

# E5 - Covert Operations

Source: [Crunchyroll](#)

Translator:

Editor:

Timer:

QC:

(Please feel free to edit the speaker names if incomplete or inaccurate. Names are handled on a best-effort basis depending on the info on the source file. Dialogue is left as is.)

**SIGN** The Apothecary Diaries

**SIGN** The Apothecary Diaries

**SIGN** This story is a work of fiction. The names of all of the characters, organizations, and so on are imaginary. It also bears no connection to any specific real-life events.

**SIGN** Episode 5: Covert Operations

**[02:18] Basen**

I yield.

**[02:23] Jinshi**

You've improved, Basen.

**[02:25] Basen**

No...

**[02:27] Basen**

My brute force is still no match  
for your techniques, Master Jinshi.

**[02:32] Jinshi**

But that force of yours is quite astounding.  
You truly carry the Ma clan's blood.

**[02:40] Jinshi**

How's the apothecary doing, Gaoshun?

**[02:44] Gaoshun**

What specifically do you mean?

**[02:46] Jinshi**

Has she gained weight?

**[02:48] Gaoshun**

I believe she has regained some, yes.

**[02:51] Jinshi**

I see. Well...

**[02:54] (Flashback) Maomao**

Don't you understand why this stuff was banned?!

**[02:57] (Flashback) Maomao**

I told you, it's *poison*.

**[02:59] Jinshi**

It was unexpected, seeing that side of her.

**[03:03] Gaoshun**

Are you all right, sir?

**[03:04] Jinshi**

Hmm? What?

**[03:06] Gaoshun**

You seem very concerned.

**[03:13] Gaoshun**

No, it's nothing.

**[03:25] Maomao**

I knew I'd find it!

**[03:28] Maomao**

Yes!

**[03:31] Maomao**

Oh! Over here, too!

**[03:33] Maomao**

And here, too!

**[03:36] Maomao**

Where should I eat it? The kitchen?

**[03:39] Maomao**

But I don't want people  
asking where I found it...

**[03:42] Maomao**

Oh, but before that...

**[03:45] Xiaolan**

Wow, looks so good!

**[03:47] Xiaolan**

Thanks as always, Maomao!

**[03:50] Xiaolan**

It's so kind of your higher-ups to share snacks  
with you every time there's a tea party.

**[03:57] (Flashback) Yinghua**

You need to eat more!

**[03:58] (Flashback) Guiyuan**

Gain more weight!

**[04:00] (Flashback) Ailan**

Don't be shy!

**[04:04] Xiaolan**

Oh, did you hear?

**[04:06] Maomao**

Hmm?

**[04:07] Xiaolan**

I heard a palace servant

**[04:09] Xiaolan**

was able to seduce a military officer  
who was famous for hating women.

**[04:13] Maomao**

Huh...

**[04:14] Xiaolan**

Guess how she did it.

**[04:16] Maomao**

Who knows?

**[04:18] Xiaolan**

They say she used an aphrodisiac!

**[04:20] Maomao**

Aphro...disiac?

**[04:27] Maomao**

*That one.*

**[04:28] Xiaolan**

What's wrong, Maomao?

**[04:29] Maomao**

N-Nothing. It's not related. Probably.

**[04:36] Maomao**

Good morning.

**[04:38] Guen**

Oh, hey little lady! What's going on today?

**[04:42] Maomao**

There's a secret I'd like to discuss with you.

**[04:44] Guen**

What is it?

**[04:46] Maomao**

This.

**[04:49] Guen**

Wow! Those are fresh matsutake mushrooms!

**[04:51] Maomao**

I'm glad to see you seem to like it.

**[04:53] Guen**

We'll need charcoal!

And some soy paste and salt!

**[04:58] Maomao**

*Somehow, I've ended up being  
buddy-buddy with the quack doctor.*

**[05:07] Guen**

Oh, how irresistible!

**[05:09] Maomao**

I think it's ready.

**[05:11] Maomao**

Pour on some soy paste, add some salt...

**[05:16] Maomao**

Here.

**[05:21] Guen**

Delicious!

**[05:22] Maomao**

*Now he's an accomplice.*

**[05:25] Maomao & Guen**

Delicious!

**[05:28] Eunuch A**

D-Doctor!

**[05:31] Eunuch A**

A c-curse...

**[05:33] Eunuch A**

Can you make a medicine that cures curses?

**[05:36] Maomao**

A curse?

**[05:38] Guen**

What do you mean?

**[05:39] Eunuch A**

It's this.

**[05:43] Maomao**

That's quite a bad rash.

Maybe an ointment, for starters?

**[05:48] Guen**

Could you make some?

**[05:50] Maomao**

Understood.

**[05:52] Guen**

So, what's this curse you mentioned?

**[05:55] Eunuch A**

It was two nights ago.

**[05:59] Eunuch A**

Trash that comes out of the rear palace

**[06:01] Eunuch A**

is burned in the pit on the west side.

**[06:04] Eunuch A**

I was doing work as usual that day, when...

**[06:09] (Flashback) Eunuch A**

What's that?

**[06:13] (Flashback) Eunuch A**

A woman's dress? The bottoms of the sleeves are burnt.

**[06:17] (Flashback) Eunuch A**

And wood writing tablets...?

**[06:19] Eunuch A**

I was a little curious, but I just threw it in the fire anyway. Then...

**[06:39] Eunuch A**

It's a curse! That must be what got to my hands!

**[06:44] Maomao**

Was the fire this color?

**[06:51] Maomao**

Or perhaps this color?

**[06:55] Maomao**

This would do the same thing.

**[06:58] Guen**

Little lady, what is that?

**[07:01] Maomao**

It's similar to how fireworks work.

**[07:03] Maomao**

Some things change the color  
of a flame when burned.

**[07:07] Eunuch A**

Then, what about my hands?

**[07:09] Maomao**

There was probably something  
on the wood tablets.

**[07:13] Maomao**

I think it caused the rashes  
when you touched them.

**[07:16] Maomao**

Try this medicine, and let us know how it goes.

**[07:19] Eunuch A**

Oh, thank you.

**[07:21] Guen**

The little lady's medicines  
work like a charm!

**[07:24] Guen**

You'll be better in no time!

**[07:27] Jinshi**

Well done as always, apothecary.

**[07:30] Guen**

Master Jinshi!

**[07:33] Guen**

I'll make you some tea.

**[07:37] Maomao**

Greetings, Master Jinshi.

What business do you have with me today?

**[07:41] Jinshi**

Do you mean I shouldn't talk  
to you unless I have business?

**[07:45] Maomao**

Of course not.

**[07:49] Jinshi**

Follow me for a moment.

**[07:52] Guen**

Thank you for waiting, Master Jinshi—

**[07:55] Guen**

Oh.

**[08:01] Jinshi**

How many colors are there?

**[08:03] Maomao**

I can't say specifically.

**[08:05] Jinshi**

Then, how does one apply these colors?

**[08:09] Maomao**

With salts, you can dissolve them in water.

**[08:12] Maomao**

Some will dissolve in other things, like oil.

**[08:17] Maomao**

But this is outside my area of expertise.

**[08:20] Jinshi**

I see.

**[08:22] Maomao**

If that's all, please excuse me.

**[08:25] Jinshi**

Wait.

**[08:27] Maomao**

What is it?

**[08:29] Jinshi**

I like them teapot-steamed.

**[08:34] Jinshi**

I'm counting on you, apothecary.

**[08:36] Maomao**

*So, he knew...*

**[08:39] Maomao**

I'll see if I can find more tomorrow.

**[08:50] Jinshi**

Find everyone who's suffered burns on their arms recently.

**[08:54] Gaoshun**

Understood.

**[08:56] Maomao**

The colored wood tablets are probably some kind of code.

**[09:00] Maomao**

People would only use something like that for... something secret?

**[09:05] Maomao**

What would that be?

**[09:09] Maomao**

None of my business. Nothing a food taster should be concerned about.

**[09:17] Hongniang**

Thank you. Oh, please take that over there.

**[09:22] Maomao**

I'm back.

**[09:24] Hongniang**

Welcome back.

**[09:26] Yinghua**

Maomao! Nice timing.

**[09:27] Hongniang**

Over there, please.

**[09:29] Yinghua**

Try this on, would you?

**[09:31] Maomao**

Huh? I have a bad feeling about this...

**[09:37] Maomao**

What is this?

**[09:39] Yinghua**

Isn't it obvious? It's your dress  
for the garden party.

**[09:42] Maomao**

Garden party?

**[09:44] Yinghua**

Twice a year, the emperor and his  
high officials gather in the courtyard

**[09:48] Yinghua**

to enjoy food and entertainment.

**[09:51] Hongniang**

The emperor isn't married yet,  
so he has no empress consort, right?

**[09:56] Hongniang**

In that case, it's customary to bring  
the upper first-rank concubines.

**[10:01] Maomao**

Upper first-rank concubines...

**SIGN** Current Emperor

**SIGN** (Contender for Empress Consort)

**SIGN** Upper First-Rank Concubine

**[10:03] Hongniang**

The four high-ranking concubines who are  
the best contenders for the empress consort.

**[10:12] Hongniang**

Concubine Gyokuyou, Precious Consort.

**[10:14] Hongniang**

Concubine Lihua, Wise Consort.

**[10:17] Hongniang**

Concubine Lishu, Virtuous Consort.

**[10:19] Hongniang**

Concubine Ah-Duo, Pure Consort.

**[10:22] Hongniang**

Last time, Lady Gyokuyou  
Lady Lihua couldn't attend,

**[10:24] Hongniang**

because they had just given birth.

**[10:26] Hongniang**

So this time, they decided  
to invite all four concubines.

**[10:29] Maomao**

And what do we do there?

**[10:32] Hongniang**

Well, nothing, actually.

**[10:38] Gyokuyou**

We're invited as guests.  
We just have to follow the emperor.

**[10:43] Hongniang**

Some officials come by  
to pay their respects.

**[10:46] Hongniang**

So, don't forget to smile.

**[10:48] Maomao**

Huh...

**[10:51] Maomao**

Is everyone required to attend?

**[10:53] Yinghua**

Of course!

**[10:56] Yinghua**

This is Princess Lingli's  
first public appearance,

**[10:58] Yinghua**

and a rare event with all four  
high-ranking concubines!

**[11:01] Yinghua**

This is a war! We have to brace ourselves!

**[11:05] Yinghua**

Let's do this!

**[11:08] Maomao**

*Lady Gyokuyou has so few  
ladies-in-waiting to start with.*

**[11:11] Maomao**

*The newbie can't sit this out.*

**[11:14] Maomao**

*Besides, if there's a meal,  
the taster is indispensable.*

**[11:18] Yinghua**

I guess you do need to  
stuff the chest area a little.

**[11:22] Yinghua**

I want to bulk up your waist, too. Is that okay?

**[11:25] Maomao**

I'm in your hands.

**[11:28] Yinghua**

We'll be doing some nice makeup, too!

**[11:31] Yinghua**

You should hide your freckles occasionally.

**[11:36] Maomao**

Staying outside in the strong winds,

**[11:39] Maomao**

watching the entertainment, eating the food,

**[11:41] Maomao**

smiling at the officials who come by...

**[11:45] Maomao**

I'll definitely need an iron  
bladder for this one.

**[11:50] Maomao**

In that case...

**[12:01] Maomao**

Good.

**[12:03] Hongniang**

That smells nice.

**[12:06] Hongniang**

What are you making?

**[12:08] Maomao**

It's candy made of ginger and oranges.

**[12:10] Hongniang**

Candy?

**[12:11] Maomao**

Orange peels improve blood flow,  
and ginger warms the body.

**[12:17] Hongniang**

Wait, is it for the garden party?!

**[12:20] Maomao**

Yes. I also made this, just in case.

**[12:24] Maomao**

I sewed pockets into my underrobe.

**[12:27] Maomao**

By putting pocket warmers in there,  
it should help me withstand the cold.

**[12:30] Hongniang**

Maomao!

**[12:32] Maomao**

Huh?

**[12:32] Hongniang**

Please, make enough for everyone!

**[12:36] Maomao**

S-Sure...

**[12:42] Maomao**

*I guess getting too used to custom*

*can stifle the simplest ideas.*

**[12:48] Maomao**

*A little work can make things better.*

**[12:53] Maomao**

Come in.

**[12:54] Jinshi**

I'd like to ask for one, myself.

**[12:56] Gaoshun**

Me too, please...

**[12:58] Maomao**

Okay.

**[13:00] Seamstress**

Please teach me how to make that.

**[13:02] Cook**

Please.

**[13:04] Maomao**

*The emperor's own seamstress and cook, too?*

**[13:36] Yinghua**

So cold!

**[13:53] Maomao**

Finally finished.

**[13:56] Maomao**

*So, it's tomorrow.*

**[14:01] Maomao**

Let's make some of those too, just in case.

**[14:06] Gaoshun**

Regarding the search for those  
with burns on their arms...

**[14:09] Jinshi**

No luck yet?

**[14:13] Gaoshun**

I'm sorry.

**[14:15] Jinshi**

I hope the garden party goes smoothly...

**[14:39] Ladies-in-Waiting Trio**

Wow...

**[14:42] Yinghua**

You're beautiful, Lady Gyokuyou!

**[14:44] Guiyuan**

Crimson looks so good on you!

**[14:46] Ailan**

Such wonderful beauty...

**[14:49] Maomao**

No wonder they say crimson suits her  
better than anyone in all the land.

**[14:52] Hongniang**

Yes, you outshine all others.

**[14:56] Gyokuyou**

Thank you. And for you all...

**[15:01] Gyokuyou**

Here. I have to mark you, to make sure you don't attract any bad bugs.

**[15:07] Gyokuyou**

Maomao.

**[15:10] Gyokuyou**

Remember, Maomao. You are *my* lady-in-waiting.

**[15:17] Maomao**

Uhm, thank you.

**[15:21] Yinghua**

Got her!

**[15:24] Maomao**

Um, wait.

**[15:25] Guiyuan; Ailan**

Makeup time!

**[15:28] Gyokuyou**

Time to become as cute as you can be!

**[15:30] Yinghua**

We'll wipe off your face and apply some scents.

**[15:32] Yinghua**

Then we'll deal with your freckles...

**[15:34] Guiyuan**

There.

**[15:38] Ailan**

Huh?

**[15:39] Guiyuan**

Maomao?

**[15:40] Yinghua**

No...

**[15:41] Hongniang**

Why?

**[15:43] Gyokuyou**

Maomao, you're...

**[15:46] Maomao**

Ah...

**[15:47] Maomao**

*They caught me.*

**[15:50] Gyokuyou**

All right, let's go.

**[16:12] Jinshi**

Concubine Lishu, I look forward to seeing you later in the garden party.

**[16:16] Lishu**

Yes, Master Jinshi.

**[16:26] Jinshi**

Last is the Precious Consort, Lady Gyokuyou.

**[16:32] Gaoshun**

*He seems to favor Concubine Gyokuyou.*

**[16:35] Gaoshun**

*Could it be because of his favorite toy?*

**[16:39] Gaoshun**

*He can be so troublesome.*

**[16:45] Gyokuyou**

Maomao, you've helped out quite a bit.

**[16:48] Maomao**

Glad to be of service.

**[16:50] Jinshi**

Greetings, Concubine Gyokuyou.

**[16:52] Gyokuyou**

Oh, greetings.

**[16:54] Jinshi**

My lady, you certainly  
look wonderful in crimson.

**[16:58] Jinshi**

Your gorgeous, yet somewhat mysterious  
style must stem from your jade eyes.

**[17:06] Gyokuyou**

Thank you.

**[17:12] Jinshi**

Now, to check in on the princess...

**[17:24] Maomao**

Greetings, Master Jinshi.

**[17:30] Jinshi**

Oh, it's you, apothecary.

**[17:32] Jinshi**

Are you wearing makeup?

**[17:34] Maomao**

No, I'm not.

**[17:36] Jinshi**

Your freckles are gone.

**[17:38] Maomao**

Yes, I removed them.

**[17:40] Jinshi**

You covered them with makeup, you mean?

**[17:41] Maomao**

I removed my makeup. That's why they're gone.

**[17:46] Jinshi**

That doesn't make any sense.  
You're contradicting yourself.

**[17:50] Maomao**

*Ugh, what a bother.*

*I should have just nodded along.*

**[17:55] Maomao**

Every day, I put dried clay  
on my face to add freckles.

**[18:00] Maomao**

I already had makeup on every  
time you saw me before this.

**[18:04] Maomao**

Cosmetics aren't just for making  
a face more beautiful.

**[18:08] Jinshi**

Why would you do such a thing?

**[18:12] Maomao**

You really want to know?

**[18:15] Maomao**

It's to prevent being  
dragged into a back alley.

**[18:20] Maomao**

I lived near the brothels, but not  
every man left sexually satisfied.

**[18:24] Maomao**

Some had empty wallets, violent  
tendencies, and venereal diseases.

**[18:28] Maomao**

A short, skinny, ugly girl  
rarely becomes a target.

**[18:34] Jinshi**

Were you ever dragged away?

**[18:35] Maomao**

Attempts were made. Instead, I got kidnapped.

**[18:43] Maomao**

My makeup was faded. They seemed  
to think I was borderline marketable.

**[18:49] Jinshi**

I see.

**[18:51] Jinshi**

I'm sorry we couldn't police them.

**[18:55] Maomao**

I don't particularly care.

**[18:57] Maomao**

A buyer can't tell if you were kidnapped, or just sold off  
legally so there'd be one less mouth to feed.

**[19:05] Jinshi**

Doesn't that make you angry?

**[19:07] Maomao**

Obviously, it does. But it's not your fault.

**[19:16] Jinshi**

I'm sorry.

**[19:20] Maomao**

*He's being straightforward for once.*

**[19:30] Maomao**

That hurts.

**[19:32] Jinshi**

Sorry. It's yours.

**[19:37] Jinshi**

See you at the party.

**[19:50] Maomao**

A man's hairpin? Why?

**[19:54] Yinghua**

Wow! So nice!

**[19:57] Guiyuan**

I'm jealous!

**[19:58] Ailan**

I want one, too!

**[20:00] Maomao**

*I could give it away,  
but how would I split this?*

**[20:03] Gyokuyou**

Oh, you broke our promise already.

**[20:10] Gyokuyou**

You're no longer mine alone.

**[20:16] Maomao**

Um, what does that mean—

**[20:21] Gyokuyou**

It's starting.

**[20:49] Maomao**

*The garden party begins.*

**SIGN** Next Time

**[22:46] Narrator**

*Next time: "The Garden Party."*

**SIGN** Episode 6: The Garden Party

---

Revision #1

Created 2024-04-08 16:57:10 UTC by whimsee

Updated 2024-04-08 17:00:19 UTC by whimsee