

**Five Tigers Go to the Mountain**

(a kung fu play)

by

**Julius Galacki**

- 5 PAGE DIALOGUE SAMPLE -

CAST (in Order of Appearance)

**Master Yang** ..... an old martial arts master who is also a master puppeteer and storyteller - **played by the actress playing Yim Mui.**

**Suzy Hark** ..... a Tinsel Town talent scout, blond brassy and beautiful.

**Cedric** ..... a blond, muscled, wannabe movie star.

**Wong Fei Hong**..... a legendary martial arts master, doctor and poet, who is young, confident and serene.

**Jackie** .....Wong's student and comic side-kick.

**Yim Mui** ..... a legendary warrior princess.

**Time:** 1674, 1992 and 2011 (or whatever is the current date of the production)

**Place:** an isolated mountain top in the vicinity of Mount Song in China (one of the 5 sacred mountains of Taoism and also the location of famous Shaolin Monastery).

*In this play, there will stage directions where various props are pulled out from traps in the floor, however another way to accomplish the same function (if that is not physically possible at a particular theatre) is to use the convention of the kōken in Noh Theatre (a.k.a. kuroko / kurogo in Kabuki Theatre), i.e. a stage hand clad all in black and potentially in a black mask/veil as well, who would bring out and hand the particular props to the appropriate actor at the appropriate time.*

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*(An old man is seated before a huge bowl of rice. Strings are attached to each of his five fingers. He seems to be manipulating unseen puppets inside the bowl. He is quite entertained by this activity and does not initially acknowledge the arrival of the Americans, Suzy Hark and Cedric. Seeing them, he hides his hands in the bowl and removes the strings. The two foreigners watch momentarily before speaking. Suzy has seen the strings and is satisfied.)*

SUZY HARK

*(Bowling.)* Master, *(gesturing toward Cedric)* I have brought you a student.

CEDRIC

*(Bowling.)* Uh, I am honored.

MASTER YANG

Eh? I'm just an old man. How can foreigners speak Chinese so well? *(To the audience, like an aside)* In fact, why do my words sound so devilishly strange?

SUZY HARK

*(Bowling again.)* Because sifu, we're only establishing a theatrical convention, sifu. *(Elbowing Cedric.)*

CEDRIC

*(As if reciting a memorized passage.)* Uh... I only want to speak the one true language. I let it say what must be said.

MASTER YANG

I don't know what you're talking about. See, rice. I'm making sticky rice, nothing more.

SUZY HARK

Cedric here speaks very little Chinese, but he still knows who you are.

MASTER YANG

He does? And you?

SUZY HARK

I'm his agent. Suzy Hark. *(Hands him a business card.)*

MASTER YANG

So *you* have the talent. But what else can your puppet say?

*(Suzy motions to Cedric, who takes his cue and strikes a pose for each line.)*

CEDRIC

"I've had my day made." "I'm a contender." "Hasta la vista, sifu."

MASTER YANG

Oh very good. But what do you want from me?

SUZY HARK

Listen Yang, this is business. We've got to get to work quick. We don't have time to stand in the snow for three days contemplating nothingness. We've got to get straight to work. Get my boy some martial arts skills, and we all get rich.

*(Yang plays with the rice in his bowl, then looks up, placid and poker-faced but with a twinkle in his eye. Suzy dives back in...)*

SUZY HARK *(cont'd)*

Look at this square jaw - he's got all the potential, but he needs some talent to make it convincing. That's where you fit in.

MASTER YANG

If he cooks my meals and cleans my slop bucket for the next three years, I will consider answering *your* question.

CEDRIC

*(Sotto to Suzy.)* What did he say? What did he say? I only know the Chinese you taught me on the plane.

SUZY HARK

He's hardballing us. Give it time. We have to find out what he really wants.

MASTER YANG

*(Eating his rice.)* I have everything I need.

SUZY HARK

So you *do* speak English.

MASTER YANG

No. I simply, understood.

SUZY HARK

Don't cloud me with that Ch'i stuff. I believe in physics, cold hard facts, science. You know, money.

CEDRIC

C'mon Suzy, let's go try the Japanese karate master.

SUZY HARK

No, Yang's the best. The very best. We didn't climb this mountain for the view.

MASTER YANG

Why not? I did.

SUZY HARK

C'mon Master Yang, you've lived in this cave for nine years working up your wisdom. Can't you see the opportunity you have here?

MASTER YANG

There is no wisdom without physical strength. And there is no strength without wisdom.

SUZY HARK

That's what I've been trying to sell you. It's time you share what you've got up there with someone who's still got the muscle.

MASTER YANG

My power is for the Han people only. We must free ourselves from the imperialist foreigners - the enslaving Manchu dynasty.

SUZY HARK

Manchu's? *(To Cedric)* Wasn't that a silent film?

CEDRIC

With the moustache? I'm not a Manchu. Right? I can't be a Manchu?

MASTER YANG

No, you are not Mongolian. But, you are not Chinese Han, either.

SUZY HARK

You want to talk ideology, then fine. You'll need resources. There's money. *(Yang shrugs.)* Power. *(Yang shrugs.)* Prestige *(Yang turns away.)* C'mon, that means the world wide acceptance of your fighting system! *(Yang stops, and partially turns back)* Uh, huh, that's right. Your system seen on millions of movie screens. Then billions of kids - billions - kicking your kicks. Spinning your spins. Think on *that* for three years. Come on Cedric, you're right. That Japanese master would be better –

*(Suzy grabs Cedric and pulls/pushes him along. They stop and turn when Yang speaks.)*

MASTER YANG

I have decided. *(Pointing toward Suzy.)* As of today, you are my student.

SUZY HARK

Me?

CEDRIC

What's he saying?

SUZY HARK

That's a good one. A woman fighter. That's a B-movie in America. Or worse, Art House! No, it's got to be him. That's A list.

MASTER YANG

*(After assessing Cedric for a moment) He can take this bowl and fill it with water. After he has slapped it all out, he must refill it. And start again. Perhaps, after three years of such discipline, I will see if he is ready for his first lesson. (Gesturing toward Suzy) But you - you have already have the vision thing.*

*(Master Wong and his protégé Jackie enter. Both are handsome young men. Wong clearly carries himself with the dignity and composure of a master of not only martial arts but also Chinese medicine, poetry and the arts. Jackie is slightly younger, the student, who is both cocky and obsequious. They are dressed in modern martial arts clothes. Jackie carries a strange box/instrument that vaguely resembles a clock, as well as Wong's bag of traditional medicines. The three people on stage turn to watch these new arrivals.)*

WONG

Check the chronometer, Jackie.

JACKIE

It says we are in the 30th year of the Qing dynasty, or the one thousandth six hundred and seventy fourth year in the Current Era, also known as "A.D." – "Anno Domini" – in the Christian calendar...however, in the Hebrew calendar –

WONG

*(Stopping Jackie with a gesture of his hand.) No need to continue showing off ,Jackie. I am now properly time centered.*

SUZY HARK

Sorry boys, check your hourglass again. It's 1992 and we got here first, so you can forget about getting the Master's divided attention.

WONG

You are confused Tsui *(pronounced something like "ts-way" where the "ts": is like the ts in gnats.)*

SUZY HARK

That's Suzy, not Su-way. Names aren't like horse-shoes, bucko.

(The play continues...)