



A MOST VIOLENT YEAR







MUD, BLOOD, AND GLORY



RETURN TO BARBARISM

“THEY STARTED WITH THE INTELLECTUALS”





“Bazhou isn't the quaint village you remember.”



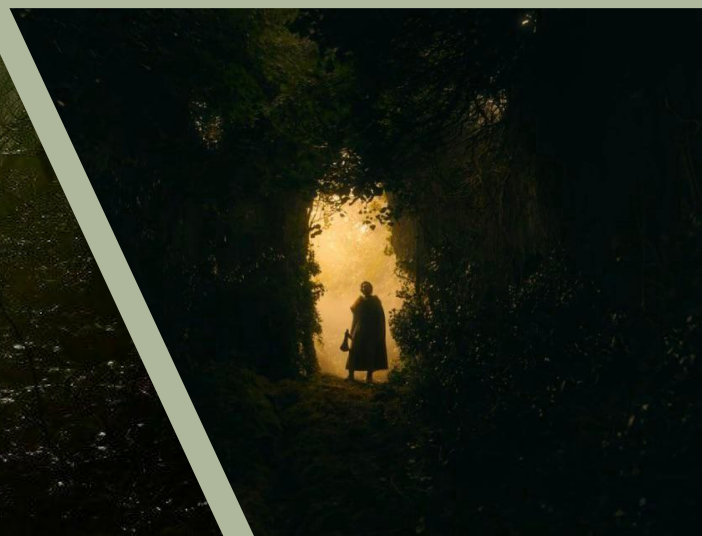


“Those aren't soldiers. Not anymore at least. They're Jinyiwei agents with imperial privileges.”

PARADISE LOST

Zhang's house is beautiful but cold and empty. The furnishings convey a sense of isolation and failure; very tailored pieces that appear uncomfortable and uninviting; guests are given the impression they are not able to sit and rest.





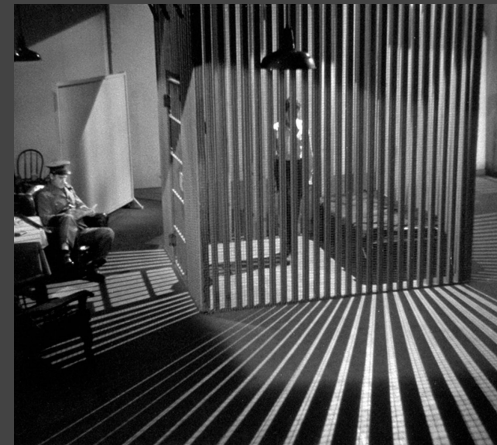
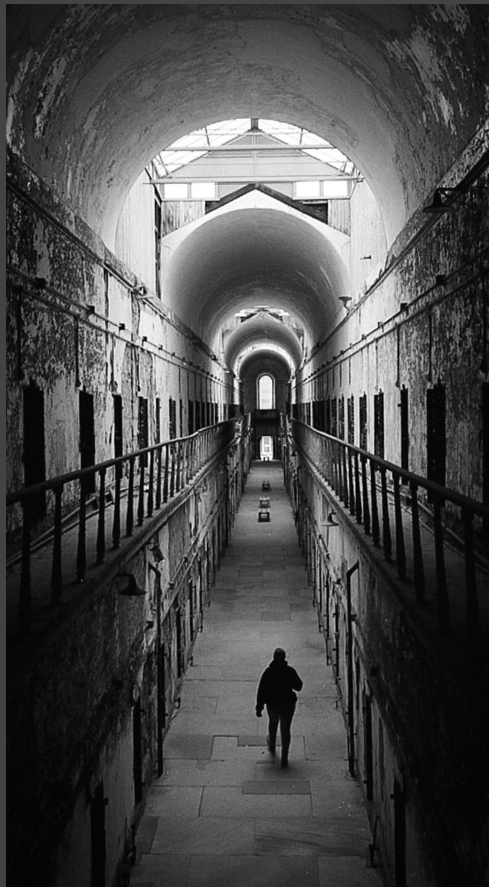


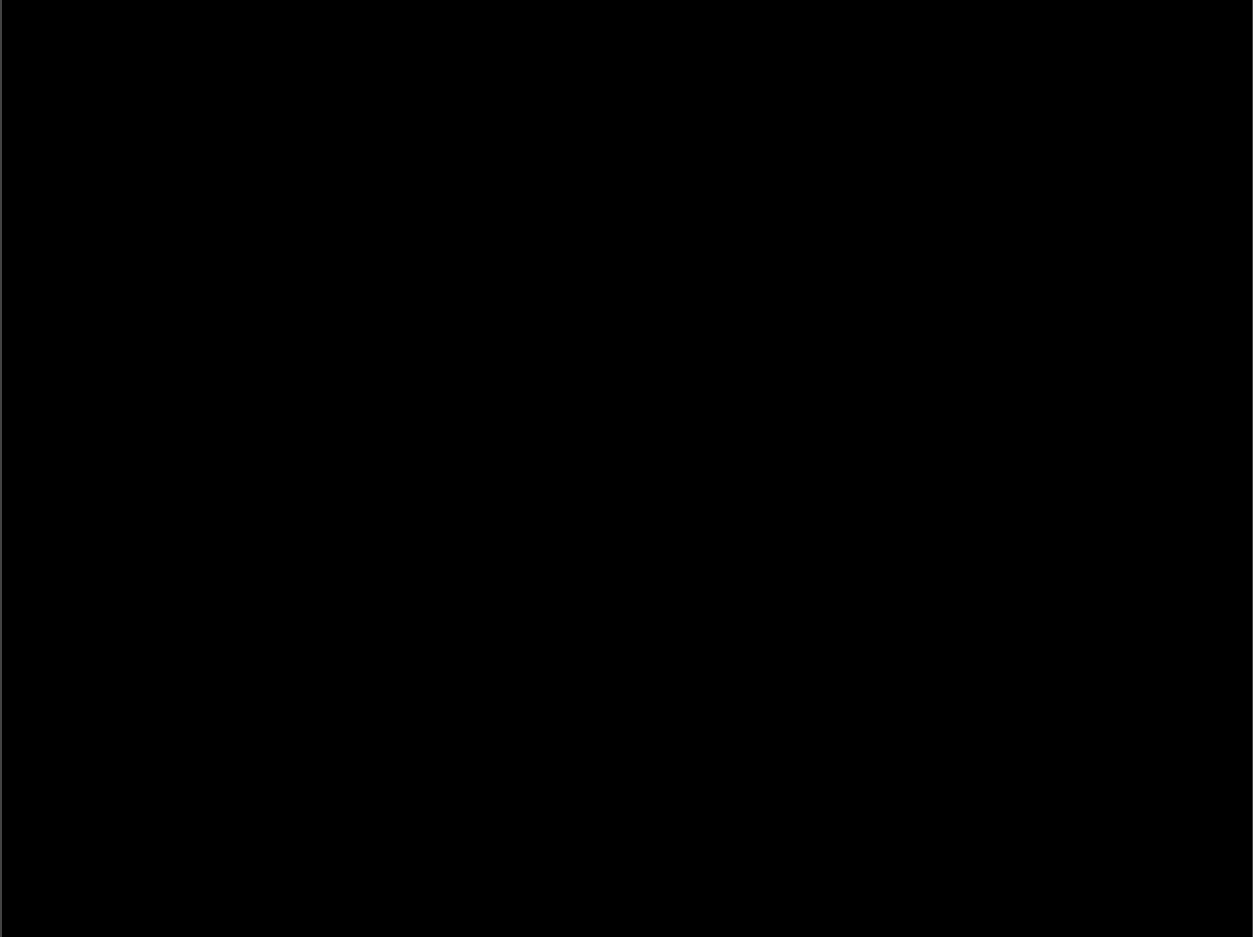
PRISON

MADNESS IN ISOLATION

Clothing is torn, ill fitting, old, and stained by unknown fluids. Walls caked with shit and blood. Guards routinely forget about prisoners, but they'll never know until the food stops coming.

Chiaroscuro lighting that leans towards noir and Japanese horror - with Chinese characteristics. Walls and floor style take after abstract expressionism, action painting, fresco and impasto.



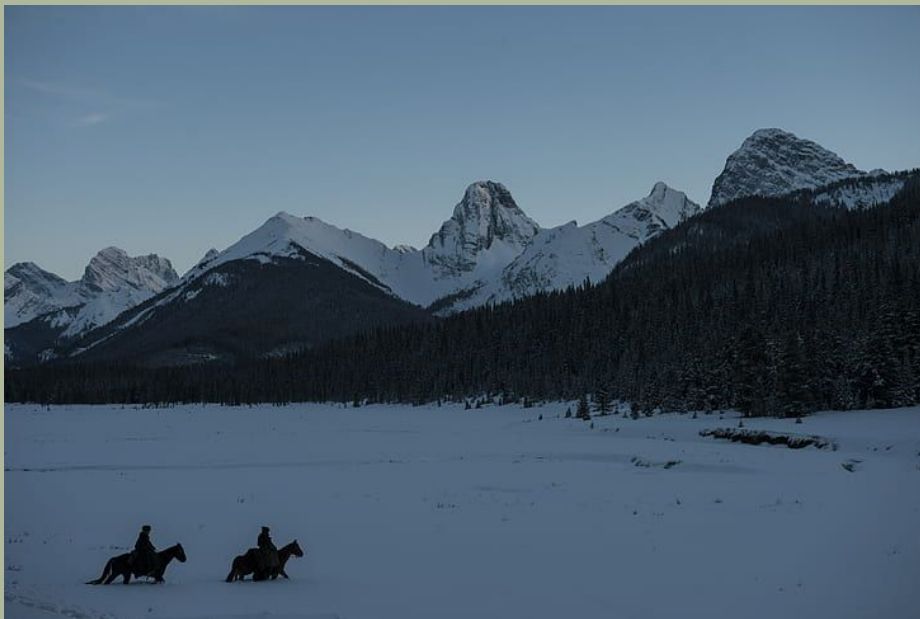






ROAD TO BAZHOU





Horses and cliff, snow + fog





Bandit camp and environment, snow + fog





Blocking





“Looking out downwind where the snow was blowing, they saw three tents and a series of trenches lining the city outskirts.”

STREETS COURTYARDS INTERIORS

During Shen's time in the capital, Bazhou's hinterland witnessed a massive transformation, from utilitarian huts for miners towards more decadent hutongs intended to house noble families and local officials.

Construction never quite finished, which is reflected by the abandoned stones and logs + deteriorating roads. Employs the aesthetic language of China's northern hutongs and small towns, with a heightened sense of desolation and negative space (wide, empty alleys).



Wang will tell the player that over a century ago, Bazhou's development was marked as a major item on the government's agenda; due to its fertile soil, nearby military garrisons, and proximity to Beijing and the Bohai Sea. The subsequent speculative real estate market transformed the village, but things quickly turned for the worse when the underpaid soldiers turned to banditry, converting the garrisons into criminal strongholds.

Zhang's neighborhood was constructed to house noble families and local officials, but most refused to move in, citing the instability in the county. Those who stayed are unable to maintain their standard of living in Beijing or received the property as a wedding gift or a bribe. Wang remarks that even though most of the empty estates are considered toxic assets, the local peasantry is still stuck living in their substandard homes with thatch roofs and shared courtyards.

“Bazhou has no constitution. Relationships are the laws.”





COURTYARD

I like the use of fog here



“Centered in the middle of the courtyard, for all to see, is an impractically sized tree.
One shudders at the thought of its maintenance costs.”



Modern melds with traditional chinese characteristics such as grey tiles, wooden eaves, black walls, etc. Tree acts as the centerpiece; day begins with a thin layer of snow over everything.

There are signs the courtyard has been ransacked: broken cabinetry, shattered vases, etc.

Looks like someone went through a lot of effort to break as much as they could. Wang will note that this much destruction would've been heard by the neighbors, but they only reported shouting. clue:

Noise

From here, players can explore the connecting rooms.



BEDROOM

Zhang's bedroom is beautiful but cold and empty. The furnishings convey a sense of isolation and failure; very tailored pieces that appear uncomfortable and uninviting; guests are given the impression they are not able to sit and rest.



The floor has been nearly blanketed by an assortment of rich, jewelbright, silk robes and skirts. Various pieces of headwear, footwear, and jewelry are spilling out of broken cabinets and lay scattered across the room. Wang wonder's what sort of robber would leave all of this behind.

Clue: If players investigate the left side bed, they'll find a women's sleeping undergarments folded under the pillow.



Fish Bowl, Clutter, Vivid Garments, Scattered Jewelry/Art/Keepsakes



Fish Bowl, Clutter, Vivid Garments, Scattered Jewelry/Art/Keepsakes



OFFICE

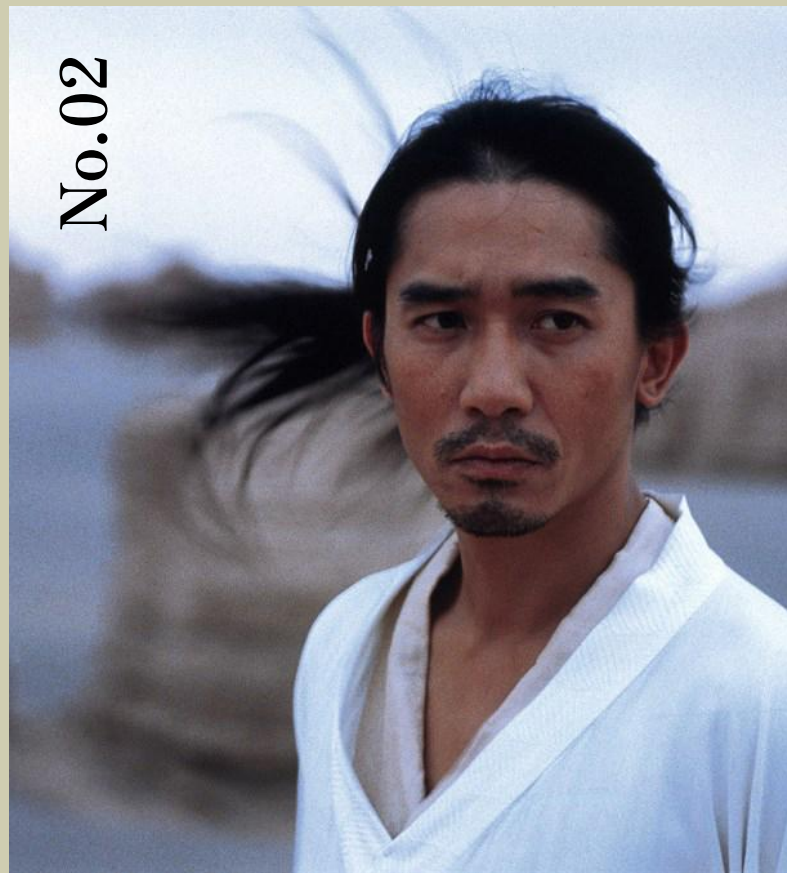
Closer to a bedroom than a study.
Rampant violations of feng shui principles; the room is depressingly cluttered and disorderly. There are too many pieces of furniture and none of them seem to be in the proper place.

Amidst the unfinished letters, worn books/scrolls, and empty jugs across the floor sits a luohan bed. Clearly nobody is conducting any meetings here...

Clue: *Zhang is sleeping in his office.*







No.02

SHEN



“Some say there are no bad people, just bad circumstances.”



WANG

“There's no help for a cop who doesn't believe he's protecting the people”



Former beloved
Town pariah
Wants to be a
business owner



Former bandit
Short temper



Innkeepers daughter
Wants to be in
Beijing



Noble women from
Beijing



Bandit leader
Former soldier



Your kid



Childhood friend
Gambler
(Porcelain Man)



County prefect
Your boss