* Sing!

Chorus (In Mandarin). Sing! 唱歌!

Bearskin (In Mandarin). Sing. 唱歌。

She starts to sing 'Mo Li Hua'.

Bearskin takes off his bear-hide and places it on her to warm her; she notices his soldiers uniform and backs away from him, disgusted.

Bearskin. What?

Meng (In Mandarin). Get away!! I knew you weren't to be trusted. 走开!! 我就知道你是信不过的。

He approaches and grabs her as she attempts to fight him off.

Bearskin. What's wrong? I don't understand. I've done nothing to you.

Meng (In Mandarin). GET OFF!! 滚开!!

She pushes him hard and he lets her go.

Meng (In Mandarin). Soldiers. I hate you. Soldiers. 军人。我痛恨你。
军人。

Chorus. Soldiers.

Meng (In English). Soldiers. *(In Mandarin)* I hate you.我痛恨你 *(She spits towards him.)* Soldiers! 军人 *(In English)* Soldiers! *(She holds up the bag she hasn't let go of).*

Bearksin (Rising passion). I'm no soldier to you. I'm not a soldier of your people. I don't know what soldiers have done to you but that doesn't rest on me.