

Chain of Amber



KOREA

Xunsan

Wonsan

Seoul

Ch'ung-sa



Mary 1910

what if

...there lived a woman that embodied wanderlust?

...her radiant beauty and charm were equally matched by her power of persuasion?

...this woman, who never took herself too seriously, became a cornerstone for a country's movement for independence?



what it is



CHAIN OF AMBER is a limited-run one-hour period drama based on the incredible life of Mary Linley Taylor. An English woman who toured India and the Far East as a lead actress for a theatrical company. While in Japan, she met an American gold mining engineer to whom she would wed. Mary moved to Korea, where she spent most of her life, thrust into its ancient culture and elaborate customs in constant threats by the Japanese occupation.

CHAIN OF AMBER is a fish-out-of-water story that explores themes of one's purpose, wanderlust, and the circle of life.

CHAIN OF AMBER mixes heartfelt drama with a whimsical sense of humor and the entertainment of song and dance.

CHAIN OF AMBER is a show about returning home.



the show logline

During the interwar period, a free-spirited and adventurous English woman finds love and home in an unlikely place, Korea.



the world

CHAIN OF AMBER takes place during the 1910s to 1940s: England to the British-occupied colonies of India and the Far East, to the wilderness and mines of the Japanese-occupied Korean peninsula, the Trans-Siberian trip through Russia, the foreboding expatriates' internment camps in Japan, and the manufacturing plant that churned out parts for the war effort in Long Beach.

Each episode is like a bead of amber that's strung on a single thread that is the wonderful character of Mary Linley Taylor herself: strong and courageous, warm-hearted, fun, and open-minded -- drawn by the chain of amber in search of her home.

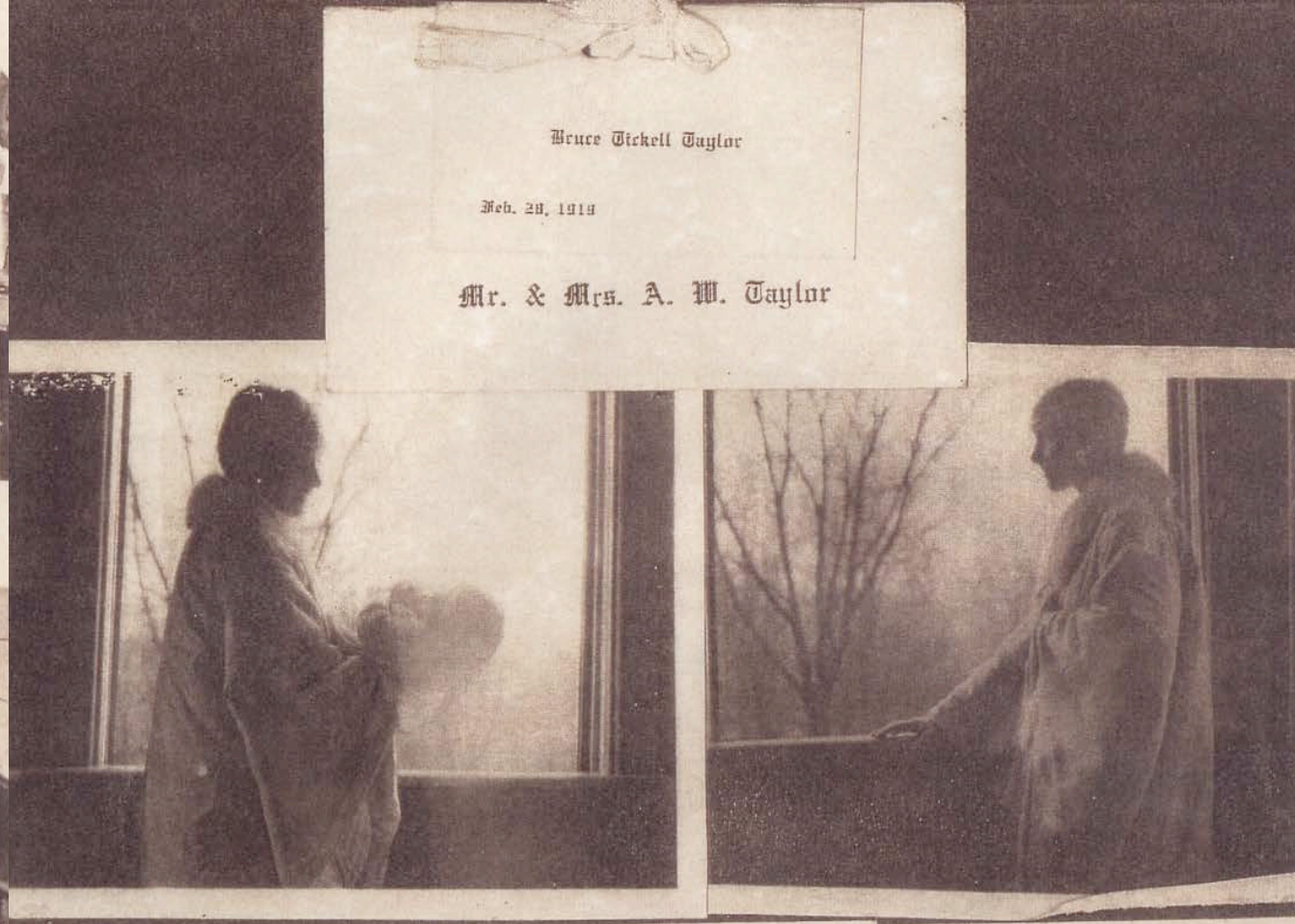




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MOUATBIGGS BALBACOMBE TORQUAY



Birth of Bruce Tickell Taylor.
 Feb, 28th 1919. { Known as "B.T" or "Beatty" }



Mary, Betty, Ron.



Una and Eric.



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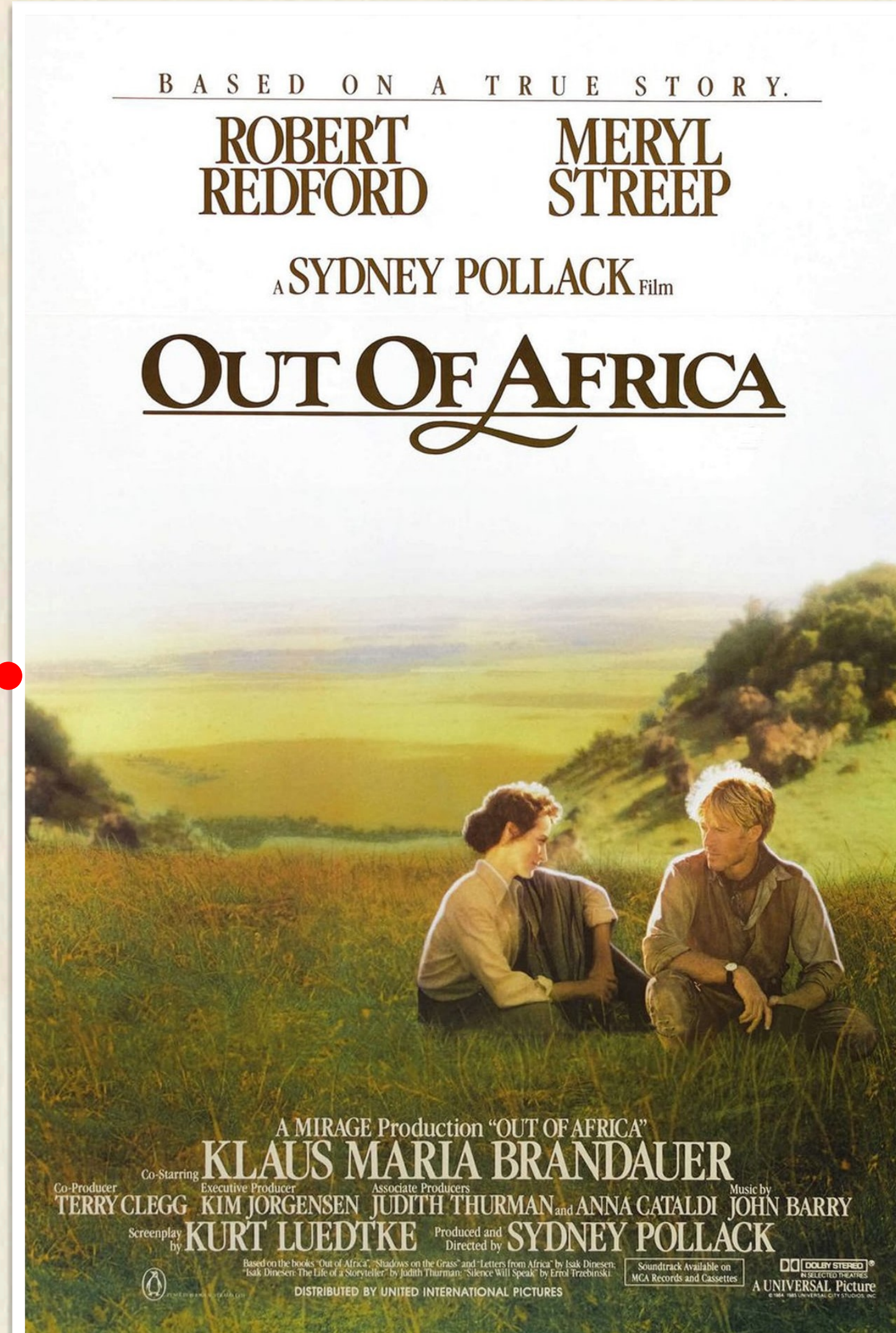


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the tone





MARY LINLEY TAYLOR, (6 - 50s), an English woman who never shied away from putting on a show. She was more interested in romance than in the facts of things.

When she was a little child, her house entertained the strangest of people: soldiers, sailors, big game hunters, explorers, and scientists. With them came the spoils of their adventures. She was captivated by a necklace made of beads of amber from the Far East. She didn't know where it originated from, but she knew she had to go there.



Mary found her calling when she snuck past the doorkeeper to Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's Theatre while they were rehearsing. He saw her, tossed a script into her hands, and told her to read it with the company. Mary's confidence was effervescent. It wasn't long before she was touring England with the company and soon found herself performing in India and the Far East as a lead. In Japan, at a party, Mary Linley drew the bluest eyes that she would ever see, a tall and tanned man that would captivate her heart and imagination.

When she finds herself settling in Korea, the land of upside-down, she discovers that a home is not made of brick and mortar but where the heart is.





ALBERT WILDER TAYLOR, (30 - 60s), an American, is the new generation of 49er, mining the hard rocks of mount Korea. With a back as straight as a sharp edge, a beret covering his salt and pepper hair, and a tobacco pipe in his mouth, nothing fazes this soft-spoken poetic debonair. He favors no sides but his own, even stubbornly.

Albert was destined to be in the mining business as his father, George Alexandra Taylor, a mining engineer, made a living building the largest stamp mills in Alaska. George drew the attention of the emperor of Korea and relocated to that country. When the time came, Albert took up the mantle and continued his father's legacy in Korea.

Being a successful mining engineer had its perks. It afforded Albert opportunities to pursue his other passions on the side. Albert's writing and photography matured, the latter heavily inspired by Ansel Adams. However, Albert was still just a mining engineer, but all that changed when he experienced the Japanese atrocities against the Koreans.

Albert thrust himself into the midst of the political tension, even putting himself in danger. Albert became a part-time journalist. However, this strained his relationships with his brother, who felt Albert was neglecting the mining business; and with Mary, who was losing him to his many responsibilities -- torn between two lives.



additional characters

KIM “SAH-EURN” CHUSA

(40 - 70)

He is thin, medium-tall, like a statue made of ivory. His eyes are ripe like olives with a sparse mustache. He is one of only a few Koreans that speak fluent English, the physical amalgamation of tradition and progressiveness. The perfect person to manage the Taylor’s Curio shop. After experiencing America, Kim Chusa dreams of realizing independence for Korea, even working closely with Emperor Yi to accomplish this goal. He is Albert’s best Korean friend.

WILLIAM “BILL” TAYLOR

(late 20s - 60s)

He is Albert’s younger brother and partner in the Korean mining business. His heart and charisma match his stature, which is wide and tall. He speaks with depth and volume like he swallowed a megaphone. He is equally stubborn, which sometimes causes friction between the two brothers. However, unlike Albert, he is extroverted — valuing the company of others over a book by a fireplace.

GERALD AND ALINE PHIPPS

(20s - 50s)

The British Consul General and his wife were the closest friends to the Taylors in Korea. The two families were inseparable, like peas in a pod. Even prisoned during the internment camps in Japan, they found ways to entertain and lift each other’s spirits. When the day finally came that two sister ships would carry them off to their respective countries, they vowed to reunite when the world opened up again.



additional characters

BETTY MOUAT-BIGGS

(8 - 50s)

Betty is Mary's older sister by two years. She glides across with the Hollywood glam, like Grace Kelly. Spotless, maternal, the epitome of a godmother. She follows Mary into the acting world and finds success as a film star in the United States.

UNA MOUAT-BIGGS

(3 - late 40s)

Una is Mary's younger sister by two years. As a tomboy, Una never shied away from a good fight with boys, being the first to roll up her sleeves. However, secretly, she would tell you that it was to get close to them. Una shares Mary's sense of adventure and fun. Her love of mechanical engineering opened up a world of opportunities in the Far East.

BRUCE "BEATTY" TAYLOR

(various)

Bruce was Mary and Albert's only child. His birth in Korea coincided with the death of Emperor Yi and the first public demonstration for independence by the Koreans. We see him as an infant, a toddler, a young boy, and a young man. After the end of World War Two, Bruce helps Mary return to Korea.



the story - act 1

1941 - 1945

PILOT - “Foreigner from the Western Seas”

The warnings from the consulate flow steadily through the wire, advising its citizens to return to their country. For MARY, ALBERT, and other expatriates who made Korea their home, it's hard for them to abandon. Then the unthinkable happens, the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. The Japanese detain the Americans living in Korea. Mary, British-born, becomes a prisoner in her own home. After identifying Albert's place of imprisonment, Mary sneaks out of her house and goes to Albert, disguised as KIM CHUSA's Korean wife. The meeting behind the fence lifts both of their spirits. Kim Chusa secures Albert's release. However, it's contingent upon the Taylors complying to abandon their property and leave the country. With just the bare essentials and Kim Chusa's carnelian belt, Mary and Albert leave their home behind.

EPISODE 2 - “Prisoner”

The Taylors and other expatriates arrive in Japan, but the promised ship to take them to their country is not there. To their dismay, the Japanese march them to an internment camp instead. As unpleasant as the accommodations are, Mary and her friends make the most of it. After a few, military trucks collect the expatriates and their belongings and shuttle them to the dock. There are heartfelt good-byes as friends get separated and sent to different ships bound for their respective countries. On the deck, they find ways to entertain themselves. Mary sings and performs with Catholic Fathers and Nuns. Mary and Albert finally arrive in America and reunite with BETTY in LA. With the assistance of the Red Cross, Mary and Albert start their new lives in Long Beach — apartment living and working in factories with the hope of returning to Korea. With the end of World War Two, the rejections to Albert's many requests for a return would dishearten him. He slams the door and takes a walk when he collapses to the ground from a heart attack.



the story - act 2

1898 - 1919

EPISODE 3 - “7 Years of Famine, 7 Years of Plenty”

From an early age, Mary followed after the beat of her own drums, which meant getting into trouble at times. Her mother’s chain of amber from the Far East appeals to Mary. She would occasionally take it off its mantle, without permission, and show it off in school — getting further into trouble. Eventually, her mother passed it on to her. Mary drops out of college and, with her brother’s words of wisdom, pursues acting. Mary tours England with a Theater company and jumps at the chance of performing in India and the Far East as a lead. One day she breaks and loses her chain of amber, but when she tries to replace it, she finds only imitation chains. As World War One ravages, Mary receives a telegram stating that her brother died in the war. Devastated, Mary wants to leave Japan and return home, but her theater friends persuade her to stay. She attends a party to take her mind off of the tragedy and meets Albert. There’s an immediate connection between the two, their courtship akin to a romance novel. Albert tells Mary that he has to return to Korea for business but vows to return for her. As a token, he gifts Mary with an authentic chain of amber to replace the one she lost.

EPISODE 4 - “Land of Morning Calm”

Mary’s final performance is a celebration, the public announcement of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. Aboard a private ship, Mary and Albert enjoy their magical honeymoon down the South China Sea. With Mary’s excitement, they arrive in Korea amid much fanfare and introductions of family and friends. However, Mary’s excitement quickly sours, shocked by the living situation — a hole in the floor as the toilet, among others. Mary visits Kim Chusa at the Taylor’s Curio Shop, looking for furniture to accommodate her taste. There, Kim Chusa shares the legend of Korea’s beginning with Mary. She picks up on Kim Chusa’s infatuations with a particular carnelian belt that’s for sale. The following morning, Mary wakes to a dog licking her face. Surprised, she runs out of her room and collides with the house boy as hot morning tea scalds down her legs.



the story - act 2

1898 - 1919

EPISODE 5 - “Arirang”

After a recreational ice skating session on the Han River, Mary, Albert, and fellow expatriates socialize at the Seoul Club. There, an American consul asks Albert if he'd be interested in becoming a part-time journalist. As promised, Mary and Albert journey to the mines like 19th-century pioneers on the trail. On their way, they stop and spend the night at a Korean Inn where Mary tries kimchi for the first time - her eyes water from the heat. That night, Mary hears locals singing and learns that the song is called Arirang — a folk song that turned political. Approaching the mining village, they encounter Japanese soldiers, and Albert is disturbed. In the mining village, they have lunch of venison and home-grown vegetables with friends and co-workers. Albert leads Mary to the very limit of the cave. Mary survives the sweltering heat and becomes the first woman to witness the depths of the cave. That evening, Albert leads a group of friends and workers to the Japanese soldiers' hideout and jumps them, interrupting their drinking session.

EPISODE 6 - “1919”

EMPEROR YI visits Albert at the Seoul Club and thanks him for taking care of the Japanese soldiers on his behalf — a co-owner of Albert's mine. Mary, well into her third trimester, checks into the Severance Hospital. There's a gathering crowd of Koreans nearby. The news reaches Mary's ears. Emperor Yi has died. Albert bikes his way to Kim Chusa, where they discover a Korean crucified to a pole close to Albert's house. Albert goes to Suwon to investigate more rumors of deaths. To his horror, he witnesses Japanese soldiers collecting Korean Christians into a church and setting it ablaze. Mary gives birth to her son, BRUCE. Kim Chusa goes to a secured printing press to smuggle out the printed copies of the declaration of independence and destroy evidence. A nurse hides additional copies of this declaration under Mary's bed, which Albert later discovers and smuggles them out of the country for the world to see. Concerned over the rising tension and the safety of her new family, Mary convinces Albert that they need a new home. Shouts of “mansei” ring out as the Taylor family overlook the protest from their hospital window.



the story - act 3

1920 - 1926

EPISODE 7 - “Dilkusha by the Ginkgo Tree”

With the approaching Christmas holiday, Koreans have adopted the Western practice of holiday decorations and cheers, inspired by the words of President Woodrow Wilson. Albert splits time grinding out at the mines with Bill and keeping the Japanese honest with his newly accepted journalist position. The Taylor family surveys their newly acquired land that overlooks Seoul, to which they will build their new house. With Kim Chusa’s advice against blocking off access to the sacred tree and well, the demolition begins on its foundation. As the house takes form, local villagers look on nervously. A KOREAN WITCH WOMAN strolls past the onlookers and places a curse on the building. Mary and Albert attend Kim Chusa’s birthday, where Albert gifts Kim Chusa with the carnelian belt. Mary learns that the belt once belonged to the Emperor and symbolizes freedom. Betty and UNA arrive in Seoul to visit and celebrate with Mary, bringing much-needed fun and game. With the house complete, the Taylors christen it DILKUSHA — “the palace of heart’s delight.” FATHER HUNT and BISHOP TROLLOPE perform a Christian blessing throughout the house to undo the witch’s curse.

EPISODE 8 - “Trans-Siberian”

With eyes set on adventure and England for a reunion show, Mary and Betty board a blackened Trans-Siberian train for Moscow. The Russian officer orders them to unload all seventeen pieces of luggage while they reexamine their passports. With the imminent departure looming, the Russian officer confiscates their passports and leaves Mary and Betty to reload their luggage. Mid-travel, they pass through a graveyard of abandoned railcars with political outcasts living in them — the White Russians. Mary’s nightmare manifests itself when her train derails, adding another day or two to their travel. They finally arrive at the hotel in Moscow where DOROTHY BESS, a friend who used to live in Korea, surprises Mary and takes them to a party at the stately mansion. Mary, craving a much-needed shower and a change of clothes, objects, but with persistence, she joins the party as is. At Dorothy’s home, she confides in Mary that there are constant fear and a lack of food in Russia. Back onboard the Trans-Siberian train, the Russian officer denies Mary and Betty entrance into Poland, citing their missing passports. Not to be deterred, the sisters force search through the confiscated stack on the Russian officer’s desk and locates theirs. Finally, they are allowed entrance to continue on the last leg of their journey.



the story - act 3

1920 - 1926

EPISODE 9 - "Crushed Amber"

In front of the natural cyclorama on their property, Mary directs a play inspired by old Korean folklore. The play draws a crowd of local villagers. However, this also alerts the Japanese police to the property, where they disperse the crowd and end Mary's play — citing that patriotism is against the law. Under the ginkgo tree, Mary and Una break down the stage when a branch snaps and falls, almost hitting Una. Mary recalls the witch woman's curse. With the Seoul Club friends, Mary and Albert celebrate their wedding anniversary, on a houseboat, down the Han river. That evening, the Taylors and few friends board a trolley back to their home when Koreans, feeling betrayed by America, attack them. The brawl is brutal, and the Japanese police shy away. Albert meets with the Foreign Affairs and strikes a deal with them, public demotion of the Japanese police officers on duty in exchange for no press of the event. Still shaken, Una proposes that they all return to England. As the storm approaches, Mary presses Albert regarding their situation, but Albert dismisses it. The argument gets heated when suddenly, a lightning bolt strikes the roof of Dilkusha — flames, and smoke erupt. The fighting takes a back seat. At Fusan port, Mary and Albert send Una and Bruce off to England. The Taylors begin the rebuilding process.

EPISODE 10 - "White Russians"

Mary is staying at her summer home in Wonsan, volunteering for the Red Cross and entertaining house guests like Father Hunt and LULU, a young American woman who favored a game of chasing after men. On one such incident early morning between Father Hunt and Lulu, they spot a large ship off the coast of Wonsan. Onboard are the White Russians, fleeing from the Bolsheviks, in critical condition. Albert returns to Seoul to greet the new Governor-General but finds himself in the middle of an attack by Koreans on the Governor-General's life. After escaping harm, Albert meets the Governor-General and gets permission for the White Russians to land. The makeshift camp forms on the beach of Wonsan. The community comes together to provide aid. Mary befriends CHERRY, a young White Russian woman serving in the military. Commotion stirs throughout the camp. The Governor-General sent orders for the White Russians to leave. Three commit suicide as a protest. Albert confronts the new Governor-General, who meets the Russians and apologizes for the deaths, but tells them that they still have to leave. Albert convinces in delaying the departure until he finds asylum elsewhere. As the White Russians pack to leave, Mary invites Cherry for the last meal together. On her way back to the camp, Cherry is attacked and raped by a Japanese soldier.



the story - act 4


1927, 1946

EPISODE 11 - "Crampons"

Albert turns to Mary to see if she wants to head back, but Mary powers through, matching Albert's mile for mile. Halfway up their 30-mile hike, they encounter a traditional Korean wedding ceremony. They return to Albert's new mining village, situated near the 38th parallel. Kim Chusa arrives with furnishings for the new space and connects with the new crop of Korean workers. Mary pens a letter to her family and son in England, writing how much she misses them. The bitter winter blankets the mining village, making the 8' x 8' living space feel even more claustrophobic. Mary catches the flu with a high fever. Three days before Christmas, the postman arrives with, among others, a letter from her son — they are in Seoul, hoping to see her on Christmas Day. Albert objects to Mary going due to her condition and the bad weather. However, Mary tricks him into thinking that her fever passed. So, Albert hires eight Korean helpers to take Mary to Seoul. The travel through thick snow and ice is treacherous. The eight helpers dwindle to two. Unable to progress, they take shelter at a house with other stuck Korean travelers. Even though Mary is upset that she'll miss Christmas with her son, she makes the most of it. Mary teaches a Christmas carol to this group and sings with them. In the middle of the night, the two helpers lead Mary outside, where she hears an approaching train in the distance — it's a train to Seoul. With renewed determination, the three set out for the station. Barely making the train, Mary arrives at the English Church Cathedral in the morning and reunites with her son and sisters. It's a Christmas miracle.

EPISODE 12 - "Return of the Amber and the Belt"

The present-day — memorial service concludes. Bruce asks Mary if she decided on a burial site for Albert's ashes, but Mary is hesitant. They arrive at the apartment to see Bill, who missed the ceremony. He tells her that he secured a return trip as an Army consultant and offers a lead so that Mary might do the same. Mary persistently calls and writes a letter to the Office of Property Custody. In San Francisco, Albert is honored by the White Russians who found Asylum in the United States. There, Mary reconnects with Cherry in a heartfelt moment. The efforts pay off as Mary boards the USS Aultman for Japan. On the way, the ship encounters Hurricane EMMA, but Mary is unfazed. She comforts her cabinmate and joins in on the bucket brigade. The arrival to Japan is the complete opposite of how Mary left it, with American flags and GIs roaming the streets. Arriving in Inchon, Mary meets Bill. He remarks that Korea turned for the worst. They visit Kim Chusa, who is comatose and dying. Mary returns his carnelian belt and sits with him for a moment. A proper funeral is held at the Yong Hwa Shin Cemetery as friends lay Albert's ashes to rest. Simultaneously, Kim Chusa receives a traditional Korean funeral. Mary sets foot in Dilkusha as she reflects, "I'm finally home."



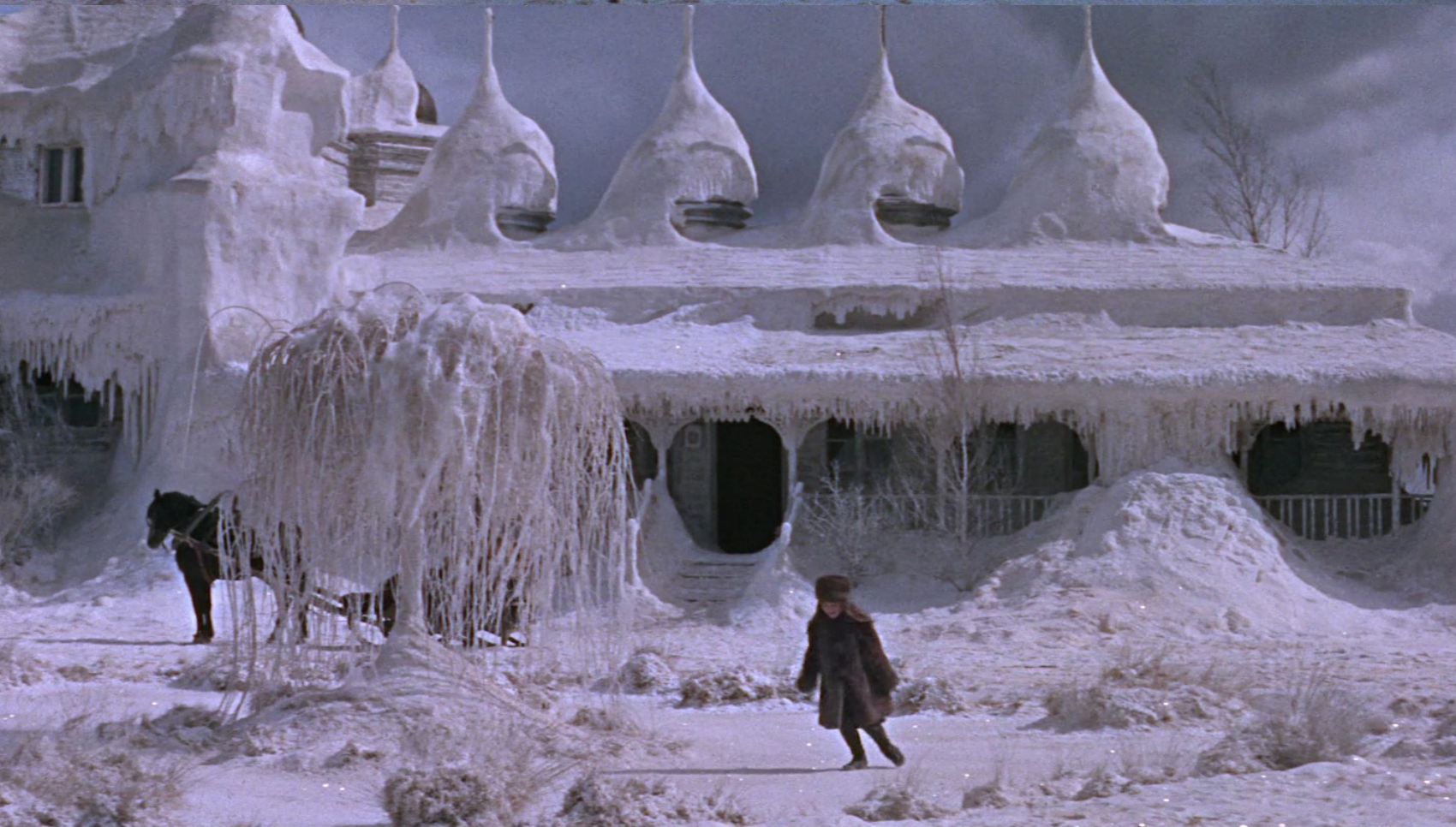
mood board











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Based on the autobiography CHAIN OF AMBER by
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