ILSANG was sulking all day. After the sunset low sighs frequently escaped his lips. He did not eat his supper. ‘Stop sulking like a tiger pup...Why can’t you eat your super?’ Someone spoke to him but he did not seem to hear.

(I am not at all pleased with myself. I’ve gone too far. Far too far. That poor thing...why did I have to be so horrible to her?)

Regret grabbed the back of his neck and would not release it. Being casual with one another often Pongsun was cheeky to him and he would be rude to her in return. Nothing like what had happened that afternoon had ever happened before. It was not one of those quarrels they forgot as soon as they turned round, and then spoke to one another as if nothing had happened. Kilsang had given her this afternoon a deep wound that she would never forget all her life. It was no wonder, then that the food stuck in his throat.

(How could she ever understand my heart? It was not she who was flirtatious. Indeed, it was me who felt amorous. Had she not gone down the hill crying I would probably have put the sickle down and rushed onto her.)

As he stood at the corner of the servants’ quarters and blankly looked up at the moon his face flushed.

(When I can’t take responsibility for her how can I take her life and ruin it? It’s easier for me to blame and curse myself as a villain.)

‘Huh, really, these days that rascal Samsu must have gone stark mad, I think.’ A voice boomed from inside the room. He turned in the direction the voice came from. The paper and the lattice of the door through which the voice came was like a lantern with flickering flame in it.

‘I should go mad if I was him.’

‘Why?’

‘Haven’t you heard? Turi has got a date fixed to be married.’
'Really? But that rascal Samsu has been bragging all this time that he won’t take her even if they offered her to him.’

‘Who will give her to him? Even before he is offered the cake he drinks water to wash it down, so to speak. That’s what he did. For a man with a child of his own wasn’t it shameless even to think of such a thing. Let’s say Pong-gi has been foolishly showing off his daughter to him, but he should think about his situation. I’m not just saying this because I am a servant myself just like him. He’s a man with wife and a child. Did he want Turi to be his concubine? Certainly not. They have a decent living and Turi is good looking. Pong-gi would never dream of giving his daughter away to be a concubine even to a gentleman. He’s known for his overweening greed but he’s so affectionate to his children.’

‘After being insulted by Pong-gi Samsu had been going round saying that if he didn’t take Turi, he’d let you pluck out his eye. Then, since last autumn, he went round with crooked smiles saying the Pong-gi might offer him his daughter but now he’d turn it down – let him have his own back.’

‘He says it to cover up his shame. By the way, that greedy man Pong-gi, he seems to have chosen the wrong chap for his in-law. He has no property. Of course, you have to wait and see till he’s grown up, but a man of thirteen, he goes round with his nose running, so they say.’

‘Huh, really! Some people get married at thirteen, and what are we doing?’

‘Hear, hear.’

‘Do you know any old girl that I can carry here on my back?’

‘What a good idea. Wait for an arrangement made by the boss, we’ll all end up becoming bachelor ghosts.’

‘If I was to be born to a life like this, I wish I were good-looking. As it is when will I ever have a girl? Life is unfair. That rascal Kilsang doesn’t want her even if there is a girl who wags her tail at him. Do you see Pongsun? She’s so pretty, she’s like the flower of her namesake, pongsunga.’

‘Don’t even think about her. You’ll end up like Samsu.’

‘Not only like him, but what about the beating in pyöldang courtyard?’