

The Story of Jang-geum - Podcast Transcript & Sound Credits

Korean - 16th C. - 1st female physician for the king

By Brigitte Paulus for the Lincoln Drama Club, Spring 2020

The Lincoln Middle School Drama Club, in Portland Maine, was just a few weeks into rehearsals for the spring play when the Covid-19 pandemic forced schools to shut down.

So, we decided to make a podcast.

The 3rd of our plays is Jang-Geum. The story of a woman in 16th Century Korea who became the 1st female to be a doctor to the king. Jang-Geum is a real person. She led such a full, interesting, and important life that they made a mini series about her on Korean tv that ran for 54 episodes!

Orphaned, exiled, overcame great odds - seriously, find out more about this woman - she's incredible.

SCENE 1-(J 1 Wine shop)

In the wine shop kitchen. Worker is cleaning bottles. Jang-geum is at a stove, pouring something into a mug.

Wine Shop Worker: *(cleaning out bottles)* Aachoo!!

Jang-geum: *(handing worker the mug)* Here. Drink this. It will help your cold.

Wine Shop Worker: Whooo - that's spicy! But I can breathe better. Now help me.

Jang-geum: *(stirring something in a pot on the stove)* Just a minute. I have to stir this some more. I don't want it to burn.

Wine Shop Worker: That's nice, but can you help me with the chores now? It's not fair that I'm doing so much and you're just cooking.

Jang-geum: It's not "just cooking", and chores are boring.

Wine Shop Worker: Yes, but we have to do them.

Jang-geum: Ugh. I know.

Wine Shop Worker: I think you should have moved in with another family - like the bakers. How'd you end up here with the wine sellers?

Jang-geum: I was orphaned.

Wine Shop Worker: Oh. I'm sorry. What happened?

Jang-geum: I'm not really sure. My dad was imprisoned. My mom was killed by the Choi. I don't know why either of those things happened. Something to do with stuff before I was born.

Wine Shop Worker: Families. Come on. Help me.

Jang-geum: Just another minute. If this works, I think it will help heal stomach-aches. Did you know that food has medicinal properties?

Wine Shop Worker: Yes... Nopa goes on about that all the time.

Jang-geum: She is right. And I think it is fascinating.

Wine Shop Worker: Whatever. It's not like you're going to be a doctor anyway. We're girls. We can't do that.

Jang-geum: Yes we can!

Wine Shop Worker: All right we can deliver babies. Big deal! That's not really being a doctor.

Jang-geum: It is really being a doctor and it's not all we can do. You'll see, someday I'll be a doctor in the palace.

Wine Shop Worker: You're not gonna be anything if you don't help me clean these bottles, because I'm gonna make sure of it.

Jang-geum: Fine. But see if I help you next time you get sick.

SCENE 2 - (J 2 sick kid)

Outside. Jang-geum is giving some food to Kid.

Kid with Sick Mom: Thank you so much Jang-geum. I don't know what we would do without you. My mom has been so sick and this food is really helping her get better. I don't understand how.

Jang-geum: Think of it as medicine that's hidden inside the food so it's easier to eat. Anyway, I'm glad to help if you need anything else please, let me know.

Kid with Sick Mom: You know, you really should think about doing this for a living. I mean, everyone in the village comes to you and pretty soon everybody in the nearby areas will be coming too.

Jang-geum: I guess...

Kid with Sick Mom: Seriously. Go to the Palace and be a cook.

Jang-geum: Oh. I thought you meant ... never mind. I don't know how I would do that.

Kid with Sick Mom: I have an uncle who works there. I bet he could get you into the kitchen.

Jang-geum: It would be better than washing bottles for the rest of my life.

Kid with Sick Mom: I'll see what I can do.

Jang-geum: Thank you.

SCENE 3- (J 3 Palace)

Inside the palace kitchen. Jang-geum is stirring something in a pot. 2 kitchen workers are nearby doing some kitchen prep work

Jang-geum: Wow. I still can't believe I'm really here. This is the best. I love cooking all these meals. I hope that they'll let me use some of my medicinal cooking if anyone gets sick.

Kitchen Worker 1: That's her!

Kitchen Worker 2: Who?

Kitchen Worker 1: Jang-geum.

Kitchen Worker 2: Who?

Kitchen Worker 1: You know. The girl whose family was messed with by the Choi.

Kitchen Worker 2: Why did they do that?

Kitchen Worker 1: I don't know. Some politics thing. She seems nice enough, but I know that one of the top people in the kitchen is a Choi. I wonder what will happen?

Kitchen Worker 2: Nothing good I bet you. Here comes the guard.

Guard: Hey! What are you doing there?

Jang-geum: Nothing. I'm cooking. What should I be doing?

Guard: Are you Jang-geum?

Jang-geum: Yes.

Guard: We have a report that you were a traitor to the royal family.

Jang-geum: Wait what. No! I'm not! I'm --

Guard: Listen child, it has been decided. Come with me. I'm taking you to Jeju Island. You'll work there for the government.

Kitchen Worker 1: Poor thing.

SCENE 4 - (J 4 Jeju arrival)

On Jeju island. Outside

Island Friend: Why are you crying?

Jang-geum: I don't know what I did. I don't know why I am here. I don't know what I'm going to do.

Island Friend: I don't know what you did either. Probably your parents made somebody else's parents angry and here you are. I also don't know what your future holds. But I do know what you're going to do now. Get up and do some work.

Jang-geum: *(Sigh)* fine.

Island Friend: *(bring Jang-geum to another part of the stage, they do some work while they talk)* What did you like to do before you were sent here?

Jang-geum: I like cooking and healing people. I used to think I'd be a doctor someday, but I guess that's not possible now.

Island Friend: Don't be such a defeatist. There's a female doctor here on the island. Maybe you could learn from her?

Jang-geum: What?

Island Friend: I don't think they'll keep you here forever. If you learn some skills from the doctor you'd be able to get a job when you leave.

Jang-geum: Thank you. I'd like to meet her.

Island Friend: After we finish this work.

SCENE 5 - (J 5 Jeju study)

On Jeju Island. Jang-geum is surrounded by books and papers. Studying.

Island Friend: How are the studies going?

Jang-geum: It was so much easier when I was just cooking. I had no idea there was this much to learn to be a doctor.

Island Friend: I found out you're getting released next week. And there's someone here to see you today.

(Kid enters)

Jang-geum: Hi. What are you doing here?

Kid with Sick Mom: I heard that you'd been sent here. I wanted to visit.

Jang-geum: You didn't have to, you know.

Kid with Sick Mom: I know. But here I am. I heard you're getting released next week. And I have good news. I talked to my uncle. He still works at the Palace and you can have your job back.

Jang-geum: But how?

Kid with Sick Mom: The Choi are under investigation so they don't hold power anymore. They messed things up pretty bad.

Jang-geum: Thank you so much!

Kid with Sick Mom: No problem that's what friends are for.

SCENE 6 - (J 6 tea)

Inside Jang-geum home. Sitting to tea.

Kid with Sick Mom: I can't believe I'm in the presence of the great Jang-geum. Did the king actually give you the title of Dae?

Jang-geum: Yes he did.

Kid with Sick Mom: And you're his personal doctor now?

Jang-geum: I did save his wife from death, save his mother from death, save his son from death, and contain a smallpox epidemic, so yeah. I'm the King's personal doctor now.

Kid with Sick Mom: I'm sorry I ever said you couldn't do it. Who knew you'd be able to?

Jang-geum: I did. I had help along the way, people who believed in me. Most of all I believed in myself and did the work I had to. Life isn't always unfair you know.

END

I hope you enjoyed this story. If you know any of the students involved - be sure to tell them how incredible they are, and listen to the next one - The Emperor's New Clothes

The stories were inspired by the times in which we live, and Jason Porath's book *Rejected Princesses*. The scripts were written by and sound files were edited together by the drama club advisor, Brigitte Paulus. Not all the students were able to send in recordings, so when needed, some Lincoln Drama alums* stepped up to fill in.

Voice actors are:

Olivia Chong - Jang-Geum

Brigitte Paulus - Wine Shop Worker

Emma Walsh - Child with sick mother and Palace Kitchen Worker

Jilli Fehrs* - Palace Kitchen Worker

Sawyer Surkin - The guard

Rose Bolduc - Friend on Jeju Island

Many thanks to freesound.org and soundjay.com for providing free downloadable sound effects. Check out the list of effects creators on the Lincoln Middle School website.

I'm grateful to everyone who helped these students still have their spring play.

Thanks to Judy Yeo - who figured out all the things to get this project to your ears. She's the one who always makes the schedules work when we're together, and does so many little things. The drama program would be lost without her.

Thanks for listening!

SOUND CREDITS

<https://www.soundjay.com>

Footsteps Sound Effect 4

<https://freesound.org/>

genghis attenborough - Ashy Minivets - Japanese Thrush

<https://freesound.org/people/genghis%20attenborough/sounds/257442/>

Edhutschek - cutting sounds <https://freesound.org/people/edhutschek/sounds/214359/>

KenzieVaness - cooking in kitchen <https://freesound.org/people/KenzieVaness/sounds/352050/>

Mafon2 - pouring water with 2 drips at end <https://freesound.org/people/Mafon2/sounds/330025/>

Ultradust (Andi Roselund (Sangwha Comm)- frying vegetables in oil

<https://freesound.org/people/ultradust/sounds/167510/>

Ultradust (Andi Roselund (Sangwha Comm) - Cooking pork on grill with korean speaking

<https://freesound.org/people/ultradust/sounds/165116/>

Lizanejordan - wooden box on wooden floor <https://freesound.org/people/lizanejordan/sounds/325929/>

Arseniusz - pouring rice <https://freesound.org/people/Arseniusz/sounds/170469/>

Aesqe - cooking in wok <https://freesound.org/people/aesqe/sounds/140454/>

Bletort - Korean Flute - <https://freesound.org/people/bletort/sounds/94934/>

Ultradust -Andi Roselund (Sangwha Comm) - Korean Sogo Drum

<https://freesound.org/people/ultradust/sounds/167382/>

LG - Korean Food Shop <https://freesound.org/people/LG/sounds/67420/>

Sarena6487528 - Korean Bell <https://freesound.org/people/sarena6487528/sounds/474949/>

Mmiron - barcelona waves - (no birds) <https://freesound.org/people/mmiron/sounds/243954/>

OpenWillem - paging through book <https://freesound.org/people/OpenWillem/sounds/442513/>

Astounded - footsteps in forest <https://freesound.org/people/Astounded/sounds/518585/>

EricSoundschmiede - walking boots water step creaky (walking in puddle)

<https://freesound.org/people/EricsSoundschmiede/sounds/454623/>

Keegan_Miner - knock door simple https://freesound.org/people/Keegan_Miner/sounds/474581/

Usamah - drop 2 books on table <https://freesound.org/people/usamah/sounds/464994/>

Silversatyr - woman crying <https://freesound.org/people/silversatyr/sounds/113364/>

Zabuhailo - 13yo girl laughing <https://freesound.org/people/Zabuhailo/sounds/143253/>

Closetwalrus - silverware on plate <https://freesound.org/people/Closetwalrus/sounds/370298/>

Fugeni bottles bumping together <https://freesound.org/people/Fugeni/sounds/416285/>

Vmgraw - water sloshing in bottle <https://freesound.org/people/vmgraw/sounds/235625/>

OlyveBone - stirring pot <https://freesound.org/people/OlyveBone/sounds/486999/>

Nebulousflynn - pouring tea <https://freesound.org/people/nebulousflynn/sounds/220940/>

OwlStorm - sipping tea <https://freesound.org/people/OwlStorm/sounds/320139/>

MilanKovanda - plates <https://freesound.org/people/MilanKovanda/sounds/377044/>