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Never Again Book 6

Never Again?

R.J. Rummel



Llumina Press

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Love's dark enemy

Power, like a deadly plague

Infects, corrupts, kills

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I have no doubt that in our history, somewhere in the world, loving couples like John and Joy have fought for freedom and, courageous warriors to the end, died in each other's arms. I'm sure they would have had it no other way. We do not know their names, but their spirits are all around us in the freedom we now enjoy. To all their souls, for myself and my wife and daughters, and for humanity, I give profound thanks.

Although names and places in this book may have an uncanny similarity to what is real, this is a work of fiction, and they all are fictional facts. Any errors in such are mine alone.

Chapter 1

God does play dice with the universe. Well, at least that part of it that humans inhabit. Each second of each minute of each hour is a new throw of the dice, and this time we may win the lottery, be struck by lightning, or have a tornado hit our town on the same day three years in a row, as happened to Kodell, Mississippi in 1917, 1918, and 1919.

By a throw of the dice we may have a stroke, meet the love of our life, or be hit by a car whose driver had a heart attack. A particular throw may save a man with a bullet wound from death, a man who will go on to become a dictator and be responsible for murdering millions, and killing millions more in the wars he wages. Or another throw may just have a doctor present at the right moment to save a boy from a life-threatening disease, and more lucky throws may allow the boy to grow up into a man of sublime peace who, in the right place at the right time, creates a country and an influential philosophy of nonviolence. Of course, when history is written, its course seems so inevitable, so fixed, that the supreme role of chance is disguised.

This is not to say that we have no role to play in our lives. We do. In the choices we make, we open or close our future to new lines of chance. Just moving to a new neighborhood, deciding to change jobs, or going to college is like going into one casino instead of another, or choosing a slot machine over the poker tables—a new world of chance is before us, and others are left behind. But when by chance a golden door of opportunity opens, by disposition, interest, education, and experience, we have to know the door is there. Of course, we may just be lucky and take advantage of the opportunity without knowing what we are doing.

Maybe once in a thousand years, maybe once in a hundred thousand, maybe for the first time in all of human history, a particular opportunity may open to some person who just happens to be at the right time and place. And thus God's throw of the dice favored Cyril Clement, one out of all the billions of human beings, with a power beyond our understanding.

He was a nothing then, a poor kid, really a street urchin. His parents were divorced and he lived at his dad's place—to Cyril, it was always his dad's place, never home—a small, two-room apartment. His father was an off-and-on laborer who spent most of his earnings in saloons.

What this boy would have become, had he not been made supremely special by chance, is impossible to know. He surely would have quit school as soon as he could. Which he did. He likely would have remained uneducated, poor, and possibly frustrated and unhappy for the rest of his life. He might have turned to crime. But maybe not. He might have lucked out in a stupid business venture, or turned out to be a well-adjusted, happy person. But in any case, as far as humanity is concerned, he would only have been a statistic, one more person added to the world's and the American population.

A throw of the dice opened to him the greatest of all opportunities, but he had to have a special disposition to grab it, or this one and possibly only chance might never appear again for anyone. He had to enjoy reading, so much so that he collected cast-off magazines and books. If he'd been illiterate, if he disliked reading, or if he read only by happenstance, humanity would have lost the absolutely profound, the absolutely incredible chance that the young boy could be a bridge from one universe—one dripping with the blood of hundreds of millions murdered, or killed in aggressive wars, one in which thug-regimes enslaved billions—to a parallel universe of peace and freedom.

March 1944, San Francisco Cyril Clement

Cyril sat on his bunk staring at his father, asleep on the other side of the narrow bedroom. The room reeked of alcohol. Hunger had awakened him. He yawned, stretched, and looked at the alarm clock on one of the bookshelves next to his bunk. Past ten a.m.—he'd missed school again. He remembered hitting the alarm when it went off at seven a.m., but he had stayed up late last night reading all of one of his latest finds, a June 1938 *Reader's Digest*, and he'd been too sleepy to heed the alarm.

His hunger demanded attention. He had not eaten since lunch the previous day, and then only a cheap, half-plate of spaghetti from the restaurant below them. "I'm hungry," Cyril yelled as loud as he could.

His father lay twisted in the covers of the single bed beneath the room's only window, snoring. It was a workday, but not for his drunken dad. He stirred and opened one bloodshot eye, then the other. He stared back at Cyril and mumbled something.

"I haven't eaten anything today, Dad. I'm hungry."

Amidst a series of wheezes and coughs, his father gasped, "Dammit, boy . . . go get a job . . . what'ya . . . want from me?" He turned his back on Cyril.

Cyril crawled to the foot of his bunk, swung his feet to the floor, and put on his pants. He had worn them for months, and the fabric on the knees bowed out when he stood. His dad's did the same, from constantly sitting in them. The overstretched fabric made him look like he had a knee deformity. He had worn his shirt to bed and didn't change it.

He wandered into what they called the living room, the only other room in his dad's place. There was no kitchen, and they shared the bathroom at the end of the hall with the other occupants of the building's second floor. He stood uncertainly by the door, his fingers unconsciously searching his pants pockets for crumbs from the bread he usually stored there to eat later—when he had it.

A knock at the door made him jump. When he opened it, the school truant officer stood on the threshold, one hand on her hip, shaking her head at him. She was a big, stout woman dressed in black, with a heavy looking brown fabric bag slung over her shoulder, and her hair bundled on top of her head.

"You missed school again, Cyril," she said in a loud, harsh voice, but compassion softened her eyes. She shook her finger at him. "I've got to take you in to the principal. If you miss many more classes, Cyril, you are going to be held back in the sixth grade." She stepped to one side of the door, obviously waiting for him to join her.

He didn't know what to say. He stood by the door, looking down at the worn edge of the room's nondescript rug. Finally he muttered, "I got to go fishing. Catch some fish. Sell them. I'm hungry."

"When did you eat, Cyril?"

"Yesterday. My dad gave me thirty cents and I ate lunch downstairs."

"You don't have any money now?"

"No."

She took a step into the room. There was no door between the living room and the bedroom, only a wide archway, so she could see Cyril's dad lying twisted in the covers, now with one hairy leg hanging out. She sniffed, twitched her nose, and shook her head. Then she tilted

it to look sadly at Cyril. He still wouldn't look at her. She reached into the large brown shoulder bag and pulled out her change purse. She held fifty cents out to him.

Cyril looked up at the money from under his brows. "What's this for?"

"Get yourself something to eat, Cyril. Go fishing, and I hope you catch something. But don't you miss school tomorrow. Okay?"

Cyril took the money, and finally looked up directly into her soft brown eyes. "Okay."

She nodded, then turned quickly and walked down the hall to the stairs.

Cyril left the door open. He pocketed the fifty cent piece, and picked up his long bamboo fishing pole from the floor behind the tattered sofa. A length of fishing twine was already wrapped around it, with a hook at the end. A faint odor wafted from his tin bait can when he picked it up, so he cracked the lid and checked his collection of worms—night crawlers. He had punched small holes in the lid so that they would have air, as an old Chinese fisherman had taught him. Some of the worms were moving over the grass and leaves he'd placed inside, so he wouldn't have to scrounge this time in the garbage cans behind the restaurant downstairs for something to use as bait.

Pole and can in hand, he left his dad's place. He would eat at Jimmy's Delicatessen. Jimmy sometimes gave him something extra to eat. Then he would head for the Bay piers. If he was lucky, he would catch a few striped sea perch or rubberlip perch. If God was happy with him, he might even pull up a dozen or so crabs. But he'd settle for the poison-finned cabezon if he had to; he could sell even that in one of the saloons and bars along the edge of Chinatown or the Barbary Coast.



Fishing was good, and by late afternoon Cyril had earned \$1.63 selling what he caught. He dropped off his fishing pole and his worm can at his dad's place—his dad was gone, no note saying where—and headed for the Used Books Mart on Merchant Street. It was a long walk from Steiner Street, but it was worth it.

The door tipped an overhead bell when he opened it, and he looked around for the owner as he entered. The store was dusty and stuffy and crammed with books and magazines from ceiling to floor.

A young woman emerged from between two stacks of books and greeted him cheerily. "Hi, Cyril. I've got a new *Astounding Stories* and a year-old *Startling Stories*. I hid them for you."

He always bought any science fiction that came in, if he had the extra money. Cyril gave her a little smile and said, "Thank you." He never knew what to say to her, so he just said "thank you" to whatever she said or did for him. That seemed to work okay.

When she handed him the magazines, he paid her the thirty cents and left with his new treasures. He would be up late again tonight. But he had one more thing to do, once he had his hands free.

As he walked to his dad's place with his purchase, he passed boxes of magazines and piles of newspapers stacked on the curb in front of some homes and businesses. He knew it was wartime; in school he liked drawing pictures of airplanes shooting at each other, with some falling from the sky, trailing smoke. A teacher had told him that it was his family's patriotic duty to put out old newspapers, books, and magazines to be picked up by trucks. He didn't understand how, but the discarded publications would help fight the war. The paper pickup was tomorrow morning, he'd learned.

For Cyril, it was like having a gold mine next door. And he was going to search the mine again.

After dropping off his new magazines, he began walking up and down the neighboring streets, rummaging through boxes along the curb. He picked up a few *Reader's Digest*, *Life*, *National Geographic*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*, and had to return to his dad's place to unload them. He hoped these would fill in the dates that were missing from his collection.

There was hardly enough room in his dad's place for all the magazines and the few books he'd collected, but he stole hollow tiles and old planks from a construction site and made himself a bookcase next to his bunk. He could only get into the bunk by crawling from the foot of the bed, but he had everything lined up by his head, so in the evening he could easily choose something to look at or read.

He felt good and he had a full stomach, so he decided to go out again for one more search before dark. He tried several different streets, finding mostly newspapers and a lot of uninteresting magazines with food, cars and ships, or clothes on the cover. So he headed where he had not gone before—down Fillmore Street. He stopped in front of an imposing building bearing a sign that read *Headquarters: Fire Commissioners and Chief Engineer*. On the curb there waited a large collection of boxes and food cartons filled with old magazines, and strange bundles of papers, all either bound or clipped, with words like "Government," "Official," "Memos," "Engine Houses," and "Reports" on their covers. He shoved them aside, looking for interesting magazines and books.

At the bottom of one box he found a thick, beat-up, bulging folder that looked like an accordion. It contained several sheaves of clipped-together papers, what appeared to be a bound book, and several thick stacks of paper, tied with twine. The bound book looked similar to the Sears Roebuck Catalogue, six of which Cyril had picked up already, for different years. Deciding to take the interesting folder home with him, he set it aside and looked for more treasures, but there was nothing except what he thought was a book; he discarded it when he saw its title: *The Official Manual on Fighting Fires*.



Over the days that followed, Cyril occasionally pulled the accordion folder from the milk carton full of other treasures that he kept under the end of his bunk, and looked through its contents. Clipped to the front of the folder was a form of some sort; he understood little of it, although he could read the title—"Official Investigative Report"—and the date—December 1938—and that there had been an apartment house fire. Its third page was typed and easy to read, if not completely understand: *I conclude that the fire was caused by rats eating off the insulation of wires behind a kitchen wall in a first floor apartment, causing a sparking short circuit which set ablaze the sawdust and wood shavings there. A fuse should have blown before the short circuit sparked, but someone had replaced it in the fuse box with a copper penny.* Science fiction had improved Cyril's vocabulary, but "insulation," "fuse," "fuse box," and "short circuit" were yet beyond him.

There was a space on the report for a description of the contents of the folder. There, someone had typed: *Partly burned papers titled "Remembrance" found by body; other documents found in safe when forced open. Crackpot.* The last word had been circled twice. Cyril read it, shrugged, and went on to other papers in the file.

Among three longer documents he found one headed "The Plan," which he did not understand when he scanned it, and another titled "Chronology" with dates and events listed in small type underneath. This held no interest for him, but he kept it simply as part of the folder.

He had yet to read carefully or even scan much of the three bound documents. He flipped through a few pages of one and then put it back in the file. A glance at their titles didn't excite him. One, the partly burned, four-inch pile of paper, was titled "Remembrance." Another, printed and bound with a hard cover, bore the title "Democracy, War,

and Democide in the Twentieth Century,” under which was printed “Ph.D. Dissertation, May 2001, Yale University History Department.” The third pile of papers had been bound with twine, and had on its cardboard cover the same title as the dissertation, with a handwritten note scribbled above: *Manuscript: dissertation academese translated into American English. Written as an alternative past and future history. Completed 1928.*

None of it made any sense to him. Most of the words were strange; they were not the words he’d picked up from reading science fiction, such as “spaceship,” “solar system,” “planet,” “ray gun,” “alien,” and “robot.” Something so ancient—from way back in 1928—couldn’t possibly contain anything interesting. And he didn’t recognize the name “John Banks” on each of the bound documents, either.

Rather than waste his time reading such stuff, he preferred to reread his special treasures, such as the articles in *Reader’s Digest* on the Japanese Rape of Nanking, or how the German guards in concentration camps selected their sexual plaything for the night from a room full of naked women. He didn’t know what it all meant, but the thought of seeing a naked woman excited him far more than anything in the accordion folder.

Chapter 2

2001

John Banks

He had never seen a bloody body before, not to mention one without arms and legs. Oh, he had seen his dead mother in her casket during her funeral, but she looked so peaceful, as if she were just asleep, and that didn't count—not like it did for so many people of the world, living through the violence of war or democide. And his father, some kind of agent for the CIA in Somalia, had been brought back in a closed casket that remained closed for the funeral. His mother had told him that was because “he didn't look pretty.” She'd never disclosed how he died.

Ironic, in a way, his not seeing what really happens to people in violence—the heads blown off, intestines hanging out, holes where shoulders, hips, or legs used to be, legs and arms themselves scattered about, bodies perforated by every sort of weapon or utensil, sometimes to the point where they looked like Swiss cheese, and blood, blood, and more blood, enough to form a Niagara of blood. Yet, this horror so abstract to him had been the subject of his dissertation. And he would now teach others about the most obscene violence of all, democide: the shooting, blowing up, live burial, knifing, gassing, and hanging; the death by torture and beating, by starvation, by exposure or by being infected with lethal germs, by being thrown off cliffs, decapitated, or crushed—death by any means within the creative imagination of monarchs, caliphs, kings, czars, emperors, and other absolute rulers and dictators of all kinds and their agents.

Ironic in another way—he was twenty-six years old. World War Two, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War were distant history to him. When he came of draft age, there was no draft, no war in which he could volunteer. He knew no veterans who had killed in war, no murderers, no government agents who killed in the hundreds or thou-

sands. Nor did he know anyone who had seen others killed or their loved ones exterminated, or who had faced the prospect of violent death and survived.

Raised in a big city by a mother who was a tennis professional, he had no idea what violence looked, sounded, and smelled like—it was alien to him. He had no direct experience of the age's killing weapons of choice: the gun, the bomb, the grenade, the bayonet or combat knife. He'd never even handled a BB rifle. He'd owned a penknife as a boy, but sliced himself when playing with it, and never opened it again. He did use kitchen knives when cooking, but they were for just that—preparing food. He never thought of using one as a weapon.

This modern man, this supremely educated historian, this new university professor, was ignorant of the true feel and texture, the true essence of fear and terror faced by billions of human beings. In this, he was a typical American virgin. Yet, what did he teach? He taught about war, although the pile of mangled and bloody corpses generated by that was only a mound compared to the mountain murdered by governments. Because he recognized this, he centered his teaching on democide.

And as a virgin in terms of these horrors, how did he know what to teach? Or rather, what did he teach? Why, the same things *he* had been taught, and in the same way. Words, tons of words, spoken and printed, and a gallery of pictures and paintings and drawings. All was theory to him. Abstract. A virgin teaching a class of virgins, who at the end of the semester would have their heads stuffed with words and flat, two-dimensional, sterile images—no smell of blood, of fear, of a convulsing body's waste; no sounds of screaming, moaning, crying . . . of dying. They would still be virgins.

He was not dumb. He knew how limited his experience was of what he taught—he himself had likened it to writing and teaching about Japan without ever going there, speaking the language, or meeting a Japanese. But early on he told himself that one does not need to be a woman to be a gynecologist, nor visit the stars to be an astronomer; the study and prevention of diseases does not require a survivor of the Black Plague. He believed that the study of the history of war and democide was sufficient to find a cure for them. And he was so sickened by what he studied about war and democide that he had turned such study into his career.

Professor Cyril Clement had convinced him that democratic peace provided a solution to war and democide, and he'd found confirmation of this in his own historical research. He'd written his Ph.D. dissertation on it.

New Ph.D. in hand, John Banks had been lucky to get a tenure-track assistant professorship to teach at Indiana University. He was on his way. Do his research, publish a book or two and some articles, keep his relations with the lovelies on campus discreet, and tenure—academic heaven—would be his.

He had learned from his graduate advisor at Yale how the academic game was played. Publish, yes. But also get to know the greats in the field. Mingle with them, carry their books, show devotion to their ideas, attend their presentations, and ask softball questions that make them look good. Then, as flowers attract bees to produce honey, they'd help get his books and articles published, and help him win research grants. And where else does one meet such esteemed individuals than at conferences and seminars held by the central organizations of one's field of study?

He took this advice to heart. Only two weeks into the Fall semester at Indiana University, his department chairman, Sam Palmerton, approved an invitation for John to participate in a democratic peace seminar held by the International Studies Association at Rutgers. He must have played the game and showed his stuff.

Afterward, he would no longer recall in detail what happened there. It all soon was compressed into a droplet of memory. For, within a day of the last session of the seminar, he was gruesomely, terrifyingly, shockingly devirginated.

Chapter 3

1950
Korean War

Cyril Clement

By his mid-teens, Cyril had exhausted what interested him most in his magazine collection, and paper drives were long past. Idly flipping through the scorched and partly burned pages of Banks' "Remembrance," he came across some very explicit lovemaking. He didn't understand all that was described, but what he did understand riveted him, and in following days he scanned through everything that had been in the folder, including the pages of the dissertation on the twentieth century. He did not much care for all the political stuff he read, and thought a lot of the dialogue in the "Remembrance" was stupid, but after he again put the full folder away, some of it stuck.

In the late 1940s, Cyril's interest in science fiction deepened, and he searched in one used bookstore after another for all the issues of the pulp science fiction magazines. He could afford them now. He had a part-time job setting pins in a bowling alley, and he often volunteered to do two alleys at once for the extra money and sometimes, even tips. Even so, he was not beyond stealing. Sometimes he carried his school books into drugstores that sold the magazines he wanted, and hid two or three between his textbooks, then walked out.

He was particularly fascinated by the adventures of Captain Future, who would save planet Earth from some criminal, alien, or global threat. He also enjoyed reading about first contact between Earthmen and aliens, and often daydreamed of trying to communicate with aliens for the first time.

Cyril thought that what was in the accordion folder was really science fiction written by Banks, which he had not been able to get published. What encouraged this view was the collection of rejection

letters he found in the back of Banks' "manuscript," from the various presses to which it had been submitted. All were dated between 1928 and 1931. All of the readers' evaluations called the manuscript simplistic, ignorant, or dumb.

Nor did he pay attention to the futuristic chronology and its stock market predictions. As a teenager, he just was not into this stuff.

As soon as he could legally quit school, which was right after his sixteenth birthday, he did so. Now he was only good for the most manual work. He had found a full-time job on the assembly line in a stove factory, doing nothing more than stuffing fiberglass insulation into the sides of stoves, riveting the sides together with a special machine, and piling the completed sides on a cart to be taken to the assembly line where the stoves were put together. He moved out of his dad's place and rented a room with peeling plaster in a boarding house that was leaning so far from the vertical that the floor in his room sloped. Still, it had space for his wealth of magazines and his few books, it was cheap, and it was as far away from his dad as he could get and still be near enough to walk to work.

He hated the work. He hated the slum where he lived. He wanted to escape, maybe even learn a trade, like operating a bulldozer.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, with the invasion of South Korea by the North, and when President Truman committed American ground forces to war on June 30th, Cyril had his opportunity. On July 5th, he waited in a long line at the Army enlistment office on Hamilton Square to volunteer. And during the first week of his service he waited in another line, this one the most momentous of his life.

A thin officer—he had one bar on his shoulder—took Cyril and his new barrack mates to an imposing wooden building bearing the sign *Headquarters*. Inside, the officer led them to a large room resembling a gym, where he pointed to a long line and directed them to wait in it. There were other new soldiers—he could tell they were new, since they all had their heads shaved almost to the scalp—standing in other lines, and moving around. Cyril leaned sideways, trying to see where his line was headed, and glimpsed another officer with single bars on his shoulders, seated behind a desk. He seemed to be asking questions of the soldiers who reached his desk. From time to time he consulted one of several thick books on the desk before him.

"What is this line for?" Cyril asked the soldier in front of him.

"I don't know." The soldier leaned over the man standing in front of him, and asked the same question. The question traveled down the line, and the answer eventually came back. "It's for your MOS."

Cyril shook his head. "What's that?"

The question went back down the line and soon an answer returned with much laughter. "It's your Army Morons Only Speciality, so they know how to screw you." Later Cyril would find out it really stood for Military Occupational Specialty.

Cyril had no idea that the officer, his books, and the upcoming interview would not only be another throw of the dice with which the gods decided his future, it would be the rarest of rare throws. It would decide not only whether he lived or died, and if he perchance lived, whether he would be poor or well-off, unknown and frustrated with his life or famous in his contributions to humanity. But that was only his future. What would soon happen at the table would determine whether the children of those around him, and especially their children's children, would live or die, live horribly or prosper. In this one throw of the dice, again the whole nature of the future universe was at stake.

The line was long, the wait interminable, so Cyril took out the new *Astounding Stories* he had picked up at the PX, and began reading it. Over two hours later, when it was Cyril's turn to be interviewed, the officer slouched over the desk with a cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, and the gray tin ashtray on the gray metal desk overflowed with butts and ash.

"Name?" the officer asked in a tired, bored tone.

"Cyril Peter Clement."

"Cyril P. Clement, what?" the officer asked, his voice hardly changing.

"Ah . . ."

Somebody behind him whispered, "Sir."

"Cyril Peter Clement . . . sir," Cyril responded.

"RA?"

This was the number by which all volunteers were identified. Along with his name, serial number, date of tetanus shot, blood type, and religion, it was stamped on the two brand-new aluminum dog tags hanging around his neck on two ball-chains. The corporal in charge of Cyril's barracks had demanded that he and the others there memorize their numbers within one day, or clean the latrine and pull the weeds around the barracks.

"Ah . . . RA15447721 . . . sir."

The officer wrote Cyril's name and number on the top form of an inch-thick pile of forms, then looked up from under his brows, his pencil poised above the form. "Civilian job?"

Cyril provided his overblown job title. "Stationary riveter . . . sir."

The officer said something under his breath, dropped the pencil, and began leafing through the thick books on his desk. Finally he muttered to himself, leaned back, looked at Cyril, and sighed. "Okay, you got me. Tell me what you did."

"I took these stoves . . . electric stoves . . . and I built in a wiring with insulation so that its molecular structure matched the design implications of the system . . . the electrons had to flow around it when the electricity passed through it . . . then I riveted the sides together. Ah . . . sir."

"That's all?" the officer asked, sounding a little more animated.

"I had to make sure the atomic structure was stable when the electrons hit it . . . ah, when the stove was turned on," he finished almost breathlessly. One of the science fiction stories he had just read in his *Astounding Stories* involved the repair of a spaceship that had been attacked by an alien fleet. Cyril just lifted a few of the words from it. *Why not? No harm done*, he thought.

The officer stared blankly at him for a moment, then leaned over the form and wrote several sentences in a text block on the form, and also in the margin next to it. Then he looked up at Cyril again, but with more interest. He turned the form around and pointed with his pencil at the bottom of it. "Sign here."

Cyril did, and the officer pointed to another line. As Cyril moved off, the officer mumbled mechanically, "Next."



It was crazy. Despite having no knowledge of medicine, Cyril was attached to an ambulance unit at Fort Benning, Georgia, for his basic training. And when he arrived, they assigned him to the motor pool, even though he had never driven anything before. His first experience was driving a two and a half ton truck, with an officer sitting beside him and soldiers in the back. His was in a line of trucks, and he'd been told to follow the one ahead when they started up.

Resting his hand on the gearshift, he asked the officer, "How do I shift this thing?"

"Ha-ha," the officer responded.

When the truck ahead started up, Cyril turned to the officer and shouted above the revving of engines, "No, I really don't know how to drive this thing."

"Shit, you kidding me, private?"

"No, sir."

The officer jumped out of the truck. Minutes later, a sergeant showed up below the driver's side door. He looked up at Cyril and screamed, "Get your ass down here."

Cyril did, and he was reassigned from the motor pool to permanent kitchen detail.

He soon hated the cooks, the kitchen, the peeling of potatoes, the garbage cans he scoured, and the mess hall that he had to keep clean; he hated learning how to tie bandages, apply tourniquets, and give shots; he hated the instructional films on battle field medicine; he hated Fort Benning; and he hated Georgia and the atmosphere of overt racial prejudice and the existing segregation. As soon as he finished basic training in mid-August, he volunteered to be shipped to Korea. He was soon on his way by ship, as a medic.

A medic, he thought often during the voyage across the Pacific to Japan on an old liberty ship converted into a troop carrier. Me, a medic. It must have something to do with the MOS that officer gave me, but I don't understand it. Ha. For a tenth grade dropout, I've come up in this world. A medic. Jeez.



The first stop for individual soldiers was Camp Zama, Japan, where they were assigned to units in Korea. This period was the most dangerous for the American deployment in Korea, and the survival of South Korea was in doubt. The invading North Korean Army had pushed American and South Korean troops down the Korean peninsula until they were squeezed behind a perimeter of defenses they had hastily dug outside of the southern port of Pusan. Lose that, and South Korea was lost, at least until an invasion by sea could be put together.

On September 1st, the North Korean Army launched an all-out offensive on the perimeter. To defend it, the Eighth Army was throwing into the battle poorly prepared, poorly armed American troops as soon as they arrived in Pusan from Japan. In this hell of exploding shells, mortars, and grenades, ripping machine guns, whizzing bullets, and charging hordes of North Koreans, medics counted their life span in days, at most.

Cyril arrived in Japan on September 5th.

Ten days later, the brilliant Inchon landing behind the bulk of the North Korean Army would take pressure off of Pusan, allowing the Eighth Army to punch its way out of the perimeter and, along with

South Korean troops, drive up the peninsula to join American troops advancing from Inchon. As a medic, Cyril probably would not have survived in Pusan until then.

But Cyril lucked out. Unbelievably so. He had just the right MOS at just the right time.

Unknown to him, Cyril's MOS labeled him "engineer, undesignated," meaning he could fill the need for any engineer. So the Camp Zama Korean Consignment Task Force (CZKCTF—pronounced sec-sef) pulled Cyril out of the huge group being sent to Korea and kept him in Japan to fill a vacancy of which the 64th Engineering Battalion had just informed them by telephone. After all, Cyril's MOS was "engineer." The 64th was involved in taking reconnaissance aircraft tapes and, from them, making maps for United Nations forces in Korea. Very technical. Obviously engineering stuff—so CZKCTF thought.

So Cyril was sent to the Isetan Department Store in the center of Shinjuku, a prime shopping and entertainment district (including a legal red light avenue) in Tokyo. Here, on the store's fourth to seventh floors, the totally contained 64th Engineering Battalion lived and worked. Cyril's bunk and locker on the fourth floor of the store were only sixteen steps from the windows overlooking the red light district. The district was off limits, patrolled by soldiers from the battalion to keep other soldiers out. This "duty" was routinely passed around the battalion, as was guard duty, and eagerly awaited—unlike guard duty.

The battalion's personnel officer first assigned Cyril to the motor pool repair shop in back of the department store. Hardly a job worthy of his "engineer" MOS, but the officer must have also looked into his record beyond that (something no one else seemed to have done), and saw that Cyril didn't even have a high school diploma. What does one do with such a person in a highly technical battalion? It's into the motor pool, of course.

It took only a couple of days for the sergeant in charge to realize how totally ignorant Cyril was in repairing and servicing trucks and jeeps, and his near accidents while trying to maneuver a jeep around the motor pool showed that he couldn't even drive. The sergeant exchanged words with the personnel officer, and Cyril was told to report to his new assignment in the battalion's graphics department.

He was supposed to work on the battalion yearbook, but he only drove the Japanese civilian responsible for this project into un-Japanese, undiplomatic language. "*Baka!*—idiot! *Baka!*" the man yelled. "Photos not straight. *Chikishou*—damn. Block print bad—not lined."

“Aligned,” Cyril corrected.

Within three weeks, Cyril was again reassigned. This time the personnel officer assigned him to the machine repair shop, presumably to oversee the work of Japanese technicians. He didn’t have to know anything or say anything, for the technicians did all the necessary repair work on the machinery. The personnel officer must have known this. All Cyril had to do was have pliers or a screwdriver in his hand when an officer was around. Otherwise, he read. It was a duty he handled well for over two years.

With Cyril assigned to Japan in a place of safety, the vast changes in the universe for which Cyril would ultimately be responsible were still on track. It might seem as though there were a guiding hand, but no—just a chain of virtually impossible good throws of the dice for Cyril, and more for humanity. Again and again, chance favored Cyril’s apparently destined future. If anyone were to track it all, it would be like winning a state lottery several times in a row.

But then, Cyril was not alone in this strange, coincidental run of incredible luck. There was also John Banks. And . . . one other.

September 11, 2001
New York City

John Banks

The actual horror John Banks experienced for the first time, he would never forget. It would color his lectures, change his life, and author his dreams. He would never be the same. And in this horror, he joined the multitude of people throughout the world who had suffered through their own war and democide.

Again, God threw the dice. On September 10th, Banks had no idea that every little step he took led him randomly to the monstrosity of the next day. It was not fated for him. A slightly different decision on this day, one appearing unimportant among all the unimportant decisions, would have led him to a different universe among his probable futures, perhaps even to death. But he made the decision, he behaved as he did, and his life's and the world's path would take on the inevitability that hindsight always gives it.

He delayed his flight out to Chicago, and from there to Bloomington and Indiana University, until noon the next day—September 11—so he could visit his cousin, Pete Baxter. Pete, a bond broker for Tucker Brokerage in the North Tower of the World Trade Center, managed \$43,000 in bonds that John had inherited. He wanted to discuss selling his bonds and moving into stocks. Besides, this was an opportunity to see Pete for the first time in years.

That morning, he took the PATH train from New Jersey to the World Trade Center. He arrived at 8:50 a.m. and hopped on the escalator up to the concourse.

It was empty of people, still and quiet—spooky. From outside came a faint rumble and the suggestion of distant sirens. The air felt sticky. A sour smell made him stop and look around; for the first time, he noticed the smoke hanging in the air, and the empty shoes, especially high heels, scattered over the floor.

His heart began to pound. He felt the first stirring of fear. Something was very wrong.

“Get out! Run!”

He whirled to see a policeman gesturing frantically toward the concourse doors. Without thinking, he obeyed.

Outside, glass, concrete, and papers of all kinds littered the street. Still more papers floated down from above. The stink of burning things and gasoline hung in the air. He couldn't run, but had to step over and around the debris.

He almost tripped over what he initially thought was a side of beef. As he dodged it, he realized it was a naked torso without arms or legs. He was too dazed to do anything but register the mangled torso and automatically look for its sex, without absorbing it at all.

Further on, he passed a large tire and then a woman's delicate hand with a wedding ring on one finger. It was severed at the wrist, lying palm upward, fingers slightly curled. Not one of the polished fingernails was broken. *The owner would be happy about that.* The stupid thought flitted across his mind like the CNN Headline news items that pass across the TV screen.

By the time he got across the street, he felt sick and weak. Several people stood there, looking up at the tower. Some of them held their hands over their mouths—whether because of the stench or out of horror, he didn't know.

He leaned against a building and finally started thinking again. *Yes—Jesus!—I saw a naked torso. A man's. And I did see a woman's severed hand. God, what is going on?* Finally, he followed the gazes of the people standing around him.

Clouds of smoke billowed from an inferno visible through a gaping hole in the tower, somewhere around the ninetieth floor. He stared. He couldn't imagine what had happened.

Above the flames, men and women stood at the windows. Some stood on the sills of broken windows with smoke rolling out from behind them. Suddenly, a man jumped from a window and twisted in the air as he fell more than ninety floors. A collective gasp of horror burst from the crowd around John. Another person jumped. And another. One landed nearby with a wet *plunk*.

John leaned over and vomited. When he straightened, wiping his mouth, his eyes rose on their own to the burning building. *Oh my God,* he realized, *my cousin is above the flames.* His hand trembled as he took out his cell phone and called his cousin.

“Honey?” Pete's voice asked.

“No,” John responded, surprised that Pete had answered so quickly, “this is John. I was about to come up when I saw the fire. What happened?”

“A plane hit the building. I can’t get Julie. She’s not at work yet. Look, I’m going to try to keep calling her, but I don’t know how long—” John heard muffled coughing “—I think I’m going to die. I can’t get the door open, and smoke is coming in through a large crack in the wall. It’s hot. Too hot. I’m sitting under my desk. I can’t breathe.”

Pete paused; for a moment, John thought something had happened to him. Then he said softly, “Please John, if I can’t get to her, tell her I love her . . . I love our children. I want her to be happy, to find someone—” more coughing “—who will make her and our children happy. Tell her that, John. Tell her that . . . ahh . . . we will meet again in heaven. . . . Goodbye.”

The connection ended with a click.

Tears filled John’s eyes. His heart thudding, he unconsciously shook the cell phone and beat it against his trembling hand. The connection was as dead as his cousin would be soon, he knew.

Then he heard the unmistakable sound of a low flying jet. Its engines grew to a scream. He jerked his gaze upward, and watched the plane fly into the South Tower. It disappeared inside for a half-second, and then the near and opposite sides of the building erupted in a huge, red and yellow mushroom cloud of burning aircraft fuel and debris. Concrete, metal, glass, unrecognizable construction materials and airplane parts, and bodies rained down on those below.

John escaped injury, but he did not escape the cloud of concrete dust, ash, and particulate debris that enveloped all in the vicinity when the South Tower collapsed. Nor did he escape the bloody horror of more body parts, mangled dead, and bloodied, severely burned people around him. And as he helped some of the wounded to ambulances or police officers, he did not let himself escape what such terrible, trembling terror meant to those who must wait in fear over the fate of their loved ones.

Somehow, John made it to Pete’s home to comfort his wife Julie. The living room was full of friends, many crying or with glistening eyes and drawn, haggard faces. No one talked. Some held hands. Two TVs tuned to different channels blared the news about the attack on the towers. He smelled coffee.

Julie’s face was drawn, her eyes red, and her cheeks tear-streaked.

John couldn’t even think to say hello. He just blurted out to Julie in a voice he didn’t recognize, “Did Pete get through to you?”

“Yes. I was on the phone with him when the tower came down. His voice was cut off and then . . . I only heard static.” Sobbing now, she continued. “We saw it. We saw it and he’s not dead. I know he’s not dead.”

Immediately, her friends rushed over and enveloped her in their arms. Pete’s little daughter Betty began crying hysterically, and his son Paul, his own eyes full of tears, tried to comfort her. John went to them, pulled them into his gray, sooty arms, and hugged them to him. He could do nothing but make soothing sounds and give them human comfort.

And so for John, theory became empirical, the abstract real. From then on, when he lectured about war and democide, his voice held a deeper timbre, his specific examples of the human cost held a new quality of sadness, and he nurtured a fresh, almost fanatical dedication to the democratic peace. All this came from his heart and soul.

But more, it affected his mind. So it seemed.

Chapter 5

1950–1953

Japan

Cyril Clement

One of the lieutenants, Roger Spielman, who had a college degree in political science, thought it would be helpful to give Cyril's battalion a lecture on the politics of the Korean War. They all gathered on the sixth floor, in the department store's former exhibition hall. Cyril considered such information presentations a great opportunity to read, and brought Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* with him. He sat near the rear, where the battalion first sergeant who attended these sessions could not see him, and he could hide the book behind the back of the soldier seated in front of him.

The lieutenant had ordered everyone to be at ease, and stood patiently at the front, waiting for them all to get comfortable on the floor. Then he began with some humor. "As you may have noticed, the Japanese have a little difficulty with English, but you can't say they don't try. Have you seen the latest Japanese advice for American military drivers? 'When passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage, then tootle him with vigor.'

"Then there are the notices in hotels: 'Please take advantage of the chambermaids.'"

He waited for the chuckles to subside before continuing. "Or the one regarding the heater: 'If you want just condition of warm in your room, please control yourself.'

"Or restaurants: 'We reserve the right to serve refuse to anyone.'"

This elicited some laughter throughout the room, especially in front.

The lieutenant's wide grin morphed into a hard line and he swung his eyes around the hall. "We are at war, as troops who may at any time be sent to Korea to fight . . ."

This met slight head shakes. Those gathered knew they were too important as technicians to be squandered in battle. None of them would be sent to fight.

“ . . . so I want to make sure you understand the stakes involved. Although it is being fought against us, the Korean War is one of Stalin’s offensives against the West, and free countries. He is attempting to spread communism around the world by force, and our foreign policy of containment is attempting to stop him—to keep Soviet communism within its current borders. This is why President Truman committed us to fight this war. We cannot allow Stalin to succeed in his attempt to conquer countries around him.”

A hand went up. These technicians, even though privates, or corporals, or especially sergeants, were not overwhelmed by rank. The lieutenant looked at the technician and nodded.

“I thought that Kim What’s-his-name of North Korea ordered the invasion.”

The lieutenant’s mouth hinted at a grin. “That’s what Stalin wants you to think. That’s why there are no Russian troops involved. Kim Il Sung is Stalin’s boy. He created him, put him in control of North Korea, and gave him all the military equipment he thought was more than necessary to defeat weak South Korea. He never expected that we would go to war to save South Korea. Before the invasion, our State Department—” his voice took on a touch of disdain “—told the world we wouldn’t.”

Spielman had no notes and no lectern. He began pacing in front of the soldiers with one hand in his pants pocket and the other ready to occasionally emphasize his points. He described the Russian Revolution, Stalin’s power over the Soviet Union, World War Two, Hitler’s holocaust, and the rapid growth of communism after the Second World War, including the 1949 communist victory over the nationalist government of China. He then went into the history of communism in Korea.

Cyril was into Asimov’s book, but did catch some of Spielman’s words now and then. When he heard China mentioned, he put down the book and focused on the lieutenant’s words. *Wait*, Cyril realized as he listened, *isn’t all this in Banks’ manuscript? Didn’t Banks describe communist victories in eastern Europe and China?* Then Cyril almost fell over. He’d remembered that Banks had described the defeat of the Chinese Nationalists and the Korean War, almost exactly as the lieutenant was describing it. Cyril had picked up the accordion file containing the book and manuscript in 1944. Yet, those pages seemed to precisely foretell the future. *That can’t be. It’s impossible.*

The lieutenant, looking pleased, kept glancing his way; Cyril must have had a rapt expression on his face. Although Cyril still thought the manuscripts he had found were science fiction, they seemed, in his memory at least, to mirror what the lieutenant was saying about communism and the Korean War with incredible accuracy. *There has to be an explanation for this*, he thought, but it still excited his interest.

Then he recalled some of the other things he'd read, things that had yet to happen, such as a Vietnam War, and a mass extermination in some African country in which nearly a million people were murdered in a few months. He now wanted to reread the manuscript in detail, and go through the stuff in the accordion folder again.

Before joining the Army, he had put all his treasured books and magazines in storage. He didn't trust his father to look after them, and he had been right. His father moved away from San Francisco with only a suitcase in hand, as best Cyril could find out. He could write to the Secure Storage Company and have them send him the Banks stuff, but he didn't trust that they could find the accordion file, and if they did, that it would reach him without something getting lost. He had to wait until his discharge to read everything again.

There was still one thing he could do, however.

That night he started guard duty; for the next twenty-four hours, he would spend two hours on guard, four hours off. His favorite location was at the department store elevator, where with an unloaded rifle on his shoulder he stood watching the Japanese customers come and go. What he would have done if a Japanese had tried to use the elevator, he didn't know. After he finished his shift, he asked around, hoping to find out where he could borrow history books. He was told he could borrow them from the military library at Army Headquarters in the Dai Ichi Building, on the other side of the street and across the moat from the Emperor's Palace.

There he found an impressive collection of history books, particularly on Asia, since the library was a prime resource for the American occupation authorities. He could not take books out, so he began spending most of his spare time there.

Ted Richardson, who bunked next to him, asked one day, "Cyril, I don't see you around anymore. You shacking up with some Japanese broad?"

Like them all, Cyril had his share of the sex for the taking for a few cents, all within a few feet of the battalion. But he was tired, and wasn't thinking. Rather than saying something like, "Yeah, she was a sixteen-year-old virgin," which would probably have provoked laughter and the

rejoinder, “There ain’t no such thing within fifty miles of here,” he made the mistake of saying the truth. “I’ve been going to the library at Headquarters almost every day.”

Ted went wild with that, almost collapsing in laughter on his bunk. “Yeah, sure,” he finally got out.

From then on, when he came into the bunk area late, one or more of the soldiers would laugh and yell, “Back from the library, Cyril? Got a hot book on the side?” They just didn’t believe him. He had to be shacking up; it was so easy to do.

Cyril’s impatience to see the Banks stuff only grew as he found nothing different in the history of the twentieth century from that he hazily remembered from the manuscript and the “Remembrance.” But he was getting an education in history and, as more and more he followed the news and commentary on the American military radio station, political science.

There was something else. Many of the technicians in his battalion who worked on the photographic and mapmaking machinery had college degrees, some with an M.A. Yet, to Cyril, they seemed no brighter or more intelligent than him. Indeed, because of his avid reading of science fiction, in some areas his vocabulary and knowledge seemed more extensive than theirs.

That persuaded him to go to college. If they could do it, so could he, and moreover, he could finance it through the GI Bill that Congress had made available for Korean veterans. But he had quit school in the tenth grade. Without a high school diploma, he could hardly enter college. So he also began studying arithmetic and geometry, American history, elementary science, and English grammar in order to take the Graduate Record Examination the Armed Forces gave, which, if he passed, would give him the equivalent of a high school diploma. Some colleges would accept that in place of the normal diploma.

One month before his discharge, he passed the exam. He also was promoted from private first class to corporal. It had taken him almost three years to achieve that exalted rank—not that he cared.

In Korea, American forces had ceased offensive operations, and a military stalemate had ensued for well over a year as negotiations deadlocked over voluntary repatriation of prisoners of war. Dwight Eisenhower was elected president of the United States in November 1952, and in December he began a three-day tour of Korea. It was clear that the war was almost over, but for the settlement of the repatriation issue.

In February 1953, with little mapmaking to do, Cyril’s battalion began thinning its personnel. Cyril, now with no vital MOS—it had been

reclassified by the personnel officer—and due for discharge in less than half a year, was not reassigned. Instead, in March, at the age of twenty-one, he received an honorable discharge and a check for back pay and a bonus totalling \$872.23.

The day he arrived in San Francisco, he paid the \$173 he owed for storage and carried his things to his newly rented room. Anticipation nearly overwhelmed him as he sat with the heavy accordion folder on his lap for the first time in over three years. Now he would read, really read, more than the erotic hot spots that he had marked with a folded corner.

He didn't eat. He didn't sleep. Not until he had read it all.

He finished with his mind in chaos. *I can't believe it, but it makes sense*, Cyril the science fiction fan concluded. *But why me—why did I find the folder? I am the luckiest man alive. No, someone is playing tricks on me. But who? Maybe somebody replaced what was in the original folder. That's stupid.*

Still, how can there be a solution to war? History says otherwise. This stuff is all story. Yet, what it says about the future I'm living through has been correct, absolutely.

Now, wait a minute. If Banks and hot-stuff Joy went back to the past and changed the future, then I'm living in the changed future. So, his predictions based on the chronology he took back in time and his dissertation of the past written in 2001 could not predict the present, because the present is his future, which he changed. Cyril shook his head. *Not right. No, it's all incredible.*

But then, if what was in the folder is in the future of the universe he and Joy left—my universe—how did this folder get into my universe? He says that one can't cross universes. . . .

He rubbed his eyes. *Christ, I got a headache.*

Chapter 6

1953

San Francisco

Cyril Clement

Exhausted after reading Banks' stuff and trying to make sense out of it, Cyril tried to get some sleep. He tossed and turned, his mind returning again and again to the impossible implications of what he had read, to wondering if what Banks said about the future were true.

Newly discharged from the Army, jobless, his future unplanned and uncertain, he knew one thing he would do at eight o'clock the next morning.

When the San Francisco Library opened, he was there with Banks' "Remembrance," the chronology, and the manuscript in a doubled paper grocery bag. He asked a librarian for a chronology of current history. She gave him several books, and pointed him to the annual *New York Times Index* for specifics.

He settled down to compare Banks' stuff to what actually happened in the world from 1906, when John Banks and Joy Phim landed in the past, to the present, July 1954. The *Index* was most useful—pick a war, revolution, public figure, or event that Banks mentioned and look it up in the *Index*. They were all there.

He finished late in the afternoon. Raw hunger drove him to a White City Diner, where he automatically ordered two twenty-five-cent hamburgers and ate them in a daze. Since everything checked in the manuscript for the years up to the present, and it was a revision of Banks' 2001 dissertation, presumably the events it noted occurring after 1954 would be accurate also. With that and the chronology, he now had in his hands precise predictions of the future political world—who would be president of the United States, what wars, civil wars, uprisings, and mass killings would occur, what colonies would become independent and what their new names would be, and so on, up to the year 2000.

Cyril's confusion of the day before had disappeared by the time he reached his rented room. The library research and his science fiction background now made him virtually certain. In the many decades since H. G. Wells wrote *The Time Machine* in 1895, time travel had been a rare plot device; now it was often used, although ridiculed by physical scientists. After devouring so much of this fiction, he now, finally, believed it. *Logic about universes be damned. That's unanswerable. However, this stuff fits history too well to deny.*

He felt like dancing around his room. He felt as though he had won a million dollars, tax free. Still, a sliver of caution remained. *One more test. That's all. Today is March 23, 1953. What's the next big event that Banks predicts after today?*

He could find nothing in the manuscript for the rest of 1953. He checked the dissertation as well, to be sure. There was nothing until February 1956. "Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of USSR Communist Party, denounces Stalin's excesses," he read aloud. "Judging by the emphasis on it, that will be a big event."

He consulted Banks' chronology, and there he found, for the months of 1953 after his discharge from the Army: *Monday, July 27, Korean armistice signed; Thursday, August 20, Moscow announces explosion of hydrogen bomb.*

His hand shook so badly that he struggled to write legibly, but he copied the dates and events down in large block letters on three-ring paper he'd found at the library. These two would be his test cases.



Cyril was rapidly living through the money he'd received on his discharge from the army; he had to find a job. He started on the late night shift at the Coca-Cola Bottling Company in Oakland. It was an easy job—he checked the cartoons of empty bottles that came into the plant, making sure there was nothing solid inside the bottles, such as pencil stubs and ball point pens, and then he tossed the bottles upright into a slotted conveyor belt. The bottles passed through a high pressure cleaning machine, then through the machine that filled them with Coke and capped them. He got so he could throw eight bottles at a time into the slots. He also packed the filled bottles into cartons when he was needed.

After work he slept most of the day, then ate at Barney's Diner, the one with a fake biplane made to look as if it had crashed on the diner's roof. With his stomach filled with a seventy-five-cent helping of meat

loaf and mashed potatoes, he read whatever cheap and interesting pocket book was available from People's Drugstore on the corner. That is, when he wasn't rereading Banks' stuff and daydreaming about the implications if the predictions he'd copied down came true. He was sure they would. Banks had already accurately predicted too much. But he had to make absolutely, undeniably certain.

He applied for admission to San Francisco University. Because he was a veteran who had passed his GRE exam, he was accepted as a freshman for the Fall semester of 1953. The hours were days and the days months, and he thought each work shift would never end.

Sunday, April 26 came. He had hardly slept the night before. He didn't know how he'd survive another sleepless night and then the wait through the 27th until the Korean armistice was signed, if it was. He turned the radio on and tuned in to the KCBS hourly news station, and waited impatiently. The first news item was about Korea.

"It looks like the Korean War is about to end, and Washington is buzzing with the forthcoming announcement that the armistice has been signed. But there is fear that there may be last minute nonsense by the North Koreans. Lieutenant General William Harrison, representing the UN Command, will meet today with General Nam Il of the Korea People's Army at Panmunjom. Still, this is iffy. It is known that North Korean Premier Kim Il Sung will not show up for the signing; neither will General Mark Clark, head of UN forces. And there is some fear that the North will again make demands. The signing is scheduled for ten a.m., Korean time.

"In San Francisco, the milkmen's strike is in the third day, and the mayor's office promised . . ."

Cyril looked again at his watch. The time had hardly changed. It was a little after eight a.m. So, the armistice meeting would be held about noon, local time. He had checked the time difference five times several days ago, in anticipation of today. Banks' chronology was off by a day. Still absolutely incredible, to call the end of the Korean War so close—to even, in effect, predict a Korean War, as it had. So what, a day off.

Cyril tried to read. No good. He went back into the Banks folder, but he was so agitated, so excited about testing his first prediction, that he hit the streets, walking in the rain with his umbrella, standing on corners, sitting on wet park benches, watching the people and cars passing by. At noon he walked back to his room.

He turned on the radio at 12:20. He immediately heard the excitement in the announcer's voice.

“—Korean War is over. The UN and North Korean delegates signed eighteen copies of the armistice agreement, which took ten minutes. Throughout, the delegates did not speak to each other, and silently left the building through opposite exits when it was over.

“In Washington . . .”

Cyril’s mind was in such turmoil, he heard nothing more, not even the honking horns and the siren of a passing ambulance on the street nearby. Elation made him useless for an hour or more; he could only sit with his mind in wondrous ferment, his heart beating rapidly. He got up and did a little jig, then sat down on the edge of his chair; he got up within minutes to pace around his room, then plump down in another chair. Unable to keep his hands still, he pounded them lightly on his legs.

My God, the chronology is almost right on. Holy Christ, it is right on. How stupid can I get? I forgot the dateline, even after going over it myself, twice! On the way to and from Japan. It is the 27th in Korea. Jesus, the 27th. The chronology is right on.

He almost jumped over to his bed, where he had left the chronology. Dropping down next to it, he looked again at the armistice date. “July 27, 1953. I still can’t believe it.” He rapidly leafed back in the chronology to the date the Korean War started: June 25, 1950. *Jesus H. Christ! Banks’ stuff the fire department found in 1938—1938!— predicted the beginning and end of the Korean War.*

He did not need the other predictions for 1955 that he had written down. He was positive now that they would happen.

He started to shake. “Holy Christ,” he blurted. He paced until his knees stopped shaking, but his thoughts still jerked in different directions. Moving mechanically, he left his room and went for a walk, practically skipping along to a little corner park nearby where he sat down on a bench—or floated above it, he was sure.

He had the future in his hands—rather, in an accordion folder. He still did not realize the full implications of what he had, in terms of power and wealth. But he sensed enough of it.

The chronology in the file ended in 1965, when John and Joy would be around seventy, and well retired from their mission. Still, that was more than ten years into the future. He had over ten years of precise predictions of what would happen politically, including the outcome of major elections, significant inventions, and other major events.

Then, as what else he had hit him, his eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. *Holy Christ. The folder also has a chronology of major stock market events, and the annual prices of some companies.* He smacked his head with the palm of his hand. *I’m rich.*

Chapter 7

October 22, 2001
Indiana University

John Banks

He had just finished lecturing his “Introduction to Contemporary History” class, his second class lecture of the day, and he was tired. As a first year assistant professor who had completed his Ph.D. only about five months ago, he spent virtually all his time preparing for these first class lectures, and had a million notes with him when he walked into the classrooms. Except for this next class: “The Democratic Peace.” It examined democracies as a method of nonviolence, and a way to end war and minimize violence. Since this had been the subject of his dissertation, he needed few notes for his lecture.

He had been lecturing on genocide and mass murder—what he called *democide*—for about a month, since this was the most extensive and bloody form of violence, killing over four times the number that died in all domestic and foreign wars of the twentieth century. He intended to point out that liberal democracies committed virtually no democide of their people.

He entered the classroom full of chattering undergraduates and placed his briefcase on the desk in front of the blackboard to open it. Taking out the one-page outline of what he was going to say, he set it on the lectern next to the desk, then looked up at the students. As if of their own volition, his eyes sought out the gorgeous oriental girl in the back—Joy Phim, as his class registration list identified her. She never asked questions and was registered for his class as an auditor—no credit. But, and he found this most exciting, her slanted almond eyes were always on him as he lectured. And they showed deep interest. Sometimes she would nod, her full lips parted to show her white teeth; sometimes she would lean forward and cup her chin in her hand, one finger on her cheek. Rarely did she take notes.

He was a bachelor. He had been so busy studying and writing for his degree, and now preparing his first classes, that he simply did not have the time for more than an occasional, uncomplicated relationship. Now, he knew the dangers to his career of hooking up with a student, and available women on the faculty or in the administration were rare, but in spite of the risk, his disobedient eyes increasingly sought out that student in the rear. He couldn't help himself. He caught himself lecturing to her as though no other student were present. And at the end of the class, when she was usually among the last students to leave, he just had to steal a glance. She always wore a sweatshirt and a tight denim skirt or jeans, and her straight black hair, tied back in a ponytail, swayed as she walked.

No more that a few lectures had passed before his eyes sought the ring finger of her left hand and saw no engagement or wedding ring. Nothing. That had registered in a minor explosion of desire, and that evening he had difficulty keeping his mind on the rewriting of his dissertation into a book on the democratic peace.

Well, there she was again, sitting forward in her seat, waiting, her eyes locked on him. He looked at his watch. It was time. "Good afternoon, students," he began, as usual. He accompanied the greeting with his genuine, opening-lecture smile. He found he loved teaching. "Today, I want to begin with Vietnam. There is a map of this nation in your assigned reading and I suggest you turn to it. It is important that you have a good understanding of where Vietnam is in relation to China, Laos, and Cambodia for these lectures." He paused a moment as the students complied.

"Perhaps of all countries, democide in Vietnam, and by the Vietnamese, is the most difficult to understand. It is mixed in with six wars spanning forty-three years." He raised his hand and lifted a finger to count off each. "The Indochina War, the Vietnam War, the Cambodian War, the subsequent guerrilla war in Cambodia, the guerrilla war in Laos, and the Sino-Vietnamese War. As some of you may know, one of them involved the United States." He hesitated—that was a joke—but no student even smiled.

"There was also a nearly twenty-one-year formal division of the country into two sovereign North and South nations; the full communication of the North; occupation of neighboring countries by both the North and South; defeat, absorption, and communization of the South; and the massive flight by sea of millions of Vietnamese—"

A thud interrupted him. Miss Phim had dropped a book. This gave him an excuse to look at her, and he saw that she had covered her face with her hand, and was not moving to pick up her book. *Strange*, he thought.

He continued, “As best as I can determine, through all this, close to 3.8 million Vietnamese lost their lives in political violence, or nearly one out of every ten men, women, and children. Of these, about 1.25 million, or nearly a third of those killed, were murdered.

“Now, I want you all to understand that this is not only a complex history to unfold, but one beset with biases, misinformation, disinformation, propaganda, and hidden agendas.”

He stepped from behind the lectern and took a step toward the front row to gesture toward himself. “Before continuing, I should share my own biases with you. I am a fervent believer in human rights and freedom. And I believe that the best political structure for insuring this is democracy. Not just a democracy in which there are regular elections and everyone can vote, but a democracy, one we call a liberal democracy, which guarantees human rights and the rule of law. For all.”

He was informal with the class, and sometimes joked with them, or made puns in his lecture. He never treated a question as wrong or dumb, and the students had grown increasingly relaxed throughout his lectures. One of the most relaxed of them in the second row asked, “Does that mean, Professor, that you will be giving us a biased lecture?”

The class laughed, the students looking at him expectantly. In the back, Miss Phim shook her head.

Banks rubbed his chin. He tried to look serious, but the dimples at the sides of his mouth gave him away. “Of course not, Mr. O’Reilly; my bias is the true bias.”

More laughter.

Banks waited for a moment, saw there were no more questions, and with a fleeting glance at Miss Phim, he started his lecture.

Chapter 8

1953

Cyril Clement

The stock market! Of course. Somewhere in Cyril's diverse reading, he had learned that people bought and sold stocks, and that one could make a profit if one sold a stock at a higher price than it had cost to buy. Of course, one could also lose money by selling stock below the price at which it was bought. What stuck most in his mind was the huge fall in the stock market in 1929, in which many rich people had lost everything they owned, driving some to commit suicide.

He rushed back to his room, bent over the beat-up cardboard box that he kept on the floor near his bed, and searched among the Banks stuff there for the "Printout of Historic Prices for a Few Notable Stocks, 1906–1965." There were only fifteen stocks in the list, including American Telephone & Telegraph, General Electric, U.S. Steel, Western Union, and Westinghouse, followed by a chart covering many pages that gave their daily closings on the New York Stock Exchange. There also was supposed to be a listing of all stock closings on the New York Exchange from 1906 to 1965, but according to the "Remembrance," that was on a CD, whatever that was. He had looked for something with that name, but could not find it among Banks' stuff.

Though his excitement was still at a high pitch, he went to work at the bottling plant that night. He had to. He was paid \$1.10 an hour, and could not afford to lose the time or be fired. Every penny he earned now beyond his rent and food could go toward his savings. He thought happily of what he would do. *When I have enough, whatever amount that is, I'll begin buying and selling stocks. I'll follow the technique Banks outlined in the "Remembrance." When I'm so successful I might draw attention to myself, I will lose on one out of four stocks.* Tomorrow, he decided, he'd go to the library to get books on how the stock market worked.

He'd had Friday and Saturday night off; now, as he arrived for his Sunday night shift, his mind was in another world, one with a mansion on the coast, a yacht and a Cadillac, and a huge personal library. His body, drained by all the day's waiting, then his exuberance, and lack of sleep, was on automatic. Working beneath the sign posted above the boiling-hot bottle washing and sanitizing machine that warned workers to keep their arms and heads bare, he was not even aware of the long-sleeved shirt he wore, its sleeves unrolled. He had seen the sign so often, he no longer *saw* it.

Going through the motions, Cyril picked up a bottle, turned it upside down and, if nothing fell out, shook it and listened, then looked inside before putting it back in the carton. Next bottle, then the next, until he'd checked all in the carton. Then he threw the bottles into the slots on the conveyor belt, stacked the empty carton on a pallet, and turned to the next carton, and the first bottle in that carton . . . one bottle after another . . . one carton after another . . . He fell asleep on his feet, until—

Wrenching, pulling, twisting; burning, searing pain! Awful, screaming pain.

“Ooouuuueeaaahhh!”

Blackness.



Pain . . . in my head . . . my shoulder . . . my hand. Burning hot; so thirsty. Cyril squinted through his left eye, saw a forest of tubes. Pain . . . too hot . . . something touching, pressing . . . pain. Can't scream



Pain in my shoulder . . . right one . . . less . . . head aches—throbs . . . can't move—afraid to . . . something wrapped around my . . . voices.

He opened his left eye. Fog filled the room. A dim light somewhere behind him barely illuminated a wispy woman in white and a bespectacled man in a long white coat. They seemed to be swimming among a clutter of bottles and tubes

Nothingness.



Wetness. A rag wiped over his flesh. He opened his eye, and saw a woman in white washing his bottom and genitals. He felt a different kind of heat and struggled to demand she cover him. It came out as a weak and strangulated stutter; there was a tube down his throat, strangling him. His heart started beating wildly, and his whole body shook.

The nurse stopped what she was doing, stepped back, and looked up at his open eye. She rushed from the room.

Cyril jerked and shuddered. He tried to shout for help, but could not. A man wearing a stethoscope around his neck entered, a hypodermic in his hand. He gave Cyril a shot of something, and almost immediately, soothing warmth spread through his body, and the world disappeared.



Voices. He opened his left eye. Two doctors stood at the foot of the bed, chatting, but most of what they said was gibberish to Cyril. One glanced his way, then walked over to the side of the bed and said, "Hello. I'm Doctor Lundy, and I'm your primary doctor." He leaned close to look into Cyril's eye, and asked, his voice soft and professional, "How do you feel?"

"Thirsty." The tube was gone.

"I'll have the nurse bring you water in a few minutes. Could you tell me your name?"

"Cyril Clement."

"Where do you live?"

"At 261 Castro Street."

The doctor wrote the information down on a clipboard. "City?"

"San Francisco."

"Job?"

"Night shift, Coke Bottling Company."

"What year is it?"

"Nineteen fifty-three."

Lundy nodded. He waved at the other man. "This is Dr. Harding. He is our burn specialist."

Harding nodded to Cyril. "Good to see you awake." With a little wave at Lundy, he left the room.

Doctor Lundy's voice became conversational. "Do you have any memory of what happened to you?"

"Just burning pain. That's it."

“Well, your right shirtsleeve caught in a conveyor belt that carried empty bottles into the wash and sterilization chamber. You tried to wrench it loose but couldn’t, and your hand and arm were pulled into the chamber. The right side of your head was jerked against the protruding structure of the chamber above the conveyor belt. You would be dead if it weren’t for the safety switch that closed everything down because of the drag of your weight on the belt.”

Panic made Cyril breathless. “Did I lose anything?”

“I’m sorry, you lost two fingers of your right hand to the burns. But we were able to save your hand and arm, and we don’t think you lost any function in them. You lost part of your right ear, but your hearing should be okay. As to the right side of your face, you had third-degree burns and a few deep cuts, but we can fix all that. You may have a small scar or so, but nothing unsightly.”

He paused. When Cyril said nothing, he asked, “What about your parents? We couldn’t locate them.”

“They’re gone. I lost contact with them while I was in the Army. I have no brothers or sisters.” He swallowed. “I can’t pay for any of this.”

“I don’t think you need worry,” Lundy said. “I guess Coca-Cola or their accident insurance will take care of it, including the skin grafts and whatever other surgery you need as a result of your accident. This happened to you on the job.”

Cyril relaxed. Then it struck him. “My God, my stuff. How long have I been unconscious?”

“About ten days. That was quite a bump on the head you got. Gave you a concussion, but there doesn’t seem to be any lasting effects. We want to run some tests, however.”

Cyril opened his one eye wide. “Jesus,” he yelled, “I missed pay day. I missed my room rent. Shit, the manager will have rented the room to someone else. My stuff! I’ve got to get—”

“I don’t know about that. If you know the manager’s name and telephone number, I can have my nurse call and tell him you’re here.”

“Jim Aku is the manager. You have my address. I don’t have his telephone number. Check the telephone book, please. This is very, very important. Have your nurse tell him I will pay his rent as soon as I get out, and not to touch my stuff.”



Cyril was released from the hospital three weeks later. He would still need outpatient care for his arm, and the right side of his face was a

little mottled, with livid scars and a right eye that was droop-lidded and red-lined. But they assured him that would all go away in time. He'd be stuck with a badly scarred and discolored right arm, though.

He'd had to keep after the doctors and nurses to get in touch with his rental manager; when after two weeks they finally did, his room had been rented, and its contents stored in boxes in the basement.

He took a streetcar to the Coca-Cola plant to pick up his paychecks—his pay had continued while he was in the hospital, and he was expected back on the job in three days—and cashed them at the nearest bank. After finding himself a new room through the classified advertisements, he went to his old rooming house to pick up what had been boxed for him.

The manager took one look at Cyril's face and expressed his sorrow over the accident. He smiled on receiving the room rent Cyril owed, and apologized with a shrug for renting the room right away. "No word from you, you know," he said. "Too many walk out on me, leaving junk in room. I still got to pay owner, you know. I sorry. I thought you walk out. Anyway, I pack up your things in two boxes. They in the basement."

The manager led Cyril down the basement steps to an area filled with cages, one for each room. He went to one wire door and unlocked the padlock securing the ends of a chain that held the door shut. Then he gestured inside, to two boxes—all Cyril owned in the world, except for the books and magazines he still in storage. Excited anew over the prospect of reading Banks' stuff, feeling happier than he'd been since the accident, he picked up one box and told the manager, "I'll have to come back for the other. I have to use the streetcar."

Cyril quickly tired during the trip; he had lost conditioning and his muscles had withered in the hospital. He was sweating and puffing by the time he got to his new room and dropped the box on the bed. He sat next to it, trying to recover some strength. Finally he opened the box and slowly took out his wrinkled clothes, army boots, shoes, and a crumpled hat—that was it. In hindsight, he realized the box had been too light to contain Banks' stuff.

He waited, trying to regain more of his strength, and then took the streetcar back to the rooming house, where the manager told him that he could get the remaining box himself.

He hurried down to the basement and opened and checked the box. "What?" he yelled. "Goddamn it, where's the Banks stuff?" He kicked the box and ran out of the cage, slamming its door so hard against the next cage that it bent off its hinges.

He dashed up the stairs to the manager's apartment and flung the door open without knocking. "My stuff—" He couldn't get his breath.

The manager scowled at him.

Cyril leaned in the open doorway, gulping air. Finally he flung the words out. "Where is my stuff? My papers are missing."

The manager's eyes narrowed and his mouth tightened into a hard line.

Cyril yelled, "I had a whole box of very important stuff on the floor. Where is it?"

The manager put both hands on his hips and glared at Cyril. "You disappear. Not my fault. I had janitor put your things in box. He then clean dirty room you left so I could rent it. You no pay, I must pay. I do not know what he do with junk. Maybe throw away."

Cyril gaped. He gripped the side of the door to hold himself up. "Thrown away? Thrown away!" In a pleading wheeze, he cried, "Wheere?"

The manager jerked his thumb toward the back of the house. "Garbage cans in rear. Garbage gone."

Cyril dashed out of the room and down the long hallway to the back door, then out to the beat-up tin garbage cans. He whipped the lid from one after another. Nothing but junk, rotten, half-eaten food, and waste paper.

He kicked the last can, dropped down next to it, and beat the cinder-strewn ground with his fist. The full enormity of his loss hit him like a sledgehammer. He howled in despair, then broke down in body wrenching sobs. He lay there for hours, too wretched to move.

Chapter 9

John Banks

He stood with one hand resting on the lectern, on the one-page outline of his lecture. He looked around the classroom, stealing a quick glance at Miss Phim. He thought of his female students as “Miss,” the males as “Mister,” and addressed them that way. When a “Miss” from Australia asked him why he didn’t use their first names, he told the class, “It is to show you the respect you deserve as a student. After all, you are not forced to study in a university. You choose to be here at considerable cost to you and, most likely, your parents.” Then he’d given them his signature lopsided grin. “And also, I think I should honor your intelligence, prudence, and good sense in taking my class.”

Some of the students chuckled, some laughed, some looked at him seriously—*I wonder if they will put that in their notes*, he’d thought as he waited for the class to settle down.

Now, he began his lecture with a vertical wave of his hand.

“In this lecture I will focus on Vietnam’s First Indochina War, which began in 1945 and ended in 1954, and which the Vietnamese called the War of Independence. First, a little background. France took over all of Indochina in the late nineteenth century, making Vietnam one of its colonies. There had been some rebellions against the French, most notably the 1930–31 communist-led uprising in which ten thousand Vietnamese were killed, but it was not until World War Two that the French lost their hold. When Germany defeated France, the remaining French Vichy regime was allowed nominal control over a French garrison of fifty thousand in Vietnam. The Japanese, allies of Germany, had applied military pressure to the French garrison for facilities and bases in Vietnam even before France fell, and in negotiations with the Vichy government, Japan later achieved control over Vietnam’s important airports and port facilities.

“In December 1941, the day—” He stopped and asked the class, “What happened in December 1941 regarding the Japanese?”

One of the students in the front row yelled, "They attacked Pearl Harbor."

"Where is that?"

"Vietnam?" one of the second row students guessed.

John's mental jaw dropped, but before he had to struggle to keep sarcasm out of his voice, several students shouted out, "Hawaii. Pearl Harbor is in Hawaii."

"That's right," he said. "In December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and thus provoked war with the United States. At the same time, Japan surrounded French forces in Vietnam and gave them an ultimatum: cooperate or be destroyed. With no outside help possible, and with even the appearance of French control at stake, the French accepted full Japanese use of Vietnam as a base and staging area. In effect, the French and Japanese operated as co-colonists of the country.

"In 1945, as the end of the war approached, Japan grew increasingly concerned about setting up an 'impregnable defense' of its empire, and became disenchanted with its relationship with France. In a surprise coup d'état in March, Japan took over Vietnam by brutal force, massacring many French in the process.

"Even before this coup it was obvious to many Vietnamese that Japan would eventually lose the war and have to leave Vietnam. Vietnamese nationalists and communists thus envisioned their country's independence and worked toward that end. When the United States defeated Japan in August 1945, both groups maneuvered to take over Vietnam. The communists, or *Viet Minh* as they were called, were especially well organized. Although there were only about five thousand of them, they succeeded in dominating the major cities in the north. In September of 1945, their undisputed leader, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam while carrying out guerrilla warfare against French forces.

"France was not about to allow a de facto breakup of its empire. It gradually mobilized its forces to recapture Vietnam, and reasserted authority over most of the south. Neither the Viet Minh in the north nor the French desired all-out war, however. Ho Chi Minh tried to negotiate some kind of autonomy in a French Union, and a preliminary agreement to that effect was signed in March 1946."

Banks saw some eyelids drooping. *No good.* He put his hands behind his back, leaned toward the class, and said, "I am absolutely certain that each one of you did your assigned reading for today. I'm positive that any one of you I call on can answer a simple question about this agreement. Let's see." He reached for his deck of note cards,

each with the name and background of a student he had written on it. The one for Miss Phim was missing the corner he had cut off so that he could easily pull it out of the deck when he wanted. Not today. He shuffled the cards, looked at the top one, and said, “Mr. Baker?” He scanned the faces before him.

A student put up his hand.

“What happened to this agreement of March 1946?” John asked.

“Ah . . . it was useless. War broke out.”

“Yes, thank you. Negotiations to reach a final agreement could not bridge French colonial aims and Viet Minh communist aspirations. In December 1946, sixty thousand trained Viet Minh troops attacked French garrisons throughout Vietnam. All-out war began.

“The war rallied Vietnamese around the Viet Minh, especially in the north. Having massacred the most important noncommunist nationalists, the Viet Minh remained the only coherent force fighting for Vietnam against foreign imperialism.”

He glanced at his outline. “By the end of 1948, they had gained control over half the population and villages of Vietnam. By 1951, they were a huge communist organization of 760,000 activists and 350,000 regular troops and guerrillas.

“This bloody war came to an end with the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. France and the Viet Minh agreed to a cease-fire, and at the subsequent Geneva Conference attended by the Big Powers, France accepted the independence of Vietnam. This conference also negotiated a cease-fire line at the 17th Parallel. Look at your map—it’s that red line dividing the north from the south. This effectively partitioned the country into North and South Vietnam and later would define the demilitarized zone—the DMZ, for short—between them. This Geneva Agreement also allowed for three hundred days of two-way movement of pro- or anticommunist forces and other Vietnamese across the DMZ. And it called for elections throughout all of Vietnam in 1956, to unite the country.”

He stopped and looked from one student to another until almost all were looking up at him. Then he moved close to the students in front without crowding them. Leaning toward them, gesturing with both hands and shaking his head as though incredulous, he said, “The human cost of the Viet Minh victory was enormous. Nearly 510,000—maybe even more than twice that number—died in battle or due to the fighting. Probably half of those killed were civilians. And this does not even take into account the horrendous democide launched by communist Viet Minh that I will discuss in the next lecture.”

The lecture for this period complete, he turned the class into a seminar, as he always tried to do. He began with a comparison. “Keep in mind the approximately 510,000 soldiers, guerrillas, and civilians killed in the First Indochina War. Now, how many were killed overall, soldiers and civilians, in both the North and the South, in the American Civil War?”

“A lot,” offered one student.

“A million,” said another.

“True, a lot; and a million is too high,” John responded, and waited.

“About one hundred thousand?” suggested a girl in the back.

“Too low,” John replied.

“Half a million,” claimed a boy seated in the middle of the class.

“Close enough,” John said. He checked his outline. “In the American Civil War, 558,052 soldiers and civilians died. What many people think of as just a little war somewhere in Asia was virtually as bloody and horrendous as our civil war. But you may be surprised to learn, as you will in the next lecture, that during this war and up to 1956, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese civilians would be murdered by the Viet Minh, more than were killed in World War Two for the United States.”

He perched on a nearby desk and waved his hands apart as though drawing a line with his fingertips. “Okay, students. Questions? Comments?”

Chapter 10

1953–1956

Cyril Clement

Months went by, and still Cyril had not completely recovered from his accident or the loss of the Banks documents. He called it his pauperization, after coming across that word in his reading. He tried to forget about it—it was past, over. Although he'd come to accept the unbelievable accuracy of Banks' predictions, Cyril hadn't written them down anywhere, and he didn't remember them specifically. He tried to move on, but felt all the emotional misery of someone whose close relative had died, one everyone thought was filthy rich but, after the heirs spent months exulting over the forthcoming inheritance, whose gambling and business debts took every last cent in the estate.

Thursday, August 20, 1953, came and went. When the news reported that Moscow had announced the explosion of a hydrogen bomb, Cyril thought it sounded familiar. He checked the paper he still had, the one on which he'd scrawled two of Banks' predictions. Yes, Banks had also predicted this precisely.

Again he fell into a stupor, and could barely call in sick to the bottling company. Three days went by before he could work again. His spirits rose only when he realized that classes at San Francisco University would soon begin. This would be new. It would be different. Despite all that he had lost—more than any human being had ever lost, he convinced himself—he still could make something of himself. He would not be an impoverished loser if he could help it. At least Banks' stuff, though lost, had instilled in him that determination.

Cyril entered San Francisco University on the GI Bill, which paid for his tuition and dormitory fee, but not much else—he still

had to work part-time. He found such employment at Alfred's Bookstore, on Fulton Street near the university.

Much influenced by science fiction, he decided to major in physics. He didn't realize, however, that while science fiction had created in him an awe of science, particularly physics, his heart was not in the actual discipline. Instead of doing the work required for his science courses, he read articles and books on Asia and on war—a reflection of what had heavily influenced him while stationed in Japan.

While there, he'd become quite enamored of Japanese culture, and had spent what time he could spare from studying for the GRE test to learn Japanese. He had grown up during World War Two, absorbing all the wartime propaganda about the “buck-toothed,” “inscrutable,” and “evil” Japanese. In Japan, much to his surprise, he discovered that the Japanese could cry, love flowers, play with dogs, and laugh. They were like him fundamentally, and this ate at him. He was uneducated and naive, and could not understand why Japan and the United States had made war on each other.

He became a pacifist who asked nasty questions during the occasional briefings given his battalion: “What did the North Koreans ever do us?” He hated war and could see no justification in the killing and destruction it always caused. This, in spite of what Banks had written about democide—a word whose depths of horror he only gradually came to understand. It was war he really focused on, as did virtually every pacifistic social philosopher and historian of the time.

Cyril's college grades in his science and mathematics courses suffered from this lack of interest, so in his sophomore year he transferred to history, with a focus on Asia. But when he took a course from a visiting professor on peace, it radically changed his life. The professor's readings were on war, and he drew his reading chapters primarily from Quincy Wright's two-volume work, *A Study of War*. This was a revelation for Cyril. He saw that he didn't have to grope for extra time beyond his regular studies and part-time work to read about war; he could study war as part of a regular discipline, especially political science.

But there was more to the revelation. He read all of Wright's two volumes within a couple of weeks, and launched himself at those major works Wright referenced. He haunted the library shelves that held books on war, often sitting in the aisle with his back against a bookcase, skimming through a pile of books, looking for their authors' recommended or concluding solutions to war. He did two term papers, one on international law and organizations as a solution, the other on the balancing of power as a preventative.

But he had not covered all that was available by any means, and in particular he still had to go through the sociological and psychological approaches, as well the empirical and mathematical ones just getting underway, which were much influenced by the pacifist Lewis Fry Richardson. Nevertheless, one thing became increasingly clear: there was no consensus on a solution, and no solution had so far worked to prevent, or even moderate, war.

One day, as he sat amongst another pile of books, glancing occasionally at his watch as the time to go to work at the bookstore neared, he picked up the last book he would look at for the day. It was almost as thin and light as a pamphlet, and he didn't think there would be much philosophical or scholarly weight to it, either. It was Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace*. He found references to it in several places, which had prompted him to pull it from the shelf. By the time he was halfway through, he'd become so totally absorbed that he was late for work, and decided to miss work completely so he could reread Kant's book.

He didn't hear the mental click as everything—everything, including what he'd read in Banks' documents and all he'd read and studied since—suddenly came together. But his heart beat rapidly, and he felt a shiver run up his spine. He leaned against the book stacks, trying to catch his breath. It was like the confirmation of the chronology's prediction of the end of the Korean War, all over again.

"Jesus, I'll be damned," he exclaimed, his voice rising loud enough on the last word that a student at the end of the stack turned and stared at him. Then the perfect word came to him, and he looked up at the ceiling and whispered in a rush, "Eureka! There *is* a solution to war. Kant's got it right. Universalize republics—that is, democracies." If it hadn't been for Banks' stuff, he realized, this would have seemed just another solution among hundreds. "Christ, I would have ignored it!"

Two students wandered into the stacks, stopped, and looked at him curiously. He tried to smile at them, but couldn't. He was too wrapped up in his discovery. He looked sightlessly down at Kant's book, still in his hand. *I've lost the chance to get rich off the stock market; I won't be a millionaire. But I haven't lost my memory. I remember Banks' mission—that Survivors' Benevolent Society that sent him and Joy back to 1906 in a time machine. They were to prevent the century's major wars and what Banks called democide, and promote democracy to keep the peace.* Cyril remembered that Banks was a professor of history who was sure that universalizing democracy—Kant's solution—would do it.

He smiled as he recalled John calling Joy his assistant and translator—a martial arts and weapons expert! *She claimed, “I am your muscle,”* Banks had written. But Cyril remembered most how sexy and stunningly beautiful she was.

For the thousandth time, the sex scenes with her that Banks had written about in the “Remembrance” tried to capture his mind with imagined images, and he waved his hand in front his face as though waving them away. *Not now.*

He refocused by trying to remember Banks’ most favorite truth. *Yes, I have it: “Democracies do not make war on each other and have far less violence than other governments.” And his conclusion and the reason for the time travel mission: “Democracy is a solution to war and democide.”*

He felt the truth of it deep inside. It was like a religious revelation. He just *knew* now that this was the solution. He shook his head in wonderment. *Wright and a few others hinted at it, but except for Kant, no one else saw this as the solution. But, if Banks’ chronology could predict the beginning and end of the Korean War decades before it happened, and . . . yes, the Soviets exploding the hydrogen bomb—God, it didn’t even exist when Banks predicted that!— he had to be right about everything else.*

Cyril was too excited to question the logic of that. Nevertheless, it changed his life. Before reading Kant, he’d often suffered from deep depression lasting for several days at a time, days in which he had to drive himself to attend his classes and his job. But now, what Banks and Kant wrote changed his future, perhaps in better ways than being a millionaire would have. For the rest of the world, it would revolutionize international studies. It would change the study of war. It would create a new and dynamic American foreign policy. And it would change the universe.

Chapter 11

The series of near-impossible chances that bestowed upon Cyril the one opportunity—denied to all other humans—to bridge universes, were themselves conditional. They depended on a chain of events in Vietnam that surrounded one family, in particular. Had any links in this chain been broken, there would have been no Joy Phim, and she and John Banks would not have embarked on their mission in time, and there would have been no accordion folder full of Banks' documents for Cyril to find during that fateful World War Two paper drive. There would have been no bridge between universes. Instead, our foreseeable future would remain rife with merciless dictators enslaving billions and producing a Niagara of blood.

At least, this is what would seem evident to an omniscient observer. But even, such an observer can be betrayed by the unknown.

Let's start at the most relevant beginning of this significant chain of events, which took place about seventy-three hundred miles away from where Cyril was attending college.

1956, Nong-cong, North Vietnam Hoang Loi

He had murdered his son Trai. Now there was no turning back.

In the little tool shed behind his three-room home, he grabbed the two coils of rope he had already prepared and waxed in just the right place. He had to hurry. Members of the People's Brigade, assuming that he had already followed orders and deserted his home, could arrive at any moment to loot the place.

He passed by the doorway of his home on the way to the tree. His wife Le Nogoc Bian stood swaying there, clutching the door jamb for support. The blood spattered when they'd killed their son stood out starkly on her white face. Her eyes, though glistening with tears, now showed only fierce determination and utter resignation, but anguish pulled at the muscles of her face and dug deep furrows into the flesh.

He was proud of her. When the brigade's courier had driven up to his door in an old Citroën, slammed the order into Loi's hand, and left without a word, they'd sat next to each other at their big table to read it together. Only silence followed. They had no need of words. Finally they looked at each other. She nodded, rose heavily, and stumbled to the door. Trying vainly to control her tears, she had called her son Trai in from feeding their pigs.

They had known they might be marked. They should have fled. But it was not easy to pull up roots, to leave the graves of their ancestors, to give up their friends, to throw away the small but successful farm Loi had inherited from his father, the farm his son would inherit from him. To go where? And to start over with nothing? They could not sell the farm—that was just the kind of evidence of capitalist greed that would get him shot.

He swerved from his path to the tree and went to Bian to put his arm around her shoulders. She turned to hug him with all her strength. He stroked her hair and whispered, "Soon we will be free." She began to shake and he held her tighter, trying to will his strength into her.

She had done the hardest part. By the time her son came in, she had wiped the tears away, manufactured a plastic smile, and told him that this was a special day for prayer. She told Trai to get on his knees and pray with her. Then she led him in her favorite Buddhist prayer, timely for all their suffering in this land.

*May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings
of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.*

*May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may
those bound, be free.*

*May the powerless find power, and may people
think of befriending one another.*

*May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful
wilderness—the children, aged, the unprotected—be
guarded by beneficial celestials, and may they swiftly
attain Buddhahood.*

On the last word, Loi smashed his son's head in with a sledgehammer—a fast and probably painless death. Then, heaving sobs, spewing vomit, he collapsed on the floor next to his son.

That was over an hour ago. He had fought the pain and grief, the horror of what he had done. They did not have the time. Now, he gently

pushed Bian to arms' length, held her there for a moment to look into her eyes and relive their love and life together, then he kissed her on the lips—a gentle kiss that only saw their eleven years together, a gesture blind to the blood on her face.

He had wanted to kill her as he had his son. She deserved a better death than hanging. But she had insisted that she die with him.

Gritting his teeth, he took her hand and led her to the blooming shower tree. Two straight-backed woven bamboo chairs waited there, on either side of a rickety wicker table. After their hard work around the house and farm, they'd sometimes come here in the early evening, light incense to keep the mosquitoes away, and talk about their son, their future, their relatives, and village gossip. And the dangers that faced them all under this new revolutionary regime.

He moved the table away, picked up one of the coiled ropes and, holding the newly waxed end, he threw the coils over a twelve foot-high limb so that the uncoiled rope would be cinched against one of its branches. He did the same with the second rope.

Bian's wide eyes glittered. She looked around—at their home, the pens for their livestock, the few goats and pigs they'd freed that remained nearby, and the small, neat fields of corn, sweet potatoes, and beans. Loi went to her. He took twine out of his pocket and she put her hands behind her. He tied them loosely together, just tight enough to keep them there for the brief time required.

Loi did not know how to tie a hangman's noose, but he tied a knot that would easily slip down the waxed part of the rope and hold her neck in its grip. He could not look at her face as he put the noose around her neck. She tilted her head forward so that he could pull her long black hair up through the noose to hang free. She had wanted to pin her hair up in a roll on her head, out of the way, but he'd insisted she leave it loose.

He took her hand and helped her stand on the chair, and then he pulled the other end taut so the noose was tight around her neck, and tied the end to the tree trunk.

He pulled up the noose on the other rope so that he would have to stand on tiptoe to put his head into it, and also tied its end to the tree. Then he stood on the other chair, fixed the noose around his neck, and took a glove from his pocket. He pulled it on, put that hand behind him, and forced his other hand into the glove as well, imprisoning both hands. The more he struggled to free his hands, the harder it would be.

His body had known what needed to be done and had done it. Nothing remained. Except courage. He need only kick the back of the chair, but his instinct for self-preservation came alive. His wildly pumping heart shook his whole body; sweat poured from him. He tried to kill his instinct, tried to let his body do what was necessary, but it mutinied. He looked hopelessly at his wife, his lovely wife.

She stared at the blue sky, watching the white puffs of cloud float on the early afternoon breeze. A bulbul chased another across the sky, and she followed it with her eyes.

His teeth began chattering. He fought for control, but now his body marched to a different master. It was about to slowly wriggle his right hand out of the glove behind his back when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw Bian move. He stared.

She stood taller on the chair, tilted her head back, and looked at him. Her soothing voice caressed him with her last words: "Our souls will soar together, my loving husband. Shall we kick the chairs away together, so our souls will be one in time and can easily find each other?"

She gave him the strength he sought. "I love you, my darling." He took a deep breath. "On two," he said.

"One."

"Two."

Wang Shihao

His friend's mother and father were doing something on the tree. Wang Shihao did not understand at first. They seemed to be playing with rope. Maybe they were climbing up the ropes, to pick the small, red-tinged yellow flowers from the branches? He would go and see, and ask them where his friend Trai was.

As he drew closer, he saw the overturned chairs beneath their feet. They were standing on nothing. He ran to them, but stopped when he saw that their heads were twisted at odd angles, and their faces were white. They were not climbing the ropes; the ropes were twisted around their necks.

Shihao gaped at them. He knew they were dead. He had seen the corpses of those everyone had to ignore as bad people, those who had starved to death. His teachers had even told him to throw stones at such people when they were alive. They were evil and deserved to

die, his teachers said. He had attended meetings with his family, meetings where everyone shouted and waved fists as more evil people were shot.

The door to his friend's home was open. He ran inside. Maybe Trai could tell him what was going on with his parents.

He stopped dead inside the door. His eyes bugged; his mouth fell open. Trai lay on his side in a fetal position with his hands clasped, as though he had toppled over while praying. The back of his head was crushed and clotted with blood. Blood was spattered everywhere.

Shihao came to life and shuddered. He turned, screaming, and ran out the door.

He ran the whole half a mile home and stumbled into the cassava field where his father lifted weeds with a hoe. He tried to get the words out, but he started crying hysterically, jabbing his finger in the direction of Trai's home. Finally he got "dead" and "blood" out, and his father's eyes opened wide. He dropped his hoe and headed in the direction Shihao pointed.

Wang Dewu

Shihao's father, Wang Dewu, had a good idea what had happened, but he had to verify it. Each death or murder was now input into his timing. He fought the driving urge to run toward Hoang Loi's home and tried to walk normally. A communist or one of their sycophants might pass by on the road, and running could be seen as suspicious—everything, it seemed, was suspicious to the communists.

From a distance, he saw Loi and his lovely wife, Le Nogoc Bian, hanging from the tree. Cold chills ran down his spine and his heart beat rapidly. The desire to rush to them and cut them down was almost overwhelming, but his fear was even stronger. Someone might see him. Someone might already be in their shack, watching him. He could be reported for aiding counterrevolutionaries.

"Calm, be calm," he told himself. But he could do nothing about his cold sweat.

He suspected what had happened, and now, above all, he had to be sure. Loi was about as successful a farmer as Dewu, and they were equally independent. They not only survived, but even made a little extra *dong* they could use to occasionally give their family presents, to see the delighted smiles of their children.

He approached the hanging bodies and studied them. Bian and Loi had been a loving couple, and not embarrassed about showing it in public. *No one will even know what they said to each other when they were ready; what final words of love they exchanged before together—he assumed it had to be together—they kicked the chairs from beneath them.*

Holding back tears, Dewu entered the couple's home. He blanched when he saw Trai on the floor. The bottom seemed to fall out of his stomach, and he let out a long groan. What had happened here was obvious. They had given their son no warning. Bian probably told Trai to pray with her, and Loi must have smashed his son's head in with the bloody hammer lying on the floor nearby.

He looked around and found the official order on the table. He picked it up and, as he read it, his free hand turned into a white-knuckled fist.

October 20, 1956

Hoang Loi and Family:

You have been tried by the Revolutionary People's Brigade and found to be an enemy of the proletariat and our glorious land reform. Your sentence is isolation. You are hereby ordered on pain of death to leave your home and everything in it by midnight this day, October 20. You are not to take any livestock or pets with you, nor food from your farm. All gold, jewels, money, and any other thing of value must be left in your home. You may take only the clothes you wear.

Anyone who gives you shelter, clothes, transportation, money, or food is also an enemy of the proletariat and subject to ostracism.

Secretary Pham Nam

*Nong-cong Revolutionary
People's Brigade*

He looked out all the windows to make sure the brigade's cadre had not yet come. They would come soon, to make sure Loi and his family had left, and to loot the home and farm. He stuck his head out the door and looked around again before stepping out and walking as normally as he could back to his own home.

His wife, Jiang Jia Li, held a weeping Shihao. Still in shock, the boy clutched her short vest with one hand and wrapped a handful of her cotton dress within the other. She looked up at Dewu when he came in the door, and silent words passed between them.

Dewu went into the bedroom, squeezed between the wall and the end of the bed, and sat on the side of the bed near the window. For some reason, right now, he could not shut himself off from the sky. He put his head in his hands and let the tears flow.

Like Hoang Loi, he had been nonpolitical, only concerned with his family, his farm, and his friends. He had avoided the entreaties of the nationalists to join them in the war against the French. Then, when the communists and not the nationalists won the war, and the communists under Ho Chi Minh eliminated all political competition by systematically purging and murdering leading nationalists, he had refused to join the communists. He'd been thankful for that later, when Ho began purging the party, imprisoning and executing party members whose enthusiasm for the revolution was questionable.

He just wanted peace for his family, wanted to be left to work his farm. But recently he had heard of a directive from the party that required each town and village to find and eliminate through execution, imprisonment, or official isolation five landlords for every two hundred residents. Isolation—a terrible form of ostracism—was tantamount to slow death by starvation, since everyone feared providing the isolated family with any food or shelter.

Dewu was not a landlord. Neither was he rich. His neighbor Hoang Loi had not been rich or a big landowner either. But Hoang Loi and he had done better than most of the other farmers, and that set them apart. So, when the Revolutionary People's Brigade—made up mostly of the poorest of the farmers, the least successful ones—was given the order to rid the town of the “landlord scum,” they of course selected Hoang Loi and his family. Dewu was sure he would soon receive an isolation order as well.

Jia Li came into the small room, shut the plank door behind her, and slithered across the narrow bed to sit next to him. She put her head on his shoulder and asked in a tremulous voice, “Was it that terrible order?”

“Yes.” He heard her sob.

“Will we be next?”

Dewu released a long, ragged sigh. Her question forced him to face what, unconsciously, he had been trying to avoid. “Probably.”

Her question and that simple word blasted into sharp focus all his chaotic thoughts, all the facts he had assimilated, and subdued the rag-

ing emotions that had usurped his mind. He shook his head, swiped tears away from his eyes with both hands, and turned on the bed to face her. Putting his hand on her thin shoulder, he gave it a gentle squeeze. "What will happen will happen. It will be our fate." Determination steeled his voice as he added, "But fate will have to find us."

Grief lined her face and she slumped in resignation.

"We are escaping today," Dewu said.

"But . . . where?" she choked out.

"South Vietnam."

"How?" She shuddered and looked out the window. "The border is too far to walk, and we could never get across. It is too guarded." The hope in her voice betrayed her doubtful words.

"We have to hurry now; there is not time to explain it all. I've heard rumors, and some of my dealers and suppliers in Thanh-hoa have been secretly listening to shortwave radios. *Nhan Dan* newspaper and Hanoi Radio have given out more information than they know. Many people are still escaping to South Vietnam, even after the end of that so-called population exchange with the South when the war of independence ended."

When she frowned, puzzled, he added in a rush, "The party suppressed information about the exchange. If I had known about it then, I would have tried to take us all south, even though the communists set up roadblocks in some places to prevent people from getting there. After that was when some people around here bought shortwave radios on the black market."

Dewu was speaking so fast, he was almost panting. "We will take our horse and cart the twenty miles to Sam-son. I will load the cart as though going to a market. In Sam-son we should find a fishing captain who will take our gold. I hear that, if given enough, they will motorboat escapees past the communist coast guard, into the Gulf of Tonkin, and south to the South China Sea. There, they hail any South Vietnamese fishing boat. Its captain will also demand gold, but if given enough, he will transfer us to his boat and return with us to his South Vietnam port. Then, my *cherie*, we will be free."

He held her shoulders. "The savings that you annually converted to gold—anyone would be *do ngu*—stupid not to do so in this country! Good thing you are a good Chinese wife who lorded over—ah, kept our family budget." He tried to smile, but it came out a grimace. "I now have to admit you were right to save what you did when I wanted to spend all our extra income on tools and livestock. It has added up. With that and your family jewelry and heirlooms, I am sure we have enough to make it, and then some."

His tone turned to steel again. “No more time. Pack up one suitcase for you and one for Shihao. Put some food in a bag. Remember, we are going a good distance and may have nothing to eat or drink on the fishing boats but what we bring with us. I will pack my own case.”

She stared at him wide-eyed, her faith in him spreading across her face. “But what about—” She waved her hand to encompass their house and farm.

“We leave everything. Better to start over than be dead. Remember Loi and Bian and never forget them.”

Suddenly, Jia Li put her hand over her mouth and gasped. “Our parents! Their bodies and spirits. We will desert them. Oh, Buddha!” She bent over, put her head in her hands, and cried hysterically.

Dewu gently rubbed her back. Softly he said, “If we stay, we join them. We will make our last visit to their graves on the way, and explain to them why we are leaving. Their spirits will understand. We’ll take their photographs with us, and place them on their graves and pray to Buddha to invest the photographs with their spirits. We’ll put the pictures and some soil from their graves in our baggage, and they will travel with us to the south.”

Jia Li stopped crying and turned her wet face to look at him. She stammered, “Yes. Yes . . . of course. My father was killed by communists. My mother died of heartbreak. They will be happy to leave this communist hell.”

Dewu slid across the bed toward the door, saying, “As will my parents.” His mother and father, along with his older brother and sister, had died in the communist famine of 1945. “Enough. No more delay. Let’s pack what we must have and go.”

She gripped his arm. “What if we are caught?”

“They will kill us. With bullets. Or by torture. Or in prison. Let’s hope for bullets.”

Chapter 12

John Banks

An extra cup of coffee gave John the caffeine push he needed. His dreams were beginning to bother him; they'd taken on a strange mix of horror and desire. He had awakened several times yelling something incoherently. The dreams had begun, oddly, with the start of this series of lectures on Vietnam—at least the ones he vaguely remembered did. But then, his sleep had been restless since he returned from the catastrophic 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers.

He got to class a little early, before Miss Phim arrived, and watched in amusement as the other students' eyes followed her progress from the side door to her usual seat in the rear of the classroom. He couldn't help taking quick glances himself. He checked his watch. Time to begin

“Good afternoon, students,” he said.

“Good afternoon, Professor Banks,” some responded.

“Any problems, issues?” he asked.

No one spoke up, so with a look around the room that allowed a quick glance at Miss Phim, he said, “In this lecture I will cover the Viet Minh communists' democide of their own people, including fellow Viet Minh.

“As the Viet Minh struggled against the French, they also fought a vicious hidden war against their noncommunist nationalist competitors. They assassinated, executed, and massacred whole groups of nationalists, including relatives, friends, women, and children. Nationalists were not the only victims. ‘Class enemies’ were also ‘punished,’ and communist ranks were purified of Trotskyites and others who deviated from accepted scripture.”

He looked around and asked, “What is a class enemy?”

“Someone who gets all A's,” drawled Mr. Simmons, still looking resentful over John's insistence early in the semester that he remove the golf cap he habitually wore backward. He sat slouched in his seat, his legs sprawled under the seat in front of him.

John grinned as the class laughed, and then said, "I guess, Mr. Simmons, you are destined to be no one's class enemy."

More laughter and *ohhhs*.

John waited. A student raised his hand. When John nodded at him, he answered, "The communists are supposed to represent the class of workers. So, anyone who is not a worker is a class enemy."

"Such as?" John asked, looking around the class.

"The rich," someone shouted.

"Landowners," said another.

"Businessmen."

"Teachers."

When the laughter died down, John responded. "All true, even for teachers, who are often the first victims of democide. Technically, the class enemies are those who own the means of production and wealth, such as businessmen and landowners, and thus, by communist theory, exploit the working class. They are all called *bourgeoisie*. But actually, the class enemy is anyone who disagrees with the communist rulers, is a potential or actual competitor for power, such as a priest or monk, or has a noncommunist college education, such as those educated in French or American universities. Even communists are enemies, if they believe in 'incorrect' scripture, such as the Trotskyites.

"Trotsky was a competitor to Stalin who believed that the revolution in Russia could only survive if it were spread to other nations without waiting for its consolidation in Russia. Stalin believed in Russia first, and Ho Chi Minh felt the same way about Vietnam. Thus, those who thought Trotsky was correct were enemies to be eliminated."

"Why?" one student shouted.

Normally, John would have left this to the class to answer. But he had a longer lecture than usual and still wanted to leave some time for questions at the end. So he answered it himself. "As communists, Ho Chi Minh and those around him had an absolute, fanatical belief in the utopia promised by Marxist theory. Since they thought that Marxism was absolutely true, and that following this truth and implementing it would undoubtedly do away with war and poverty and make all men equal and free, they would not allow any disagreement with this noble goal, or any threat to it. They thought they were on the moral high road, and this justified their mass murder of those who might be in the way of this 'glorious future.'"

John swept his hand down: enough, time to move on.

"Ho Chi Minh began a wave of assassinations of nationalists who opposed the communists in the 1930s and it continued more or less un-

til 1945. Then he intensified it into a wide-scale terror from 1945 to 1947. Thousands of the most educated and brightest Vietnamese were wiped out. Truong Chinh, one of the top communists who became vice premier of North Vietnam in 1958, gave this rationale for this communist mass murder.” John leaned over to the lectern to read from his outline there. ““For a newborn revolutionary power to be lenient with counterrevolutionaries is tantamount to committing suicide.””

Banks let that sink in for five seconds, and then continued. “In 1953, as the war with France for independence moved toward a clear victory and the communists controlled virtually all the countryside and many cities and towns in the north, they began their social revolution with what they called land reform. A nice term for what really was a transitional phase in nationalizing all farming—collectivization.

“Do you all understand what nationalization means?” he asked the class. Some of the students shook their heads. “It means the government takes over farms, fields, livestock, and farming, and farmers become in effect employees of the government. It’s as though all farmers were drafted into the army, but in place of generals giving orders, there is a massive government bureaucracy that tells the farmers what to plant, when to plant it, and how much to grow, all according to a plan, and then takes all of what they produce. Their food and other necessities are then rationed. The idea is to make farming more efficient and to do away with the inequality between rich landowners and poor farmers.”

He stopped and scanned the class. No hands. He continued. “However, in Vietnam, land ownership among the peasants was widespread. In the vital Red River Delta, ninety-eight percent of the peasants owned the land they worked; throughout the north, about two-thirds of them did. Moreover, few outside the Mekong Delta region owned more than two or three hectares—equivalent to nearly five acres and a little over seven acres.

“But that didn’t matter. The real reason for this land reform was to consolidate communist power over the peasants by destroying their natural, centuries-old source of countervailing authority in the villages and hamlets, particularly that of the larger landowners and wealthier peasants. And to clear away potentially effective opposition to the ultimate collectivization of all land.

“The technique followed the communist Chinese model. First, marshal the poor peasants, far greater in number, against their better-off neighbors, fewer in number but locally more powerful. How? By taking the land and property of the better-off and giving it to the poor peas-

ants. This incentive rallies support for the revolution in the mass of poor peasants. Moreover, if many of these so-called landlords and rich are also killed, the remainder are terrorized into obedience. Then, once they've won this struggle against these actual or potential 'enemies of the revolution'—John made the gesture for quotation marks—the communists can turn on the peasant mass and nationalize their newly gained land. Divided, without organization or leadership, the natural local leaders eliminated, and having seen what happened to those labeled landlords and rich, the peasants are too terrorized to resist.

“As the Viet Minh communists carried it out, land reform involved two so-called sky-splitting and earth-shaking mass campaigns, one after the other. The first, the two-year Land Rent Reduction Campaign, began in 1953 in Viet Minh-controlled areas. It involved two successive population classification decrees, one in 1953 and the other, a more refined version, in 1955. Both required the rural folk to pigeonhole every member of every village into one of a hierarchy of classes, with the poorest, wage-earning or landless peasant class at the bottom and the landlords at the top, with the rich peasants right below them and the weak, average, and strong middle-level peasants forming three middle classes.

“The communists then demanded that the poor peasants liquidate the landlords. Under the watchful eyes of communist cadre, they shot, imprisoned, or otherwise punished the landlords, sometimes by taking their land away. But apparently they didn't find enough. Unhappy that so few 'landlords' had been liquidated in each village, the communists pointed out that the peasants should have found many more 'exploiters.' Reconsider the population classification decree, they told the peasants, and reclassify your neighbors. Now those classified as strong, middle-level, rich peasants had to be redefined as landlords, and they ended up with about five times as many exploiters to execute or otherwise eliminate.

“The new classification, however, condemned not only the better-off peasants, but also the more productive and enterprising of them. The differences between landlords and rich, strong, middle-class peasants on the one hand, and those peasants who were poorer or smaller landowners on the other, was often a matter of fine distinctions. Sometimes the only difference was that some peasants were more hardworking and successful than others. This hardly fazed the communist cadre, however, since their goal was social revolution; whether class differences had to be forced or invented did not matter.

“To make it even more likely that they find the requisite number of sacrificial victims, the communists then defined a new category: landlord mentality. This, incredibly, signified ‘evil by lineage.’ A person in this category was anyone whose ancestors had been landlords as the communists defined them, or who sometime in the past had possessed land or livestock.

“Murder by classification was often made final with a bullet, but many died in prison, or by suicide, or as the result of an isolation policy. By demand of the state, whole families whose male head was classified as a landlord were ostracized and boycotted. No one could have anything to do with them. Even talking to them was prohibited, and children were encouraged to throw stones at them. They were not allowed to work. Quite simply and understandably, most died of starvation. A horrible death.

“We can only guess at the overall toll of this pitiless campaign. Maybe one hundred thousand Vietnamese were thus murdered. Maybe many more.”

John paused and slowly scanned the rows of students. Some looked shocked; some wrote notes; some looked sleepy. He said it again, louder. “Perhaps one hundred thousand human beings like you and me were *murdered*. That’s a statistic, a jumble of numbers, and its human meaning is hard to digest.”

He walked to his briefcase and took out his deck of name cards, shuffled it, and picked the card on top. “Mr. Thompson?”

A hand went up.

“What is the population of our town of Bloomington?” John asked him.

Ah . . . hmm . . . twenty-five thousand?”

“No, it’s about sixty-five thousand. All these people in Bloomington do not even come near the number—they are only a little over half—of those who were possibly murdered by the communists in this land reform campaign.” Now he had them all looking at him, and even more had raised eyebrows, round eyes, and drooping jaws. John walked to one side of the room. Their eyes followed him.

“To move on, the purpose of the Land Rent Reduction Campaign was to soften up the countryside for the radical seizure of the land of those who had, as the communists said, too much, and temporarily transfer it to those who had, in their words, too little. This prepared the way for collectivization. With the elimination of those considered landlords and rich, and after a delay to allow for the political and economic reorganization of the villages, the North now launched its Land Reform Campaign.

“They brutally stripped land and other possessions from those with even moderate-sized plots, and gave it to peasants with either very little or nothing at all. But in North Vietnam, peasants with as much as an acre of land were few; even fewer, however classified by the population decree, fit the classic Marxist idea of landlord. Nonetheless, those who had survived and kept their land through the previous campaign now were forced to vacate their homes and abandon their land and possessions.

“Those Vietnamese accused by the communists of being traitors, reactionaries, and cruel bullies also had their land and possessions confiscated. Ultimately this meant that anyone in communist disfavor could be robbed of all his possessions.

“The expropriation of property and its transfer to the poorer peasants was often done with some ceremony. This might involve the beating of drums, a speech by some comrade announcing the evils of the victims and the confiscation of their property, shouting of the required ritualistic ‘Long live’ and ‘Down with,’ followed with removal of all the movable possessions—farm animals, pets, farm implements, household furniture and goods, pots and pans, and other cooking utensils. Distribution of the confiscated land might also involve great ceremony, with the usual flags, slogans, and shouting. Each peasant received a certificate of land ownership. If we can believe the communists, one-fifth of an acre thus went to each of 325,000 families.”

John paced slowly to the other side of the room. “A particularly shocking device of these two savage campaigns was murder by quota.” He stopped and stared at the class for a moment. “Do you know what a quota under communism is?”

One hand went up.

“Yes, Miss Finch.”

“It means that so much of something must be produced.”

“Right,” Banks replied, “and in this case, so many killed had to be produced.” He raised his voice without realizing it. “A *quota* of murders.”

He paused, trying to calm the rage rising within him. Lack of sleep made this a struggle; it sapped his control. He’d started pacing again; now he stopped and, as the class stared, fought down bile. He’d felt this way the first time he came across the murder quotas the Soviet KGB had telegraphed to villages and towns, and again when he discovered Mao Tse-tung’s. And again when he wrote about it in his dissertation, and when a member of his dissertation committee tried to cast doubt on anything so evil being done by an established government. And . . . now.

He stepped back to the lectern and pretended to look over his outline. At first his hand shook, but he took a deep breath and tried to force his mind into recognizing where he was.

Brrrr! . . . brrrr!

Construction was underway one building down from this one, and the sound of a puffing compression engine came vaguely through the closed windows in the protracted silence. The room seemed overheated.

He gained control. Stepping away from the lectern again, he glanced at Miss Phim. *Was that a look of understanding?* he wondered.

He returned to his lecture. "Ah . . . in applying the population classification decree, the communists had demanded that at least one defined landlord be killed per village. But, as I mentioned, on first application, the poor peasants were insufficiently dedicated, and they didn't exterminate enough 'evil' ones. So, during the Land Reform Campaign, the communist Central Committee raised the quota from one to five per village. That is, they ordered the peasants of each village in North Vietnam to define at least five so-called landlords for execution, even if the land in the village was already being shared communally. And five executions was a minimum.

"The communist rulers believed that ninety-five percent of the land was owned by the wealthiest five percent of the people. Therefore, of course, five percent of the folk in each village and hamlet had to be eliminated, with five as a minimum: five in a village of one hundred, twenty-five in a village of five hundred, and fifty in a village of one thousand. I don't know how they handled the numbers when five percent of a village of fifty yielded 2.5 people. I suspect that, since by communist theory it was better to kill the innocent than let the guilty go free, they always rounded upward. In any case, each village had its special 'land reform' team whose job it was to do the killing, once its report was approved by provincial party headquarters."

He was lecturing too loudly and rushing his words. He had to get better control. He went to his deck of names. "Mr. McLean?"

When a hand went up, Banks asked, "If the population of Bloomington is sixty-five thousand, how many would be murdered by these communist calculations?"

"What calculations?"

"That five percent must die."

McLean bent over his notes and scribbled for a moment, then looked up with his brow furrowed and said, "Thirty-two hundred and fifty?"

“Correct. A little over three thousand of the people that live here would have to be murdered because they might be landowners; they might be the wealthiest.” He let that sink in.

“Those murdered by quota, however, made up only part of the overall dead. The casualties in these sky-splitting and earth-shaking Land Rent Reduction and Land Reform campaigns from 1953 to 1956 may have been extremely high. Some estimate five hundred thousand Vietnamese; even a high estimate of six hundred thousand has been mentioned. But there are also very low estimates, such as eight hundred, five thousand, or fifteen thousand dead, killed, or victimized. Given the minimum quota of five ‘landlords’ in each village, and considering those that committed suicide or families that died from official ostracism, probably the correct figure is more like 150,000 dead—over two times the population of Bloomington.”

He glanced at his watch, and saw he was nearly out of time. He stopped, looked over the class, and ended with, “‘Land reform’ was not the only instrument of communist mass murder, but I’m going to stop here and continue this in the next session. Okay on this so far?”

A few nodded; some looked at him blank-faced, and others stared down at their notes.

“Class dismissed.”

As the students filed out, he opened his briefcase with a jerk and threw his outline inside. He didn’t look up, not even as Miss Phim left the classroom.

Chapter 13

1956

North Vietnam

Wang Dewu

Dewu's horse neighed and stamped its front hooves as a policeman in a baggy green uniform and sloppy cap approached their cart. A farm horse, it had always been sensitive to strangers, and this policeman stank of too much garlic and *nuoc mam* fish sauce. Two other policemen leaned on the roadblock, watching as the first lifted up a corner of the tarp covering the back of the cart. They were just outside of Sam-son.

While holding up the tarp with one hand, the policeman used a long stick to probe beneath the heaped rice sacks filled with corn and potatoes, then slid it down alongside the gutted pig.

Dewu relaxed the reins to give the horse a little freedom as the policeman came around the cart and looked up at Dewu. He felt Jia Li and Shihao tense beside him.

“Your pa—”

Shihao wailed loudly, “Why are we stopping? I want to eat. You promised we could eat!”

Jia Li screamed at him, “Shut up! Brat.” She smacked him on the cheek.

Shihao started jumping up and down on the cart's spring seat. “*Em ghet anh*—I hate you! *Em ghet anh!*”

Dewu stood up on the footrest, threw his papers at the policeman, and turned to Jia Li. He grabbed her by the hair and pulled her close. “How dare you hit our son, *cho cai*—bitch!” He shook her.

She screamed back at him, “You *cho de*—son of a bitch!”

Upset by the loud screaming, the horse started throwing his head up and down. Its fidgeting shook the cart from side to side.

The policeman did no more than glance at the papers before holding them up to Dewu, who had started hollering at his son. Jia Li looked at the policeman, her face distorted in anger, and then hid her face. She gave Dewu a look he immediately understood.

Dewu turned to the policeman as if about to bark at him, but he saw his papers in the policeman's hand and grabbed them with a loud, "*Dip di tung ngo nay di*—fuck this stupid kid."

The policeman shook his head. "You have been too easy on them. Use a stick on them once a week." He demonstrated by whipping the stick into his hand with a *swish!* "I have peace in my household."

"Yeah," Dewu replied, "I will use a bigger stick." He jerked on the reins and loudly clicked his tongue.

The horse took off almost at a gallop, and Dewu had to rein him in to a walk. As they passed the two other policemen, they waved at Dewu with sympathetic grins.

Out of sight of the roadblock, Dewu stopped the cart. He put one arm around Jia Li to pull her close, and reached over her to draw Shihao to them. "Nicely done. But do not let it spoil you. If either of you ever do anything like that for real, I *will* take a stick to you."

Jia began to scowl, but she saw the twinkle in his eyes and the grin forming, and when he started to laugh, Jia Li laughed with him. Shihao joined them, at first nervously, and then wholeheartedly.



In Sam-son, they went to the central market on Van Mieu Street, where they acted like any other farmers selling their produce while looking for Sino-Vietnamese buyers, for only they could be trusted. With each, Dewu initiated a short conversation.

"Nice weather today."

When the other invariably agreed, Dewu asked, "Do you think the weather in the south is as nice?"

The other could either end the conversation with a shrug or noncommittal answer, or say something like "Maybe" or "I would think so."

The next question was the dangerous one. Dewu scratched his nose as though unaware of the *dong* between his fingers. "Well, with such good weather, the sea can't be too rough."

When it got to that, three Sino-Vietnamese merchants in a row just walked off. The fourth, the one who bought the gutted pig, wrote something on the receipt and immediately hauled the pig off in his own cart.

Dewu looked at the receipt as if merely checking it, then whispered to Jia Li, "It says 'Here, at 5:30 p.m.'"

They sold everything, including the cart and horse. With an hour to spare, they slowly circulated around the market, as though they also had things to sell in the bags and cases they carried.

At 5:30 they were back at the east end of the market where they had sold the pig. People bustled about, preparing to close up their stalls. The merchant who had bought the pig was nowhere around. Then a tall man with a leathery, deeply lined face made to walk past them, then seemed to think of something. He stopped, pulled a pack of Victory cigarettes from the bag he carried with one hand, flicked the pack so one stood out, and grabbed it with his lips. He looked around, and then walked up to Dewu.

"Do you have a match?" he asked, the words making the cigarette bob up and down from the side of his mouth.

"I'm sorry, I don't smoke. But I have a long fire match you are welcome to have." He looked at Jia Li. "Get me one of my fire matches."

While she bent over one of their bags for it, the man said, "Nice weather. Do you think it is like this in the south?"

Dewu tried to keep the sudden excitement out of his voice. "I would think so. Do you think the sea will then be rough?"

The man gave Dewu a long look. His dark, sunken eyes held a touch of fear. Then he looked at Jia Li, who had straightened and was holding out the match, and then at Shihao, who had drawn close to Jia Li and looked shyly up at the man. The man nodded, and seemed to gather himself together. He took the match, lifted his foot, and struck it on the sole of his dirty boot. He lit his cigarette, then held out to Dewu the bag he had been carrying, opening it to reveal an overripe papaya.

As though saying something about the papaya, the man whispered, "Nine gold *tael*. You got?" That amount was currently worth about \$400.

"Yes."

The man continued to whisper, his words hurried and barely audible. "Be at pier 7B at one a.m., third fishing boat from the beginning of the pier. Come only if there is no moon. No flashlights. No talk. No light-colored clothing. Hide in the boat until I come at about five a.m. Fisherman's clothes in pilothouse for both of you. Put them on."

The man closed the bag and shook his head as though disappointed, and ambled off, leaving a trail of swirling smoke behind him.

The town's small Chinatown was one street over, and there Dewu asked around for where a Sino-Vietnamese farmer could find

cheap lodging for one or two nights. One such place was a home that rented rooms, and one room was available. Dewu registered his family for it with all the details required by law, including false information about the travel permit he was supposed to have from his village.

The owner of the home, an old and shriveled woman whose bent back indicated she had worked most of her life on a farm, warned him in Chinese, "For staying overnight, you will have to register at the police station in the morning. Please do not forget, or I will get into trouble."

In barely remembered Chinese, Dewu replied, "Yes. It be bad for me. Worse." He paid her for the room in advance, and she accepted the *dongs* without comment. He was convinced she knew they were escapees.

Gulf of Tonkin

Dewu huddled in the boat's small pilothouse, arms wrapped tightly around Jia Li and Shihao, as Captain Manh, the man they had met at the market, slipped his boat away from the pier and steered it out to sea. Dewu could not believe fleeing North Vietnam was this easy, and he expected to die at any moment. He did not take an easy breath until Manh yelled over the chugging motor, "We are in international waters." By that time, the sky had cleared up and the moon provided enough light to see any boat within half a mile.

The transfer from the North Vietnamese fishing boat to the one from the south would be a risk all around. If the North Vietnamese coast guard caught them, even in international waters, they would sink both boats and probably leave all aboard to drown. Dewu had heard that some pickups were merely tricks to lure South Vietnamese fishing boats into range for North Vietnamese police to machine-gun and sink. He wondered what would happen to them if no South Vietnamese boat ventured near.

As if to calm his concern, a boat, barely visible, appeared in the moonlight. It slowly approached, bouncing as it rose and fell on the choppy swells. As it drew nearer, Dewu studied the craft. It was all poles, nets, and lines, in the midst of which was a small pilothouse. It flew no flag that Dewu could see, but Manh yelled out to him, "That's a South Vietnamese fishing boat."

Dewu and Jia Li had changed back into their own clothes. Now as Manh instructed, they stood with Shihao, clearly visible in the bow of their boat. Dewu supported Jia Li, who was barely able to stand—the pills Dewu had bought on the black market before they departed only moderated her seasickness.

The other boat stopped within hailing distance, and a man wearing a yellow boat hat that covered his neck and ears leaned out of the pilothouse and yelled, “Five taels. Nothing less.”

Dewu shouted back, “We’ve got it.”

The captain of the other boat kept his boat bobbing on the waves about ten feet away and held out a long bamboo mango picker with a melon-sized basket at the end. He yelled again, “Put the gold in the basket first.”

But Dewu feared if he did that, the other captain might then pull away and be gone with the gold and his family’s future. Even if he put two or three taels in the basket now and offered the rest when they reached port, it would still be a big loss if the other boat took off without letting them board.

Dewu hurried back to the pilothouse and asked Manh for a flashlight. Returning with it to the bow, he passed it to Jia Li. He held up his hand, opened it so the taels could be seen on his palm, and told Jia Li, “Shine the flashlight on my hand.”

As the taels scintillated yellow in the light, he waited as the other captain steered his boat closer to see better the amount of gold in his hand. When the bobbing, surging boat was close enough that the rubber tire bumpers hanging over the side of each boat were only a foot or two away, Dewu fisted the taels. Timing the waves, he launched himself from the gunwale with his right foot and leaped over the gunwale of the other boat, almost lurching into the captain.

The captain growled something and raised his fist, about to club him, but Dewu held up the taels for the captain to see, and then handed them over to him. As he counted and then pocketed them, Jia Li, clinging weakly to a lanyard and swaying to the boat’s erratic rhythm, handed their luggage and bags across the choppy waves to Dewu.

She paused, sagged from the lanyard, and vomited into the ocean. Then, eyes streaming, she gripped the lanyard with one hand, grabbed Shihao’s shirt with the other, and helped him up onto the gunwale to jump across. He stood there shaking, his eyes wide with fear, looking at the hands his father held out, then back at his mother.

“Jump!” she screeched.

He did.

Dewu caught him in both arms, stumbling as Shihao's momentum threatened to topple them both backward. He set the boy down as Jia Li stepped onto the gunwale. He reached for her outstretched hand, trying vainly for several moments to capture it before their hands finally met, and he pulled her across. When he released her, she sat down hard on the deck next to Shihao, who had his back to the gunwale, gulped air, and then vomited again.

The boats were now pitching against each other's bumpers. Without even a wave to the other boat, the South Vietnamese captain immediately pulled away, as though moving away from a plague ship.

Dewu finally relaxed. They had made it this far. He sat down between Shihao and Jia Li and put his arms around them and held them close. Jia Li finally wiped the vomit from her mouth, pushed her hair back from her face, and yelled above the noise of the boats and the sea, "You sure know how to keep your wife entertained."



Five day-long hours passed. Even Dewu felt nauseated as the increasingly choppy sea tossed the fishing boat around as if it were a child's plaything. The captain of the boat had gruffly introduced himself as, "Nguyen, just Nguyen," which was one of the most common names in Vietnam. He added, "We are going to my small fishing village of Cam-hoa. It is two miles inside the South."

He said not another word, which was just as well. Dewu found a place by the pilothouse that was protected from most of the sea spray and the breeze. He put his back against the pilothouse, pulled Jia Li and Shihao close to him, and then dragged a canvas that stank of fish around them.

The moon had disappeared, and the sky was nearly black. Dewu gazed absently at the dark gray clouds barely visible in the inky sky ahead of the boat. Somewhere near the horizon, he saw a faint light reflecting off the clouds. It couldn't be dawn, he thought. The glow was in the southwest, not the east. Gradually the light brightened and turned into a roiling red cloud. Something large was burning. Dewu tensed.

They drew closer. Flames in coruscating red and yellow shot through billowing clouds of gray and black smoke to stain the whole horizon red. A village was burning. It had to be Cam-hoa.

The cross nailed to the wall of his pilothouse proclaimed Nguyen a Catholic. That did not deter his use of language. Even above the engine noise and the loud slaps as the ship bucked through the waves, Dewu

heard him yelling, “*Cho de*—son of a bitch,” to Dewu, or maybe to nobody. “The communist guerrillas are burning my village. I told that *do ngu lo dit*—stupid asshole to give them the fucking taxes they demanded, but no. That idiot bastard invited in a small South Vietnam Local Defense unit to protect the village. Four goddamned solders! Ha! *Do ngu*—stupid. He should have sent the communists an invitation.”

There was a pause, and then Nguyen cried out, “Oh my God. My wife Thu Lan—my son Dung. Holy Mary, please let them live.”

Dewu pushed aside the tarp and entered the pilothouse, dark but for the light from a few instruments. He put his hand on Nguyen’s shoulder, tried to say something optimistic about his family. But the captain slapped his hand away and turned his rage on Dewu.

“If I had not gone out to pick you up, I would be with my family,” he hissed. “I could have protected them. It’s your fucking fault. When I get in closer, you had better jump out of the boat, or I’ll shoot you all.”

Dewu was alert to just that possibility. From the beginning, Nguyen had been nervous. He’d acted as though he would throw them all overboard at the approach of any ship.

Nguyen reached for something in a compartment next to the wheel, but before he could withdraw his hand, Dewu smashed him the face with his fist, driving him to his knees. One hand still holding the wheel, Nguyen tried to point a gun at Dewu with the other. Dewu grabbed the gun, twisted it free, and pointed it at the captain.

“I am sorry,” Dewu yelled above the noise of the boat. “You saved us and I do not want to hurt you. But to save the lives of my family, I will shoot you dead if I have to. Just take the boat in, and let us off.”

Nguyen had a bloody nose and a split lip. He used the wheel to pull himself up. Then he just leaned over the wheel and let the blood drip from his nose and lip. Finally he looked at Dewu through watery eyes, and nodded.

Jia Li and Shihao had been watching at the door, and now they entered the pilothouse to stand next to Dewu. Jia Li looked better.

“Thank you again for saving us,” she shouted to the captain. “I am so sorry for your village. I hope that your wife and son are safe.”

Dewu motioned for Jia Li to stay back and not get too close to the captain. He pointed north with his free hand and said, his tone making it a question, “I thought that by fleeing south we would leave all those *do ngu* communists up north.”

“This is . . .” Nguyen began, but his lip was swelling. He waved ahead, in the direction of the fires. And started crying.

Jia Li moved toward him, and Dewu screamed at her, “No, Jia Li!”

She jerked back. She looked away from Nguyen, reached out for Shihao's shoulders, and turned him so that he faced away also.

As they approached the coast, Nguyen turned off the instrument lights, probably too emotionally blinded to realize the boat was visible in the light of the flames. He throttled the motor down to its lowest notch and steered them slowly into a small harbor and toward a jetty. The boats that had been moored to it had been sunk; only the tops of their pilothouses and their masts showed above the water.

Their boat was barely moving when it brushed the jetty, the old tires hanging from the side of the boat absorbing the impact. Before they could bounce more than a foot away, Nguyen jumped onto the jetty and tied the bow of the boat to a piling, then did the same at the stern. He jumped back into the boat, turned the motor off, and jiggled the ignition key from the lock.

He did not even look at Dewu. "Go," he bawled, and ran off toward the flames.

"Quick," Dewu told Jia Li, "we have to get away before someone comes."

He hopped onto the jetty and she handed the suitcases and bags up to him, then gripped his hand to be pulled with Shihao onto the jetty. They each picked up a suitcase and bag, Dewu tucking his bag under his arm to keep his right hand with the gun free. Dawn had yet to light up the sky, but the flames from the village cast just enough wavering light for them to see clearly.

They hurried from the jetty and moved quickly along a path that led into an empty, rutted parking lot. On the other side they found a gravel road that ran along the coast. Dewu turned left on it, which had to be south. They kept to the forest side of the road.

They soon encountered others on the road, going in the same direction. Some had suitcases, as they did; some pushed or pulled carts filled with their goods. In a mile or two, the road was almost crowded with people, horses, donkeys, oxen, carts, and wagons, all heading south.

No one talked. Only grunts, wheezes, and coughs signaled life; only the flapping, scraping, jingling, and rattling that always accompanied a trudging caravan of humans and animals marked their passage. Nor did Dewu or his wife and son say anything. They merged with the refugees from the burned village, effectively hidden among them. The flames, and then the red and yellow clouds receded behind them into a smoky horizon. And when eventually the rising sun painted the trade wind clouds with a golden hue, it had no competition from the burning village.

As they passed a field of huge boulders between the road and ocean, Dewu motioned that they should go down among them, as some refugees had already. They found a small, flat area on the sand between the boulders where they could rest. While first Dewu and then Jia Li guarded their bags and suitcases, they used an area behind some other boulders to relieve themselves. Then Jia Li distributed cold balls of sticky rice and cut vegetables among them, and Dewu passed around a water bottle with a cup screwed on top. "No more than a half-cup each," he cautioned. Those were the first words among them since Dewu's "Quick" at the jetty.

When Shihao and Jia Li had drunk their water ration, Dewu filled the cup halfway for himself, and held it up to his wife and son. "This should be a happy moment. We made it to the south. I am sure we would have been dead soon, if we remained in the north. And we are protected here, within this crowd of refugees. To our new life." He touched each of them with the cup and swallowed the water in two gulps.

Then he rummaged in his suitcase and drew out a tattered school map of Vietnam. He laid it on the sand. "If we keep going on this road, I am sure we will end up in Hue, the former capital of this region. I hear there is a large Chinese community there, and many North Vietnamese Catholics who went there after the so-called exchange of populations between the North and South. So we should be able to get help, if we need it. We have our jewelry and remaining gold; maybe we can start a small business."

Chapter 14

John Banks

He felt much better this afternoon than he had in the morning. He had bought a sleeping bag yesterday, and after a quick lunch today, had closed and locked his office door, put the bag on the floor, and got into it with his computer's alarm clock set for forty-five minutes. He knew nothing from the time he closed his eyes until the alarm went off with a repeated bong.

He strode into his classroom just on time. A few students who had been talking in the hallway followed him in. Miss Phim sat in her seat, reading something. His eyes lingered on her for a moment. There was something about her besides her beauty and body, but he couldn't put his finger on it. He finally tore his eyes away self-consciously, wondering if the other students had caught him staring at her.

"Good afternoon, students. Are you ready for the world's greatest lecture?"

"We're having a visitor?" Miss Sneal asked, keeping her face bland.

John gave an obvious, long sigh. "Another failing student," he quipped, waving a hand at her. When the laughter died down, he began.

"Last time I went into the Viet Minh Land Reform Campaign. Today I will deal with other communist campaigns during this period.

"In 1953, the Communist Party carried out a Political Struggle Campaign. This was a very short-lived and explosive campaign of terror to prepare the way for their so-called land reform. Its aim was to eliminate those still remaining who had helped the French, as well as those who were anticommunist or not sympathetic enough, and unreliable or questionable communist cadre. In a replay of Stalin's Great Terror—"

John stopped his pacing, looked from one student to another, and said, "You have this in your reading. What was the Great Terror?"

He ignored the hands and went to his note cards of student names. He made a show of shuffling them, then purposely picked out Miss Phim's from near the top. "Miss Phim?"

She lifted her hand so that he would know who she was, as though he needed that reminder. He had not heard her voice before, and was immediately surprised to hear her speak perfect English, with an exciting feminine sweetness to it. "In the Great Terror, Stalin purged the Communist Party at the top and mid-levels. This was in the late 1930s. About a million communists were executed."

Almost mesmerized by those slanted, single-lidded almond eyes looking at him and that voice, he had to give himself a mental shake. "Ah . . . correct. Although there is some controversy over the best estimates of those murdered, a million is the usual total given. Thank you." He tore his eyes away from her.

"As I was saying before I so rudely interrupted myself," he grinned, "Ho Chi Minh held his own mini Great Terror. People would be arrested for some excuse, such as not paying taxes, and then painfully tortured until they 'confessed' to membership in fictional anticommunist associations and plots with certain others, whose names the interrogators supplied. These in turn would be arrested and tortured. Of course, this typical communist technique provided the 'legal' foundation for finally arresting and executing the 'reactionaries' the party was after.

"Such terror went on in every village, for if the social revolution was to proceed, those who did or might question it had to be liquidated. After about two weeks of this terror, as many as three to five people had been killed per village. But it was getting out of hand—peasants fled the villages, and the party itself was in danger. Since the Communist Party had achieved its purpose of eliminating possible opposition, it ended the worst excesses of the terror, but then only temporarily.

"It lived on as a form of repression and social prophylaxis, and there were still periodic purges of communist cadre. Many of the cadre had joined the party in its early years and had bourgeois backgrounds; they or their families were eventually classified as landlords. And then the terror grew again, as land reform provided an excuse for a national purge of the Communist Party, of which the vanguard were the poor and landless peasants. Their denunciations often extended to the rank and file of the party. Anyway, local party officials had difficulty finding the requisite number of bodies to meet their quota for each village, so it helped to include objectionable party members.

“Aside from these purges, the political repression and associated terror reached its peak in 1956, at the same time that land reform was ending. In this year, about seventy thousand Vietnamese may have been murdered from repression alone. No doubt, the Communist Party succeeded—through murder, suicides, and imprisonment—in eliminating all possible competition for power and opposition to Ho Chi Minh’s brand of communism.

“Then, apparently concerned that the accelerating terror and killing might weaken or destroy the party’s hold on the country, it launched the Rectification of Errors Campaign. It confessed that mistakes had been made, and it fired many top officials and released many prisoners, including former communist cadre who, for the most part, had been arrested for deviationism, bourgeois tendencies, or landlordism.

“Since those who had done the finger pointing were often new party cadre, the old cadre’s return to their villages triggered conflicts between them and these new, much more radical cadre—especially if they had replaced the former cadre or been responsible for their arrest and punishment. Untold numbers of communist cadre died in the settling of scores and exacting revenge.”

A hand went up.

“Yes, Mr. Fischer.”

“If our government tried to do all that stuff here, everyone would revolt. How could the Vietnamese stand still for this cr—killing?”

“Well, many of those who would lead such revolts had been murdered. But the peasants did revolt spontaneously, particularly during the deadly years from 1955 to 1957. For example, in November 1956, Ho Chi Minh’s home province of Nghe An saw open rebellion, and rioting and insurrection spread throughout much of the province. It took a whole division of troops almost a month to reimpose communist control. Rebellions also broke out elsewhere. The worst of these, near Vinh, involved protests by those who had been prevented from moving south during the three hundred-day window opened by the Geneva Agreements. The following year, armed rebellions took place in Phat Diem, Than Hoa, and near Hanoi; they were bloodily suppressed by the army. In the restoration of communist order, many peasants were killed, many executed, and many others deported. In the uprisings of November 1956, perhaps two thousand were executed, possibly six thousand killed or deported. Overall, from 1955 to 1956, those who lost their lives from rebellion may have numbered between ten and fifteen thousand.”

John looked at his watch. He had better wind down. “To conclude about this deadly period of Vietnam’s history, the period from 1953 to 1956 was a politically tumultuous one for North Vietnam. It saw the end of the War of Independence and the signing of the Geneva Agreements, which established the independence of Vietnam and its separation into the North and South. It saw the mass exchange of populations between them, with some 727,000 to one million North Vietnamese refugees—about sixty percent Catholics—moving to the South, and nearly fifty thousand to one hundred thousand primarily communist guerrillas, families, and sympathizers moving to the North. And it saw the victorious communists socially and economically reconstruct the North, wiping out actual or potential opposition. The Political Struggle, Land Rent Reduction, and Land Reform campaigns were the major weapons in this social revolution.”

John had walked to one side of the room while lecturing, and now walked back to the middle to lean over the lectern and check his outline. “All told, from 1953 to 1956, the communists likely killed 195,000 to 865,000 North Vietnamese. I conservatively estimate the toll as around 360,000 men, women, and children.”

He looked around the classroom. “Incredible, isn’t it. This number did not die in war. These human beings were not killed in combat. They were murdered by their own communist government. And . . .” he hesitated, to make sure he had everyone’s attention, “this number is even more incredible when you realize that it is much greater than the 292,131 American soldiers, marines, airmen, and seamen killed in all of World War Two.”

John slowly let out his breath. “Okay, class—questions, comments?”

Several asked questions, which he deflected back to the class by using his deck of names to call on students for answers. This created some interesting exchanges among the students. When time was up, he said, “That’s it, folks. Next time we will cover South Vietnam and the North’s war against it. You have your assigned reading in Cyril Clement’s book on government murder listed in your syllabus. Dismissed.”

Several students approached him as the classroom emptied. One said she had lost her syllabus, and asked for another; two others asked if the topics for their first term papers, due the following week, were okay. As he discussed their topics with them, he stole a glance at Miss Phim as she strode out of the classroom in Levis so tight, they would show a dimple on her well-rounded rear end.

Chapter 15

1956–1958
San Francisco

Cyril Clement

Cyril's experience in Japan, his interest in Asia, and what he had read about Joy in Banks' stuff disposed him toward oriental women. So, when he was a freshman at the university, he tried to increase his chances of meeting a desirable one by joining the Foreign Students' Club and participating in their dances and other activities.

He always wore long sleeves, and learned to do most things with his left hand. It was not that his right arm and missing fingers embarrassed him, but that he didn't want to answer questions about the injury or have anyone express pity for him.

He dated a number of foreign students from Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and a Filipino and a Malaysian. Nothing clicked, or, when he thought it might, it didn't for his date. He was much too serious (perhaps boring was the better term) for many of them.

In his senior year he met Alice Kwai Lee, a third generation Chinese girl from San Francisco, at a party. She was vivacious, and always ready with a smile and a laugh. With her long, ink-black hair, large, almond-shaped black eyes, and lips that were full and usually parted to show white teeth, she was his Joy. But he never thought of her this way. If he had, he would have squelched the thought immediately. He loved her for herself; at least he believed he did, and that was the important thing.

She majored in mathematics, particularly mathematical statistics. She explained why to his question one day when they were eating at Berkeley House: "I love Chinese art and especially calligraphy. Have you ever noticed how mathematical symbols are like calligraphy?" And she went on to draw several on a napkin. Tapping the symbols for the

summation, integral, and definite integral for emphasis, she said, “I get an aesthetic pleasure, not to mention an intellectual one, out of writing, reading, and working with such universal calligraphy.”

He pursued her. Or maybe he pursued her until she caught him.

Alice Kwai Lee

Cyril had a black beard. He had worn one before it became the recognized symbol of the beatnik culture and radical, and he would wear one when this fad passed. His nose was narrow and prominent, his face long, and his eyes deep and dark brown, overshadowed by bushy black eyebrows—all, perhaps, due to his part-Italian heritage. His hair, equally bushy and of course black, was not combed or cut enough for the times. Put a long, flowing white robe on him, and he would look the picture of a Confucian scholar. That caught Alice’s attention in the beginning, enough for her to accept his invitation to join him for supper at Peggy’s.

At that first supper, Cyril’s qualities came through. He was much more mature than the college students she had dated. Without arrogance and without lecturing her, he told her he was dedicated to the cause of democracy and freedom. Not only was he serious; he seemed of a professional mind. He told her matter-of-factly that he wanted to get a graduate degree and become a professor. A good sense of humor balanced these qualities; he particularly liked to pun.

Coming from a Chinese family, certain things rang a bell with her: confidence, dedication, professionalism. And his devotion to freedom—her grandparents had escaped from communist China into Hong Kong, where her grandfather then found it easy to immigrate to the United States.

But Cyril also had certain qualities that were the opposite of those she would expect from a Chinese student, and they warmed her to him. He treated her as an equal, and respected her opinions and ideas. He especially seemed to have a sincere interest in her mathematical studies, and said he had briefly majored in physics, of which mathematics was part and parcel.

Though she was impressed by him on the first date, close up and in the restaurant lighting, the Confucian scholar look gave way to that of a Jesuit priest—not very attractive to her mind. But his eyes sparkled sometimes, and he had a nice laugh, and a pleasant male voice. And

there was a strong masculinity to him which, when she learned more about him, she attributed to his having to survive on his own, without parental guidance or help.

He lacked two fingers on his right hand, and the hand itself was discolored and scarred, but he seemed oblivious to it. His activity was not crippled, and she saw no reason to ask about it.

She was even more impressed on their third date. They talked easily, although she sensed a certain withdrawal when some subjects were brought up, such as how he became so dedicated to his cause. On their fifth date she knew she was falling in love with him. When he left her after their date, she felt empty and couldn't wait for their next time together. On their sixth date they made love, her first time. He was so tender, so thoughtful, that the experience, as painful as it was in the beginning, was a sensual pleasure she didn't think possible. From then on, each time was almost a new experience in erotic pleasure. He was her teacher, and for months she couldn't get enough of him.

"How did you learn all that?" she finally asked after one particularly acrobatic performance. "Not from books."

"When I was in Japan, I tried every day to get to the library across town, at military headquarters. But the Japanese prostitutes would block my way, and wouldn't let me go unless I satisfied them. It was an exchange. They would teach me their tricks and I wouldn't charge them for my body."

"You didn't say—were they men or women?"

"Damn," he replied. "I never checked. Shucks, now the question will bother me."



When he applied to Berkeley for graduate study, she did also. They were both accepted. Before they both received their undergraduate degrees, Cyril proposed. She had counted on it, and accepted with the greatest happiness. But it wasn't as she expected.

They were in his dormitory room. She still lived with her parents.

As soon as they'd entered the room, he asked her to sit on the bed while he brought up his desk chair to face her. She knew what was coming.

Yes, he said it: "I want to marry you."

Not quite like the movies, but so what? Alice thought, ready to jump on him in her happiness, nonetheless. "Yes, yes, I ac—"

He held up his hand. His voice low, with a touch of anxiety giving it a certain gruffness, he said, "After you hear what I have to say, you may not want to marry me. You may think I'm crazy. But, unless you believe me, you can't be my wife. You see, what I am about to tell you will be the major factor in my life, and if we marry, yours also."

Her eyes opened wide and she leaned back. Then she looked at him, aghast. "Have you murdered someone?"

"Of course not."

"Have you committed a crime, any crime, now or in the past?"

"I stole books to read when I was a teenager. Otherwise, no."

"Are you a communist or a communist agent?"

"No!" he involuntarily blurted.

"There is a wife?"

"Heavens, no."

She smothered a laugh. "Have you a dozen children scattered around?"

He smiled. "The last time I counted, it was more like five hundred."

"Okay, nothing serious. I ac—"

Hand again. The he threw the words out in a breathless, monotonic stream. "I was in possession of material from the past, written by time travelers, that precisely predicted the future."

The telephone for the floor was ringing at the end of the hallway. In the next room, people laughed.

The phone stopped ringing; somebody yelled, "For Ed. Ed, you here?"

"Huh?" Alice finally exclaimed, frowning. Her mind tried desperately to get a grip on what he had said. "I don't understand."

Cyril Clement

How do you tell the one you love and want to marry what she must know, when the story is so crazy? No, more like cockeyed. So he said, "Please listen, and no questions until I'm through. I want to give you the complete story. Okay?"

She nodded.

So he started with the government's paper drive in 1944. He left nothing out. He kept his voice steady and tried to keep the fear out of it. If she said he was crazy, absurd, she wanted to think about his proposal, then that was it. He would go on to his graduate study, but he

would be heartbroken. He wanted her to be his wife. He loved her. He needed her. And he had spent a sleepless night trying to think through how to do this. When he came to the final moment, all he could do was go from A to Z.

He told her why he was so dedicated, about his pacifism and hatred of democide. He told her about faculty's lack of knowledge about not only the democratic peace, but also the amount of past and present democide, including the millions now being killed in China by the communists. And he told her what he planned for the future, after he got his Ph.D.

Hours later, when he finished, he was mentally exhausted. He felt weak, weary, as though he had run for miles. He couldn't look at her. He leaned back in his chair, looking down at his hands tightly clasped on his lap. He was so scared, he felt like vomiting.

"Ah . . ." she began slowly.

Startled, fearing the worst, he looked up and into her . . . *What? Dancing eyes?*

"You misled me."

Oh my God. Shit, he exclaimed to himself as his heart fell to the floor.

"I thought this was serious, my love. I don't deserve you if I can't accept a little unusual experience. It's not like being beamed up to a spaceship and impregnating an alien." She gave him a serious look, belied again by her laughing eyes. "Have you confessed all and everything?"

He nodded, too helpless now to say anything.

"Now," she said, "can I answer the proposal you made to me too many hours ago?"

He nodded, or maybe that was his heart shaking his head.

"You won't raise you hand?"

He shook his head. Tears sprang to his eyes.

"I accept, you crazy man. Yes, and yes. I love you." She grabbed his hands and pulled him onto the bed on top of her.

They cried together with happiness.



They had a big wedding, with Alice's most distant relatives and closest friends in attendance. Her father had resisted the marriage at first, since Cyril was not Chinese, but he finally came around when he learned that Cyril would be a professor, a very prestigious profession for the Chinese.

Of course, no word, not even the slightest hint, was ever mentioned to others about the Banks documents. That was now a secret locked in Cyril and Alice's hearts and minds. And in the future, when the normal, everyday world and their different cultures and backgrounds caused some big fights between them, the Banks stuff, as they now both called it, was one of the strongest bonds between them.

Chapter 16

1960

Hue, South Vietnam

Wang Dewu

The slim, pretty young woman dressed in white silk dress and trousers walked into the Youde Drugstore in Hue, the sound of her clogs on the tiles lost amidst that of the outside traffic. She placed her heavy, fabric bag in a cart and pushed it down an aisle past the shelved goods and packaged food. Soon she had partially filled it with three large bags of potato chips from the United States, two plastic bags of dried squid from Japan, and a stuffed teddy bear from Taiwan.

She looked around, apparently searching for something else to buy, and then reached into her fabric bag and flicked a toggle switch. She closed the bag, placed the potato chips, squid, and bear on top of it, and pushed the cart behind a stand of Vietnamese magazines near the counter, where the owner was talking to a customer. The corners of her full lips raised in the hint of a smile, she strolled out of the drugstore, and down the street.

Precisely 123 seconds later, a thunderous explosion ripped the front of the drugstore apart, blowing out the front windows, and killing five people, including the owner and a pedestrian outside, and injuring twenty-three.

Dewu's Pho Shop was three stores down on Le Loi Street. The explosion sent a shudder through the foundation and rattled the plate glass window. Customers momentarily froze in shock, some with their flat-bottomed spoon halfway to their mouth. Then one overturned his chair as he pushed off it, whipped open the front door, and rushed out. Dewu ran from the kitchen and through the front door before it closed.

In minutes, the street erupted into a chaos of shouts, screams, beeping horns, and straining motors. Dewu, his heart pounding, soon came

back into the shop. He held up his hands to the customers and blared, “Youde Drugstore down the street has been bombed. No need to leave. We are safe here.”

Most hurriedly finished their food and left anyway, some leaving money on their tables. Only two customers remained, one calmly spooning his noodle soup into his mouth.

Dewu went into the kitchen, where Jia Li waited for him. She had a towel around one hand, burned when the explosion had startled her and she’d knocked over a bowl of hot *pho*. Dewu leaned against the server’s counter, his back to the tables so that he would not be heard. His shoulders slumped, he crossed his arms and looked down at the floor.

“It was Mo Dawel’s store,” he said, his voice low and weary. “He’s dead. Head’s in shreds.”

He led out a long, shuddering sigh. “The Viet Cong are hitting Hue now. I told you that they have assassinated the government’s representatives and heads of the Phong Dien, Dong Ha, and even Huong Thuy villages. Well, now they are hitting those they consider anticommunists here.” He looked into Jia Li’s worried eyes so that she could read his own anxiety. “Dawel is . . . was . . . a North Vietnamese escapee, like us. He was vehemently anticommunist, as we are.”

The Viet Cong were the *Viet Nam Cong San*—Vietnamese Communists.

Jia Li was squeezing the towel over her burnt hand and shaking her head. Dewu read panic in her eyes. All the lines in her face seemed to succumb to gravity, and her voice was a hiss as she tried to prevent it from reaching the two customers remaining in the restaurant. “*Do ngu*. He had to start that North Vietnamese Anticommunist Society. He was asking for it. And you. You should not have joined it. Oh, honey, they will target you—us—too.”

“I know. In retrospect, it was stupid of Dawel. Stupid of me. But we never thought that the North would declare war on the South like this, a covert war carried out through their puppet Viet Cong. They will soon send their army south. I now do not doubt that.”

Jia Li moved her eyes quickly to look beyond the counter. One of the remaining customers had been lingering, but when he saw he had been noticed, he put the two hundred *piasters* for his *pho* on the counter and walked out.

The restaurant was empty, and the street outside had quieted down some. A siren sounded in the distance.

“I’m selling the restaurant today for whatever I can get,” Dewu suddenly announced. “We’re leaving Hue.”

Jia Li shuddered and shook her head. Tears flowed from her eyes. She stepped toward Dewu and put her arms around him and her head on his chest. "I know we must. Poor Shihao. He has made good friends and is doing well in school."

She squinted up at him through the tears, her brow furrowed. "Where can we go?"

Dewu's mind was working furiously. He had not expected they would hit Hue. It was, after all, the second largest city of South Vietnam, and the capital of Annam—the former kingdom of central Vietnam.

"Now we must move fast. Again. We are going to Cholon, the Chinatown of Saigon. We will be unknown there; strangers can easily lose themselves in its crowded sections. We'll start over again. Our North Vietnamese accent will always tell everyone where we are from, but we can just act as ordinary northerners who moved south in 1954 during the population exchange between the North and South."

He clapped his hands. "Okay, quick. Go home and get ready to move. Fortunately, we are only renting. I'm going downtown to the Business Exchange Group to see if I can get a buyer today for this restaurant, and everything it contains."

He took out his pocketknife and cut a flap off a cardboard box. He quickly wrote *Out of Business* on it and handed it to Jia Li. "Here. Hang this on the door. We leave by bus as soon as I sell the restaurant and buy new documentation."



Dewu was very uncomfortable on the bouncing, overcrowded, old French bus. It seemed little more than the addition of side walls with windows and a tin roof to a flatbed truck. His long legs were cramped, squeezed as they were around their baggage, and his knees kept knocking against the back of the seat ahead. Smaller Jia Li and Shihao, however, simply pulled their feet up on the seat.

He had sold the restaurant for 54.3 million piasters—about \$150,000, black market. He had converted it all to gold taels, except for a little over a million piasters that he converted to three thousand American dollars.

He did not know what would happen during the trip. It was dangerous. They might be waylaid by Viet Cong, South Vietnamese troops, or even the renegade troops of one of the private armies that President Diem had defeated in unifying the South. So, Dewu had tightly rolled

ten \$100 bills together, forced the roll into a small plastic tube with a screw cover, and stuck it deep up his anus. He kept feeling as though he had to defecate.

He had done the same to Shihao, who understood at eleven what was happening, and tried to be manly about his father shoving the tube up his anus. But his body was so stiff and his anal muscles so clenched that Jia Li had to sooth him into relaxing before his father succeeded.

Jia Li had just inserted the tube into her vagina, and then wore a menstrual pad to deter a finger search. Dewu had watched as she had inserted it, and then blandly suggested that she could take all three tubes. Dewu had seen enough American movies to know that if he said that to an American woman, she would have hit him with the menstrual pad. Jia Li only reddened, covered her face with her hand, and giggled.

Jia Li also had sewn their gold into the lining of their clothes and their bags and suitcases. No one would find it on a fast search, the kind carried out by bandits with sixty or more people to search, and worried about being discovered.

The trip to Saigon would take almost a day and a half. They had made no reservations. They would find a cheap hotel in Cholon to house them temporarily, and then work through the Chinese business community services and classified advertisements.

The road was in terrible condition; in places, the bus had to navigate muddy stretches strewn with leaves and branches. A couple of hours outside of Hue, the bus stopped abruptly. Dewu immediately stood to peer out the front window over the heads of the passengers in front of him.

A semi truck had been pulled across the road; armed men stood beside it. One of them hammered on the bus door, and the bus driver had no choice but to open it. A man clad in black pajamas, a red neck scarf, a soft khaki hat, and rubber sandals entered the bus. Brandishing his Soviet Kalashnikov AK-47, he yelled, "We are fighting for the freedom and independence of South Vietnam from the capitalist puppets of the West. We are taxing you for our heroic struggle. As we come down the aisle, put all your money, jewelry, and watches into the bag. If you withhold anything, you will be shot. Also have your ID ready."

Two Viet Cong, one an old man with a long gray beard, the other a young girl wearing a conical hat, entered the bus. Each was accompanied by a Viet Cong carrying an AK-47 as they started slowly down the aisle, thrusting an empty rice sack toward each passenger in turn. One pair worked the right side, the other the left. Behind them, more Viet Cong entered with AK-47s and started checking IDs.

As they did so, Red Scarf instructed the driver to pull the bus off the road onto a narrow side road. As soon as a curve in that road put a screen of jungle between the bus and the main road, Red Scarf told the driver to stop.

Dewu had been sitting in an aisle seat, with little Shihao between him and petite Jia Li. He remained standing, carefully watching the approach of the Viet Cong woman and the armed man who were looting his side of the bus. Just before the pair reached him, there was a short *Bbrrrrpppp!* of AK-47 fire, followed by a scream that stopped suddenly with another *Bbrrrrpppp!*. Dewu stood on tiptoes and craned his neck to see what had happened. A lifeless body slumped into the aisle, the fingers of one dangling arm touching the pitted and dirty floor.

Standing in the haze of gun smoke, Red Scarf shouted from the front of the bus into the absolute silence, "Two less wicked tyrants."

Somewhere up front, a woman started gasping in loud sobs. A child began to cry.

When the Viet Cong woman reached him, Dewu had ready his forged ID; it seemed well worth the thirty-six thousand piasters he had paid for it now. He flashed it to her, then motioned for her to lean closer. She did so, her partner holding his gun inches away from Dewu's face.

Emphasizing his Northern accent, Dewu hissed into her ear, "Get your sergeant."

The woman stared at him, frowning, and then turned to the man with the gun, who shrugged.

"Now!" Dewu barked.

The woman quickly handed the bag to her partner and rushed back to Red Scarf as Dewu watched. His heart was beating so hard, he thought the Viet Cong still holding the AK-47 on him would hear it. The woman said something to Red Scarf, who then turned his head quickly to stare at Dewu with narrow eyes.

Keeping his AK-47 at the ready, he came slowly down the aisle, squeezing past the ID checkers and the other looter to stand in the aisle in front of Dewu. His AK-47 and that of the other Viet Cong were both pointed between Dewu's eyes.

Well, they can only kill me once, he unconsciously rationalized, nevertheless fearing what he planned to do next. Scowling at Red Scarf, Dewu flared his nostrils and curled his lip back.

Red Scarf's smirk turned into a frown. Then he raised his eyebrows, and the barrel of his AK-47 dipped. "What—"

Dewu silenced the man with an abrupt chopping gesture. He looked disdainfully up and down the aisle, then wagged his finger and touched his mouth with it to indicate secrecy. He motioned for Red Scarf to give him his ear. When the man lowered the AK-47 and did so, Dewu emphasized his North Vietnamese accent and snarled barely loud enough for the other to hear, “You asshole. I gave an explicit command that this bus was to be left alone. You farmers! Dumb as pigs. You are blowing my cover. Get off this bus now, or I will *cat me cu may di*—cut off your dick.”

“Who are you?” Red Scarf stammered, his eyes wide.

“I am Nguyen Tan Khiem, military advisor to your People’s Liberation Armed Forces in South Vietnam and headquartered in Chu Chi.” He reached into a hidden flap Jia Li had sewn in his coat and pulled out a red-lined ID displaying Dewu’s photograph and the People’s Army of Vietnam seal over Commander-in-Chief General Vo Nguyen Giap’s signature, and waved it under Red Scarf’s nose. “Now, get out.”

Dewu’s eyes bored into those of Red Scarf, who stepped back, holding his AK-47 loosely in one hand. Dewu’s ID plus his northern accent had quelled all doubt. Red Scarf shook his head and mumbled, “No one told us.”

Dewu tilted his head back and pointed his chin at the man. He hoped that the anger he really felt showed in his eyes as ordered in a low, steely voice, “I am telling you now and for the last time. Get. Off. This. Bus.”

Red Scarf turned, told the armed man next to him they were leaving, and moved down the aisle, telling the other Viet Cong they passed, as well. When some objected that they had not finished, he started pushing them toward the exit with the stock of his AK-47. In minutes, they were gone.

With his keen young ears, Shihao had heard everything spoken between his father and the Viet Cong. He stared at his father, his eyes round, his mouth hanging open. Jia Li had missed most of what was said, but she’d caught enough to realize that Dewu was responsible for saving not only their valuables, but perhaps some lives. She waved at him to get his attention, then raised her eyebrows.

He put a finger to his lips. “The next town,” he said.

There was a long silence on the bus, then someone got up to check the two dead men, and that roused the bus driver from his shock. He slowly backed up the bus to the main road. The truck that had blocked it was gone. As the bus continued on its trip, loud chatter broke out among the passengers. Some cried; one woman

screamed that she had lost all her money. Another passenger took up a collection among those the looters had not reached, to give to those who lost their travel funds.

At Vinh, the dead passengers were removed from the bus by the police, who ordered that everyone else remain on the bus to be questioned by South Vietnamese security officers. When one of them asked an elderly, rotund man hugging a leather case to his chest what he saw, he pointed in Dewu's direction and said, "The Viet Cong just stopped in the midst of their robbery and ID checking when they got to that family."

The officer stared at Dewu, and then approached him. The shiny visor of his officer's hat almost hid the deep crease of suspicion running across his forehead, but not those framing his mouth. He gave Dewu a wary look, his hand on his holstered pistol, and asked him, "Can I see your identification?"

All depended now on how Dewu handled this. He and his family could be arrested, doubtlessly tortured, and then imprisoned. He pulled out his South Vietnam driver's license, and then out of the right inner pocket of his coat his bank card, Hue business registration, and house rental agreement.

The officer carefully scanned the documents, then handed them back and asked, "Why did the Viet Cong stop with your family?"

"It is hard to explain," Dewu replied, watching the other's eyebrows flit up and then down as he controlled his reaction to Dewu's North Vietnamese accent. "When the Viet Cong sergeant heard my accent, he looked worried. He kept asking what I was doing here. I said I was a businessman, and had immigrated to the South in 1954 during the North-South population exchange.

"I had been tortured by the communists; I have almost died in their northern prisons. The Viet Cong did not scare me, and I outstared him. Since I showed no fear and stood up to him, he must have thought I was some kind of agent. I sensed that, and so sharpened my accent and ordered him off the bus, or I would have them all executed. Merciful Buddha, he and all the others left. They are only ignorant farmers during the day, you know."

The officer gaped at him for a moment, and then burst out laughing. "Good story. I'm sure you will impress all your friends when you tell them that. So, you don't know why they stopped at your family?"

Dewu shrugged. "No, not really. I did notice that their sergeant glanced at his watch, and looked worried. He then turned around and they all left."

The officer tilted his head and, narrowing his eyes, asked, “Why did the one with the bag stop with you and go get his sergeant to talk to you?”

“My northern accent. It seemed to spook them.”

The officer nodded, and then questioned Dewu as to why he and his family were traveling to Saigon. Dewu frankly explained his family’s fear of the Viet Cong closing in on Hue, and the wish for a more secure location. He mentioned his family’s reaction to the drugstore near his own business being blown up.

The officer seemed satisfied, wished him the best, and went on to other passengers, who were growing impatient.

While that was going on, Dewu explained to Jia Li what he had done. She asked, “How much did that fake ID cost you?”

“Two gold taels.” About seventy American dollars.

“Well,” she said, a happy grin on her face, “they were worth more than their weight in gold.”

“Yes. And you know, Zeng Jintao, who made those for me, could have counterfeited an American passport in three hours, he said.”

“You are not thinking of—”

“No, sweetheart, I never intend to leave Vietnam. It is my country.”

Soon, a security officer shouted to the passengers that they could leave the bus for a half-hour while the blood from the dead men was cleaned up. Someone shouted, “The Viet Cong called them wicked tyrants. Who were they?”

“Just low-level government officials,” the officer shouted back.

Another passenger responded loudly, “Just as you are.”

The officer made no reply.

As they departed, Shihao cried in a voice shrill with panic, “I have to go—right away!”

“Crap or pee?” Dewu asked.

“Crap.”

“Oh, shit,” Dewu swore. “I have to help. You know what you can’t lose, right?”

Shihao looked even more panicked.

The bus depot was nothing more than a long shed containing a waiting room and a bathroom at one end, its door ajar. Dewu could not understand why nobody was using it, until he and Shihao rushed into it and saw why. The toilet was a hole in the floor, with a small, rusty sink with one dripping faucet on one wall. There was no tissue or toilet paper. *People must be using the side of the shed or the nearby jungle*, he thought. Leaves were as good as toilet paper. That was probably what his wife was doing now, since she had disappeared.

Looking at Shihao, Dewu knew they didn't have time to do the same. Dewu tried to close the door, but it was stuck ajar. Shielding his son with his body, he told him, "Go on the floor. Quick."

The boy took down his shorts and underwear and, red-faced, he did so. Dewu watched carefully, and when he saw the plastic tube fall within a wet brown clump, he reached beneath his squatting son and extracted it. He took it to the sink and washed it and his fingers under the faucet.

By that time his son had finished. "Shove it all in the hole," Dewu ordered, "and then wash your hands. I'll get something we can use to clean the floor." He'd seen a garbage can near the bathroom. Dewu pulled a section of newspaper from the can and took it back to the bathroom. He wet it, and gave part of it to Shihao to wipe himself with while he used the rest to wipe the floor.

Then he gave the plastic tube of money to Shihao, made sure he could not be seen from the outer room, and told him, "Back it goes."

After he'd inserted it, Dewu asked him, "Feel better now?"

"No," his son mumbled, pulling up his underwear and shorts.

Chapter 17

John Banks

After his lecture to his introductory class, several students had come up to John with questions. He had tried to answer them all, which only made him late for this class. His students were already in their seats, waiting, when he strode quickly into the classroom, put his briefcase down on the desk in front, and took out his lecture outline.

He had been restless again last night, but he had taken another nap in his office, conquering the tiredness he'd felt all morning. At least for now. Everyone was quiet. He finally stepped to the lectern to face the class, glancing at Miss Phim, who sat leaning forward, hands clasped on her writing chair. For some reason, she now seemed much older to him than the rest of the students, and he felt a familiarity with her that he couldn't possibly have. He scratched his head, frowned momentarily, and then turned to the class. "Good afternoon, students. Ah, how come you're all here early?"

"You're late," two shouted at him.

"Late?"

Another shouted, "Late. You're late."

He stroked his chin and replied, "I don't hate anyone. Well, maybe mass murderers."

That met smiles and some laughter. About a third of the students yelled out, "You are *late*."

"Oh, I'm *great*. Thank you. With that encouragement, let me start the lecture."

There was more laughter and a bustling among the students as they got their notebooks, pens or pencils, or laptops ready. Some recorded his whole lecture on DVDs or tapes.

"Any questions before I begin?" One hand went up. "Yes, Mr. Edenfield."

"My grandfather was in the Vietnam War. I told him about your lecture and he says that there was not much killing in the North before the war. He says the South was worse."

“As I mentioned last time, there was propaganda from all sides, and beliefs about the North that followed along ideological lines. So, who do we believe? I tend to believe someone like Clement, who has done exhaustive research on all sides of the question. I also tend to believe what comes out of extensive interviews with refugees. And I tend to believe what the communists say themselves for internal consumption or communist ears only, if it goes against their foreign propaganda. All this leads me to say that your grandfather is most likely mistaken. I will hand out a bibliography on Vietnam at the end of the final lecture on this country’s wars and democide. You already have the references that Clement gives in his text. I suggest you ask your grandfather, with the respect due a veteran of that awful war, how he knows what he claims.”

John looked around the classroom. “Any more questions?” There were none.

“Okay, onward.” He moved away from the lectern and made a sweeping motion with his hand to encompass the class, the first of a hundred gestures to come during the lecture. “You should remember that the communists under Ho Chi Minh were engaged in democidal mass campaigns before, during, and after the War of Independence. You should also remember that the Geneva Agreements that ended the war also split Vietnam into an independent North and South.

“Now, this is much misunderstood. Historically, there had never been one Vietnam. There were in fact three regions, kingdoms, or states. One was *Tonkin*, composed largely of what later became North Vietnam after the defeat of the French. Its capitol was Hanoi. The second was *Annam*, or central Vietnam, with Hue the capital and its major seaport at Da-nang. The third was *Cochin China*, the south of Vietnam, with its capital at Saigon, or what the communists now call Ho Chi Minh City. This region was once part of the Khmer—Cambodian—Empire.

“When the French colonized Indochina, they made Tonkin and Annam semi-independent French protectorates, with native rulers. They made Cochin China, however, a French colony. Thus, Vietnam had already been split before the French took over Vietnam, and they continued this split. After World War Two and France’s reassertion of authority over Vietnam, and in opposition to Ho Chi Minh’s demands that all Vietnam be unified, the French made Cochin China an independent republic. Trying to end the War of Independence that absorbed more French soldiers and material than France, still recovering from World War Two, could ill afford, France tried to reach an agreement with the three regions that would unify them into an independent gov-

ernment within the French Union. Tonkin—North Vietnam—rejected it, but the Annamite emperor Bao Dai and Cochin China accepted the proposal. France thereby proclaimed Bao Dai emperor of all Vietnam in 1949.

“As I mentioned in a previous lecture, in 1954 the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in North Vietnam, which led to the Geneva Conference, and the formalization of the split between North and South Vietnam. I also mentioned that the Geneva Agreements resulting from the conference also called for Vietnam-wide elections in two years to unify Vietnam, but they were never held. Each side blamed the other.

“Anyway, the communists under Ho Chi Minh now ruled the North by international agreement. And the political situation in the South was chaotic. Bao Dai’s government was bedeviled by warlords and autonomous sects. Its Premier Ngo Dinh Diem achieved several military victories against these divisive forces, and in April 1955 he then turned on Bao Dai himself. Through an extralegal assembly meeting, Diem had a new government declared, with himself as head. In October he held a sham referendum to endorse this bloodless coup d’etat; in one area he got ninety-eight percent of the vote.

“With this coup and corrupt referendum, Vietnam now had an authoritarian government over the South, created by Diem. It was no less opposed than Ho Chi Minh’s totalitarian communist government over the North.”

A hand.

She’s a cutie. “Yes, Miss Smyth.”

“What is the difference between these governments?”

“A totalitarian government rules everything. There is no freedom of speech, religion, or association. It controls or owns all business. Its commands are the only laws. An authoritarian government is a dictatorship that monopolizes political power, but may allow freedom of religion, nonpolitical speech, and nonpolitical association. It may leave businesses largely alone as long as they stay out of politics. Okay?”

When she nodded, he went on. “Events in the South were not what Ho Chi Minh had expected. The Bao Dai regime was supposed to disintegrate, but with the help of Diem, it appeared to be growing stronger, to be replaced through Diem’s coup with what seemed to be an even more effective and dedicated anticommunist government. Perhaps some nudging would help. So, as early as 1955, North Vietnam ordered those communist forces—Viet Minh—remaining in the South to carry out a low-level guerrilla war against the new regime. The North intended to expand their area of control and thwart Diem’s attempt to rid

South Vietnam's countryside of communist Vietnamese, whom he called Viet Cong. At the time, nothing more appeared necessary, since Ho Chi Minh still thought the regime unlikely to survive.

“Once he had successfully extended and consolidated communist power in the North, he more seriously focused on the South. In late 1956, the North's communist politburo reevaluated the likelihood of Diem's collapse. It decided that more revolutionary techniques would have to be applied to bring him down and temporarily replace his regime with a congenial and transitional pro-unification government. There still remained violent discontent in the South. Those sects and regions striving to keep their autonomy still rebelled against government control. Diem's own version of land reform alienated masses of peasants, who saw it only as a way for the rich to get richer. And attempts to win the support of mountain people only embittered them when Diem had them deported en masse for, as he said, their own protection.

“But this discontent was disunited and lacking in direction. So the North moved to provide antigovernment rebels, dissidents, and guerrillas who had once fought against the French with organization and leadership, and particularly with the aim of overthrowing the so-called reactionary Diem. Thousands of former Viet Minh still remained inactive in the South, and had only to dig up their weapons.

“During the following months, terrorism and related assassinations significantly increased in the South. Mainly under the North's direction, anticommunist officials and civilians, or those who created trouble for the communists, were assassinated or abducted. Often these victims were simply the best officials, or civilians who were extraordinary in some way, and thus too good an example to the people. The communists preferred corrupt and incompetent officials; those who were dishonest and criminal created disaffection and an environment for communist proselytizing.”

John stepped to the lectern to refer to his outline. “In 1957 alone, over seven hundred low-level officials were murdered this way, and around 3,750 were murdered in the following three years.” He took his outline with him when he stepped away from the lectern.

“Beginning in 1958, the North also secretly returned to South Vietnam those military and political cadre who had been sent to the North after the Geneva Agreements. But the guerrilla war against the South was still at a relatively low level, and Diem appeared to be growing stronger. With U.S. advisors and military aid, Diem's army would soon be a well-trained and equipped force of over 135,000

men. For the U.S., this was a matter of containment—and underline that. Containment was the dominant American foreign policy throughout the Cold War.

“Clearly, the North now had to undertake a full-scale armed struggle to, in its words, smash the Saigon regime. This decision was made during the communists’ Fifteenth Conference of the Central Committee meeting in Hanoi in January 1959. They soon issued the appropriate policies, underlined by Ho Chi Minh’s appeal in May to liberate South Vietnam.

“The North then prepared for infiltration by its regular troops, and their supply. It moved to establish bases on the Cambodian border at Tay Ninh, northwest of Saigon, and east of Ratanakiri province, in the South’s Central Highlands. And it built the first leg of the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail through Eastern Laos and Cambodia and thence at several points into South Vietnam. Using the trail and its subsequent extensions and modifications, the communists built up their forces in the South. In 1960, the North’s killer squads increased the rate at which they were assassinating officials and village heads, killing nearly three thousand over the two years ending in 1961. By this time, the North had also infiltrated ten thousand regular soldiers and a substantial number of the forty thousand guerrillas then operating against the Diem regime.”

John stopped for a moment to give the students a mental break. This was a lot to digest and he wanted to make sure they understood it. “Questions?”

None, so he continued. “From July 1959 to June 1960, the North carried out the Concerted Uprising Campaign, with the goal of expanding direct communist control over southern territory. They planned to do this by breaking up what they called the machinery of oppression, that is, by disorganizing Diem’s strategic hamlet program, which aimed at separating villagers from communist agents, and assassinating South Vietnam’s real authorities outside the cities—the hamlet and village officials. In this way, the communists hoped to gradually spread their control over the countryside and eventually lay siege to the cities.

“The start of North Vietnam’s war against the South, and therefore the Vietnam War, might therefore be set at 1959, or even 1958. I date it, however, as beginning in January 1960, when General Vo Nguyen Giap, head of North Vietnam’s army, unambiguously involved the North in war against the South.”

“To quote Giap, the ‘North has become a large rear echelon of our army,’” John read from his outline. “‘The North is the revolutionary

base for the whole country.” He looked up. “By ‘whole country’ he meant North and South Vietnam.

“The following September, the Communist Party’s Third Congress meeting in Hanoi decided to create a broadly defined political front, a façade for its war against the South. Several months later, the Saigon media reported the formation of the National Liberation Front.

“The tempo and scale of war and terror from then on increased materially; by 1964, thirty to forty-five main-force battalions of North Vietnam troops, composed of thirty-five thousand guerrillas and eighty thousand irregulars, had gained control over most of the South.

“One source claims that in 1964, the Viet Cong taxed the population in forty-one out of the South’s forty-four provinces and prevented government access to eighty percent of its territory. The National Liberation Front claimed it controlled eight million of the South’s thirteen million people, and three-fourths of the country.

“With all these losses and its troops by then dispirited, it seemed only a matter of time before Saigon succumbed to the communists. Nor did extraordinary U.S. military aid and twenty-three thousand advisors, as they were called, prove enough to even stabilize government defenses. The collapse of the South that the North had been predicting since 1954 seemed imminent.

“But wait. The U.S. rode to the rescue. Temporarily. That’s the next lecture.” He looked around. “Questions?”

Several hands rose.

“Yes, Mr. Williams.”

“I’m confused.”

“Oh, sorry, I have you on my class list as Williams.” That well-worn humor earned a few chuckles. “Forgive me, Mr. Williams. Go on.”

“I’m taking a class in Asian history, and the professor says that the Viet Cong were independent freedom fighters fighting a guerrilla war against capitalist repression in the South.”

John knew who the student was talking about: a tenured Marxist in the history department. Since John was a new professor without tenure, he knew he should be very careful in his answer. *But screw it*, he thought. *It’s the fucking Marxists who have done most of the killing.*

“He’s wrong. It’s really not me saying that. It’s the leading generals of the North, such as Giap, who, after the end of the war in 1975, confessed that the Viet Cong had been an operating arm of the North Korean Army.”

Williams followed up with, “Why doesn’t he know that?”

Oh shit. I’m in it. He took a deep breath before answering. “He is a historian of the region, and I’m sure he knows that. But, you see, he’s a Marxist, and no doubt happy the North won, and it is . . . nice to say that the South was mainly defeated by its own people.”

“Are you saying, professor, that he is lying?”

If I say yes, I’ll be kicked out of the History Department. “As I said in the beginning, Mr. Williams, this is a contentious area where even the best scholars see things very differently. I suggest you do a search on the Internet and do your own reading on this question to determine what you should believe.”

He looked at the class, and then slid his eyes to glance at Miss Phim. She was smiling. He ripped his eyes away, felt his face get hot, and quickly moved into the discussion part of the period.

“Questions, comments?” If there were none, he would call on people randomly from his deck of student names. That is, except for one.

Chapter 18

1960–1963
Cholon, Saigon

Wang Dewu

They arrived at the An Dong bus station in Cholon early in the morning. Poor vendors hawked their food at several places in the station, and Dewu bought rice and fried fish cakes for all of them. He also asked the vendor if there was a cheap hotel nearby, and the man told Dewu to try the Dang Dinh Nam Hotel on the other side of Dung Street, across from the station.

They walked the short distance, carrying their suitcases and other baggage. Once Dewu had Jia Li and Shihao settled in a room, he asked the hotel owner-receptionist for the location of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for Cholon. He was directed to an office building on Le Van Duyer Street.

When he got there, he climbed to the second floor and entered a small office with *Chamber of Commerce* lettered on the door in both Chinese and Vietnamese. Inside, a little counter held maps, forms, and pamphlets; at one of the two desks, an older, much shrunken man in an ill-fitting Western suit sat. A little sign on his desk said *I am a volunteer businessman here to help you*. The man looked up when Dewu entered, and motioned him over to take a seat.

The man began his query with a hiss, as though he had a split tongue. “*Hsss . . .* can I help you?”

Dewu explained, “I sold my business in Hue and came to Cholon for fear of the Viet Cong. I eventually want to open another business here. But for now, I will have to take any kind of job to get started.”

The man’s sympathetic expression looked forced. He clasped his hands in front of him and replied, “*Hsss . . .* we have so many refugees here from all over, and so many are former businessmen and executives like you, that there are no good jobs available.” He shook his head, now

looking as if he'd eaten soap. Perhaps he intended to look sad. "*Hssssuu . . .* I will give you a list of restaurants, laundries, and shops that might need help. *Hsss . . .* I warn you, though, that you will be competing with all the unskilled labor that has flooded Cholon, and if you get a job, it will be hard work for almost nothing." He leaned forward, looking hopeful. "*Hssss . . .* maybe there is something for you in our file. But it is so full that I really do not have the time to look carefully."

Dewu refused to pay the obvious bribe. He took the list, took a free map of Cholon and Saigon off the counter, and walked out. He didn't return to the hotel; instead he started going from place to place, looking for work. One restaurant on the list, Cao's Steak and Salad, had catered to Westerners. Dewu found it a burned-out ruin between two brick buildings—the work of Viet Cong, he was sure. Two restaurants later, he was lucky. The owner recognized Dewu's accent, and revealed that he had also escaped from the North. After a brief conversation about the village he'd fled and why, the owner hired him as a dishwasher even though he needed no more help.

When Dewu returned to the hotel and told Jia Li about his new job, she took the list, said simply, "My turn," and left their hotel room. Three hours later she came back with a job in a Chinese laundry whose clientele was largely American military.

She explained, "I kept going from one place to another, seeking managers or owners who looked like they were from the North, and then I judged by their accent whether they were from our district. When I—"

Boooom! Brrrrttt! Brrrrttt! Boooom! Pop! Pop! Brrrrttt!

The sounds of the street battle were distant, but loud enough to be worrisome. Wailing sirens drew closer, and then stopped. Somebody ran down the hallway, their slippers clip-clopping. Then nothing. In the silence, Dewu felt he could hear them all breathing.

Jia Li glanced toward their one window, and then at Dewu's purposely calm expression, and raised her eyebrow for just a moment. Then she continued. "I found such a woman who had escaped over the border, and she hired me on the spot."

They now had work but, still not satisfied with their meager joint income, over the following days Dewu kept asking around for a second job. He happened to check the Tong Chinese Furniture store when their delivery truck driver had just been taken to the hospital, seriously ill with botulism, apparently from eating bad pork. When Dewu showed the store manager the license he carried with him that showed he had owned his own store in Hue, the manager decided he had to be a responsible person. And he was obviously Chinese. Dewu got the job.

Next, they had to get out of the hotel. It cost them too much. As Jia Li kept saying indignantly, “It is wasted money.” So, Dewu and Jia Li, and even Shihao, spent their spare time and weekends building a small shack from plywood, bricks, and hollow tile on a tiny piece of rented land. Dewu had scavenged the tiles from a building that had burned down—he was there when the smoke was still rising from the debris, and fought with others for what he got.

At the Cholon Binh Tay Market, he bought corrugated steel sheets obviously stolen from the Americans, and tarps and plastic sheets to help divide the bedroom from the rest of the house. For their toilet, he created a hole in one corner of their tiny bedroom, hung plastic sheeting around it, and dug a hole in the ground underneath big enough for a four gallon plastic bucket. It became one of Shihao’s odd jobs to empty the bucket into a water runoff sewer along a nearby street.

The shack was not much, but it protected them from the weather, and one street over from them was a public spigot where they could get water—not the same street with the sewer. Dewu also paid “rent” to run an electrical line from the fuse box of a home down the street to his shack, and then bought an old electric stove and small refrigerator. Jia Li started to complain about wasting money for electricity, but Dewu shut her up by saying, “It is coming out of my humble allowance, my lovely budget sheriff.”

Jia Li registered Shihao in school, and he settled in and started getting homework. Jia Li made sure he finished his homework before he did anything else. “Anything else” meant finding odd jobs around the neighborhood. He would knock on a door and say, as his father had taught him, “First job free. Second job at what you wish to pay. If you like my work, third job at my fee of one hundred piasters an hour.” This was about twenty-seven American cents at the black market rate.



By 1963, they had saved enough in addition to what they had brought with them from Hue to buy a small rattan store, and its first inventory of furniture. They were in business again. Dewu was happy about that, until early one morning when he passed the bodies of two men and a woman while on the way to his store. They had been kneeling, and were shot in the back of the head. They must have been killed recently. He did not stop, nor did he try to contact the police. *Not wise*, he thought, *to draw any attention to myself, my family, or our store.*

He hurried to the store and into his tiny office. It was like Hue all over again. But this time, there was nowhere to flee. Fortunately, this time he had been smart and stayed out of politics, joining no organization, even if it seemed benevolent. But he was no longer happy. *The Viet Cong are gradually taking over South Vietnam*, he realized, as his mind connected all the disparate information he had been getting in the news about the communist guerrilla war. *It seems only a matter of time before we lose everything we have so hard worked for to the communists. Again. I just can't sit back and let this happen. Oh Buddha, I just cannot.*

Chapter 19

1958–1963

Cyril Clement

With his discovery of the relevance of the Banks mission to his studies, and that political science was really the discipline he should be in, Cyril transferred in his junior year. He concentrated on peace studies, a new field of study yet without a name. Every term paper he wrote in every course from then on was related in some way to war and violence, including the term paper titled “Can There Be a Science of War?” he wrote for a Philosophy of Science course. He graduated with an A in every course.

He received a graduate assistantship at the University of California at Berkeley, where Alice was accepted as a graduate student in mathematics with a scholarship that paid fully for her tuition. They rented a tiny apartment in married student housing. It was cheap, an important consideration when their income barely covered food. If need be, they could turn to Alice’s parents, but Cyril would not tap that resource unless they were near starvation. Alice seemed to have acquired an extrasensory ability to read his thoughts, and never even hinted at asking her family for help.

In two years, Cyril did his M.A. thesis on “What is Peace? Visions of Peace Through the Ages.” Alice did her M.S. thesis in mathematics on “A Characteristic Equation Approach to Significance in Factor Analysis.” She then got an off-campus job in a secret project aimed at improving nuclear missile accuracy. That’s all she could tell Cyril. “Anything legal I can do to fight communism, which destroyed my grandparents’ country, I will do,” she told Cyril. When he looked concerned, she added with a grin, “But you and your mission come first, love. Always.”

“*Our* mission, sweetie.”

“Of course.” She smiled.

Yes. *It is now a mission*, he thought. He smiled at that. In their own way, they were now duplicating the John-Joy mission. He saw immediately all the oddities in that. Neither Joy nor John were yet born. Yet, he and Alice were engaged in a mission based on theirs. Oh, they could not intervene in nations' machinations or bribe politicians with millions or fund massive lobbying efforts, but they could promote the democratic peace.

He contemplated the time circuitry involved, but decided to leave alone the thought of how this all could be—how Banks' stuff had ended up in this universe, from which John and Joy traveled to 1906 to create a peaceful alternate universe. It was in this alternate universe that Banks had written his "Remembrance." Since the scientists that had built Banks' time machine insisted one could not cross from one universe to another—the reason he and Joy could never return to this universe—how could the Banks stuff end up here? Someday, he promised himself, he would engage the philosophy and physics of this.



In three years, Cyril got his Ph.D. with a dissertation on "The Balance of Power: A History of Suppositions, Speculations, and Surmises." Graduate study had been contentious, and several times he had thought of dropping out and making his way as an independent scholar. But nonprofit research institutes and centers were rare, and he feared he might end up as a taxi driver. And he would refuse to live on Alice's income or what her father might give them. So, with Alice's constant encouragement and understanding, he persevered and swallowed his chagrin and frustration at the opposition he got from faculty over the simple proposition that democracies are the most peaceful form of government. He could not do his thesis or dissertation on it—his committee of faculty members that judged whether he passed or failed would not have approved of the topic. Not one faculty member agreed with him. They considered Cyril simplistic, right wing, or ignorant of history.

Cyril learned something else during his graduate years. He remembered well Banks' belief that *democide*—the term he used for government-initiated genocide and mass murder—was even bloodier than war. In his "Remembrance," he had pointed out several times that about 174 million men, women, and children had been murdered by governments in this century—about four times the number killed in all domestic and foreign wars. But Cyril found virtually no literature on

democide; in fact, the concept itself was unknown. And even though everyone knew of the Nazi Holocaust of six million Jews, and *genocide*, the term invented by Raphael Lemkin in the early 1940s to apply to that and other such mass murders of people because of their group identity, even the most recognized and famous scholars did not know about the widespread democide occurring in the late 1950s in the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, and elsewhere, particularly in the communist nations.

Comparative genocide, or genocide studies, was not a field of study, and there were virtually no books written on it. Most political science faculty would not believe Cyril when he mentioned some of the major genocides and mass murders—he could not use the unknown word “democide”—he remembered from Banks’ writing. They believed him even less when he claimed that democracy was a solution to genocide and mass murder.

By the time Cyril graduated with a Ph.D., he was absolutely determined to change the landscape of knowledge about war causation, avoidance, and prevention, and to teach the world about the incredible amount of democide that had—and still—occurred, and present democracy as its solution. He could not imagine a higher goal than to solve the problem of war and democide, and to educate the world into fostering a *democratic peace*—another concept borrowed from Banks.

Chapter 20

June 1965
Cholon, Saigon

Wang Dewu

By 1965, Dewu devoured the morning and evening daily newspapers and the hourly news with increasing fear for his family. He no longer slept well, and with his stomach more knotted than not, he had little appetite and was losing weight. He and Jia Li argued frequently over small things, and she asked him several times if something was wrong. But he refused to tell her about his deep anxiety. He felt he worried enough for both of them, and since she could do nothing about it, best she not realize their danger.

The communists had virtually defeated South Vietnam. The previous December, the Viet Cong had taken over the anticommunist town of Binh Gia on the coast to display their power, even though it had a large population of six thousand. They all but destroyed ARVN—Army of the Republic of Vietnam—battalions that tried to retake the town. After four days, the Viet Cong abandoned it voluntarily. And this past February, a small force of Viet Cong attacked the American base at Pleiku, just to snub their nose at American power.

But such newsworthy attacks did not tell the awful story, that of the gradual erosion of government and ARVN control over one village after another as the Viet Cong took over quietly, as other villagers disgusted with government corruption and instability shifted their loyalty to the communists. Like a spreading oil slick, the Viet Cong and PAVN—People's Army of [North] Vietnam—gradually took over one region after another, as indexed by how dangerous it was for government officials or ARVN troops to travel there, and by the Viet Cong “tax” collections along their roads. Some cities and towns were like urban oases in a sea of armed communists.

And the ARVN was falling apart. Hundreds of thousands of its soldiers seemed to be deserting, and although it had a stringent conscription law that made all male Vietnamese citizens from twenty to forty-five years subject to service in the military and civil defense establishment, it was poorly enforced, and *an tien*—bribery to avoid service was rampant. To make matters worse, the government was in political turmoil. President Diem had been deposed by a coup d'état and murdered in 1963; General Minh, leading a Revolutionary Military Committee, took over, only to be overthrown by another coup in 1964 by a junta headed by General Nguyen Khanh. After months of political uncertainty and turmoil, Tran Van Juong became Premier.

But there was a slim hope. North Vietnamese torpedo boats had attacked two American destroyers in August of last year, and the American congress had passed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, giving President Johnson authority to do what he considered necessary to protect American forces and stop further aggression. So far, there were only about twenty to twenty-five thousand American military here, and although it seemed certain that that number would soon dramatically increase, he didn't think the Americans knew how to fight the Viet Cong and the PAVN.

Late last year, the government had launched a more strictly enforced campaign to induct men aged twenty to twenty-five into the military, and had followed that with a comprehensive recruiting campaign, including enlistment bonuses.

For two years, Dewu had been on the verge of enlisting in the military. Only concern for his family held him back. They had a big mortgage on the rattan store he had bought, and sales barely covered the monthly payments. Shihao, near the top of his class in school, was almost assured of going to college. He was their pride, and Dewu did not want him to have to drop out to support his mother if Dewu were killed. Jia Li worked as a waitress at Kim Cafe, but she would have to quit that to run the rattan store if he enlisted, and again, Shihao would have to quit school and work to help with their expenses. And he didn't want to leave them living in the dilapidated, one-room shed they still lived in among the shacks of other refugees—all their money went into the store, necessities, and savings.

But now all that had changed. By way of a promised fifteen percent kickback to the Dong Tho consortium, he had succeeded in being added to a major contract among Saigon stores and producers to supply

furniture to American bases being built and expanded in and around Saigon. That, the enlistment bonus, plus their savings would be just enough for them to buy a two-bedroom home.

He knew what communism was like. He had no illusions about what the North's victory would mean for South Vietnam, and his family. If (or more probably, *when*) the communists won, he could not live with himself if he'd done nothing. He and his family would not have long to live anyway. After all, he had fled the North, and he did not believe the North would forgive him for that. Such behavior showed the very antirevolutionary beliefs for which they had already executed thousands in the North, and assassinated many in the South in areas under their control.

At thirty-seven, he was too old to be drafted into the regular army, although not for civil defense. But he was not too old to fight. He was not too old to be accepted as a volunteer. He would enlist today.

Chapter 21

June 1965

Ministry of National Defense, Hanoi, North Vietnam

General Vo Nguyen Giap

General Vo Nguyen Giap stared sightlessly out his clean first story window toward Hoang Dieu Street. He did not like it. He had thought victory would be theirs by spring, but the Americans had changed everything. Spies had reported that a battalion of marines came ashore at My Khe in the South in March, and that in April the American President Johnson approved sending two more marine battalions along with twenty thousand logistics troops. Now, intelligence had informed him that Johnson would likely approve that another 180,000 troops be sent, with probably another one hundred thousand in 1966. And they would be combat troops, willing and able to fight and take the offensive. Even now, twenty thousand troops a month poured into the South with all their incredible weapons to shore up its all but defeated American *my nguy*—puppet government.

“Well, the good general knows when to change his strategy,” he told himself with a long sigh.

The *Dong Xuan*—Winter-Spring Campaign had been a good plan. He had intended to infiltrate three PAVN divisions into South Vietnam’s highlands via the Ho Chi Minh Trail, from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia. Then, in three phases, he would split South Vietnam in half. First he would conquer the Green Berets’ Special Forces camp at Plei Me, then the city of Pleiku, and finally the city of Qui Nhon on the major highway along the coast. A great plan, but now he had to cancel it.

The damn Americans were not the French he’d defeated in 1954, ending the First Indochina War; judging by how they fought in the Korean and Second World Wars, they were a dangerous enemy. They had new fighter bombers, air-to-ground missiles, and many types of bombs.

They had the ability to helicopter troops rapidly behind his lines. They had helicopters like giant cranes that could carry artillery to support these troops. He had to be honest. He did not know how to fight them. Yet. But he would. He would lure them into the battle of his choice, lure the tiger from the mountain, and study what they did.

He pulled a cigarette from his pack of Chinese Kanghua cigarettes, thumping it end-first several times against his desk to compact the tobacco before putting it in his mouth. He lit it with his Taiyang lighter, blew out a puff of smoke, and turned back to his adjutant. General Hoang Phuong sat on the other side of the desk, looking at him with slightly furrowed brows. He reached forward to butt out his own Kanghua in a military tin ashtray.

Giap shook his head, compressing his lips so that his broad features tightened into a grimace. "We have discussed this. I know you want to go ahead with the Dong Xuan campaign, as do most in the Central Committee and First Secretary Le Duan, but no. We now will have to confront the Americans, especially their air cavalry, and I am not sure how they will fight. By the time we have our divisions in place to begin the campaign in October, they may have a sufficient force, tactics, and weapons to destroy our divisions. Better we lure them into battle first and see what they do."

Phuong pursed his lips for a moment before replying, "You know what Duan will say: 'Strike while they are weak. The Americans are training and better arming the ARVN, and giving them a spine. If you wait, it soon will be too late.'"

Giap waved his cigarette at Phuong. "Since I am Vice Premier, Defense Minister, and Army Chief, he and the Central Committee will listen to me. They really have no choice. And I know that Ho Chi Minh will support me, not that I really need it."

Phuong took out another cigarette and lit it before making eye contact with Giap again. "I am disappointed. I thought that I would see my relatives in the South by next summer, and take the gift of communism to them. How long do you think you will have to postpone the Dong Xuan campaign?"

"Maybe ten years. Maybe twenty. But don't be so disappointed. Be patient. In time, we will learn how to fight them. In the meantime, we have agents and supporters in Europe who will work for us against American involvement. We will kill many Americans, and their deaths plus the demonstrations and agitation of our supporters will weaken American will and limit what they will do. Moreover, intelligence has been quite clear about Johnson's fear of involving China, and his will-

ingness to let us use Cambodia and Laos as our sanctuaries and marshalling areas for outflanking the South. This shows their resolve is already weak.”

Puang took a long drag on his cigarette and let the smoke out slowly. “You are the world’s best general. We have the best battle-tested officers in the world. We beat the French.” He jabbed his finger up in the air as though pointing to the American planes already involved in bombing North Vietnam. “But the Americans have the best technology, the best weapons, and incredible resources.”

He uncrossed his legs and leaned forward on his chair toward Giap. “I have the greatest confidence in you, myself, our general staff, and our soldiers, but it will not be easy to win this war on the battlefield. If our losses are great enough in the future, we may have to negotiate. We should also be prepared for that, and lay the political groundwork.”

Giap leaned back and crossed his arms over his chest. Talking around the cigarette in the corner of his mouth, he said, “The reason we have to learn how to fight them is to learn how to bleed them and make good news for us. We will not win this war on the battlefield,” he declared. “We will not win it through negotiation. We will win it in the hearts and minds of the American elite and politicians. And the *do ngu*—stupid students. Especially the *do ngu* students.”

Chapter 22

July 28, 1965

Da Nang-Chu Lai region, South Vietnam

General Chu Huy Man

PAVN General Chu Huy Man's headquarters was located in the former home of a French plantation owner. His office was on the second floor of the red brick house, in a small, whitewashed room with a colored picture of Ho Chi Minh taped to one wall; creases from its frequent folding and unfolding marred the subject's brow. An old French map of the region had been tacked to the wall across from the picture and covered with thin plastic on which red and blue symbols had been written with a grease marker. A rectangular table with three rattan chairs around it dominated the corner of the room adjacent to the only door. On two sides of it were ammunition boxes loaded with files, a filing system that allowed headquarters to instantly flee an attack by American or ARVN forces. The glass and casing in the room's only window had been removed and a 50mm machine gun emplacement set up; the same had been done to windows in the other rooms facing the other three sides of the house. The perimeter had been cleared of the plantation's mango and papaya trees, their trunks and branches used to form a redoubt at the home's columned entrance.

All this was necessary, even though temporary, since General Man commanded the operations of the Viet Cong against the newly landed American marines in the Da Nang-Chu Lai region. The Americans and ARVN had increased small-scale sweep operations, more for purposes of training the Americans and ARVN to work together and initiating American troops to the alien countryside than to find and fight Viet Cong. Still, they might discover Man's headquarters by chance, or from a traitor. Though he thought that very unlikely—his

well-placed spies would warn him of any pending sweep that could head his way—every week he ran an escape drill. The headquarters could be emptied of everyone and all essential files, equipment, and weapons in four minutes.

He was not happy with his assignment. The Viet Cong were poorly armed with old, hand-me-down French and Chinese weapons. Though that was changing as the PAVN brought new weapons from the Soviet Union and China down the Ho Chi Minh trail for the Viet Cong, these new weapons were still wielded by poor peasants, often farmers during the day and fighters at night. General Man thought of himself as a fighting soldier's general, well prepared to command a division in combat. What he commanded now was more like hornets pestering a lion.

For this reason, when his RTO radioman gave him the coded, red-flagged, level one message from General Giap, he immediately opened his small safe and took out his one-time code pad. From that he determined what manual to use. He went to one of the ammunition boxes and picked out the translated "American Artillery: Specifications and Tactics" and sat down at the table with it. Each sequence of numbers in the order gave him the page, line, and word count to a specific word in the manual. The code was laborious, but unbreakable, and in about two hours he had the full message decoded.

It was the order for which he had hoped. Giap was sending him to the Western Highlands to set up what he called a B-3 headquarters. He would have tactical and administrative command of all Viet Cong and, what made this delicious, a PAVN division in the Highlands. He would launch a division-size attack on the Americans to see what they could do and, if that succeeded, seize Pleiku, the command center of the ARVN's 2nd Corps. This would drive a dagger into South Vietnam's defense of its central region, and open the door to resurrecting the Dong Xuan campaign to split the South.

He did not need to reread the message. He would remember every detail. He tore it into narrow strips and the strips into thirds, then walked over to the disposal bag hanging on a nail by the door and threw them all into it—the contents would be burned before nightfall. He had action reports to complete and preparations for his replacement, who would be here in two days. But first, he had to do the most important thing. He pulled a sheet of plain paper from a folder in one of the

ammunition boxes and sat down with it at the table. Taking a blunt pencil out of a pocket of his ordinary, olive-colored shirt, he began to write.

My Dear Ba ZZ,

You will be happy to read that this is my last letter from ZZ region. We talked about this possibility during my last leave—each night I think of our days together and they sometimes fill my dreams—and now the order has come from ZZ himself. I will assume command of ZZ action in ZZ. I know you wish me the greatest success and hope that the Red Flag will rise over these, our capitalist-enslaved countrymen, soon.

Tell ZZ that I know he will do his best in school and honor us all.

I worry about both of you all the time. American bombing can only get more intense and dangerous as the American jackals more and more fear losing to us. I know, you refuse to move out of Hanoi. “It is my duty to stay,” you say, and I must admit I am proud of you. But use the bomb shelters. It is also your duty to bring up a dedicated son of the revolution.

I miss you,

ZZ

He carried in his pocket the personal code pad that he and his wife had prepared when he was ordered to South Vietnam. He pulled it out now and converted all the ZZs to the numerical codes for their proper names. He then folded the letter into a two-inch square, and lit a candle. When wax pooled around the wick, he dripped it along all the edges of the letter, and stamped them with his special seal.

He went to the door and called for his Viet Cong dispatcher. When he arrived, General Man handed him the letter and said simply, “This is to my wife in Hanoi.”

From then on, the letter would move through a well-oiled machine, passing from Viet Cong to Viet Cong and eventually through one of the many secret passages between North and South Vietnam to be delivered as though a posted letter to the home of General Man at 43 Quang Trung Street, Hanoi. The letter needed no address. All that need be said as the letter passed was, “This is to the wife of General Chu Huy Man.”

Rank had its privileges.

Late September Ho Chi Minh Trail, Cambodia

General Man walked up the low hillock overlooking the Ho Chi Minh Trail terminus for the Western Highlands, and pointed to a rocky area where he wanted his orderly to unfold his tripod seat. He sat down, and left it to his headquarters staff to find their own seats. Most sat in the shade among the hillock's scrub trees. He watched a 33rd Regiment battalion of his soldiers stagger into the terminus with a mixture of sadness, shame, and pride.

Some were carried on pole-litters, some were supported by the arms and shoulders of others, some used makeshift canes, and many trudged in without aid, their food tube over one shoulder and worn, dirty packs on their backs, with their canvas hammocks rolled and tied on top. Almost all suffered from malaria despite the malaria pills they took daily. Each man who could carried a particular weapon, or part of the heavy ones, and ammunition—he saw AK-47s, Siminov carbines, Degtyarev automatic rifles, Maxim machine guns, 12.7mm anti-aircraft machine guns, various-sized mortars, and grenades in abundance. Porters came in looking exhausted, pushing their bicycles with the long poles attached to the frames that carried 350-pound loads of ammunition, supplies, and rice.

The general knew the statistics. He knew what he did not see—the bodies of his dead soldiers. Over the two-month trek down the trail, out of each company of 120 men, three or four would die from American bombing, snake bites, malaria, and dysentery. But now the survivors were here.

They would have time for rest and rehabilitation before he engaged them in combat against the Americans along with the two other regiments, altogether six thousand men. Those of the 66th were still strung out along the trail, separated into battalions with three days between them. All the battalions of the 32nd Regiment had arrived and were recuperating in the rest camp a mile away.

He'd taken his *Tay Nguyen*—Western Highland plan, really General Giap's plan that Man had modified to local conditions, from the first two phases of the cancelled Dong Xuan campaign to split the country. With this 33rd Regiment, he would encircle the Special Forces camp at Plei Me, a Montagnard village about thirty miles southwest of the strategically important city of Pleiku. Plei Me contained—Man smiled to himself at how thorough his spies were—Green Berets De-

tachment A-217 under a Captain Moore, some ARVN Rangers, and over four hundred poorly armed and trained Jarai, Rhade, and Bahna tribal Civilian Irregular Defense Group personnel. The camp was only about twenty-five miles from the Cambodian border, close to where Man now sat.

His goal in this attack would not be to seize the camp, but to besiege it and present the ARVN 2nd Corps commander headquartered at Pleiku, Brigadier General Vinh Loc, with a dilemma. If he did not send ARVN reinforcements, Plei Me would surely fall, striking a psychological blow to the puppet government, and leaving General Loc with enemy forces on his doorstep. If he did send reinforcements, he would deplete his forces at Pleiku of their reserves and leave Pleiku vulnerable to attack. Therefore, he surely would send his reinforcements, but also call on the Americans for help. This was the clever part of the plan.

The relief force would have to come down highway QL-14, where Man would ambush and annihilate it with his 32nd Regiment. Afterward, the 32nd would join the 33rd Regiment and seize the camp at Plei Me. Then the final battle. General Man had mapped out almost every square inch of this. With Pleiku's defenses weakened by the relief column made up of their reserve, he would surround Pleiku with his 66th Regiment, wait for the arrival of the 32nd and 33rd Regiments, and give Pleiku the coup de grace.

And throughout all this, General Giap insisted, seek out battle with the Americans. After the seizure of Pleiku, he wanted a detailed report on how they fought and the significance of their air and ground weapons.

General Man saw a platoon of young girls dressed in tattered, dark green pajamas, conical hats, and rubber sandals, and with packs on their backs, entering the terminus from the trail. He knew they were among the thousands of girls working as construction crew all along the trail to keep it clear for the soldiers. They had not received the hard military training and conditioning of the men before they entered the trail, and too many died. He was even more saddened by that than the death of his own men. These girls were the future mothers of the revolution, and each a blossom in her own right. Were his wife unmarried and much younger, he knew she would have volunteered to be among them.

He stood and walked down the hillock to the small marshalling area set aside from that for the soldiers, where they girls were beginning to collect. He would give them a little speech and tell them how important their work was to the revolution and his upcoming battles. It was the least he could do.

Chapter 23

1963–late 1970s
Los Angeles

Cyril Clement

Cyril's first teaching position was at the University of California at Los Angeles. He had tried for available positions at Yale, Princeton, and the University of Chicago. With his graduate grades and completed dissertation, he thought he stood a good chance. So much depends on recommendations, and he thought his were excellent. But years later, he had access to his department file, and found his dissertation chairman's recommendation in it.

To Whom This May Concern,

As his dissertation chairman, one from whom Cyril Clement has taken several courses, and his advisor, I am writing this recommendation for him.

He is a bright, thoughtful, and hardworking student who always went well beyond the requirements of his courses. Mention a study in class, and I could be sure that he would read it. He always earned an A grade on both term papers and final grades.

As to his dissertation, this is an original and solid piece of research and shows excellent control of the related literature. He defended it very well. I bet that in several years of seasoning, he will be making significant contributions to his field.

He tends, however, to be independent minded, sometimes dogmatically unwilling to accept advice or recognize the knowledge of his teachers. He has a tendency to push silly ideas.

Nonetheless, I would place him in the top ten percent of all graduate students I have taught, and believe he would make an excellent teacher and colleague.

Yours Sincerely,

Jim Condi

Professor of Political Science

When he read the recommendation, he knew why he had not been offered a position at the other departments to which he had applied. The recommendation was lukewarm in what it said and, coming from a dissertation chairman, in its brevity. It was a wonder he had the position he did, but he found out by asking around that he'd been lucky—a faculty member's sudden resignation had made a position available at the last minute, when many top-rated applicants had already accepted positions elsewhere.

In the mid-1960s, the social sciences were rapidly expanding the use of statistics and mathematics, including in the study of war and violence. The basic idea was that the study of war could be made more scientific and quantitative, and this would help find a scientific solution to war. Cyril was aware of this, but did not have the statistical training to take advantage of it. Alice did. In secret collaboration, they put together a proposal for the National Science Foundation (NSF) that would involve a sophisticated statistical analysis of the factors in war causation from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The proposal fed into the ballooning popularity of these methods to the social science peer group evaluators of NSF proposals. His proposal was approved for two years at \$25,000 each year, and Alice quit her job to be his only research assistant. They were off.

He took a simple approach: exploit what ideas and facts he knew about war and democratic freedom, treat them as hypotheses, and test them by scientific empirical research. He was back to being scientific, an incurable itch given him by his voluminous consumption of science fiction. But the ideas were not his own; they were Banks'. From this time to decades in the future when they would be widely accepted, he acted as if he'd based them on Kant. He could hardly give credit to Banks' future Ph.D. dissertation in the Yale University Department of History of 2001. "Too bad," he told Alice with a smile. "It would be interesting to see who would blindly copy his footnoted references."

Over their years of empirical statistical research, Cyril supplied the scholarship and deep knowledge of war, while Alice provided the statistical method and, with growing access to high-speed computers, the

computer programming and analysis. Cyril finally insisted that they jointly author the articles growing out of their research, and Alice finally agreed when he threatened to mix her favorite Egret brand Chinese rice with some cheap Californian variety.

Because of the sophisticated research and careful scholarship shown in the articles they published in major professional journals or presented at major conventions, Cyril got more grants. And with Alice's background in secret defense research, they got approval for their joint research proposals that they submitted to the Advanced Research Projects Agency of the Department of Defense.

Cyril, bringing in more research funds to his Political Science Department, was promoted to associate professor in four years. He got tenure in another two. Prior to that, he and Alice had been very careful. They knew what results they would get if they focused on democracy as an independent variable in analyzing war. But it was too early in his career. He had yet to develop the reputation to carry it. So, they analyzed hundreds of variables in unique studies, but always including some measures of democratic freedom. They always noted the results for democracy, of course, but in the context of the relationship of other variables to war.

In an ego-sensitive profession, Cyril refused to treat any of his results as revolutionary. He always wrote them up as simply confirming or further clarifying the work or theories of such notables as Professors Quincy Wright, Karl Deutsch, and Hans Morgenthau. He knew how to play the academic game.

Cyril soon became known in political science, especially in the subfield of international relations, and was widely quoted and referenced, even by those who disagreed with his conclusions. He, and sometimes Alice with him, frequently received invitations to give papers, and leading journals even asked him to be a reader for submissions. His grants, the solid research of the articles published almost every six months, and his humbleness with regard to the Big Names played a role. Perhaps most important, however, was that he was playing into the tremendous growth in the use of quantitative methods and mathematics in political science, and their growing dominance over other subfields of research.

By the late 1970s, he and Alice thought it was time to reveal the importance of democracy to war. He wrote a book: *Why War, How Peace?* It was published by Yale University Press and became widely known, but not much used in classes. In it he covered the various theories and empirical work, including his own, on the causes and conditions of war and peace. He highlighted the findings on democratic

freedom, and introduced Banks' term *democratic peace* for the first time in his conclusion: *Historical scholarship, empirical research, and scientific tests all show that a democratic peace has existed through history, and presently exists among nations. Democracies do not make war on each other; the more democratic two nations, the less severe whatever violence between them, and democracies have the least severe foreign violence. This suggests that the way of creating a peaceful world is through promoting democracy.*

In this time of the Cold War between communism and democratic freedom, some reviewers thought Cyril's book was unconscionable flag-waving and others thought it a polemic, but some thought it provided a fresh look at war. As Cyril had hoped, some thought Cyril so wrong about democracy that they set out to disprove him. Some of them asked for his data; others generated their own. Some covered different time periods, and used different approaches and methods. This took years. But by the late 1980s, virtually all had come to accept Cyril's conclusion, with slight modifications that did not detract from democracy as a solution to war.

Indeed, a new article on the democratic peace came out saying it was the most substantiated and most solid proposition in the whole field of international relations. When a gleeful Cyril told Alice this, she observed, "I think now is the time to leave this area to others and do what you have always wanted to do: concentrate on democide. I've never really understood why you began with war rather than democide. The democratic peace applies to both, as you always insist."

Cyril nodded, but explained, "There is no such field for democide as there is for the study of war, and focusing on democide before I established my reputation in international relations would have made it difficult, if not impossible, to get grants. Even my tenure might have been in doubt, for two reasons. With my assertions about the amount of democide, I would have been considered an oddball. And, more important, Marxism and leftism are prevalent among the faculty, and they would hardly be happy with my pointing out that Marxist nations are the worst murderers by far. If my book presenting the democratic peace was called flag-waving and a polemic, consider what would be said about a book saying Marxism is guilty of most of the mass killing and genocide in the world—110 million murdered. No, tenure and a solid reputation for good scholarship and careful and sophisticated analysis had to come first."

He grinned. "I now have tenure and enough of a reputation. Let's start on it."

Chapter 24

October 19, 1965
Plei Me, South Vietnam

At eleven p.m. on October 19, 1965, PAVN 82mm mortar fire and explosive-filled pipe sections blasted away the sound of night insects around the Special Forces camp at Plei Me. Then, two thousand PAVN infantry of the 33rd Regiment attacked the camp from three directions. They overwhelmed the defenders and fought through the barbed-wire perimeter on the south side, their 57mm recoilless rifle fire knocking out two of the three defense bunkers.

The Americans and Civilian Irregular Defense Group fought back with machine guns and, in some places, hand-to-hand. Soon, A-1E Skyraider aircraft struck at the attacking PAVN infantry using missiles, bombs, and napalm, while other aircraft dropped parachute flares to illuminate targets for the Skyraiders. And during the night and into the day, American aircraft dropped ammunition and supplies to the beleaguered defenders.

In spite of a vigorous defense with mortars, grenades, and a lethal wall of machine gun and rifle fire, the much larger PAVN force seized part of the camp. Their behavior puzzled the defenders, however. What had been an intense and deadly attack that looked like it would overrun the camp became restrained—the PAVN did not exploit their initial success.

While some defenders credited the merciless, killing air bombardment they'd delivered for this, there was a simple strategic rationale. General Man had ordered Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Huu An, the commander of the 33rd Regiment, to encircle the camp, threaten it with annihilation, but not to seize it. With this threat, they'd lure a relief force to be sent from Pleiku, and the full American engagement.

General Du Quoc Dong of the ARVN 2nd Corps headquartered in Pleiku was faced with depleting his reserve force to relieve Plei Me, or

letting it fall. He communicated his dilemma to the ARVN Joint General Staff, who asked for American help. All as General Giap had hoped.

General William Westmoreland, commander of all American military forces in Vietnam, ordered General Harry Kinnard to reinforce the ARVN 2nd Corps with his newly arrived 1st Cavalry Division. Generals Kinnard and Dong ended up with a plan to send in a 1st Cavalry division to reinforce the defense of Pleiku, and strengthen the defense of Plei Me by dropping into the camp American-ARVN Special Forces and sending a large relief force from Pleiku to Plei Me, which they would protect with artillery batteries helicopter lifted into position in range of the highway they would travel.

General Giap would have what he wanted—a divisional-level battle against the well-trained, well-armed American troops with all their air power and artillery behind them. But he had not realized what a hellish inferno he would be calling down on his troops.

October 20, 1965, Pleiku Wang Dewu

Private Dewu and Corporal Nam climbed into the open M113 armored personnel carrier with the rest of their infantry squad. Dewu moved to stand in an open top hatch at the rear of the vehicle, as did three others. He waited, the stench of gasoline and diesel fuel exhaust almost overwhelming him. Sweat soaked his fatigues, and the reeking, hot, humid afternoon air almost made him retch. Or was it his fear?

He rested his .30 caliber Browning automatic rifle (BAR) on the top of the ridged aluminum hatch. The World War Two weapon was heavy and prone to malfunction, but he felt lucky having it. If he had remained a foot soldier, he would have had to carry and use one of those clumsy, although less heavy, American M-1 semiautomatic rifles from World War Two. But he had been among those picked at random from the infantry as replacements for the 3rd ARVN Armored Cavalry Regiment, and issued the BAR as a result.

He took a sip from his canteen to wet his dry lips. He stood shoulder to shoulder with his friend Nam, their web gear almost interlocked. Around them, sergeants barked orders, the treads of M-41 light tanks rattled, and the diesel engines of theirs and other M113 personnel carri-

ers added to the cacophony as a squadron of M8 armored carriers got into position within the long column. "What is going on?" he yelled at Nam above all the noise. "Are we being attacked?"

Pug-nosed Nam turned his round face to Dewu, his narrow eyes barely showing beneath his oversized American helmet. "I hear we are going to defend or retake some outpost the Viet Cong have attacked."

"Viet Cong?" Dewu took off his own American helmet to scratch absently at an insect bite on his head. He looked up and down the long, dusty line of armored vehicles and infantry that was forming. Then he saw Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Trong Luat and his staff watching the column come together.

"Look," Dewu shouted, pointing to the colonel. "If he's in charge, we must have our whole 3rd ARVN Armored Cavalry Regiment with us. This is no Viet Cong sweep. I think we are going to fight real troops from the North. I hope so. Enough of this fighting the Viet Cong—they are only the North's peasant night shift."

Nam squinted at him. "Sure, and get our asses shot off. You admit that the PAVN *bo dois*—soldiers are better than the Viet Cong. But you know what the Viet Cong did near Bai Gia. They ambushed and wiped out one of our battalions in less than twenty minutes. Maybe the PAVN would have reduced that to ten minutes."

He turned away and fumbled with quivering fingers for his pack of Salem cigarettes, partly squashed in his pocket by one of the grenades hooked to his webbing. He managed to pull one out and stuck it in his mouth to light it with his Zippo. He took a deep drag, blew the smoke out slowly, then waved his cigarette at the forming column. "Look at us," he shouted to Dewu. "Ready made meat for an ambush, as sure as chickens crap."

Dewu chuckled, and yelled, "You can't kid me, Nam. I know how hot you are for your first battle."

"Not like you," Nam hollered back. "Just remember. You toss a grenade forward, and not behind you. That's where I'll be."

An hour later, at 5:20 p.m., Dewu and Nam jostled against one another as, all along the Relief Force column, vehicles jolted into motion with the roar of clashing gears and howling motors, clacking, rumbling, and jangling equipment, and rattling metal sides. The armored Relief Force of three battalions of twelve hundred men, Dewu's infantry company mounted on the M113 armored personnel carriers, six M41 light tanks, a squadron of M8 armored carriers, and two 105mm howitzers set off from Pleiku for Plei Me along highway QL-14.

Within minutes, spies reported to the PAVN commander of the 32nd Regiment that the Plei Me Relief Force was on its way. His battalions were in place on the only route the column could take. They were ready. And the Relief Force would be utterly destroyed. Of that he had no doubt.

Chapter 25

October 23, 1965

Highway TL-6C, South Vietnam

Moving only during the day and with frequent stops for repairs, meals, and to allow RECON platoons to scout ahead for ambush, the Relief Force rumbled slowly down highway QL-14 until it met the junction with highway TL-6C about five miles from Plei Me. This was a heavily wooded area with elephant grass several feet high, even higher anthills, and stands of small ironwood trees, with an occasional palm tree towering above them all.

Colonel Luat was worried. They were on the final stretch and had met no ambush. Surely the PAVN would not allow him to so strongly reinforce Plei Me without a fight. Worried about the trailing column of supplies, he brought the M8 armored carriers forward as a second column that could be better protected by the tanks and armored personnel carriers. Then with two RECON platoons forward and on the watch for an ambush, he ordered the Relief Force forward down the most dangerous stretch of highway TL-6C.

Almost immediately, the forward platoons ran into concentrated rifle and machine gun fire, and radio contact with them was lost within minutes.

The 635th Battalion of the PAVN 32nd Regiment attacked the main column, while its 344th Battalion attacked the other one.

Wang Dewu

Dewu and his squad rode in the M113 with its rear door and hatches left open for air circulation. Although it was hot inside, even now, at six p.m., it was better than standing under the hot, slanting rays of the sun with weapon ready. But when they heard the distant thump of mortars and the pop of rifle fire, Dewu, Nam, and two others sprang into the open hatches with their BARs ready.

Ratatatatat! Bugles and shouting.

Brrrrttt! Brrrrttt!

Crack! Rifle fire.

Bullets rapped the M113's aluminum sides and whizzed overhead. The M113 driver suddenly engaged his diesel engine and jerked the troop carrier about one hundred feet forward, close to two M41 tanks whose turrets moved back and forth, their 76 mm cannons banging away and their .30 caliber machine guns spewing bullets and smoke. The other personnel carriers and tanks also deployed into fighting positions. Except for Dewu and the others manning the hatches, the soldiers in the M113s rushed out their rear doors and into defensive positions alongside the road with the infantry.

Dewu had no time to think. He reacted through instinct and training, trying to show as little of himself as he could above the hatch while he took aim and fired his BAR in spurts at where the gun smoke rose from among the trees and anthills.

An 81mm mortar shell exploded in the dirt nearby with a *whump!*

Kaboom! One hit the road, rocking the M113. Shrapnel clanged against its side and whizzed by Dewu's head. The vehicle's .50 caliber machine gun responded.

Ratatatatat!

Nearby, a tank's canons boomed. Closer still, Dewu barely heard what sounded like a paddle hitting mud; he did not hear his friend's gasp.

The sun slid below the treeline. In the dimmer light, Dewu saw the enemy's green tracers coming from around a nearby anthill.

Brrrrttt! Ratatatatat! Brrrrrrrrttt!

As he and others fired back, Dewu could see their own stream of red tracers as they shredded the anthill. He ejected his clip, shoved another load of twenty rounds into the BAR's receiver, and pointed the weapon at the gray shapes emerging from the smoke almost obscuring a stand of scrub trees. Two of them went down; the others took cover in the tall grass and behind a tree, and continued firing at them.

The M113's gunner swung his machine gun around and opened up on them. *Rattattatatat!* As his red machine gun tracers crossed the tracks of the PAVN's green, they looked like ethereal swords clashing.

Twang! Something banged Dewu's helmet and kicked his head sideways.

No pain. He ignored it.

The bedlam of battle increased to an impossible staccato roar. *Hiss-suee!* A rocket propelled RPG-7 antitank grenade flew by the rear of Dewu's M113, missing by a few feet. It would have blown a huge hole in the side, and probably exploded Dewu and the others out hatches.

Brrrttt! Brrrttt! Brrrrrppp!

From a line of towering hardwood trees, a PAVN company launched an attack directly toward them, shooting their AK-47s and Chinese 56-1 assault rifles from the hip.

Rattattat! Rattattat! The M113's machine gun and that of the tank in front cut them down.

Another 81mm mortar exploded with a *whump!* that shook the M113. Two infantrymen fighting from behind its protection screamed, their agony almost entirely lost in the roar of battle.

Dewu used up another clip and another, and then the flashing, blinking darkness lit up as American planes dropped flares.

American F-100 jets roared overhead. Then hissing, and *kaaarrrruummped!* as napalm fell on PAVN positions.

Whump! Whump! Whump! Helicopter gunships blasted troop pockets with rocket and cannon fire. Trees and brush burst into flame, adding a wavering, hot light to that of the cold white flares. Dewu could see dim shapes in the smoke, trying to escape the concentrated and deadly bombardment from the air and the tanks. Sprayed by M113 machine guns and bursts of fire from his and other BARs, the shadowy figures fell.

A gunship flushed a group trying to sneak up on the M113 out of the elephant grass; rather than be killed in place, they attacked the M113 with rifle fire and grenades. A grenade clunked off the side; another landed between the hatches and bounced over the side before exploding and killing two ARVN soldiers firing from behind the vehicle. Dewu and the M113 machine gunner shot them all down.

In about two hours the air attacks and heavy fire from the tanks and armored personnel carriers beat off the attack of the two PAVN battalions, and the horrific battle died down, leaving a greenish, smoky haze, brush fires, and bodies as far as one could see. An occasional *pop! pop!* and *crack!* of bullets punctuated the cries and screams of wounded.

Dewu began to shake so violently that he put down his BAR and grabbed the edge of the hatch with sweaty hands to steady himself. He felt nauseous and exhausted, as though he had run five miles.

When the reaction faded, he looked around. The M113's machine gunner was taking out a cigarette. Dewu was the only one above the rear hatch. He dropped down into the vehicle and saw three bodies. One was Nam. Half his face was missing. Dewu dropped to his knees beside his friend, then jerked his head to one side and vomited.

He wiped his mouth with his sleeve and climbed unsteadily over the bodies and out the open rear door. A medic passed him, looking inside

for wounded—all were dead. He asked Dewu to help him pull them out of the M113 and then join other infantry in carrying them to a collection area, where dead and badly wounded would be picked up by medivac helicopters. Of Dewu's squad, six had survived.

Supply trucks wove in and out of the columns, providing canned food and water and replenishing ammunition. The order came from Colonel Luat to set up a defensive perimeter of infantry and selected M113s and tanks around the two columns for the rest of the night.

3:00 a.m. October 24 Highway TL-6C

The night was alive with the hum of mosquitoes, croaking tree frogs, and the sounds of crickets, cicadas, and geckos. Suddenly loud PAVN whistles signaled another attack.

Whump! Ratatatat! Bangbang! Brrrrttt! Brrrrttt!

Inside the M113, Dewu had been slumped over his BAR, asleep. He jerked awake and stood up in the hatch with two others as three company-sized prongs of the 966th Battalion attacked the Relief Force.

Dewu fired at the gun flashes. Nearby, infantry fired off their flare guns to illuminate the attackers. Soon over a dozen flares floated slowly down, and the tanks and M113s all opened up on the running shadows and the sources of the green tracers. Then the American planes and helicopters roared in again with lethal napalm, killing missiles, and deadly cannon fire to devastate the attackers. Dewu saw many of the enemy turn and seek shelter behind anthills, brush, and trees, only to collapse under the spray of bullets and shells from the tanks and M-113s. Some, flaming torches, staggered in circles and fell.

The enemy retreated into the far darkness, leaving only the sound of the American aircraft and again the howls and groans of the wounded. An occasional *Pop!* or *Ratatat!* from the defenders' guns disturbed the sudden stillness.

Daytime, October 24 Highway TL-6C

ARVN sergeants went from company to company and vehicle to vehicle, doing an accounting. A number of armored vehicles in the first column had been damaged, but none beyond repair. All could continue to the relief of Plei Me. The second column, however, had been hit

hard. Trucks, gas tankers, and two M8 armored cars had been destroyed, and more were heavily damaged, including the two 105mm howitzers. Clearly, the Relief Force needed more help to continue on through another inevitable ambush.

American helicopters placed artillery batteries in range to provide protection for the columns. In the afternoon, helicopters from Pleiku resupplied the Relief Force.

Dewu, eating his meal of hot rice and vegetables and an American candy bar, trembled with excitement. Then he remembered his friend had been killed, and felt guilty about being excited. But he couldn't help it. He had survived his first combat, and he had killed many enemy soldiers, he was sure. This was why he volunteered. He was fighting communism. And it now looked like they would relieve Plei Me, which, his sergeant had finally told the squad, was their task.

He leaned on the edge of the hatch of his M113, watching the activity along the column as one vehicle after another pulled back into line or shifted position into a moving defensive perimeter. Sergeants barked orders to their platoons and lieutenants moved up and down the loosely dispersed columns of infantry, their radiomen always close behind. He looked back and saw Colonel Luat, whom he recognized by the cluster of officers and the two American advisors around him, getting into an indistinguishable M8 armored car in about the middle of the column. A few of his officers and an American advisor joined him. Within minutes, Dewu's M113 jerked, the diesel engine growled and belched a cloud of exhaust, and the whole column began to move.

In hours, all hell broke out again. PAVN bugles directed the most vicious PAVN attack yet. Mortars, grenades, tracers, chattering machine guns, and whizzing bullets seemed to be everywhere. The aluminum sides of the M113 rang and pinged from bullets and shrapnel as mortars whumped nearby.

Except for those firing out of the rear top hatch, the rest of Dewu's squad rushed out the rear door, preferring to fight in the open over being torn apart inside by a rocket propelled RPG grenade. Three of them sprawled into unmoving heaps as they exited.

An enemy, his pith helmet and green uniform blending with his surroundings, had slithered through the elephant grass to within ten feet of the M113. He rose to throw a grenade at its machine gunner. Dewu sprayed him with his BAR.

Brrrrrrppppp! Brrrrpppp! Brrrrpppp! Brrrrpppp! Two more rose and fired their AK-47s at the machine gunner.

The gunner's steel shield deflected the bullets. He turned the gun on them. *Rattattattattatt!* They were cut almost in half.

Bogged down, the Relief Force was in danger of being overrun. Responding to the urgent messages from Colonel Luat, the divisional command rushed artillery observers to them in a medivac helicopter.

They heard the *wopwopwop!* of the Huey skimming the treetops before it swooped in close to the column and hovered three or four feet above the flattened grass just long enough for the observers to jump out. Then it rose straight up like an incredibly fast elevator. Guarded by infantry, the observers ran to the column's leading vehicle, and from there directed artillery onto the massed PAVN. The Relief Force resumed its progress behind and alongside the artillery's rolling bombardment.

Boom! Kaboom! Boom! Shells sent towering showers of dirt, rocks, weapon fragments, and sometimes bodies into the air.

In the evening, the Relief Force broke through the PAVN siege lines around the Special Forces camp at Plei Me, and then reinforced the defensive perimeter. It added its weight to the American 1st Cavalry infantry and artillery that had landed by helicopter within close support range.

It was over for the PAVN. General Man's plan to destroy the ARVN Relief Force, seize Plei Me, and then roll up Pleiku had failed. Leaving behind a reinforced battalion for cover, General Man ordered his 33d Regiment at Plei Me to withdraw to the west, back toward Cambodia, where they could rest and recover from the heavy losses they had sustained.

The defeat was worse than he'd feared possible and Dewu had hoped. Under the defensive fire of the Special Forces camp and three hundred air strike sorties conducted against its attacks, the 33rd Regiment had been reduced to only one company of effectives. The 32nd Regiment, which set up the ambushes, lost forty percent of its officers and men to the guns of the Relief Force, air strikes, and artillery. Two of three battalion commanders had been killed and the third one wounded.

November, Ia Drang Valley South Vietnam Highlands

General Westmoreland, apprised of the victory at Plei Me, ordered the 1st Cavalry division to pursue the retreating ARVN force, and

committed a brigade to finding and destroying the PAVN battalions hidden in the Chu Pong Massif that ran along the Cambodian border. Among its peaks and ridges and double- or triple-canopied rain forests, the PAVN could rest and reform.

The 1st Calvary first landed artillery support and then, with a huge complement of helicopters, landed the brigade to attack the PAVN where they least expected it, behind their lines near the Ia Drang River. In a bloody battle from November 14 to 19, the PAVN launched wave after wave of attacks on the brigade and the one that replaced it, and were defeated each time by concentrated fire from the M-16s, M-60 machine guns, and 81mm mortars of the American brigade, and the napalm, bombs, and missiles of American aircraft, including B-52s and helicopter gunships. By the end of the battle on November 18, the PAVN were forced to retreat toward Cambodia with the loss of about eighteen hundred men.

That did not end it for the defeated PAVN battalions, however. A mass of helicopters transported an ARVN force of four airborne battalions commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ngo Quang Truong, assisted by the American Advisor Major Norman Schwarzkopf, to attack the fleeing PAVN north of the Ia Drang River. With the support of twenty-four 105 howitzers set up at two landing zones within range, they strove to prevent as many enemy as possible from reaching their Cambodian sanctuary.

Skirmishes erupted as soon as they were dropped into their landing zones, and they pursued and badly cut up what remained of General Man's battalions. The artillery was especially effective, killing at least 127 troops, while the remaining threw down their weapons and ran. Days later, the last survivors of General Man's three battalions entered Cambodia.

General Giap's strategy to lay siege to Plei Me, draw out the Americans, and ambush the Relief Force from Pleiku, then roll over Plei Me and Pleiku, failed. Yes, they had "lured the tiger out of the mountains." And they got mauled as a result. But he could live with that. For the first time, complete and fully armed PAVN battalions had fully engaged American forces in battle. They had learned much about how Americans fought, and their courage. Most especially, they had learned much about the deployment and tactical use of American artillery and air power.

But Dewu knew nothing about this. He would not know about the success of his Relief Force. He would not cheer the great defeat of the communist battalions. As his M113 approached the defensive works

surrounding the Special Forces camp at Plei Me, as it rumbled past the last remaining shrubs on the right side of the highway, he stood watch in the hatch with his BAR resting on the edge of the hatch.

My first battles, he thought. Nothing can prepare you for them—not for the deafening sounds, the exhausting heat, the stench of fear and death. Not for the confusion, and especially not for what a grenade, mortar, or machine gun can do to the human body. The written description of combat or the special effects of a war movie are to real combat as an erotic book is to real lovemaking. Well, Jia Li, your worry about my early death in battle was needless. I survi—

The sniper's bullet entered Dewu's right eye and ripped through his brain.



Shihao had tried to comfort his mother when the government's death notice came. She lay grief-stricken on her bed for days, alternatively sobbing and moaning and refusing to eat. He had tried to help her, to soothe her, to hold her, and only when he was alone did he quietly cry himself, until he had no tears.

He missed his father terribly. He kept a much-treasured photo of him in his wallet, and he had it enlarged and framed. It was over his chest of drawers at the foot of his bed, where he could easily see it when he went to bed or got up in the morning.

Chapter 26

1968–1970

Saigon

Wang Shihao

Hanh was his age and a neighbor, living one house over from his. They had both graduated in 1968 with a baccalaureate, and went on to Saigon University, he to major in the School of Law, she in the School of Pharmacy. The university accepted anyone with a high school diploma.

Shihao passed her on his bike as she rode her own, and he paid little attention to her. She was just another lovely student he occasionally saw on the Saigon University campus. With nods, hellos, and smiles, they simply acknowledged that they were neighbors.

Then her bike chain broke in a way that could not easily be fixed. She walked over to his house wearing a robin's egg blue shirt over blue jeans, her long black hair pulled back tightly along the side of her head by ivory combs.

"Can I have a ride to school on your bicycle?" she asked him. No shyness. Unusually direct for a young Vietnamese girl.

He liked that, and he was happy to help her, and also take her back home on his bike after she'd finished her work in the university library for the day. Neither of their schools required attendance in class and the professors sold their lecture notes.

Her closeness on the bike, her sweet jasmine smell, her soft voice in its South Vietnamese accent, especially when interspersed with French, the language in which pharmacy was taught at Saigon University, all sparked his interest. It deepened when they arrived at her house and she invited him to have tea with her, even though her parents were at work—a heretical thing to do. It had a rebellious, almost erotic tinge to it. He liked that even more.

For some reason, the repair of her bicycle took much longer than it should have, and the two of them riding to and from school on his bi-

cycle became commonplace. So did their afternoon discussions and increasing intimacy. Still, it was not love for him until she suddenly yelled for him to stop the bike one day, jumped off, and went over to an old lady sitting on the curb with two big bags on each side of her. She wore a shawl over her head, with a tuft of gray hair sticking out, and two denim shirts and black pants, and her bruised toes stuck out of her slippers at the bottom. Everything was meticulously clean.

Hanh sat down on the curb next to the old woman, put one arm around her shoulders, and asked with compassion in her voice, "How are you today, Tam?"

"Oh, okay." She gave a hacking chuckle, then reached beneath her shirt and pulled out a folded dollar bill. She waved it in front of Hanh, and exclaimed in a surprisingly firm and feminine, though scratchy, voice, "I get from Yankee soldier. See? He good soldier. Feel sad for Tam." She barked out another chuckle that bounced her body up and down.

Hanh motioned Shihao over with her free hand, and said, "Tam, I want you to meet my friend Shihao."

Tam looked up, and he almost gasped. Her face was deeply lined, and her mouth hung askew, with gaps where some teeth should be. One eye was barely open and seemed to look in another direction, while the other was yellow-rimmed and bloodshot. Its depths seemed to reflect all the misery the poor woman must have been put through.

"I'm happy to meet you," Shihao said, unconsciously giving her a slight bow.

Hanh gently rubbed the woman's back, and asked, "Would you sell the dollar to me? I've always wanted one, you know, as a souvenir."

Tam held the dollar close to her chest, tilted her head at Hanh, and replied, "Oh, this is valuable. I don't know if I can sell it to you."

Hanh opened her purse and looked in her wallet. She took out a handful of piasters and asked Shihao, "Can I borrow what you have?"

Shihao opened his own wallet and took out all the piasters he had, and handed them to Hanh. She took them, quickly counted them, and added them to her own. She held them all out to Tam. It all was four or fives times the near 360 piasters the dollar was worth.

"Here you are, Tam. This is for your dollar. Please hold the dollar for me for now, okay?"

Tam took the money and crushed it and the dollar to her chest with another body shaking chuckle. "I will keep dollar for you. Do not forget that I have. Okay?"

Tears trickled down Hanh's cheeks as she stood, leaned over, and kissed Tam on the cheek. She took Shihao's hand.

As she led him back to the bike, he looked over his shoulder at Tam. "Goodbye, Tam."

She didn't appear to hear him. She seemed to be chuckling to herself.

At the bike, Hanh put her elbows on the seat, her head in her hands, and cried silently into them while Shihao held her to him with one arm. Finally she looked at him, her tears still flowing, and mourned, "She was a beautiful and very talented violinist. She is . . . oh Shihao, she is only forty-two years old. Her husband was killed in the army. So was her oldest son. Her younger son joined the Viet Cong and was captured, tortured, and died in prison. She was then picked up by the security police and tortured for information about her son's friends. During that her only daughter was raped and then disappeared— she thinks she's in a brothel somewhere, serving American soldiers. Now, nobody wants to have anything to do with her. It's not fair, Shihao, it's not fair." She shuddered, stood straight, and looked at the woman sitting on the curb, humming to herself.

"This can't go on," Hanh declared.

Shihao never remembered what he said in return, or the bike ride to her home, or what they had discussed that evening. Not even whether it was about Tam. He just remembered it as when he knew, like sunlight bursting through the clouds, that he loved her. And somehow it became accepted that they would get married.

They announced to their families their intent to get married during the summer semester break. Her father was an international tradesman and her mother kept his company's books. He had no objection to their marriage. Even though Southern Vietnamese believed themselves superior to Chinese, Cambodians, Malaysians, and other Asians, his international trade had given him an unusual tolerance of ethnic and national differences. Except for the Americans, whom he condemned for coarsening Vietnamese culture with their jukeboxes, Coca-Cola, incredible wealth, and the beer parlors and prostitutes they spawned.

It was Shihao's mother who expressed unhappiness over the marriage proposal. "She is southern Vietnamese," she lamented. They are too easygoing, undisciplined, and lazy."

"Not Hanh," Shihao insisted. "She is going to the university to become a professional pharmacist. She works hard at her studies."

Jia Li stood staring at him. Finally she held out both hands palm down, crossed them, and quickly swished them to each side, creating a temporary vacuum in the air while she shouted, "Pham Hanh is not Chinese."

Shihao put his hands on his hips and leaned toward her. Barely controlling his voice, he reminded her, “You are more Vietnamese than Chinese. You are third generation Vietnamese. I am fourth. You love Vietnam, as you told me. So, is it not time for us to share our heritage with the Vietnamese?”

She threw up her hands and cried, “What can I do? You are of a new generation. You are hardly Sino-Vietnamese now. You have been debauched by American movies, television programs, and perverted magazines.”

She sighed, and a tear rolled down her cheek. Shihao remembered that tear above all. It mesmerized him as she said, her voice on the edge of quavering, “I gave up the tradition of picking your wife for you as soon as I realized what the Saigon urban culture and its Americanization has done to you. That, and your father’s independent spirit. I love you, my son. Your happiness and success mean more to me than an old woman’s old beliefs. So, I will accept Hanh.”

He hugged her and thanked her, and she gripped him tightly for a moment, then stepped back and waved her finger at him. “When she moves in with us after the wedding, I will try to make her at home—that is, when she shows due respect to her mother-in-law.”



Hanh’s active concern for welfare and human rights soon led her to consider joining the Student Union, which to her eyes often demonstrated for such causes. But to Shihao, the School of Pharmacy was riddled with students who supported the procommunist National Liberation Front (NLF), or were communist, and Shihao felt certain that they had misled her about the Student Union.

“Why do you want to join with those communists?” he demanded.

Her face turned to iron, eyes narrowed and chin thrust at him, which was so much a part of their arguments. “They are not communists. You see ‘communist’ everywhere. The leaders of the Student Union are trying to find a third way, a solution to this damnable war that is neither communist nor that of our corrupt government. Why don’t you understand that?”

He shot back, “You can’t be so naïve. You will help the communists win. Don’t you understand what that means?”

They had been eating lunch in the university cafeteria. Even though Hanh had not finished eating, she stood, her eyes tearing, and snapped, “Thousands of people are being killed while our government officials

grow fat on bribes; many more are dying from disease and poverty while these officials get drunk in their rich houses. The American puppet masters, with their corrupt culture, lord it over us while our officials bow to them. I am not a communist, but there has to be an alternative, and I will work for it. Get that through your thick head.” She turned, knocking over a water glass with her swinging purse, and walked away from the table, her head high.

She joined the Student Union. Afterward, she told him—rather, declared—that she would participate in the Student Union mass demonstrations against the government. He was ready with information on the union’s leaders. “They are communists, or NLF sympathizers.” And he briefly described their backgrounds.

“So what,” Hanh said, “even if true. But that is government propaganda that you accept without question. If communists were going to demonstrate against raping children, you would not participate because the leaders are communists? That’s stupid.”

“We are talking about these demonstrations. They will weaken the government, and provide more ammunition for those working for the communists who want to bring down the government. This is not an issue of raping children. It is whether you support the communist war on us or not.”

“You are brainwashed,” she hissed.

He could not get through to her. She actively participated in the demonstrations, holding up a sign that said *Third Way! American Puppets Resign*, and screaming it out at the police who blocked the demonstrators from marching on Tu Do Street. She pumped her fist in the air for the large number of foreign reporters and photographers.

He had no sympathy for these NLF and procommunist people she not only consorted with, but aided. He remembered his youth too well, and still often thought of his friend Trai and his parents, Hoang Loi and Bian, whom the communists had sentenced to isolation. But most of all he remembered his father, Dewu. He would still be alive and doing well in Cholon, were it not for his fear of the communists taking over South Vietnam. He had volunteered for the army when he would never have been drafted, not for combat anyway.

Now his fiancée was getting deeply involved in the student anti-government movement and demonstrations and, as he saw it, in effect aiding the communist cause. At first he had been appreciative that Hanh’s social consciousness extended into politics. He liked that she had an interest in the world outside of pharmacy and social welfare and, unlike most Vietnamese women, was becoming actively involved in

university and national political issues. But as her activism became more and more associated with the radicals in the Student Union, he became more and more concerned by the direction it was taking.

As they argued about it more and more, her accusations almost became a mantra. “You are blind to the corruption of the Ngyen Van Thieu regime, and his bureaucrats from top to bottom. The whole edifice has to be overturned and a new, independent and free South Vietnam put in its place.”

He replied with his own mantra. “Better the corruption than rule by the communists. You get corruption then also, along with total repression and death.”

Recently, she was adding something far more dangerous to her argument. “Come on, so you had a bad childhood in North Vietnam. Those who mistreated you were bad communists. Bad people exist under any system. But we are promised by Radio Hanoi and the NLF Radio Giai Phong that we will have our freedom and independence if the communists win. And has not the NLF made this their reason for existence? Are they not promoting our independence at every opportunity? And are they not respected by the North?”

When he heard her openly favoring a communist victory, he replied, “We are free and independent now. You and the Buddhist monks can demonstrate. They can burn themselves to death to protest government policies, and all the gory details and pictures appear in the newspapers. Do you think the communists would allow such reporting? You can even meet with and be seen on the streets with those communist students Huynh Tan Man and Nguten Tron Quang Nghi. Why do you say we are not free?”

“Because the military and regime thugs control voting and everything else outside of Saigon, and only in Saigon is the press free. It’s the Americans. They have taken over the country and swamped us with their crude culture, and they control our government. It is colonialism again. We have never been free. We fought the French for independence and got the Americans. I agree with the NLF’s program of *Hoa Binh, Tu Do, Doc Lap, Trung Lap, Hanh Phuc*—Peace, Freedom, Independence, Neutrality, Social Welfare. Even Ho Chi Minh has said we should all have, ‘Independence, Freedom, Happiness.’ Sure, he’s a communist, but he was first a Vietnamese.”

In spite of her seduction by the communists, he tried to accept it. He loved her. When there was a huge increase in the price of paper and the Student Union accused the government of trying to suppress freedom of speech by making it difficult to publish, she joined their protests and

demonstrations without telling him. When he found out from one of their friends, he objected, but did not make a big point of it. But when she went out on that crazy, month-long student strike engineered by the Student Union after Mam and other students were arrested as communists, he opposed the strike. They had a screaming fight over it.

When she wrote an article for the pro-NLF student newspaper *Tu Quyet* —*Self-Determination*, calling for American troops to go home, and supporting the Third Way between the current regime and communism, that same “Third Way” called for by the NLF, she didn’t show it to him until it was published.

“What’s this?” he asked when she handed it to him.

“An article I wrote. Congratulate me. I’m a published writer now.”

Shihao began reading it while Hanh stood nearby, clearly hoping for his approval. He read only halfway through and skimmed the rest. He put it down gently and tried to control his temper, but he felt the anger building up.

He lost control and smashed his fist down on the table. “How could you?” he hissed. He picked up her article, crumpling it between his fingers, and slapped it down on the table. “You . . . you have gone over to the other side. This is *do khung*—crazy. You condemn our government, you condemn the Americans who are helping us. But you don’t condemn the communists. You favor overthrowing our government. All in favor of your fucking Third Way. Third Way? Communist way!”

As he ranted, her eyes grew large and she covered her mouth with one hand. Then she screamed at him, “Capitalist pig!” and ran out.

That was the beginning of Shihao’s awareness of the decision he eventually would have to make.

Chapter 27

April 1970
Saigon

Wang Shihao

Shihao pushed away uneaten his bowl of tiny green eggplants soaked in chilies, a few garlic cloves, and *nuoc mam*—fish sauce. Trembling, nauseous, he also ignored his French coffee. He put his elbow on the waxed tablecloth, leaned his head into his hand, and stared out the window of the Givral Cafe at the neoclassical building of the National Assembly across Tu Do Street.

He looked over at the table where sat the pro-National Liberation Front (NLF) Student Union leaders Nguyen Van Thang, more a nationalist than an NLF or communist supporter Shihao guessed, and that very vocal favorite of the international journalists, pro-NLF activist Doan Van Toai.

Hanh had not informed him of what was about to occur, nor how Thang and Toai were directing it from their table here. Shihao noted the young people his age who came in, talked briefly with the two organizers, and left.

He waited for Hanh now. He had picked this time and place so she would be less harsh if she chose to refuse his demand, which he now thought she would do, but fervently hoped she would not. What he at first had found attractive—her enthusiasm, her desire to help others and improve the lives of those around her, her social consciousness—had taken a course that was now destroying him. Lately, as what she was doing became too glaring to deny, he had lost his appetite and had difficulty sleeping.

A sudden “*Chau*—hello” broke through his reflections. A waitress stood next to his table. She looked down at his uneaten food, looked up at him curiously, and asked, “Is something wrong?”

“No,” he answered lamely. Then he sat up straighter and strengthened his voice. “No. I am not as hungry as I thought. Please bring me a bottle of *Ba-Mui-Ba*—Thirty-three beer.” He hoped the beer would settle his stomach.

When the waitress placed the bottle of beer with a glass in front of him, he tipped the bottle to his mouth and took a mouthful of the beer, then held the cold bottle against his cheek. He resumed staring out the window, remembering his happy moments with Hanh, and then the bitter arguments. *I cannot help it*, his anguished thoughts confessed. *I love her. I hope there is still some way to—*

He saw her coming toward the cafe’s glass door with Nguyen Tuan Kiet, who Shihao was sure was an NLF agent. They came in together; Kiet went to the table where the two Union leaders sat, while Hanh came to his table. Shihao’s heart beat rapidly as he watched her walk toward him. He loved her no less now than he did when they got engaged. She had a beautiful, heart-shaped face with luminous eyes, and her long, lacquer-black hair, clasped to the side of her head as usual, fell to her waist. She wore a white silk shirt and black pants. Before she sat down, she glanced over at the leaders’ table where Thang and Toai sat staring at her. She nodded at them and sat in the chair closest to Shihao.

She looked at him, eyes wide, brows slightly raised, and asked in her soft South Vietnamese voice, “Darling, I have to leave shortly. Why do you want to see me here, at this time?”

He broke eye contact, gulped his beer, and then slowly put the bottle down. She did not know he knew, but word got around among students, especially for what was being planned. Yes, even among anti-communists. She and hundreds of other students were about to invade the National Assembly to stage a sit-in. Once he found that out, he had gone directly to one of the leaders and, evincing interest in participating himself, had asked what their demands would be. They wanted the Assembly to commit itself to an unconditional peace, immediate withdrawal of American forces, and South Vietnamese self-determination. As Shihao saw it, a communist victory.

University students were among the elite, highly regarded in Vietnamese culture, more respected as students than they would be when they entered their professions. Therefore, this sit-in and the leaders’ demands would be an event for the world media. He knew opposition forces and the NLF would make a huge thing about it. It would be devastating to the government, and influence American public opinion. He knew that this was why the communists were behind it.

He finally looked into her eyes. She stared at him, her lips slightly parted, her eyebrows raised higher. He knew what he had to say. He had agonized over it for weeks, and now, with what she was about to do, the moment had come. He felt like vomiting again. He'd begun to shake. But he could accept her activism—her procommunism—no more.

“Did you join the NLF?” After so many years, he was surprised that his voice reverted to the northern accent of his youth.

She looked down at the flowery waxed tabletop, then straightened and tilted her head back. “Yes.” She made it sound like a declaration. Then suddenly, her voice turned soft again. “But you must unders—

“You are going to go across the street and participate in the sit-in, right?”

She hesitated, and then narrowed her eyes. “How did you know that?”

“You are going to do this even though it will seriously embarrass the government in the eyes of the world, and help the communists take over South Vietnam?”

“The communists do not intend to take over. They guarantee our indepen—”

“I love you as much as I ever did.” His voice had risen; it sounded to him like one long squeak as he threw at her the words he had to tear from his heart. “I want to marry you and have children by you. But you cannot be my wife and help the communists. If you walk across the street . . .” He tried to stop his lip from quivering. He raised his hand, and as she jerked her head back as though expecting him to smack her, he pointed at the Assembly building. “If you walk across the street and join that *do ngu* sit-in, I never want to see you again.”

His eyes were wet, but he held his head high, and waited.

Her eyes opened wide and she tilted her head, momentarily covering her mouth with her hand. She visibly shuddered before gaining control and putting both hands on her lap. Leaning toward him, she replied firmly, “Darling. You cannot mean that. I love you. But I also love my country and freedom. You must understand.”

He shook his head, suddenly feeling stronger. He stood and told her in a steady voice, “I’m leaving. Come with me to the university now. Me or joining the sit-in. Choose!”

Her face hardened and she crossed her arms. “Go,” she said. “I guess I’ve known deep down all along that you and your corrupt government and your corrupt Americans are all that stand in the way of a truly free and independent Vietnam. Go, and my love be damned.” She looked away.

He quickly strode to the cafe door. There he had to stop and look back. She had got up and was walking toward the organizers' table, where the three seated there were smiling a welcome to her.



The student sit-in was all the organizers had hoped and what Shihao had feared. From then on he avoided the Pharmacy School, he avoided Hanh's home, he avoided any student events that she might attend.

When he told his mother, she surprised him with her response, although he should have expected it. She gave him the same stern look she had when she'd scolded him as a boy for some misdeed. "I did a little investigation of her, and found out what you just told me about her months ago."

Taken aback, he blurted, "You never told me that."

The corners of her mouth lifted slightly to hint at a grin. "Then it would have taken you much longer to break from that procommunist. You are like your father. Stubborn and intelligent. I had to let him find out for himself truths obvious to me. Same with you, my son."

"And if I still planned on marrying her, regardless?"

Across her face flashed an animal look he had rarely seen before. It was almost as though she were pulling her lips back to bare her fangs and warn off a threat to her young one, which in a split second morphed into a ghastly grin, and then morphed again into a slight smile. He caught it all, and a chill swept through him as she said, "You did not. End of story."

Chapter 28

John Banks

He was, as he put it to himself, dragging ass this afternoon. Because of two committee meetings, one in the Department of History over changes in department undergraduate courses, and another in the College of Arts and Sciences over student demands for more representation on faculty committees, he had no time for a nap, and barely time to wolf down his lunch. And the last class lecture had not gone well. He had misspoken several times and had to consult his outline, and actually went to his notes in his briefcase more than once.

He sighed. *The trouble with taking naps is that the body gets used to it, and so when one doesn't nap . . . Hell with it. I'll do my best, and if I get too wooly headed, I'll turn the class into a seminar and let the students argue among themselves.*

"Good afternoon, students," he announced with false enthusiasm. "Any questions about your reading?"

There were none. "Okay, the United States to the rescue. Last time I concluded that South Vietnam was unable to defend itself against the North's overt and covert war against it. Defeat and the communization of all Vietnam seemed inevitable. Clearly, then, only massive U.S. involvement held hope of saving the South from communism. And so it appeared to President Johnson's administration. If the American foreign policy of containment—containing communism in its then current boundaries—meant anything, if U.S. defense treaty commitments were to be credible, the United States must save the South.

"In August of 1964, they got their excuse. North Vietnam patrol boats allegedly attacked two U.S. destroyers patrolling international waters in the Gulf of Tonkin. What actually happened is controversial, for what was called an attack may have been mistaking radar blips of the ships' wake for torpedo boats. In any case, torpedo boats had clearly launched an attack against one of the same destroyers in those waters two days before.

“President Johnson moved swiftly. While launching retaliatory air attacks against the boats’ bases, he also presented Congress with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Although falling short of a declaration of war, it would give the President a blank check to fully join the Vietnam War in defense of the South. With President Johnson and much of the elite establishment in Washington leading the charge and with strong public support shown by the polls, Congress promptly passed the resolution.

“The result was that in the following years, the President poured hundreds of thousands of American troops and massive supplies of light and heavy military equipment into South Vietnam.”

He stopped and reached for his outline. He was pleased that this subject—the war and democide that he had studied for his dissertation and now made the center of his career—had an excitement to it that cleared his mind. Still, he had to consult his outline for exact figures.

Periodically glancing at it, he continued. “This formidable American effort, which reached its peak of 543,400 troops in April 1969, shored up the South Vietnam government and achieved a military victory on the ground. The Viet Cong were badly defeated after their abortive countrywide Tet Offensive of January to February 1968, in which they lost thirty-two thousand guerrillas. More important, the Viet Cong revolutionary infrastructure that had been built up in the villages and urban areas surfaced during the Tet Offensive in many places and was virtually destroyed. Overall, possibly some fifty thousand National Liberation Front cadre were killed. Moreover, by 1968 South Vietnam’s military was considerably restrengthened by U.S. aid and training, and numbered around 819,000 personnel. It regained control over a considerable portion of the country’s population.

“The year 1968 was the turning point in the war, but not in the direction one might suppose. By then, the propaganda of communist front groups in the West, particularly in the United States, was pervasive, especially when recycled by the North’s sympathizers and those opposed to the war, often in the press and through mass demonstrations and political theater. With two hundred to nearly three hundred U.S. dead returning home from Vietnam in body bags every week, deep schisms already had appeared in U.S. public and particularly elite opinion.

“Before 1968, what held the war’s support base together in the United States was the administration’s promise that the war was being won, that there was light at the end of the tunnel, that America needed only to stay the course. But the rosy assurances looked like lies with the Viet Cong’s obvious ability to launch the 1968 countrywide Tet Offensive.”

Good, a hand. “Yes, Miss Shaeffer.”

“What is Tet?”

“Tet is the Vietnamese New Year celebrations taking place during the first seven days of a new year’s new moon, which may be in January or February. It is the most important holiday in many Asian countries, including China. Okay?”

When Miss Shaeffer nodded, John hesitated and then asked the class, “Where was I?”

“Tet,” a student yelled out.

“Thanks,” John replied, grinning along with the students.

“Our response to the Tet Offensive,” a student in front said with a smile.

“Ah yes,” John said. His excitement over teaching this subject collapsed with his forgetfulness. *Jesus*, he thought, *I’ve got to do something about my sleep.*

“To go on, while few Americans saw the magnitude of the Viet Cong’s defeat, what they did see, as universally displayed in the news media, was the Viet Cong’s bloody street-by-street occupation of the large city of Hue and the battle to evict them, the battles in the streets of many other cities, and the attack on the American Embassy in Saigon. That was it. This offensive, coupled with the North’s largely successful struggle for the hearts and minds of American intellectuals, won the only battle that mattered—the political one. The elite establishment’s support for the war, and that of Congress, was finally and irretrievably shattered. To the American people, the war now appeared unwinnable, or in any case unsustainable.

“From that time on, it was only a matter of when and how the United States would withdraw from the war. President Nixon, whose election was partly due to his promise to bring the war to an end, gradually withdrew U.S. troops, and redoubled efforts to reach a political settlement with North Vietnam. The resulting Paris Peace Agreement and cease-fire was signed with the North in January 1973, and the last U.S. troops were withdrawn the following March.

“This peace agreement in which, among other things, the North recognized the sovereignty of South Vietnam, turned out to be merely a fig leaf for the American defeat. Despite the promises the United States had made to the South about not letting it fall, or threats to the North about violations of the agreement, the United States not only withdrew militarily but in spirit, as well. While the North openly violated the agreement and prepared its forces for the final offensive against the South, the U.S. Congress voted in June to deny President Nixon any

funds for use of the military in or around or over Indochina. And Congress reduced military aid to Saigon's forces from \$2.27 billion in fiscal year 1973 to \$700 million in fiscal year 1975.

“Ironically, for a war that was fought so much in the shadows by guerrillas and unconventional forces, by assassination and abduction, by subversion and terror, and by front groups and propaganda, it was ended by a massive, conventional military offensive. When an attack on the Central Highlands in early March 1975, intended as only part of a two-year strategy to defeat the South, ended in the rout of Southern forces, the North immediately deployed additional forces east to the coast and then south toward Saigon. The South's forces saw whole divisions disintegrating through lack of coordination and incompetent leadership, at the very top and in the field. With their forces in disarray, the South could put up only spotty resistance. Saigon fell in April 1975.

“So this Vietnam War ended with defeat for the United States and South Vietnam, and victory for North Vietnam. It would not mean peace for these poor people. Vietnam, now totally ruled by the North, would soon go to war against Cambodia, and consequently would be invaded by China. And most important in the number killed, there would be a war of the North against the South Vietnamese people after their defeat. But that is a future lecture. The next ones will be on the democide committed by the North, the South, and the Americans against the South Vietnamese people during the Vietnam War.”

John looked at his watch. He felt too tired to continue. “I'll have to leave a little early today. You have your assigned reading in Clement. It is especially important for the next lecture, and I may ask you some questions on it. Dismissed.”

He had not even stolen a glance at Miss Phim.

Chapter 29

April 30, 1975
Saigon

Jiang Jia Li

She knew Saigon was in danger. The booming sounds of battle had been close for days. Then last night, as she, Shihao, and his new wife Hua Jue Yan were discussing how and whether to protect their rattan store if the PAVN tried to take Saigon itself, the television that had been on in the background suddenly drew their attention. Following notice of a special announcement, Minister of Information Ly Qui Chung came on and read an official government communiqué. It ordered all ARVN units to stop fighting and lay down their weapons.

Defeat! The communists had won. Soon the dark streets filled with the sounds of cars, trucks, motor bikes, bicycles, and crowds of people carrying what they could as all tried to escape Saigon and move south.

She hardly slept afterward. Even now, in the light of midday, she could not believe what had happened. The communists were about to take over, with all the fear and horror that would surely follow. She heard the *wopwopwop!* of American helicopters flying overhead, ferrying escaping American civilians and Vietnamese government and military personnel out to American carriers at sea; she heard the *boom! boom!* and *ratatatat!* of the fight at the Saigon airport between PAVN troops and the ARVN paratroopers who refused to surrender. These should have dispelled her disbelief.

But Jia Li registered none of it. She had drawn into herself.

This morning, as she did six days a week, she had come to work in her rattan store. She now sat at one of her new rattan tables with Shihao and Yan with a radio between them, tuned to a Saigon news station. They heard only a continual repetition of the order by General Duong

Van Minh that all ARVN troops lay down their arms. Finally, in late morning a government official announced that PAVN troops would be entering the city, and that they should be welcomed peacefully.

The streets outside had grown as silent as the store. Jia Li fought with herself to accept this terrible truth. She had been sure that as Qui Non, Hue, Da-nang, then Phan Rang had surrendered north of Saigon, the United States would return and again save the South from this awful danger. She could not understand how they could have fought the communists for so many years only to let South Vietnam fall to them now.

Yes, she and Shihao and Yan could have fled the country. But although she was of Chinese descent, Vietnam was her country; she had been born here, her roots were here, her parents were buried here. And where would they flee, anyway? Neighboring Cambodia was in the midst of a civil war with the communist Khmer Rouge guerrillas, and it looked as if they would soon take over that country, if they had not already, just like North Vietnam was taking over the South. Laos also seemed ready to fall to the communists. Fleeing to communist China was ridiculous. And it had been too late for months to try to get a passport from the collapsing South Vietnamese government, even if they could afford the bribes by selling their store. Even visas from the United States or France were impossible. They had not been associated with the American military in any way except selling them furniture. They had no skills other countries would want. They would be poor refugees with an unknown future in an alien land whose language they could not understand.

Hua Yan had also refused to leave. Shihao thought they were dangerously wrong even in 1972. Then when the Americans finally withdrew all their troops last year, he had insisted, "We must leave. We can sell everything and bribe officials to get a passport to fly out. We must. When the communists take over it will be hell."

Jia Li and Yan refused to consider it. Yan exclaimed, "Vietnam is my home. Like you, I may be Sino-Vietnamese, but I'm Vietnamese in my soul."

Yan's family stayed. Her father, a small producer of *nuoc mam* fish sauce, insisted, "I produce the sauce everybody uses. What are the communists going to do to me, take my sauce away? Then what are they going to use on their food?"

So, although one semester away from graduation in 1972, Shihao had quit law school when it became obvious to him that the United States planned to withdraw all its troops and end its military aid. He said then that it was only a matter of time before the North's conquest

of South Vietnam, and he believed that all who became professionals under the so-called American lackey South Vietnam regimes would be subject to arrest and especially harsh treatment.

He took over from Jia Li the management of their rattan store and the pick up and delivery of furniture, using the small three-wheeled Lambretta truck he bought for that purpose. Jia Li continued to work in the store and Yan helped when necessary, although her main responsibility was cooking their meals and taking care of their house, which was within walking distance of the store.

Jia Li became aware of the strange stillness that had settled on the street. She sat absolutely still, ignoring the tears running down her cheeks and the pain of her eyes, which she knew were swollen and red. She looked at Shihao, and saw only a blur shaped by her tears. She asked rhetorically in a voice that sounded rasping and broken, “Our country, our freedom, our lives—they are over, aren’t they?”

Wiping his own eyes, Shihao gently placed his hand on her shoulder. “Not our lives. We are nobodies. We just have to learn to live a new life.” He looked at her carefully, moved to hold one of her hands in both of his, and said softly, “I know you do not want to watch the North Vietnamese soldiers march in. I know how much you hate the communists, as I do. I will never forget my friend Trai.”

He stood, looked out the window at the nearly empty street, and continued. “But I’m curious to see what they look like. We’ll be back right afterward.” He nodded to Yan, who rose and moved to give Jia Li a little hug. Then she headed to the door with Shihao.

Wang Shihao

Once they were on Le Van Duyer Street next to the store, heading for broad Thong Nhut Boulevard in front of the President’s Palace, down which the victorious communist soldiers were sure to come, Yan scolded him. “Is this not a little cruel at this moment, leaving her alone like that to grieve over what happened? I bet she is thinking of the death of your father, whom I know she loved very much.”

“You do not understand my mother as I do. In certain moments she wants to be alone with her grief. I know what she will do while we are gone—something she would not have done if we stayed. She will close the store and go home to her bedroom and talk to my father’s picture. I wanted to leave so she could do this. So we might as well also see the communist *con khi*—monkeys make their entrance.”

Yan was quiet for awhile as they walked, sometimes dodging around ARVN uniforms and weapons discarded on the sidewalk. Then she asked, a glimmer of hope in her voice, "Are the communists really that bad? Their radio programs from Hanoi always talk about peace and freedom and uplifting the people. And especially about independence for the South and a 'Third Way' between North and South. And we have had a lot of South Vietnamese politicians, journalists, and professors—" she pronounced the last word with respect "—who say the same thing."

Shihao looked at her uneasily. She reminded him of his former fiancée, who had been in Chi Hoa prison for the last year because of her procommunist activism, which sometimes had turned violent. Yan was a typical southern Sino-Vietnamese girl. Thin, with the fashionably long, lustrous black hair and large, velvety eyes with long lashes; she had a graceful, willowy way about her, like a cat. By contrast he was swarthy looking, tall, and barrel-chested—unusual for Sino-Vietnamese, since they usually had migrated from southern China. He had the strong face and body characteristic of Manchurian or northern Chinese. As he grew older his father Dewu had been amazed by their different physiques, blaming it on his great grandfather, who had been an imperial officer from the north serving in Canton before defecting to join the Boxers during the Boxer Rebellion, then fleeing with the whole Wang family to Vietnam.

Shihao said again what he had been telling her since their first discussion about the war. "Don't believe anything the communists say. It's all lies. I've told you what I remember about my life in the North, about my friend Trai, and then what my father told me."

"I know, sweetheart, but I find it hard to believe that everything the communists say would be such lies." She looked at him askance and put her hand in his. "Soon we'll find out the truth. In any case, we are nothing to them. There is no reason for them to do anything to—"

She stopped, distracted, as they passed a store obviously being looted—its plate glass windows were broken, and people ran out carrying goods. Shihao pulled her across the street and they walked in silence for several blocks. They heard the distant rumble of trucks and the clanking of tanks before they saw them

They were the PAVN trucks and T-54 tanks of the 203rd Armored Brigade, accompanied by soldiers of the 116th Regiment, some riding in the back of trucks with their rifles ready, some on the tanks, some marching in with their AK-47s, RPGs, and Type 56 assault rifles on their shoulders. The soldiers wore green uniforms and pith helmets.

Among them all bobbed a mixture of NLF, Viet Cong, and North Vietnam flags. Also marching in columns were soldiers in the black pajamas and soft, floppy hats of the NLF and Viet Cong. The soldiers soon reached Doc Lap Palace, where they raised a Viet Cong flag. There were few people to greet them, although communist flags were appearing in front of some buildings.

As the dust and exhaust from the passing vehicles and soldiers enveloped them, Shihao sat down on the curb and vomited between his legs. “Oh *am bo tat*—the merciful Buddha,” he moaned, “how could this happen?”

Yan immediately moved to crouch in front of him and shield him from the view of the soldiers. She pulled on his arm. “Quick, let’s go before they see you.”

He rose, turning his back on the soldiers as he did so, and with head high and Yan’s arm in his, he walked down a side street. All he could mumble was “*Cho de*—son of a bitch, *Cho de, cho de.*”

Jiang Jia Li

“*Nam do a di da phat*—may god protect us,” she cried to the empty store. There would be no business today and she wanted to be at home—their home, Dewu’s home—at an atrocious time like this. So she left a note for Shihao, closed and locked the store, and walked to their two-bedroom house. It was smaller than the home she and Dewu had in the North, but it was substantial enough, with electricity and cold and hot running water from a heater in a corner of the kitchen. It was a mansion compared to the shacks and cardboard boxes on Phan Van Khoe Street, near the Binh Tay Market, where many Sino-Vietnamese refugees from the cities and towns overrun by the North Vietnamese army lived, and where they had lived when they first came to Cholon.

Where they had *all* lived, until the government informed her that Dewu had been killed in action. Images and thoughts tumbled through her mind. *No, no, I could not allow that to happen to my son, too. . . I had to save him . . .* When he became of draft age, Jia Li had spent some of her secret savings and bribed the draft official to exempt Shihao. *It was a selfish thing, very selfish.* She never told Shihao what she’d done; she knew he would go into the army willingly and fight like his father had. But she had sacrificed her husband in defending this country; she would not sacrifice her son as well.

She entered their home, Dewu's home, and went to her bedroom. She took Dewu's framed picture down from the wall and sat on the bed where they had slept together. Holding his picture to her cheek, she grieved. "Oh Dewu, my love, I miss you so much. But I am glad you are not alive to live under them again. You tried to stop them. You fought for our freedom. It is not your fault that our government failed us, that the Americans failed us. You tried, my love, and I hope with that your spirit will find peace."

She hugged the picture tightly to her chest and collapsed on her side in a fetal position around it, her tears wetting the bed.

Chapter 30

John Banks

He had forgotten to set his computer alarm and the extra half-hour he'd slept made him late for his last class. The nap didn't make him feel any better. He entered his class to lecture on Vietnam wishing he could go back to his apartment and sleep. He now was certain that he had to do something about this.

Fortunately what he wanted to say was all nicely packed into his mind for unloading. This lecture and the next one were the core of his interest in Vietnam, and he didn't want to screw it up

He entered the classroom just on time, with students again straggling in after him. "Good afternoon, students."

"Good afternoon, Professor Banks," the usual ones replied, which didn't include Miss Phim. *But she wouldn't*, he thought, *being in the back*.

"Last time I dealt with the combat, the military aspect of the Vietnam War. It was deadly, cruel, and often savagely fought. Overall, including the pre-Vietnam War guerrilla period and the war itself, it ended in 1975 with about 2.9 million killed on all sides. That was war as we know it historically and traditionally—gun against gun, shell against shell, general against general. However, there was also a different kind of war going on. That was fought against civilians trying to go about their ordinary lives. That is, a war whose prime weapon was democide—outright mass murder. It was fought as though the various Hague and Geneva Conventions defining the laws of war were never signed and ratified by nations. And they were not signed by North or South Vietnam."

John had a three-page outline this time, typed in a very small nine-point font. He picked up the outline and held it in one hand to consult for place names and figures—and to wave like a weapon when punctuating a point. He glanced at it before continuing.

"During the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese forces or their Viet Cong front continued their terror campaign against South Vietnamese

civilians, amounting to 24,756 incidents just from 1965 to 1972. This number covers terrorist executions, as when the Viet Cong entered a government village at night, rounded up officials and civilians on a list, brutally tortured and murdered them, and then disappeared into the jungle. But it does not take into account the continuous, day-by-day terror in the Southern provinces they controlled. The Viet Cong arrested people even for such crimes as having close relatives who worked for the government or who were unsympathetic to the communists.”

He glanced at his outline. “Note one captured Viet Cong roster of those arrested from 1965 to early 1967 in seven villages of the Duc Pho district, Quang Ngai province. Among those labeled government agents, spies, policemen, soldiers, and the like were people characterized as distorting communism; sympathizing with the enemy; spreading rumors to belittle, speaking evil of, or attacking revolutionary policy; opposing the denunciation campaign; opposing cadre; being the wife of an enemy soldier; having a husband who is an enemy tyrant or a son who joined the enemy army, and the like. Many of these people faced execution, along with others tagged as tyrants and spies.

“One list of such executed from 1963 to 1964 in Phu Yen province included members of South Vietnam political parties, a number one cruel village policeman, an individual who had left the liberated area and who was cruel and stubborn, and a district agent who had incited Catholics to counter the revolution.

“Even the wives or relatives of South Vietnamese soldiers were sometimes assassinated. A captured Viet Cong document, for example, revealed that in Binh Tan district the wives of two government officials were murdered; murdered also in Duc Hoa district, according to another captured report, were the dependents of two South Vietnamese military men.

“The Viet Cong carried out a particularly gruesome massacre when they temporarily occupied the old city of Hue during the Tet Offensive. They brought with them prepared lists of victims that they sought out and arrested. In short time the victims were shot, beheaded, buried alive, or tortured to death. Hundreds of such victims were found in nineteen mass graves around Hue. The communists themselves estimated they murdered in this way around three thousand people.

“Throughout the war, all such murder was planned and systematically conducted by North Vietnam. As part of its own organization and through its operatives placed in key positions, its Ministry of Public Security ran the Viet Cong Security Service, whose members in the years around 1968 reached over twenty-five thousand. It was this or-

ganization that determined who would be assassinated, executed, murdered, and otherwise punished throughout the South, and then carried out the dirty work.

“Aside from those assassinated or arrested and executed, many civilians were also killed by North Vietnamese or Viet Cong mines or booby traps. In Thua-Thien province in 1968, for example, a water buffalo tripped a booby trap and killed the twelve-year-old boy walking alongside; another killed a civilian clearing the area around a grave site. As for mines, special ones made to only explode at the weight of a bus were placed on civilian bus routes. This was no little matter, since buses were a major means of transportation between villages. In one case, for example, twenty-five civilians were killed and five wounded when a bus hit a mine.

“Moreover, civilians were fired upon directly. Buses and other civilian vehicles were often raked by automatic fire or mortared from the roadside. Civilians were murdered indiscriminately in ambushes, or died when cities, hamlets, and villages in government areas were shelled and mortared. Twice in March 1969, rockets attacked civilian areas in Saigon, killing fifty-five people and wounding 117.

“Then there was the Viet Cong practice of swimming in a civilian sea. They would set up their bunkers in villages and attack from the midst of helpless civilians. Using innocent civilians for protection is in itself a war crime, and makes the Viet Cong and thus the North criminally responsible for the resulting civilian dead. It is a form of democide.

“They would also directly attack villages and hamlets and murder the inhabitants, including children, to create panic and social chaos in the area that the communists then could exploit. A particularly gruesome example was their December 1967 attack with flame throwers on Dak Son, a Montagnard hamlet. They murdered 252 Montagnards. In a similar attack in June the next year against the Son Tra hamlet in Quang Ngai province, they murdered seventy-eight civilians. I could spend the rest of our session mentioning one such attack after another.

“To show that the government could not provide protection, the Viet Cong even attacked refugee camps or columns of refugees fleeing battle areas. They practiced this particularly criminal policy throughout the war. In one such attack on the Kon Horing highlander refugee camp in Kontum province, they left sixty-eight dead refugees. All this murdering of refugees was by order of Communist Party high officials. For the early 1969 attacks, for example, the party’s Decision No. 9 directed that refugee camps be the main targets for attack.

“When the communists attacked civilian areas or population centers, it was their policy to leave wounded civilians to die from their wounds, no doubt often slowly and painfully.

“As morally reprehensible as all this was, even more abominable was the use of quotas. Again. As the North did over its own people in its deadly land reform. As an example, consider a secret 1969 Viet Cong directive for the Can Duoc District Unit, Subregion 3, which specified for the month of June the following quotas for the units it covered.” John read the quote from his outline: “‘kill at least one chief or assistant chief in each of the following: Public Security Service, District National Police Service, Open Air Service, Information Service, Pacification Teams, and a District Chief or an Assistant District Chief, and exterminate three wicked tyrants living in district seats or wards. As to village units, they must kill three enemy.’”

“Captured Viet Cong documents revealed that quotas played a role even in military operations. In capturing and taking over the capital of Ben Tre province, such a document ordered that they must, and I quote—” he read from his outline again “—‘kill from three to five and put out of action from five to ten others on each street, in each block of houses.’” He looked up and clarified that. “Those to be killed were called reactionary elements.” Eyes back to his outline. “To quote further, ‘Loosen the enemy’s oppressive control machinery, destroy seventy percent of the inter-family chiefs and one hundred percent of the administrative personnel in the area.’”

“Other documents and sources reveal quotas as well. In the Quang Da Special Zone, a sapper unit was ordered to kill one hundred tyrants; another force in Thua Thien province had to completely destroy two hundred tyrants.

“Often, such quotas were imposed at the village and hamlet level. Note the targets assigned by the command committee of the Chau Duc District Unit of Ba Bien province for the upcoming Tet Offensive: ‘Break the enemy grip. Destroy the three village administrative personnel in Phu My, Phuoc Thai, and Phuoc Hoa Villages along Highway No. 5. Kill the ten hamlet administrative personnel, three people’s council members and others of the reactionary political organizations.’”

“In some cases the quota to be murdered per village was as high as twenty-five, particularly regarding the government personnel to be exterminated. Sometimes the quotas were even given in the aggregate for whole areas. Just for the coast in the Viet Cong’s Subregion 5, higher authority instructed them to ‘kill 1,400 persons, including 150 tyrants, and annihilate . . . four pacification groups.’”

John looked around the class. “For those of you ignorant of communist terms, tyrant means government officials.”

He could see that some students’ eyes were glazing. Not Phim’s—she leaned forward, her eyes seemingly intent on him. He waved his hand at the class. “Hello. You all with me?”

Some nodded.

“Take a five minute break. Stretch, tell your neighbor how awed you are by my lecture, but stay in the classroom.”

He sat on the corner of his desk and reviewed his outline. Then he heard a very familiar voice say, “Professor Banks, I have a question.”

He knew immediately that it was Miss Phim. Not only was her voice more familiar than it should be, given she had spoken in class only once, but when he looked at her so close, he felt . . . Ah, how to put it . . . a sexual intimacy. He felt as though he could put his arm about her and his hand on her bottom and she would lean into him, as though they were lovers.

He almost jumped off the corner of his desk to stand facing her, and must have communicated his confusion, for she hesitated, her eyebrows slightly raised and her full lips parted to show her white teeth.

“I’m sorry,” he said, trying to recover, “you caught me in mid-thought. You have a question?”

God, those black almond eyes.

“Yes. Do you know of any cases where the North or South murdered Sino-Vietnamese because they were Chinese? I have in mind what the Khmer Rouge did in Cambodia in murdering Sino-Cambodians.”

This is a mature woman, much older than the other students, he knew immediately. Aloud he replied, “No, not during this period. That came later, after the war, and was one of the reasons for the massive exodus of the boat people.”

“I know,” she said, her voice low and tinged with an odd sadness. “Thank you, Professor Banks.” Before he could respond, she turned and went back to her seat.

John refused to look her way, but he felt so excited that his mind was mush. He knew his five minutes were well gone, but he needed time. He held his outline up and looked at it unseeingly until his mind surmounted his emotions.

He looked up at the class. “Okay, everyone.”

He waited a moment for the students to get back into their seats or get comfortable. Then he resumed his lecture with, “So far I’ve empha-

sized the Viet Cong democide, always under the direction of the North, it should be remembered. But it did not leave all this dirty work to its Viet Cong front. One example should nail this down.”

John went to his lectern and picked up a book he had put there. He waved it to the class. “This is *Victims and Survivors* by Louis Wiesner. In Clement’s text it is listed among his references. I have also placed it on reserve for this class at the library.”

He opened the book to a page that had a slip of paper sticking out. “This is in regard to the North’s Easter offensive in 1973, when North Vietnam’s 711th Division took the Hoai-An and Tam-Quan districts of Binh-Dinh. Then government,” and he started reading from the book, “officials were hunted down and tried in kangaroo courts. A hundred village and hamlet cadres in Hoai-An were summarily executed. In Tam Quan forty-eight people were buried alive. Able-bodied inhabitants were taken for forced labor into the jungle, where an estimated eighty died. Younger women were permitted to volunteer “for promotion of soldiers’ morale.” By the time the 22nd Division liberated the area three months later, all the goodwill with which the Communists had been received was gone; the lesson of northern Binh Dinh was not lost in Saigon and elsewhere.”

John put the book down, took a few steps closer to the front row, and returned to his lecture with a halfhearted wave back to the book on the lectern. He was surprised at how tired he felt. He had to finish this. “A count of the total number of civilians, government officials, or South Vietnam soldiers captured as POWs that were murdered is, of course, impossible. South Vietnam, however, did keep some record for part of the war of civilians and officials that were assassinated in the countryside. From this and other sources, I estimate that from nineteen thousand to 113,000 were so assassinated, probably around sixty-six thousand civilians and officials.

“Keep in mind that these were noncombatants. They were South Vietnamese who, possibly because of the good job they were doing in a village, their honesty, industriousness, or leadership, or because of their beliefs or outspokenness, were murdered—sometimes with the greatest cruelty and pain. When this number is added to those killed by communist mines, shelling, and in other ways, the total democide by the North in the South was possibly around 164,000 South Vietnamese. Over the course of the guerrilla and Vietnam War this would be about one out of every ninety-eight South Vietnamese men, women, and children.

“The various South Vietnamese regimes also murdered civilians and captured guerrillas and North Vietnamese. But that is the next lec-

ture.” Much to his embarrassment, he heard his voice running down at the end. Then he felt himself slouching in front of the class. *Shit.*

He scanned the class from left to right and back again, and finally had an excuse to look at Miss Phim. She seemed to be staring at him with an eyebrow raised.

He straightened up and quickly asked, louder than he intended, “Questions, comments?”

After the discussion and an argument between two male students about whether the Vietnam War was a civil war or not, he dismissed the class with a sigh of relief. Miss Phim seemed to take her time leaving and was almost the last one out. Did she hesitate before she left? He couldn’t really tell. A student co-opted his attention by asking for an extension of the due date on her term paper because her computer had crashed and she lost all that she had written. He felt like telling her, “Tough shit, you should have anticipated that.” But he just lifted both hands palm up in a shrug, and then extended her due date by a week.

Chapter 31

2001

Ralph Nieman

Dr. Ralph Nieman finished up with the hypochondriac, not of her own health, but that of her daughter. She kept taking the girl to the emergency room at the hospital next door every few weeks with one alleged illness or another. Finally a doctor had the nerve to insist she see a psychiatrist, and recommended Nieman. It had become clear in a short time that the woman craved the attention that a sick daughter would give her from sympathetic relatives and friends. The problem was how to cure her sufficiently enough to protect her daughter. Otherwise he would have to turn the case over to social services. Maybe he would just tell her bluntly to stop using her daughter for her own social life.

His nurse stuck her head into the office. “Ready for the next patient, a Professor Banks?”

“Give me one moment.”

When she closed the door, he picked up the report he had from Banks’ medical doctor and scanned it, then rubbed his chin a few times as he reflected on it. Finally he buzzed his secretary. “Please send Professor Banks in.”

When Banks entered, Nieman was immediately struck by the man’s presence. His eyes were large and frank and looked out from under full, straight eyebrows that contributed to a strong, well-structured face. All this sharply contrasted with his unruly, carrot-colored hair. Slim but well-built and about six feet tall, he carried himself well, but in a relaxed way, not like somebody with a military or executive background. *Put a cowboy hat on him and he would be perfect for a cigarette advertisement*, Nieman thought.

Nieman stood to shake hands with him. *Good grip*. “Hello, I’m Ralph Nieman, Professor Banks. My pleasure.”

“I’m John Banks. Nice to meet you.”

Pleasant and well-modulated voice, Nieman observed. “Please sit down.”

“Ah, on the couch or the chair?”

Nieman chuckled as he sat down. “Let’s start with the chair. I’ve set aside two hours for our first meeting, and then for future meetings, we’ll see how it goes. Let’s begin with you telling me what the problem is. Would you mind if I recorded all of this?”

“Not as long as I get copies.”

“Of course.” Nieman switched on the tape machine on his desk, which had two sensitive microphones located at different places in his office. He moved his lined yellow legal pad by his right hand and picked up a pencil, and looked at Banks and slightly raised his eyebrows in anticipation.

Banks described more fully what was in the report that Nieman had received from his doctor. “I’m often awakened with headaches, and they stay with me throughout the day. They’re not blinding headaches. I can function and teach, but they are still distracting and uncomfortable. I take a nap midday that sometimes helps, sometimes not. I know something is wrong with me because of my restlessness at night. I wake up in the middle of the night sweating, my heart pounding, and I have the strangest dreams—at least I sense they’re really strange, but I can recall only crazy snatches. Until a couple of months ago, I was a sound sleeper—usually got a good eight hours straight. Now, I’m not only restless, I am increasingly wetting my jockey shorts with nocturnal emissions.” Banks grinned. “Whatever dreams have been causing that I especially want to remember, but can’t.

“Of course, it might all be natural. I have not been with a woman since 9/11, and I’m new to Bloomington. It being a university town, I’m wary of trying to find a prostitute. And being a new professor, you know, there is a wall between me and the female students that is too dangerous for my future to climb. In this age, a misunderstood pat on the back could elicit a harassment complaint, so I’ve kept my distance from the female students.”

Nieman noted, *No embarrassment, all matter of fact, no gestures, face relaxed, but set. Probably a very boring lecturer.*

Banks concluded, “Anyway, I went to the university doctor, who gave me all sorts of tests, even a finger to feel my prostrate, and then sent me to a neurologist. After more tests, he referred me to you.”

“Do you have any specific problems, fears, worries?” Nieman asked. “IRS, stocks going down, relatives, tenure, screwing up a lecture, anything like that?”

“Well, screwing up a lecture would be a nightmare. But I don’t think my dreams are about that.”

“Okay, just relax and tell me about your background, notable events in your life, and so on.”

For the next forty-five minutes, Nieman took few notes as he listened to Banks’ unexceptional life story—except for his awful experience during 9/11. Nieman speculated that it had burned deeply into Banks’ psyche, especially since Banks had no prior experience with the mutilated bodies of men and women, violence, or even death. He simply wrote down “9/11” in his notes, and circled it.

This may be easy, he thought.

Nieman asked just to be certain, “You say that you can’t remember your dreams.”

“Snatches that don’t hang together and are crazy, as I said. I hate guns, but in one dream I’m shooting one. I know nothing of martial arts, but I’m throwing somebody over my shoulder as though it’s the most natural thing to do. I’m dressed funny, as though I’m living far in the past. I make love to a beautiful Asian woman, but I can’t make out her face or body—don’t ask me how I know she is beautiful and Asian. She just is.”

“Okay,” Nieman said. “Are you familiar with hypnosis as a psychiatric method?”

Banks shook his head.

“I’m going to use it to uncover what is in your dreams. I’ll put you into a hypnotic state and then ask you questions about your dreams. If I can uncover their content, then maybe we’ll also uncover what your problem is.”

Banks shrugged. “Whatever. If it helps, good. Just tell me about the sex, okay?”

Nieman smiled. “I will tape the whole thing and you’ll get copies when I reach my conclusions. Please, lie down on the couch and put your head on that soft pillow on one side.”

Banks did so, and then suddenly sat up and started taking his shoes off.

“What are you doing,” Nieman asked.

“Taking off my shoes.”

“Yes. Why?”

“I don’t know. I just feel it’s not right to put my feet on the couch with my shoes on.”

“Were you taught that? Something your parents didn’t allow?”

“No, I just felt it wrong now, never before.”

Hmm, Nieman thought. Maybe a white coat reaction—one to me being a psychiatrist.

With his shoes off, Banks lay back down on the couch. “Oh, this is great. I may fall asleep on you.”

Nieman circled the air with his finger. “In a way, I will be putting you to sleep, a hypnotic sleep.”

Nieman sat down in the chair near Banks’ head and leaned over him, holding a finger before his eyes. “Now, look at the end of my finger, and only at the end of my finger. Try to clear your mind of everything but my finger.”

Nieman waited a moment. “Take a very full breath and let it out slowly. . . . Do it again . . . again.

“You are getting sleepy, very sleepy. You are sitting on a warm rock overlooking a placid lake. The sun is shining on your back, and you can feel its warmth. You are relaxed, so sleepy. . . . You leave the rock and stretch out on the short grass under a nearby tree.”

Banks’ eyes closed. He breathed softly and regularly.

“Can you hear me?” Nieman asked.

“Yes.”

“Are you asleep?”

“Yes.”

Nieman began by asking him a few personal questions that he knew the answers to, and then moved to questions about the dreams, slowly trying to reveal their content. He succeeded. In fact, he succeeded well beyond his expectations. In snatches, and then with greater coherence, and finally in full paragraphs, Banks described what Nieman soon understood was one dream:

“It’s 9/11. I am horrified by the body parts and people jumping from the burning building and my cousin dying in the collapsing building. I try to provide emotional support to my cousin’s wife, and finally after a week make it back to teach my class.

“It’s awful teaching about mass murder and war when I only want to forget about it. Joy is in my class, and I want her. After my last lecture she invites me to a party given by her mother, Tor, for me. The other guests are people who suffered through one war or democide or another, and they have gathered to convince me to join Joy in one-way time travel back to 1906 on a mission to end war and democide and promote a global democratic peace. Joy seduces me into accepting.

“It will be a dangerous trip. Joy is the martial arts and weapons expert, while I’ll provide the historical information and knowledge about the democratic peace. In preparation for our very risky mission in the past, she tries to teach me her skills so I can protect myself. We make delicious love for the first time during one such session.

“We travel back in time and succeed in preventing the Mexican Revolution and World Wars I and II. We democratize China and Japan and spread democracy through much of the world.

“But Joy begins to use her power to eliminate rapists and muggers on the streets. I hate her acting as judge, jury, and executioner. It becomes a source of much conflict between us, but it finally seems to be resolved. Then, in the late 1930s, Joy tries to assassinate the American presidential candidate Norman Thomas because she thinks he’s a communist. I stop her and with her help I suffocate her with a pillow to prevent her from ever killing again. Then I write a remembrance of Joy, the love of my life, my best friend, and commit suicide while clutching it to me.”

Nieman waited for a few moments, but Banks was silent. *What an unusual dream*, Nieman thought. *It’s coherent, logical and, if you leave the time travel aside, it could be an actual story. It has none of the fantastic or impossible happenings of dreams, such as being chased by a two-headed green man. But, he murdered his lover, no matter the reason. And he committed suicide. Not good. Let’s see if there is anything else to it.*

Nieman looked at his notes where he had recorded the turning points in the dream, and began to probe at those points. “What was this society that sent you into the past?”

“The Survivors’ Benevolent Society. It’s made up of survivors of war and democide, who have devoted all their wealth to the society. Its purpose is to end war and democide.” He went on about the members and then about their backgrounds, with surprising detail.

And so on for other questions. When Nieman decided it was time to end the session, he sat for a moment reflecting on what he had heard. *Incredible detail for a dream. It was as though he was simply recalling part of his life or . . . something he read. We’ll see.*

Nieman sat back and told Banks, “I’m going to count to three. When I reach three, you will forget about what you told me about your dream, wake up, and feel good. One. Two. Three.”

Banks turned his head to look at Nieman, his eyes wide open. “Did I fall asleep?”

“Yes, you fell into a hypnotic sleep. You can sit up.”

As Banks did so, Nieman asked, “Tell me, Professor Banks, do you know anything about a Survivors’ Benevolent Society? Maybe from something you read?”

“No, never heard of it.”

Nieman asked other questions, and got the same answer. Then, without any lead up, he asked, “Have you ever felt so depressed that you thought of suicide?”

Banks seemed startled by the question, and then answered, No, never,” as though he had been asked if he peed in public.

“Have you ever hated someone enough to want to murder them?”

Banks narrowed his eyes, and shook his head as he blurted “Christ, no.”

Hmm. He’s either a good actor or being honest. I’ll go for honesty at this stage, Nieman thought.

He gave Banks a few moments, then he asked what he suspected would give him a different answer. “What about a Joy Phim?”

Banks eyebrows shot up, and he licked his lips. “I have a Joy Phim in my class. A true beauty. Asian. Is she the one I made love to?”

Nieman noted that he actually looked hopeful, and smiled to himself. He answered, “She’s in your dream, but at this point, that’s all I want to reveal. Okay?”

Banks nodded. Nieman stood and Banks followed suit.

“That’s all for now,” Nieman said. “I think we made progress. I want to set up another appointment, an hour this time. Please do so with my nurse.”

They shook hands. On the way out Banks said, “If I’m making love to her in my dreams, that’s great. No fear of sexual harassment, no fear of the relationship souring—it’s a real no-problem hookup.”

Nieman smiled and waved goodbye. After the door closed, he wrote down on his yellow pad, *Joy is critical.*

Chapter 32

2001

John Banks

He had gone without lunch to fit in his appointment with Ralph Nieman. He hoped the psychiatrist could find the source of his problem. Whatever it was, it was beginning to affect his teaching and writing. Especially his writing.

He was in the process of converting his dissertation into something readable—a book on the democratic peace. As it was now, with all the verities demanded by his dissertation committee, the compromises with one or another member, the heavy footnoting, and the references to everyone who had even mentioned the democratic peace over their morning coffee, his dissertation was hardly fit for the educated mind. But when he sat down in the evening to work on it, his mind felt mushy and his concentration wavered.

He entered the class a few minutes early. As he was opening his briefcase to take out his outline, Miss Phim came in and stopped at his desk. “Good afternoon, Professor Banks,” she said in her soft, feminine voice. She stood about five feet, eight inches tall to Banks’ six feet, so she tipped her head up as she talked to him. From this new angle, he admired her beautifully oval face and the full lips that she lightly emphasized with lipstick. But it was her remarkable black eyes that again captured him. They were large, almond-shaped, fringed with long black eyelashes, and tipped up at the corners.

Jesus, no wonder she’s in my dreams. I could dream about her every night.

“This is for you.” She held out a folded note to him.

Her eyes and that voice . . . no more than four words, but from then on the memory of her voice and her eyes would attack him with their declaration, “I am woman. I am feminine.” They would never fail to melt him.

He took the note too rapidly, hoping she did not see his hand shake. With a little smile—almost, it seemed to him, an acknowledgement of what she was doing to him and happiness over the personal note she'd passed to him—she turned to walk to her seat.

He stood stunned. *Open it. No, later. Now! No, when I can enjoy it. Now. No, I won't be able to lecture then.*

His heart was fluttering; his imagination was wild with conjectures: *Her telephone number. An invitation of some sort. A tentative opening line.*

Then it hit him. *Goddamn it, she is my student. I can't have anything to do with her outside of this class. Shit! Ah, but she is in my dream.*

His mind was out of control. He stood with his briefcase open, staring down into it as though looking at something, the note hanging in one hand. *I'll let her down easy.* He began to compose how he would do it. He would say—no, rather write on the note and return it, *I'm sorry, but you are my stu—Jesus, the class.*

He looked up see the students staring at him. He gently laid the note in his briefcase, took out his outline and placed it on the lectern. His headache felt worse.

“Good afternoon, students,” he began. “Sorry for the delay. My mind was simply blasted by this incredible insight I had.” He let a few seconds go by as they stared at him. “Did you know . . .” and he let a few more seconds go by, “that the more the North Vietnamese murdered—” his voice took on the quality of a fundamentalist preacher concluding his sermon “—the greater the death toll!”

Silence at first and then chuckles sputtering into outright laughter. Still, some looked at him and the other students in confusion, and some appeared to be writing in their notes. He looked at Miss Phim, and saw her shaking her head and laughing.

“Absolutely brilliant,” he added. The headache was still there, but he had forgotten it. Humor always helped him. “Well, ready for more brilliance?”

With the smiles and groans spreading throughout the class, he began. “The last time I was concerned with the democide by North Vietnam. The South also committed democide, although not as methodically, nor planned at the highest levels, or done under quotas. Still, it was democide nonetheless.

“In the early years of the war, the Diem regime tried to resettle and relocate people, euphemisms for forcefully deporting entire villages and regional populations to more secure parts of the country. The os-

tensible purpose was to better protect these people from the communists and to set up fire-free areas where anyone who moved could be assumed a communist. Presumably, these deportees would also be provided better homes and fields to plant, and be won over to the government's side. None of this proved true. But in any case, these deportations, often brutally and hastily carried out, killed many people, either in the process or as a result of the relocation itself."

John consulted his outline. "For one minority group of Montagnards, for example, about 208 of the 2,050 people moved to Plei De Groi camp and fifty-six of the 760 relocated to Plei Bang Ba camp died in the next four or five months.

"Consider also that out of six thousand Ronglai, a minority ethnic group that had lived in the mountains and was deported in 1959, some six hundred died in the next few years. Since the total number of Vietnamese deported throughout the war runs well over one million, the associated deaths must have been in the tens of thousands. These deaths, and that the peasants were forced to leave their precious lands and graves, in some cases even their possessions and animals, hardly endeared the government to them. When the new areas were more difficult to live in, the fields to farm a much greater distance to walk, and above all, not even more secure, one can understand the failure of these relocation programs.

"Moreover, the Diem regime, and those that forcefully succeeded it in rapid succession after he was assassinated in the 1963 coup d'etat, carried out their own terror campaigns against communists and pro-communists. They arrested thousands, many of whom died in prison or were executed. In an attempt to unify government control in the early years, military and police sweeps were made of semiautonomous religious sects or locally independent militias or armies. Political opponents and nonconformists were murdered.

"I have to be very careful when estimating the number of communists or political opponents killed in such operations or in South Vietnam's prisons. Condemning the South for its massacres, atrocities, allegedly huge prison populations, and prison torture and deaths—and the United States for atrocities—was a communist industry during the war, with many communist agents posing as responsible critics.

"For example, a Paris-educated Redemptorist priest in Saigon, Father Chan Tin, made many charges against the government, including that it had 202,000 political prisoners. He claimed to be part of a 'third force' that could negotiate an end to the war and an independent South free of the United States and the communist North. He created an or-

ganization called the Committee to Investigate Mistreatment of Political Prisoners, and his charges were actually presented to an American congressional committee, and doubtless played a role in the increased reluctance of the American Congress to support the South. At the end of the war, it turned out that Chan Tin was a secret agent for the North.

“Nonetheless, it is also clear that throughout the war the South Vietnam military treated captured communist soldiers or guerrillas with little respect. They were often, if not usually in the early years, tortured for information and then killed or, if wounded, simply left to die. While perhaps this order did not originate at the top, such killing must have been done with the acquiescence, if not nodding agreement, of the South’s high command. As the war progressed, the United States brought considerable pressure to bear on the government to more humanely treat its prisoners, and it apparently complied to a degree.

“Nor were noncombatants immune to democide by the South Vietnamese military. Villages were often bombed and shelled indiscriminately and soldiers made little distinction when civilians were mixed in with enemy guerrillas.”

Again a glance at his outline. “For example, in February 1964, the Viet Cong captured Ven-Cau village in Tay Ninh province. Even though the village had a population of six thousand people, government forces still bombed and shelled it. They killed forty-six civilians, wounded sixty more, destroyed 670 homes, caused two thousand refugees to flee, and killed eleven Viet Cong. Although occurring a few months after the anti-Diem coup, such indiscriminate military action reflected an attitude toward civilian lives all too common in the Diem years.

“In such ways and in other forms of democide I’ve mentioned, the Diem regime probably murdered thirty-nine thousand Vietnamese. The successor regimes were little better. Executions, torture, the killing of POWs, and indiscriminate bombing and shelling continued. Through American pressure, public opposition, and the recognition that much of this killing was counterproductive, such democide lessened over the years of the war. Nonetheless, these post-Diem regimes themselves probably murdered some fifty thousand Vietnamese.”

Another glance, but this time also at Miss Phim. His heart skipped. “Ah . . . when the democide of all South Vietnamese governments is added up from 1954 to the fall of Saigon in April 1975, the toll comes to fifty-seven thousand to 284,000 Vietnamese—likely eighty-nine thousand. While this number is fifty-four percent of the North Vietnamese democide in the South, during the war both the North and the South were in the same murderous league.”

He had lots of time, but didn't feel up to lecturing anymore, and this was a natural break. "Next time I will deal with the most contentious of all for Americans, which is American democide in Vietnam. What I will have to say about American democide is hated by the left as far too few and the right as far too many. But as with all my lectures, you can take it as the absolute, undeniable truth." A big smile.

I just want to get the hell out of here.

"Questions, comments?"

He sat on the desk, used his deck of names, and barely heard the discussions he stimulated among the students. Miss Phim seemed to have her eyes riveted on him, and he knew she was hoping for a positive response to her note. It was now like a rare delicacy to be prized, something over which his anticipation should build until unbearable, and then he'd consume it with the utmost joy. *Oh, a pun. Ha-ha. I'll open it in my faculty apartment.*

When he dismissed the class and several students came up to him, he tried to position himself so that he could sneak glances at Miss Phim. She left the classroom without a return glance at him. *Maybe upset at my not responding*, he thought, now worried that maybe he had missed his chance



After the last lecture, he rushed back to his faculty apartment with Miss Phim's note and increasing anticipation. He placed it on his little secretarial desk, got himself a cold beer, and sat down at the desk, beer in hand. He set the bottle down near the note. Then with his anticipation and the note's sensual mystery now unbearable, he finally opened it.

Professor Banks—there is a problem getting the Wiesner book in the reserve room. Betty Swartz, the reserve librarian, asked me to have you call her at x2143.

That was it. All the air went out of him. He collapsed into a teenage boy's slouch, hands hanging over the side of his chair, head downcast, chin resting on his chest. This was too passive a reaction for him, and soon he sat up, leaned over the desk, and knocked his head on the desk-top several times, confessing, "Dumb, dumb, dumb."

Chapter 33

1975–1976

Wang Shihao

Day by day, through carefully listening to the communist news (the only news available now), talking to his friends from his university days, and picking up the stories and rumors flying around the city, Shihao made it his primary business to keep track of what the North was doing with its victory. He felt that ultimately their lives were at stake. “Better to anticipate than be surprised” was his new motto.

And he was not surprised when, even before the sound of the communist T-54 tanks entering the city had died down, the communists set up a new Military Management Committee. Nor was he surprised when one of its first communiqués ordered the “temporary” suspension of publication of newspapers, books, magazines, pamphlets, and all other printed material, or when teams went block by block to confiscate all “reactionary” printed material.

Jia Li had told him to expect the loudspeakers. They were set up everywhere, every twenty buildings or so, to carry all the new government’s—really the Communist Party’s—announcements and propaganda.

From his knowledge of communism elsewhere, Shihao expected what the communists did seven days after the fall of Saigon—they renamed it Ho Chi Minh City. And since he expected nationalization of some sort, he was not surprised when the communists announced that the new government, and not private individuals, owned all foreign currency and metals. Nor was he surprised when they gradually imposed total rationing, or at the inflation that set in as a result of their control over food and prices—the price of a kilo of rice increased about seven hundred percent.

This did not hit Shihao and his family too hard. Since they’d expected the rationing and resulting inflation, they had secreted canned

food, rice, corn, and potatoes, and established a black market bartering arrangement with several sellers at the market—good rattan furniture for food when they needed it.

But Shihao was surprised by the clever trick the communist pulled two months after their victory. In mid-May the communists ordered all former ARVN enlisted troops to attend three-day “reeducation camps.” Some former soldiers that he and Jia Li knew through their store did so fearing for their lives. Two of them wrote their wills beforehand. But the communists let them all return in three days, after attending lectures and group meetings led by communist officials, and writing their biographies.

So, when on June 11 they ordered all officers and middle to high government officials to attend “reeducation” camps for a month, many were only concerned about the lost time from their work or families. Before going, Vo Dinh Nam, a former education official, told Jia Li, “Shihao is ridiculous about his warnings—the communists are really not that bad.”

Shihao laughed ruefully to himself when he heard about it much later. They were all fooled. The communists imprisoned most in miserable concentration camps. If the communists did not immediately execute them or kill them from overwork, disease, or malnutrition, they refused to tell them when they would be released to see their loved ones again. The new underground had been very good at spreading the word about these so called “reeducation” camps, in reality deadly concentration camps.

“Those prisoners should have known what would happen, and tried to disappear beforehand,” Shihao told Yan. “But people will believe what they want to believe, especially if it’s constantly repeated over the radio stations, TV channels—and the only existing ones are communist—and those pig-ass, universal, unavoidable loudspeakers. Soon we will not be able to pee without the communists knowing when, and how long it took.”

Still, Shihao did not feel that he or his family were at risk, even though, as time went on, it seemed less and less a joke. And then the announcement came over the loudspeakers, to be repeated on radio and TV:

“In each neighborhood, the government has set up a democratic People’s Committee. Now, by law, every family must register each of its members with its neighborhood committee. The committee will issue each family member a registration paper upon registration. This is a very important document and you must not lose it. You must show this paper to get rations or fabrics, and if you do not have it when a policeman asks to see it, he will arrest you.

“Any family member who wishes to travel must apply to the committee for a permit. If you leave the city without a permit, the police will arrest you. You must record with the committee any and all guests in your home. It is illegal to have unrecorded guests.

“Listen carefully for the address of the committee in your neighborhood”

Because of the long lines for the first registration and the demand for one personal document or another, it took Shihao, Jia Li, and Yan three trips to register their family. Shihao made sure each of them smiled throughout.

“But, of course,” Jia Li said, when she found out that the communists had also set up a Public Security Force composed of local toughs and youths who wanted to ingratiate themselves with the communists. They were supposed to spy on families, check registration papers, and look for unrecorded guests or homes that remained unoccupied overnight. These the communists then seized and looted. They were like gangsters given a free pass. With them on the prowl, low-level fear became a daily companion for Shihao and his family.

“You know,” Yan told Shihao, “I think they *will* actually know when we pee.”

The first great shock resulting from communist control was not experienced by Shihao’s family, nor the average citizen, but by all those who had bought the propaganda of an independent Viet Cong and NLF fighting for the independence and freedom of South Vietnam from both the North and the Americans. Shihao learned from friends that the communists purged the university of the Third Way by arresting its members in the faculty and student body.

He could not help the glee that crept into his voice when he told his mother and Yan about it. “The communists completely fooled all those Third Way activists. They suckered even those leading the NLF. Since our defeat, they have squashed all attempts of Viet Cong and NLF officials to be independent, arresting those who insisted on what was promised, even those they see as a potential danger. They have even executed those rebelling against the North’s absolute rule—oops, I should say the North’s *Glorious Revolution*.”

Jia Li nodded. “Good that I saved you from that *do ngu*—stupid Hanh.”

Shihao looked wide-eyed at her for a moment, and then said humbly, “Of course.” But he felt his old feelings for Hanh welling up from his heart, and saw her again in his mind, approaching his table for their

final meeting. *I hope she survived . . . I bet she didn't submit.* He took a deep breath and tried to push the thought and accompanying emotions away. "Ah, yeah . . ."

The North had totally taken over. The government in Hanoi now dictated everything; the South had become little better than the North's colony, and was treated as such. Shihao could not help wondering what those suffering in one reeducation camp or prison after another thought now—all those Third Way opposition delegates in the former National Assembly, or all those Buddhist monks, some of whom had actually committed suicide by dousing themselves in gasoline and burning for that cause. *And Hanh?*

He forced his mind back on track and shook his head. "All those *do ngu* students demonstrating for a change in the political system, and for the independence and freedom of the South from the corrupt South Vietnam government and the United States—they must be realizing how *do ngu* they were."

He couldn't help it. His mind again revolted and he saw Hanh as she sat across from him, telling him about her love for him. And how she'd looked when he glanced back at her while he walked away. He bit his lip. The pain helped. He took a deep breath, and tried to return to his verbal musings over what the communists had done.



"Get rid of it," Shihao demanded. "I do not want you to bring a child into this miserable world. It will be awful for the child, and will make life worse for us. How could you be so *do ngu*, to get pregnant?" he yelled. Then he realized what he had said, when Yan's shocked expression collapsed into tears.

Before he could apologize, Jia Li came into the room, put her hands on her hips, and barked at him, "It takes two, my son. You are the *do ngu* one."

Yan drew close to Jia Li. Looking at Shihao, she declared in a tremulous voice, "I'm having my baby. Your baby, Shihao. I love you and want your child."

Jia Li clasped her arm and said in a softer tone, "I support her, Shihao. I want grandchildren. I want our line, Dewu's line, to continue."

"How long?" Shihao asked Yan, his voice still husky with irritation.

"About five months." Then she stood up straight, jutted her chin out at him, and rubbed her hand over her stomach. "I was afraid to tell you, but I'm beginning to show."

Shihao smacked his forehead with the palm of his hand, and muttered something about being blind as a rock. He sighed deeply, and then shrugged. *I am only one man.*



In July 1975, Shihao and his family got hammered.

No one expected it. No one had prepared for it. Suddenly, the established currency would be no good. A new currency would replace it. But only so much of the old currency could be converted to the new by an individual. Fortunately Jia Li, ever prudent with the business and family budget, had been converting as much as she could into gold every month.

“How much will we lose?” Shihao asked her.

“Too much. Not my fault. We had to keep so much in cash for our day-to-day business operations. We’ll lose most of it, unless we buy something with it.”

They left immediately for the market, which was jammed full of people trying to spend their money. The prices of all goods soared. A riot threatened to erupt, as people pushed and fought to buy things while accusing sellers of trying to rob them. But soon nothing more could be bought with the old currency, for then the sellers would also be unable to convert all of their money.

After the conversion, the economy was near collapse; one business after another folded.

“We still have our business,” Jia Li said. “Also, the black market is becoming very good for us. And we can bribe the communists, I was told, to get some hard-to-find things that we need. Several people are acting as intermediaries.”

“Yeah,” Shihao responded bitterly. “Soon, I bet that will be the only way to get something done.”

He soon realized how prophetic he was. Corruption among the communists became universal. “The communist officials have so much more power, and power breeds corruption,” he told Yan. “With the absolute power communist officials and agents have over everyone’s daily lives, bribery has become their way of life.”

He mentally shook his head at that, and remembered how upset Hanh had been at the corruption of the South Vietnamese government. *Buddha, it hardly compares to what is going on now.*

Shihao kept hearing rumors of worse things to come. Now he was scared—frightened for their welfare and even for their lives, and fright-

ened for the life of the infant on the way. But when he brought up fleeing Vietnam, neither Yan nor Jia Li would agree. “*Do khung*—crazy, *do khung*, staying here,” he admonished them. “We’ve got to leave. I’m telling you, things can only get worse.”

Yan shook her head sadly. “You are always saying that. But it’s not as bad as that. We have the store—”

“And our house, Dewu’s house,” Jia Li broke in. “I don’t want to leave it.” Then she stared down at her hands and said softly, “You two go. I will stay.”

“I’m not going,” Yan insisted, staring at Shihao and crossing her arms. “You go, if you really want to.”

“Sure, and leave you here pregnant.”

That ended it for a while, but the communists gradually increased their control. Not even Jia Li, who had lived under communism in the North, had anticipated how bad it would get.



Again, the same news over the communist loudspeakers. He must have heard it a dozen times in two days:

“When the Chinese puppet Khmer Rouge marched into Cambodia’s capitol of Phnom Penh, they began the deadly evacuation of the whole city and dispersed the whole population into villages, where they were forced to labor in the fields from dawn to dusk, seven days a week. Hundreds of thousands died in the evacuation. Now, more hundreds of thousands are dying of starvation. The Khmer Rouge have also murdered former members of the government and military, professionals and Buddhist monks, and anyone disobeying them . . . they have been particularly vicious in killing Vietnamese Cambodians; within the last week, they have murdered several thousand. They have attacked our towns and villages near the border”

He felt like putting his hands over his ears, but he couldn’t trust that somebody wouldn’t see him through the window of his house and report him. Jia Li seemed not to be listening. When the speakers turned to announcing the next levy of public service work teams, Shihao asked her, “What do you make of this sudden and continual interest in Cambodia?”

“They want to turn our attention from what they are doing here. ‘See,’ they are saying, ‘we are not so bad.’ And I think they are beginning to prepare for war against the Khmer Rouge. That is the only explanation for what they are saying about fellow communists.”

Shihao nodded glumly. “I have to give our communist rulers credit. They have not made the same mistake the Khmer Rouge did in being so public about their executions, and in such a hurry. Our own glorious North Vietnamese communists have tightened their control gradually, arresting people out of sight, killing them quietly, and setting up a positive-sounding campaign of reeducation for former government and military officials as a cover for imprisoning them in concentration camps—where many soon die or are executed.”



Several months after the defeat, two low-ranking Northern communist officials barged into Shihao’s family home without notice, announcement, or knocking. They looked around inside and outside as though looking to buy the house. Yan was at home. At first she was afraid that the men were burglars, but they were polite to her, and showed no weapons. After about an hour of looking around, poking at things, and opening doors and drawers, they put it nicely to Yan: “Would you lend your refrigerator, TV set, camera, and binoculars to the government?”

She knew the consequences of refusing, and Jia Li had instructed her in how to act toward communist demands. Placing her hand on her round belly, she gave both men a wan smile—she could do no better. Bowing her head slightly, she replied in a wavering voice, “Yes, of course. My family and I would be most happy to lend you these things.”

One of the men started to write out a receipt for her, but she waved it away. “I trust the government,” she said, trying to sound indignant that they thought she needed a receipt. They gave her big smiles before carrying everything to a small Volkswagen minibus they must have “borrowed” from some other home, and driving off.

Closely following this was the inventory of their home, which Yan knew was far more dangerous to them. She had been warned by a friend down the street who had it done to her that it would happen to everyone, and she passed the warning on to Shihao and Jia Li. District by district, home by home, security agents searched even the remotest corners, looking for anything antirevolutionary and now illegal, such as foreign currency, Western books, guns, incriminating photos, and so on. If they found any such items, the family was arrested immediately. Yan’s warning gave them time to thoroughly cleanse the house of anything dangerous.

Security agents walked into the house while Shihao and Yan were home. With a nod to both, they began their search. Shihao smiled, offered to help, or tried to stay out of the way as they lifted things, emptied drawers, and moved furniture, stopping only to sip the jasmine tea Yan made for them. After a couple of hours, the home looked as if it had been ransacked by burglars. The agents found nothing.

When the agents left, and both were certain they'd not be heard, Yan broke down into shuddering tears while Shihao held her tight.



The yell of the midwife, following Yan's final, tired screech, told Shihao all he needed to know. He ran into the bedroom where Yan was birthing, but Jia Li, seeing him enter out of the corner of her eye, waved him into a corner. Shihao stood there with his arms crossed, grinding his teeth in frustration over what would happen to them now. *An infant . . . an infant. Oh, Buddha. Ngu Nhu Heo—you are as dumb as a pig,* he told himself. He clenched his fist and began hitting his leg with it. *Just an abortion. An abortion . . . that's all. There would have been none of the problems we now will have with an inf—*

"It is a girl," the midwife announced as she snipped the umbilical cord. Then she slapped the infant's behind, and the infant began crying. She handed her to Jia Li, who wiped her dry and then covered her with towels. Yan was still gasping, but she managed to moan, "See her," and held out her arms.

Jia Li gently put the infant into her arms, and then motioned for Shihao to join her.

For Yan's sake, Shihao smiled at the baby as he stroked Yan's hair. She cooed to the infant and kissed its ruddy cheek. He leaned over and kissed Yan's wet lips, and then, when Yan held out the infant to him, he faked a happy grin as he took the child and held her. *What else can I do?*

They had discussed names beforehand, and he and Yan had consented to his mother's desire to name the infant Jy-ying after her honored mother. He handed the infant back to Yan with the admonition, "You bring up Jy-ying well, now. I want her to be just like her mother." Her eyes sparkled with happiness.

Well, Shihao thought as he kissed her again, I'll be a good father. But I still should not have made Yan pregnant.

Chapter 34

2001

Ralph Nieman

When Banks entered Nieman's office for his second visit, he wasn't looking good. He appeared as though he was just getting over a cold. After greeting him, Nieman asked him if he was sick. Banks shook his head.

"Bad night?" Nieman asked.

Banks slowly nodded.

"Remember anything about it?"

"I had a gun and shot somebody who was throwing a knife at me," he blurted. "There was a woman with indistinct features who seemed to have a double. I was tortured. I woke up screaming. That's about it."

Nieman had already turned on the recorder, but he also made notes as Banks spoke. He lifted a brow in mute acknowledgment of the other's bad night, then he asked, "Do you have anything to add to what you said at our last meeting?"

Banks again nodded and rubbed his hand across his face. "Damn note," he mumbled.

"I'm sorry," Nieman said, "what did you say?"

"It's nothing." Banks shrugged. "Just a note I got from a student."

Nieman caught the underlying tone of disgust. "Do you want to put this off?" When Banks shook his head vigorously, Nieman pointed to the couch, and waited to see if Banks would take off his shoes before lying back on the couch. He did. Nieman noted it.

When Banks was comfortable, Nieman used the trigger he had implanted in Banks' memory during the previous hypnotic trance: "P, R, ti." It was a meaningless phrase that Banks would never hear by accident. Banks immediately went into a trance.

After the initial questions to gauge the depth of Banks' hypnosis, Nieman asked him about his dream. In a wooden monotone, Banks described it haltingly at first, and then as though he were reading it.

“An Islamic fundamentalist . . . Sabah was his name . . . seized power in Uighuristan in Middle Asia . . . He eventually did the same in China, spreading his fundamentalist Islamic creed. When too old to rule . . . he passed his power on to his fanatical son . . . his son exploited China’s resources to build nuclear bombs. He hid them in New York and the other major cities of the democracies. Oh my God . . . my God, he set them off! Jesus, how horrible! Over a billion killed . . .

“The democracies have surrendered to the threat to set off more of them, and Sabahism rules the world . . .

“But . . . before they die from radiation sickness, survivors—actually survivors of an institute that my money sets up before I commit suicide—send a message downtime to Joy and me—me, with that beauty Joy again in 1906. Wow.”

Nieman had to smile at the “Wow,” since the exclamation was stated in the same monotone in which the rest of the dream was delivered.

“The message asks us to stop Sabah. We plan to assassinate him when he is a child in 1914 . . . Followers of Sabah in China find out about the message, but they don’t know who received it. They fear that Sabah will be killed, and send back to 1906 a female Chinese warrior . . . Jy-ying . . . to assassinate the recipient of the message.

“Jy-ying discovers that Joy and I received the message, and plans to kill us eventually . . . First she goes along with our mission to set up the democratic world in which Sabah will thrive and world victory for Sabahism will be possible. But she soon falls in love with me . . . of course.” Banks chuckled. “She plans to kill only Joy . . . but she finds out that she and Joy are the same person from separate universes.

“God, how stupid this is . . .

“Jy-ying confronts Joy with this . . . before she loses her own motivation, she sets up a fight to the death between them . . . She badly injures Joy, and is ready to deliver the death blow to her when I rush into the gym where they are and shoot her.

“My God, I killed her with a gun . . . My God.”

Nieman waited, but the silence continued. He asked, “Is that the end of your dream?”

“No,” Banks whispered.

“Then please continue.”

“I don’t want to. It’s horrible. Again.”

Nieman then resorted to the questions he often used when his client had trouble relating a bad dream.

Banks’ eyes had grown misty, but he stuttered, “Joy and I travel to Uighuristan to . . . kill baby Sabah . . . we buy him from his parents to

do so We can't do it . . . can't murder a baby. We decide to adopt him. And I propose marriage to Joy Oh, she's so happy to accept. It's what she always wanted. We celebrate by making great love And then we and baby Sabah are killed by an Islamic terrorist bomb—by terrorists upset at non-Muslims buying a Muslim child

“Holy Christ.”

Tears flooded Banks' eyes. He began shaking. Nieman quickly brought him out of the hypnosis, and calmed him down with a series of easy biographical questions. Then he asked Banks how he'd felt after these dreams, and he answered as before.

“Lousy, tired, sometimes headachy.”

Nieman then asked Banks to set up another appointment. “I think that we are making progress,” he said. “Your dream has given me a lot to think about.”

After Banks left, Nieman wrote down his impression of the dream. It was as coherent as the one he'd heard Banks describe during the last meeting, and this amazed him. The dream was not spotty and disconnected, with often implausibly fantastic segments, but a continuous story. One that would continue, it seemed. A nuclear war, and a Joy from another universe sent back in time to assassinate John and Joy . . . it was like Banks under hypnosis was reading out the story from a science fiction book.

Hmm, and what to make of his feeling uncomfortable lying on the couch with his shoes on?

Chapter 35

1976–1977

Wang Shihao

Shihao parked their cart for delivering furniture and rushed into the store, looking for Jia Li. She was in the back repairing a chair.

“I think our store is going to be taken from us,” he blurted.

“What are you talking about?” Jia Li exclaimed.

“The news is all over town. The communists will be taking over farms, plantations, and businesses through a tax trick. They are going to claim taxes are owed, or impose a tax that will be impossible for most businesses to pay. Then the communists will seize them for nonpayment of taxes.”

“Is that all?” Jia Li asked, looking at him stone-faced.

“No. They are also going to force farmers to join ‘cooperatives,’ which in effect will give the government control over what farms produce, and the prices of that produce.”

Still Jia Li stood there. “Is that all? Yet?”

“I hate to say it, but no. They will take over all fishing boats, and set the government prices for all fish sold.”

“Are you done?”

“Yes.”

Jia Li slowly put away her tools, leaving the chair and debris from her repair work on the floor. She looked at Shihao, her head high, but her lower lip trembled. In a quavering voice Shihao could barely hear, she said, “We know what to do . . . don’t we.” Then she stopped and put her head in her hand. “I’m sorry, Dewu,” she murmured.

They prepared for the tax bill by selling or bartering off their inventory of furniture, and even what was on the floor, including light fixtures, counters, window shades, curtains, and throw rugs. They converted the resulting cash to gold. They disobeyed the new law that all

savings had to be in the government's banks, which could only be withdrawn with government approval. They hid their gold temporarily underneath a large root of the tamarind tree behind their house.

Their store's tax bill soon came, addressed to "Owner." Jia Li opened it and laughed, waving it in the air. Shihao had to see it. He snatched it out of her hand and looked at the amount. He broke out in laughter also. It was three times their rattan store's gross annual receipts.

Using their delivery cart, they transported to their home what items remained, locked the completely empty store's door, and never returned.

At home, Shihao again begged, "Please. We must leave this *do khung* country and find freedom for Jy-ying. For ourselves."

Yan shook her head vigorously. "No, Jy-ying is too young. And we still have our home. What more can they do to us.?"

"They" had become a universal reference to the communists.

Jia Li said simply, "I will not leave my country. I love Vietnam."

Yan added, "If you want to go so badly Shihao, go." Her irritated tone carried its own message,

"No, sweetheart, I will never leave you and my daughter. And my mother. That is no option. Period." Shihao felt the heat rising in his face. "Never suggest it again," he shouted at Yan.

Jia Li stepped in. "Maybe things will get better. It cannot go on like this. People will rebel throughout the country. They are now rebelling in the south." Everyone had heard the rumor that Viet Cong and NLF troops south of Saigon were in open rebellion, attacking PAVN units and government facilities.

Shihao hated to squash such hope, but he knew the truth would make them better prepared. *And maybe get them to flee, eventually.* He calmed down enough to control his voice. "That such rebellion would spread, or be successful for long, is impossible, Mom. The control of the North Vietnamese is too absolute, too totalitarian. I'm sorry, but that is the truth."



It came as an absolute shock to the family, catching them unprepared. They'd heard no rumors about it. Communist preparations for the announcement must have been done by a small, tight group. The loudspeakers broadcast it while Shihao was playing with Jy-ying, and Yan was sewing Jy-ying little shorts. Jia Li was napping.

“Special announcement. Special announcement,” the loudspeakers blared. “The rich and greedy capitalists who live in mansions and big houses have secured them on the sweating backs of the working class and poor of Ho Chi Minh City, while these people who are the backbone of the revolution can only cover themselves with tin roofs. The mansions and big houses are the people’s, and as their democratic representative, the government now will take ownership so that we can fairly allocate living room for everyone.

“Henceforth, according to deadlines the People’s Committee will hand out, no one needs more than seventy-eight square feet of living space or, for a family, the number of members times this space. Those whose homes exceed this amount must find living space that meets this standard. Those who refuse to leave their mansions or big houses will be arrested for opposing the people’s rights.

“Once this standard has been met, everyone will have fair and equitable living space. Long live the Revolution.”

Shihao grabbed a paper bag, found a pencil, and sat on the floor to calculate what their maximum living space would be under the new rules.

“We are only allowed 234 square feet,” Yan said.

Shihao finished his calculation, looked at her askance, and said, “You are right.” He then went into their bedroom to get the title for their home. It was in a locked metal box they hid behind a loose board in the closet. The document said their home was 946 square feet.

“Incredible! Inhumane! Typical!” Shihao swore. “We will have to move out and give up the land we own underneath as soon as they set our deadline.”

It was finally too much. He slouched in his place on the floor, put his head in his shaking hands, and cried. “We should have fled. We should have fled,” he kept moaning as he rocked back and forth.

Yan knelt next to him, put her arm around his shaking shoulders, and murmured, “We have each other. We are still a family and they cannot change that. We will find a place.”

Jia Li came out of her bedroom, and Yan told her the awful news. She turned white, turned around without a word, and returned to her bedroom. The door shut with a soft click. Yan guessed that she was hugging Dewu’s picture.



The deadline came. They had two weeks to turn their house over to the communists.

Instantly, with the announcement, there were too many families looking for too few places to live. One-room shacks now cost in gold what a good three-bedroom house had before the defeat. Shihao found a tin-roofed hut downwind of the stench of Cholon's Ben Tai Market, where they sold fish. It cost almost sixty gold taels.

"Good Buddha," he exclaimed to Yan, "that is almost twelve thousand dollars at the current price of gold. It's making a big dent in our savings."

They moved what little furniture and appliances they could from their home, and hung up sheets to divide the shack into two tiny bedrooms and a cooking and eating area. There was no electricity for the shack, so they bought a little woodstove, and Shihao made a hole for its stovepipe in the wall of discarded wood behind it. Nor was there a toilet, so he cut a hole in the floor in a corner, and underneath dug a hole so he could put a bucket there for their waste. He dug the hole deeper than needed so that there was room underneath the bucket for all their gold and jewelry.

They were no sooner settled than they heard by rumor and announcements of the so-called New Economic Zones. The communists were shipping whole families, especially refugees or those questionable in some of the many ways possible, to remote areas to drain swamps, clear forests, build dams, dig irrigation systems, and the like.

Jia Li told Shihao that she would try to get as much information as possible at the market. A week later, she reported what she'd found out to Shihao and Yan. She did not try to keep the concern out of her voice. "It is awful, what is being done to the people being sent there. They labor without electricity or potable water. They have to build their own dwellings. And they must grow their own food. I heard that many are dying from disease and malnutrition, or overwork." She stopped. With furrowed brow and tight lips, she looked over at Jy-ying sleeping on a blanket placed on the dirt floor. She sighed, and after a few seconds continued. "Those unwilling to work hard, or who try to escape, are likely to be executed."

No one spoke. It was a hot and humid day, and the stench from the market was especially bad. Yan reached for a small towel and held it over her nose.

"Okay," Shihao finally said. "We have been trying to keep to the rules, and we will have to be especially careful now. We must be friendly with communist functionaries. We will do however many days of 'community service' they demand with ready bow and smile. And if they ask us to wipe their ass, we will respond, 'How good-looking it is!'"

From then on, their fear of being sent to a New Economic Zone was a shuddering presence in all family discussion and activity, and even when they went to bed at night. But what they feared the least was the terror that befell them.

Months later, in the early evening, three security agents walked into their shack while Yan was cooking on their little woodstove and Shihao was trying to make a chair with cast-off wood. Jia Li was at the market. One of them pointed his American military .45 at Shihao. “Are you Wang Shihao?”

Chapter 36

2001

John Banks

He entered the classroom determined not to look Miss Phim's way, even if she danced naked on her seat. He had been so dumb, so painfully dumb, about her note. He was still embarrassed; he felt like one of those old men who interpreted a young thing's smile as a come-on.

That morning, first thing before his appointment with Nieman, he had called the reserve librarian, who asked him if he minded having the Wiesner book cross-reserved. Another professor had reserved it for his class also. John could only say, "Okay."

He was not up to giving another lecture today, and had been tempted to cancel the class. But that would force him to omit some material from his lectures later, and he didn't want to do that.

He opened his briefcase, took in hand his outline, and turned to the class, consciously avoiding the slightest glance at Miss Phim. "Good afternoon, students," he said. After the usual responses, he began his lecture.

"I have dealt with the democide of North and South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Now, let's look at what the United States did. Although much lesser in extent and different in nature, the democide by U.S. forces in South Vietnam must be recognized.

"Unlike the communists, and to a much greater degree than the South Vietnamese army, the Americans did in general try to make a distinction between combatants and noncombatants. This is evident, for example, in the treatment of wounded enemy soldiers, guerrillas, and civilians. Whereas communist forces would leave enemy wounded to die from their wounds, including civilians who had not given allegiance to them, U.S. forces generally made an effort to treat and evacuate to hospitals any wounded, regardless of what side they were on.

“There were charges by the antiwar, pro-North Vietnam, and American communists and leftist propagandists that the United States carried out a systematic violation of the laws of war and the Geneva Convention. The evidence does not back this up. On the other hand, there are many isolated cases of the American military violating the laws of war. Much of the problem lies with the American command, which was, in the initial years of war, lax in educating its troops in proper conduct, and in enforcing such conduct on the part of its troops.

“This is especially true with regard to democide. The My Lai massacre, in which about 347 innocent peasant women and children were massacred by U.S. soldiers, is well known. Other massacres probably occurred as well. Also, it cannot be doubted that U.S. soldiers killed North Vietnamese troops and Viet Cong who were trying to surrender. When Lieutenant James B. Duffy was court-martialed and found guilty for ordering that a prisoner be killed, the evidence showed that there was a ‘no prisoner’ policy from higher-ups governing the ground action of many soldiers.

“This and other testimony, letters, and news reports, reveal that some American soldiers did torture and kill prisoners, shoot communists trying to surrender, machine-gun from hovering helicopters peasants running away, disproportionately bomb and shell villages suspected of helping the Viet Cong or from which some sniper fire may have come, and so on. There were hundreds of cases reported of villages destroyed from the air or by ground troops because of snipers firing from them, or on mere suspicion that the Viet Cong or North Vietnam troops were in them. In some cases, American troops shot down people because they were acting oddly or running away. Moreover, some American soldiers admitted that they had killed civilians or committed atrocities.

“A measure of such killing of noncombatants is the number of weapons captured as a ratio of the enemy killed in action. The normal ratio killed to weapons captured was three to one. In one seven-month operation begun in December 1968 and focused on the densely populated provinces in the upper delta, the U.S. Ninth Infantry Division reported killing . . .” John took a quick glance at his outline, “10,883 enemy. These killings occurred mainly in small-scale ground and air actions, such as by helicopter gunships. However, they captured only 748 weapons, or a ratio of killed to weapons of 14.5 to one. In some actions the ratio was as high as fifty to one. Observers of these actions verified what is obvious from such ratios—not all killed were active Viet Cong.”

John stopped to give the students a chance to absorb what he had said. “Okay so far?”

“That’s awful,” volunteered one female student.

A boy asked, “How could they do that?”

John was amused that North Vietnam’s much more massive and inhumane democide during the war had not received the same reaction. “Let me try to answer that,” he responded. “You cannot picture this war in the same way that the movies portray World War Two—soldier fighting soldier, tank fighting tank, and so on. The Vietnam War was a dirty war; guerrillas fought in the midst of civilians. Alleged atrocities were committed in the heat and fog of battle. When one’s buddies were killed by grenades tossed in the open door of a medical helicopter by civilians, for example, respecting civilian immunity appeared stupid and dangerous.

“Also, civilians did plant mines, prepare booby traps, and willingly or unwillingly carry supplies and help build Viet Cong bunkers, which were often built under villages. The Viet Cong often used villages as protective cover when firing on American troops or aircraft. By the international conventions defining the laws of war, those specifically involved in such activities can become military targets, even though civilians.

“Of course, it usually was impossible to tell which civilians helped the enemy and which did not. But this did not make all civilians fair game. Note that such excuses could have been given by the German soldiers in Yugoslavia or the Ukraine during World War Two, or by Japanese soldiers in the Philippines or North China.

“When they killed civilians recklessly or wantonly, however, and I can show that this was the case, I count it as democide. And such actions by Americans should be democide if they were conducted with the explicit or implicit approval or knowledge of the high command, as was the case of the Germans or Japanese. However, this killing usually exceeded or occurred in spite of orders to the contrary.

“Now, the person in overall command for much of this action was General William C. Westmoreland. He had issued explicit rules of warfare based on the applicable treaties and conventions governing it, such as the Geneva Conventions. These rules covered the treatment of prisoners and the rules of engagement established to protect noncombatants. But although they were republished every six months, they were not well distributed to lower levels, and battalion and company officers had different ideas about the rules. According to a senior embassy official investigating alleged excesses, one battalion commander even admitted that—” John

quoted from his outline “—‘he had never read any such rules and wasn’t certain that there were copies of written instructions on the subject at his headquarters.’”

“Declaratory policy is one thing, getting it understood down the chain of command is another, and applying it in the rapid action, noise, confusion, fear, and reflex shooting of combat is still something else. When, in the heat of battle, your life and those of your friends is at stake, fine distinctions are difficult to remember, never mind apply. Moreover, the rules covering specific situations were not always clear, such as how to handle a Viet Cong unit hiding among a group of refugees, a grenade lobbed from a bus at U.S. soldiers along the road, or civilians hiding in a Viet Cong bunker.

“This notwithstanding, in the first years of U.S. involvement, the rules meant to protect noncombatants were often and blatantly violated by some lower-level U.S. officers and their men. Simply, the rules were inadequately communicated, those fighting on the front line were inadequately trained in them, and they were inadequately enforced. This was a High Command failure.

“Such a violation raises the question of the High Command’s culpability in Vietnam, including General Westmoreland. It is clear that High Command was unaware of the My Lai massacre and would not have approved of it. However, it must have known of the many cases of excessive killing, and the severe problems soldiers in the field faced in this dirty war.

“After My Lai and the questioning of American actions in the war, High Command did issue new training manuals dealing with the problems mentioned above, and explicitly stated that soldiers who disobeyed the rules of engagement or violated the laws of war would be held responsible, tried, and punished.

“To be clear about democide: if, contrary to the rules of engagement, a soldier massacres civilians, and his superiors are unaware of it, this is murder by an individual, but not democide.”

John looked around the class, still avoiding that one corner in the rear. He picked up his deck of names from the lectern, selected a card, and asked, “Mr. Ilalio, what is democide?”

“Government murder.”

He picked another card. “Miss Ne, could you fill in Mr. Ilalio’s definition?”

She had been rapidly leafing through her notes before he called on her, and she took a few seconds more. Then she started to read, “It’s—”

“Look at me, Miss Ne.” When she did, he said, “Now elaborate.”

“Well, the government has to intentionally do it. Ah . . . it’s ordered at the top; it’s government policy.”

“Good,” John said. “With that understood, did the United States commit democide in the Vietnam War? Now, My Lai did not occur as a result or in line with High Command policy or commands. It was an on-the-spot atrocity, actually contrary to rules of engagement. It was murder. Even when it was covered up by low-level officers in the field whose command responsibilities were minor, they were accessories to murder and this was a dereliction of duty, but it was not democide.

“Generally, if command authorities, those giving orders from secure headquarters and responsible for major military operations in the field, cover it up or give orders resulting in atrocities or massacres, it is democide. Of course, there is an area of ambiguity between murder and democide. But it should also be clear that lieutenants commanding a platoon, or captains a company, and who act on their own initiative in combat, are not committing democide. The decisions, or lack of them by generals who command large operations, carry significant responsibility for a state, and directly represent its policies on the battlefield, can result in democide.

“These distinctions for a war such as the one fought in Vietnam are critical. But they are also critical for similarly dirty combat, such as what took place in the Philippine War at the beginning of this century, when the U.S. High Command methodically carried out democide, and U.S. soldiers surely murdered tens of thousands of Filipinos. The same is true for a more conventional war like World War Two, in which American area bombing of German and Japanese cities killed hundreds of thousands of noncombatants.

“To be sure, there are many publications available that describe U.S. atrocities in the Vietnam War. Some are communist, or sympathetic to North Vietnam or its façades, such as the National Liberation Front, the Alliance of National, Democratic, and Peace Forces, or the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. And there are many more publications on the other side that mention no atrocities, except perhaps for the notorious My Lai massacre. There have been ‘international tribunals’ set up by those who were more inclined to question the war aims and behavior of the United States than those of the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong, but their publications sometimes provide helpful clues to what kind of murder may have been committed, especially in the testimonies of former U.S. officers and soldiers.

“One thing gradually emerges from the communist literature and from that sympathetic to the communists. Even though they were all attempting to display or, in the case of North Vietnam’s organs, exaggerate or misinform, the full extent of U.S. atrocities, massacres, and indiscriminate bombing of civilians, they provided virtually no overall estimates of those murdered. And, although the ‘massacres’ they list are outrageous in themselves, if true, the accumulated totals from their examples are relatively small compared to the intensity and blanketing nature of the accusations, and to the numbers murdered by the Vietnamese themselves.

“Even then, what many of these sources label as atrocities or massacres may, by the Geneva Conventions and other accepted rules of warfare, be legitimate military actions or accidents of war. For example, burning down a village if in fact it sits on top of Viet Cong bunkers, or attacking civilian river junks that are actually carrying Viet Cong supplies, or bombs that hang up on their rack and then fall on a North Vietnam hospital near anti-aircraft batteries. In fact, a communist ploy was to place some of these batteries close to sensitive civilian buildings or on river dikes that, if destroyed, would drown tens of thousands of civilians.

“Now, it is true that the Americans heavily bombed Vietnam during the war. About fourteen million tons of bombs and shells were dropped on Vietnam, or six times the bomb tonnage the United States dropped in World War Two. However, those that were dropped on North Vietnam must be distinguished from the bombing in the South. In the former case, the impression during the war was that the United States was carpet bombing civilians and purposely attacking hospitals, schools, and other civilian targets. This impression was influenced by the North’s propaganda, which was widely disseminated by its friends, but it was not so.

“The most important fact of this bombing was the scrupulous care with which targets were selected and bombed. Indeed, these matters were not left to local commanders. They were determined by the Pentagon and White House, and even President Johnson carefully orchestrated the bombing’s what, when, and how. Those who planned these attacks strove to limit them to purely military targets, even when it endangered the lives of U.S. pilots. I should note that pilots were even shot down because the angle and height of attack to protect civilians increased the risk from anti-aircraft guns. True, civilians were killed, possibly sixty-five thousand of them, but these deaths were collateral to bombing military targets and often resulted from pilots trying to dodge the North’s vigorous air defenses, including missiles.

“One prime example of restraint was the dikes that held back the waters in the Red River Delta. Had these been targeted, not only would the North’s economy have been thoroughly disrupted, but the resulting flood might have wiped out nearly one million innocent North Vietnamese. The North had put anti-aircraft guns on top of the dikes, but High Command as far up as the president ordered pilots not to bomb the dikes, even though the gun emplacements made them lawful military targets.

“American bombing of South Vietnam was quite different. It was often tactical rather than strategic, and frequently done under local command. Ground troops could call in air strikes on supposed enemy concentrations or movements and direct the bombing of villages and hamlets that presumably contained enemy bunkers or camps, or serviced the enemy in some way. These attacks received limited overview, and command authorities allowed considerable discretion. In many cases, innocent and helpless noncombatants were indiscriminately killed. Such bombing, apparently disproportionate to any expected military gains, was the direct responsibility of command authorities.

“Of course, mortar and artillery shelling of villages and hamlets received even less supervision from the top. Although the published rules of engagement were supposed to govern, some of this shelling was also excessive, some out of all proportion to the military significance or target involved, and some out of whimsy. How many civilian casualties this shelling caused is unknown, of course. Overall, in each of the four years from 1966 to 1970, some forty-three, thirty-eight, thirty-one, and twenty-two percent of all civilian casualties admitted to South Vietnam’s Ministry of Health hospitals were due to shelling and bombing.

“American democide in this war is most difficult to calculate. No source estimates such a toll; as I mentioned, not even the communists or those who pointed out atrocities and accused the United States of war crimes gave an overall accounting that I could find. Nor are such estimates available in the sources of information on Allied bombing and shelling in the South. From what qualitative information is available, and from figures on hospital admissions and causes of civilian casualties, I calculate that Allied bombing and shelling most likely caused ninety thousand to 180,000 civilian deaths. It appears that five to ten percent of this was likely democidal, and that of this, the United States was responsible for ten to twenty-five percent. This means that democidal U.S. bombing—that is, bombing consistent with orders from High Command, or known to be indiscriminate by High Command and allowed to continue, likely killed from five hundred to five thousand Vietnamese civilians.

“Treating the scanty and suspect statistics on U.S. massacres, atrocities, and other kinds of democide in the same way, and adding the resulting calculation to the estimated number killed because of bombing and shelling, I must conclude that the U.S. democide in Vietnam seems to have killed at least four thousand Vietnamese civilians, POWs, or enemy seeking to surrender, maybe as many as ten thousand Vietnamese. A prudent figure may be fifty-five hundred overall.”

John made a section break in his lecture by holding his hand up and putting his outline on the lectern. He turned back to the class. “To conclude, there was one more source of democide during the Vietnam War. Over a twelve year period, South Korea contributed a little more than three hundred thousand men to fight for South Vietnam, the second largest force next to the Americans. The Koreans became known for their brutal thoroughness, a reputation partly gained from their treatment of captured guerrillas or those trying to surrender, and their reckless and sometimes intentional killing of civilians. Taking all these and other possible cases into account, I estimate the Korean democide as at least three thousand Vietnamese civilians and enemy POWs.”

He glanced at the clock. He had used up practically all his time. “There is time for just a few questions. Any?”

One student near the rear shouted, “Was Hiroshima democide?”

“Yes, the city of Hiroshima was targeted as a whole. This is indiscriminate urban bombing of civilians. It was bombing ordered at the highest level. It was intentional, obviously. It was illegal, even by the international law of the time. It was democide.”

He looked around. “Any questions on today’s lecture?”

A student in the front asked, “Why don’t we hear more about all the killing by the North? We keep hearing My Lai. You know, it’s like the North didn’t do anything like that.”

John sighed. Perfect question, and with so little time. “We are Americans and American soldiers committed that atrocity. It should be held up to the light. It should tell us that we too can commit barbarous atrocities unless properly controlled and educated, with punishments for those who commit violations. But also, there is a virulent communist and left wing in the United States that wants to hold our nose to such atrocities as a way of proving how awful, to use their words, the ‘imperialist, capitalist, and corrupt’ America is.”

More hands went up, but students were starting to collect at the door for the next class. “Sorry, folks,” John said. “Class dismissed.”

Not once did he look at Miss Phim. That pleased him.

Chapter 37

Ho Chi Minh City

Wang Shihao

Shihao sat in the back of the old Renault car, sandwiched between two armed security agents. He contemptuously thought of them as *cho vang*—yellow dogs, because of the yellow uniforms they wore. Another one rode in the front with the driver. It was late at night, but they passed some familiar buildings, so he thought they were taking him to the Hoa Hoa police station in Giadinh, on the outskirts of the city—the worst of them all.

Even though some of his friends had been arrested for some reason or other, he never worried that the police or security agents would come for him. He had scrupulously obeyed the rules, and never let a criticism of the communists be heard outside his home. He leaned his head back against the seat and closed his eyes. *If only I could have persuaded my mother and wife to leave . . . if only I'd said no . . . I do not understand it . . . a happy life is important, not the misery we all suffer now.*

Buddha, now the worst has happened to me.

In his mind, he went through each level of the deterioration in their welfare and security under the new North Vietnamese government of the South. He grimaced inwardly. *So many . . . so do khung—crazy many bought the propaganda of an independent Viet Cong and NLF fighting for the independence and freedom of Vietnam from the North and the Americans . . . a Third Way, Hanh called it.*

His heart started beating rapidly and he tried to push the thought and emotion away. It wouldn't submit, instead bringing up her outrage at the South Vietnamese government's corruption. *If she is still alive, I would like to know her reaction to the communist corruption.*

He was getting a tick under one eye. *No good. No good. Stop it.*

To distract himself, he looked out the car window and saw two security Renaults parked on the lawn in front of a home. They had driven

over a flower bed. *Somebody else being arrested*, he thought. That returned his mind to his fear and the terror of their lives.

Before the defeat . . . so hard to understand totalitarianism personally, so hard to prepare for it. Still, damn it, Mom and Yan would not flee the country with me; they put their faith in rebellion. Shihao released a long sigh. He was getting a tension headache.

After more than a year, they were confident of their power . . . none of us were prepared . . . Shihao shook his head slowly and did not realize how tightly he had his arms folded across his chest until he felt the pain from his fingers digging into each arm. He tried to relax but could not, so he simply put his hands on his lap and clenched them together.

Shihao's attention was jerked to the present when the Renault swerved suddenly to avoid a rickshaw that had cut in front of them, throwing Shihao against the agent on his left side. The agent pushed him off with a grunt as the driver slowed the Renault, perhaps thinking that he would be ordered to arrest the rickshaw man. But the security agent beside him barked something, and the driver resumed his normal speed.

Shihao slouched further down in the seat, grinding his teeth in frustration over what was happening to him now. Unconsciously, he again crossed his arms and clenched his fists over his utter idiocy. *I made Yan pregnant. So, I now have a daughter. And now a new horror . . . always a new horror . . . the New Economic Zones.*

He sank further in the seat, jamming his knees against the seat in front, and screwing up his face with the anguish of it all. *I am sorry, Mom . . . very sorry . . . but you and Yan were so foolish. We should have left the country. We are fleeing when I get out of this.* He glanced at the security agent on his right. *We are fleeing if I have to tie you both up and carry you and Jy-ying to a boat.*

Chi Hoa Prison

The Renault carrying Shihao entered an alley and parked in a lot with many other such cars, some with flashers on top. They took him around to the front of the building. *I was wrong*, he thought as they passed under a sign. *This is Chi Hoa, Saig—Ho Chi Minh City's central prison.*

One in front and two behind, the three security agents who had arrested him took him inside to a room where a PAVN officer sat at a

huge mahogany desk. They stopped Shihao well back from the desk and one of the security agents went up to it, exchanged a few words with the officer, and signed a document of some sort that the man shoved toward him.

The officer shouted at two armed soldiers standing near the desk, "Take him to K-23."

As the security agents left, one of the soldiers moved up to him and said, "Follow me," and walked toward the open door. As Shihao followed him, the other soldier fell in behind. He was led through two locked and barred doors and down a hallway to a door guarded by another soldier. Passing through that door, they moved down an aisle between little cement cells, each with a large, barred, metal door. Shihao could see that the cells were stuffed with prisoners sleeping head to toe in fetal positions on the narrow concrete slab in each cell. In some of them there wasn't enough room on the slab, and prisoners slept on the concrete floor. Shihao saw no blankets, sheets, or pillows.

With a bang and a rattle of metal, the soldier opened a barred door near the end of the aisle and pushed him into a small, gray cement cell containing four other prisoners, three of whom were asleep on the cement slab, one on the floor. There was no window and only a dim, screened lightbulb in the center of the ceiling.

The aisle between the cells that they had walked down had stunk, but the stench in the cell blasted him; he immediately felt like retching. Most of the smell must have come the hole in the corner, where the yellowish wetness around it and the brown cake on its edge announced its purpose.

One of the soldiers ordered Shihao, "Strip everything." He pointed to the concrete floor near the slab and ordered, "Sleep there." Then he pointed to a bare corner of the slab. "During the day you must sit there with your feet on the floor, and your hands in view of the door. Look straight ahead. You cannot sleep or close your eyes for more than a second. You must think about your sins against the Glorious Revolution."

Both soldiers left, one carrying the stack of Shihao's shoes, brown pants, white shirt, and underwear. Everything was still in the pockets, including his wallet. They banged the door closed with the intrinsic metal ring of all prison doors, and slammed its bolt home.

He lay down on the concrete where the soldier had pointed. It was cold. Rolling over on his side and bringing his knees up and his arms across his chest, he tried to huddle into a ball for warmth. To distract himself from his discomfort, he focused on the snoring and muttering

of the other men in his cell and those nearby, but when that no longer worked he again thought about what the “Glorious Revolution” had done to the South and him personally.

His face was toward the cell door. At random intervals, as far as he could tell, a guard walked up and down the aisle between the cells. He had on soft shoes, and came without warning.

About an hour later, a guard shoved clothes through a slot under the door and, not caring whether he woke the other prisoners, he yelled, “For Shihao. Put these on, and go back to sleep on the floor. You must get up at five a.m.”

Shihao lifted the garments—threadbare khaki pants that were almost too small, and a baggy black t-shirt. Once he’d dressed and got down on the concrete floor again, the man near him on the floor, apparently awakened by the guard, whispered, “Come close. We can share our body warmth. I am Nguyen Cam. The three on the slab are Le van Na, Ly Bien, and somebody we only know as Chi. Who are you and why were you arrested?”

“Wang Shihao. I wish I knew why I was arrested.”

“Well, join the crowd. More in the morning. Now go to sleep, if you can.”

They were all awakened in the morning by North Vietnamese patriotic music broadcast over a loudspeaker in the ceiling outside the cell. He did what his cell mates did. After using the hole in the corner, they sat four in a row on the concrete slab, staring straight ahead. Cam had warned him that the order he received must be strictly followed—that they must sit straight, stare straight ahead, and not talk.

While sitting like that, Cam whispered, “As the guard said, we are to contemplate how glorious was Ho Chi Minh and the communist revolution.”

Shihao snickered.

Bien heard him and warned, “They are serious. Never doubt they will execute you if they believe you think anything different.” Then he looked scared for a moment, and his face turned flat and inscrutable. Shihao guessed that he feared Shihao might be a communist plant, hoping the prisoners would reveal their antirevolutionary thoughts. He knew then that he could not trust any of them either.

Hours later their breakfast was slid under the door. On a sheet from a communist newspaper rested four compressed balls of cold, stale rice and four small bowls of almost clear soup, with some rotten-looking vegetables and tiny pieces of fish floating in it.

“Hey, Shihao,” Bien whispered, “*bon appetit*—enjoy. This is your breakfast and your supper will be no different.”



A month later, actually thirty-three days by Shihao's count, and the complete turnover—twice—of his cell mates, two soldiers came for him early in the morning. He was so happy at that, he didn't care why they wanted him. He had run out of things to think about as he sat almost motionless on the slab day after day, and felt that he was on the verge of losing his mind. He had heard the screams and shouts, some of anticommunist slogans, of those who went crazy in the other cells. *Then again*, he thought, *maybe they're the smart ones, inviting execution rather than prolonging their misery.*

The whispered discussion with his cell mates only went so far, and after a while there was only silence. Everyone feared that one of the others might be a stooge, or reveal what was said to the soldiers for special privileges. He got no exercise, and slept fitfully, even though, with the turnover of prisoners in his cell, he now had the best part of the concrete slab next to the cell door on which to sleep. He no longer felt hungry, even though the pants that had been almost too tight when he'd arrived were now very loose and he had to double over the top hem to keep them up. He thought he might have dysentery, and seemed to be squatting way too many times over the hole in the cell floor. During his fitful sleep at night he was waking up with a dry cough. In the morning, he coughed out rust-colored phlegm.

He could only walk slowly, and finally both soldiers took him by the elbows and half carried him. They took him from the cell area into a small room, obviously an interrogation room. A gray-haired woman wearing narrow wire glasses and a green officer's uniform sat at an American Army-issue gray metal desk; her visored cap rested upside down on its cluttered top, almost touching a half-full tin ashtray. She had her hands clasped together on top of a pile of papers, and smiled at him when the soldiers brought him in.

She nodded at the soldiers, who moved to the back of the room, and then nodded at a hard-backed chair facing the desk. Shihao plunked down with relief. The wood was softer than the concrete slab. The woman removed her hands from the paper before her, and said, "I am *Dai Uy*—Captain Tran That Ky. I will determine how you will be re-educated so that you see the glory of our revolution."

Then she looked down at the paper and read, "You are Wang Shihao. Your family is composed of your mother Jiang Jia Li, your wife Hua Jue Yan, and your child Jy-ying." She looked at him over her glasses. "Is this correct?"

Her soft and friendly South Vietnamese voice shocked him, and he could not respond at first. He did not recognize her name, but he did her face, with its unusual plump, double chin. Her picture had often appeared in the papers. She had been one of the opposition members of the National Assembly. It was obvious now that she had been one of the North's agents, and her name then must have been an alias.

She leaned toward him and asked, "Can you speak?"

He shook himself mentally and tried to regain control. Not having spoken above a whisper in thirty-three days, his voice was hoarse when he replied, "Yes. I am Shihao."

She picked up a lined tablet and a pencil from her desk and signaled a soldier, who came and took them from her and handed them to Shihao. She leaned back and smiled again. "Write your autobiography. Do not exclude anything. This is very important." She nodded at the soldiers.

They took him to a small room nearby. It contained two tables, one with two chairs, and the other with one. One of the soldiers waved at the table with one chair, and after he sat down and put the tablet on the table to write, both soldiers leaned their American M-16 rifles against the wall and sat down at the other table. They both lit Camel cigarettes. One pulled a portable game of Go from his large shirt pocket and began to set it up.

Many hours later, with his hand cramping almost uncontrollably and his body beginning to ache, and after the soldiers had been relieved twice, he gave the twenty-one page autobiography to one of the soldiers, and they took him back to his cell.

Two days later, they came for him again. He stumbled along with the soldiers on each side, holding him up. He felt hot, and now his legs and arms had started throbbing.

When he entered the interrogation room, the same captain sat at the desk. She did not offer him the chair, but scowled at him. He felt too sick to care. Waving his autobiography at him, she hissed in a voice that had lost any hint of softness, "You lied in your autobiography. I warn you, you had better not lie again. Write it over." She tossed another tablet at him.

Again he was taken to the same room, where he tried to write everything he could think of into the autobiography. He had to put less thought into it this time and it went faster, but it was harder nonetheless. Several times he had to put his head on the table to rest. Each time, the soldiers pulled up his head by his hair and demanded that he continue to write.

When they took him back to his cell, he saw that one of his cell mates had been replaced by another prisoner. When he turned to look at him, he was surprised to recognize Hoang Manh Tuan, a member of the former Saigon University Student Union who had been a close friend of his former fiancée. Though forbidden to say anything, they greeted each other with a grin.

With one fewer in the cell temporarily, the three prisoners could sleep together on the concrete slab. Shihao and Tuan lay down with their heads close together and whispered to each other. Shihao explained between coughs that left him wiping his mouth that “I am here for no good reason I know. What about you?”

Tuan sighed. “I know the horrible crime I committed. When I was interrogated at Dai Loi Hotel, which has been converted into a prison, I found out that the communists already knew much about me, no doubt from those autobiographies. They knew especially that, while I had been a member of the pro-NLF Student Union, I had not joined the NLF. I had to write my own autobiography maybe ten times—I did not count—until my interrogator was satisfied that it corresponded with what they knew about me, including my sin. Now, as to why I am in this particular paradise, I guess that it is because prisoners are periodically moved from one prison and reeducation camp to another so they can’t form rebellious groups, or work together to escape.”

Shihao asked, “What happened to my former fiancée, Pham Hieu Hanh?”

Tuan leaned closer to hear him. He was quiet for a long moment, until Shihao said louder, “Do you know?”

Tuan seemed to moan before softly replying, “One of the prisoners in my cell at Dai Loi also had participated in student demonstrations. Before he was arrested, he knew this woman—Duong Chi, a journalist—who had been imprisoned because of the articles she wrote during the war. She was sent to Reeducation Camp K41. There she was kept in a large cell with about thirty-two other women. Pham Hieu Hanh was in the cell with her. They knew each other and talked together frequently.”

Shihao had a fit of coughing. His voice broke up, but he managed to ask, “Why was Hanh arrested?”

“For insufficient enthusiasm for the revolution, which made her suspect. She did not join the NLF, even though she was such a pro-Third Way activist.”

Shihao forgot himself and croaked too loudly, “She did not? She told me she did.”

“Shhh! Lower your voice,” Tuan hastily whispered. Then he moved closer so that his mouth was an inch away from Shihao’s ear. “I know she lied to you. We all knew it. Everyone but you. She did that to test your love for her. She never quite got over the break between you, you know. She did not date after that. Her politics became everything.”

Shihao tried to clear his throat several times.

Tuan sighed deeply, then continued in a whisper that wavered through quivering lips. “Anyway, the cell she was in adjoined a men’s cell . . . they were separated by a brick wall the prisoners could not see over, with barbed wire from the top of the wall to the cell roof. There was a . . . sexual trade between the two cells. Much prized among all the prisoners was the ration of boiled manioc. So the men used to save their manioc, form it into balls, and toss the balls over the wall to the women. In return, the older and stronger women forced the young girls to strip and climb onto the wall where, supported by hands below and a grip on the barbed wire, they positioned themselves so that the men could see and play with their *lon*—pussy. If they refused . . . they were beaten.”

Tuan hesitated, and Shihao could hear him crying softly. Now, already devastated by a terrible agony as he suspected what had happened, he hissed in a strangled voice, “Continue, dammit.”

Tuan groaned, “You sure?”

Shihao broke into another a fit of coughing. He wiped the phlegm away from his mouth and sobbed, “Yes.”

Tuan whispered very fast, as though the words burned his lips, “It was her turn to go on the wall . . . she refused . . . three of them punched and kicked her . . . did something to her insides . . . she died three days later.” Tuan moved his head away, trying to stifle his weeping.

Shihao lay as if frozen. A cold chill ran up and down his spine, despite his fever. Finally he gasped, and wailed so softly no one could hear it, “Oh Buddha, poor Hanh . . . poor Hanh . . . she only wanted to improve humanity, the downtrodden. Poor Hanh . . .”

Tuan turned back to Shihao and raised his hand to squeeze Shihao’s hot shoulder. They cried together, their tears wetting the concrete slab.

In the morning, Shihao could not sit up on the slab. His whole body ached, and he felt as though he was burning up. His coughing was worse, and with each cough, globs of stinking green phlegm flew or oozed out of his mouth.

Tuan banged on the cell door to draw the attention of a guard, and when he came and saw Shihao curled up on the slab, red-faced and

wracked by coughs that left phlegm running from his mouth, he reported it. Three soldiers soon came with a stretcher, lifted a semiconscious Shihao onto it, and carried him to the prison's small clinic.

After a near three-hour wait in a room crowded with sick prisoners, a doctor appeared, looked Shihao over, tapped his chest, then pressed a stethoscope against it to listen to the sound of his breathing between coughs. He held a cup up to Shihao's mouth when he coughed, and inspected the phlegm he collected. Finally he told the nurse hovering nearby, "He has pneumonia. Give him a shot of penicillin. I'll take another look at him later."

Shihao's pneumonia was viral; it did not respond to the penicillin, in spite of several shots. His condition worsened. He lay semiconscious throughout the day and night.

The next day, he mumbled something as the nurse was giving him the last shot of his quota. She bent down to hear him. He could barely speak; all she could make out was, "Poor Hanh . . . Yan . . . love . . . Jy-ying." Then he seemed to gather all of his strength to clearly whisper, "Ho Chi Minh *du mai*—Ho Chi Minh was a motherfucker," before sagging into unconsciousness.

He died hours later.

Captain Tran That Ky

When a soldier reported Shihao's death to Captain Ky, she took his two handwritten autobiographies from the stack on her desk and wrote a note on them. Pulling a form out of a drawer in the desk, she filled it in, then clipped it and the autobiographies together. She put it on a corner of her desk, where her orderly would make copies for security headquarters. They had to have a record of every death so they did not go around trying to arrest the dead.

She looked through another pile of autobiographies. She pulled out one, then another from near the bottom of the pile. She put them side by side on her desk and thought of Shihao. She had looked forward to confronting him with Dinh Hieu Hanh and Pham Hao Quang's autobiographies.

Hanh had tried to protect him, saying that Shihao did not object to her supposedly joining the NLF, but Quang was quite clear about how Shihao had objected and made antirevolutionary statements. They had obtained Quang's autobiography first and had verified it with others.

Then came Hanh's, and in each rewriting of her autobiography, she had continued to protect Shihao. So they had gone hard on her. She would never have been let out of the reeducation camps until she told the truth. Her lie was a sure sign of the anticommunist attitude she shared with Shihao.

Well, they are all dead now. Good riddance, the captain thought. She leaned over the desk and put the autobiographies on top of Shihao's.

Chapter 38

1980s–1996

Cyril Clement

Cyril and Alice spent a year collecting the most available statistics on democide around the world, and then made that part of a proposal to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The institute then approved a two year, \$50,000 grant for a thorough collection of data on democide and their analysis to determine its causes. It took two more grants in succession from USIP and six years to do the data collection, and another two years for the complex statistical analysis. They came up with a total democide estimate for 1900–1987 of nearly 170 million—in effect, Banks’ estimate for that period.

Cyril and Alice published their findings in a 1990 book titled *Murder by Government: Extent, Causes, and Conditions*. Aside from the statistics, the book covered a number of case studies, including democide by the Soviet Union, communist China, Nazi Germany, militarist Japan, and communist Vietnam. In the analysis section of the book, they showed that democide was highly correlated with the extent of ongoing civil or international war, and the degree to which a country was nondemocratic. But war was also related to the degree a country was nondemocratic, meaning there was an indirect causal relationship between nondemocracy and democide through war, and a direct relationship whether war was occurring or not. In sum, the democratic peace also applied to democide.

This was Cyril and Alice’s core book on democide. From then on, they wrote books dealing specifically with the democide in the Soviet Union, communist China, and Nazi Germany. The books were read and received good reviews, but they did not grab the minds of those working in the new field of genocide studies. Genocide had become a big thing. A voluminous literature centered on the Holocaust had developed, but while a number of books dealt with genocide in history, democide was yet too new a concept to catch on. It would.



Alice died of colon cancer in late 1994, leaving Cyril devastated. They had no children, but friends helped him through his first weeks alone. He took a semester's leave of absence without pay and used Alice's inheritance from her rich family to travel around the world on one cruise ship after another. Though one widow after another chased him, he only wanted Alice back. But the cruises did distract him from the pain of her death and helped him make the transition to a life without her.

When he returned to teaching, he could not rise above routine. He stopped doing research and professional writing. The democratic peace and democide were now well known, and there was really nothing new he could add to them. He returned to reading science fiction, and particularly alternative history. He had read all the science fiction there was in his youth, but when he started college, he gave it up—too much to study, too many fascinating books on Asia, war, and politics. Now, picking up science fiction again, he found it had evolved into a new form that recognized that women exist as sensual and intelligent partners, a form with a far greater scope that went well beyond the natural sciences to envelop psychology, sociology, and even sometimes politics, as did George Orwell's book *1984*.

In late 1996, as he sat in his campus office during his office hours, making himself available to students, he doodled on a notepad as his mind focused on John Banks, as it had thousands of times. He wondered what John and Joy were doing now. He wrote down "2002, time travel" to give himself a base for working backward. Nothing serious. Just a way to spend time. He then wrote "Ph.D. end of Spring Semester, 2001, Yale" He was sure of that because the 9/11/2001 terrorist attack played a large role in Banks' "Remembrance," and Banks had prominently mentioned his new Ph.D.

Let's see, Cyril reasoned, he could not have gotten a Ph.D. there in less than four years as a full-time graduate student. Was he full-time? Was he a teaching assistant? I don't remember him writing anything about that. In any case, he most likely spent at least four years as a graduate student, which means . . . he was there in at least the Fall Semester of 1997 . . . or a year earlier. Which would mean . . . he is there now.

"Now!" Cyril sat up straight in his chair. "My God, I can't believe it. I could talk to John Banks, if he's there."

That was easy to determine. He turned to his computer and brought up the search engine on his browser. He typed in *Yale University His-*

tory Department. Among the many listed Web sites, he found the one that gave the department's telephone number, which he then called.

He asked the woman who answered if she was the department secretary, and when she said she was, he said, "I am Professor Cyril Clement at the University of California. I am trying to locate a former student of mine, a Mr. John Banks. He may be a graduate student in your department. Is he?"

"What was the name?"

He repeated the name slowly, then waited while the secretary checked.

Several minutes later she came back on the phone. "Yes, he is here."

Cyril was almost speechless. He could feel his heart racing. "Ah . . . is this his first semester there?"

More waiting, which gave him a chance to calm down a little.

"Yes it is. Would you like to leave a message for him? We have a graduate student mailbox."

His was still having difficulty with his voice. "Ah . . . well . . . no, but thanks for checking."

He hung up, then jumped off his chair and did a little jig around his office, clapping his hands. Not caring who heard him through his open door, he yelled, "Jesus H. Christ, I can talk to Banks! To *the* John Banks." He hit his head with the palm of his hand. "My God!"

Chapter 39

1978
Cholon

Jiang Jia Li

Yan's screams tore through their shack again and again. She had been in labor for almost a full day, and exhaustion slowed the hired midwife's normally efficient bustle and Jia Li's footsteps as she moved back and forth with towels, hot water, and wet rags.

Her mother's screams and the strange activity frightened little Jy-ying, who had no idea what was going on, and no place she could go to escape. She clung to Jia Li or hovered very close, probably as tired as they.

Then the final scream came from Yan, and the midwife yelled for Jia Li to help her. The baby was coming out of Yan properly, headfirst, but still this was not right. The placenta had not come out first.

Nothing seemed wrong with the infant, however. The midwife held the bloodied infant girl in a towel and gently tweaked her foot. She started crying, and with that the midwife handed the baby to Jia Li.

Yan, utterly exhausted, lay unmoving, eyes closed, legs splayed. She was bleeding heavily. The midwife tried to wipe and inspect her vaginal area, but it bloodied almost immediately. She kept wiping Yan, putting clean towels underneath her pelvis, and muttering to herself. Finally, almost in tears, she yelled at Jia Li, "We must take her to a hospital. Her placenta is still inside, and she is hemorrhaging. She needs surgery to remove the placenta and I don't have the necessary equipment."

Jia Li hurriedly wrapped the infant in a clean towel and, holding the baby to her chest, she ran into the street and headed toward the taxi stands at Ben Tai Market. She did not know how long an ambulance would take if she called the hospital.

She found a taxi sitting at one of the stands and yelled breathlessly at the driver, "Quick, I'll pay you anything. I have to rush my daughter to the hospital. Her life is in danger from a bad birth."

The driver followed her directions to her shack, and went inside with her to help the midwife support Yan, wrapped in a sheet and a blanket, to the taxi. Jia Li followed, holding the infant in one arm and clutching Jy-ying's hand with her other hand. They sat in front while the midwife sat in the rear with Yan's head on her shoulder.

Soldiers stopped the taxi as it turned into the emergency entrance of Cho Ray Hospital. Jia Li and the midwife had to show their neighborhood registration papers, even though Jia Li kept screaming, "My daughter is bleeding to death." Finally, the soldiers let them through to the emergency entrance, where the taxi driver ran in for a doctor.

Two nurses came out with a gurney, and helped Yan out of the taxi to lie down on it, then trundled her inside.

"Please, get three *dong* out of my purse and give it to the taxi driver," Jia Li told the midwife, turning so the woman could reach the bag hanging on her shoulder. The driver gave her a toothy smile in thanks. It was the equivalent of a day's pay for most workers.

The midwife and Jia Li stood by Yan's gurney, waiting for a doctor to show. Yan opened her eyes wide, as though suddenly realizing she had birthed a live infant, and reached out her hands. Jia Li put the infant in her arms and kissed her forehead. "She's a beautiful child. Congratulations, my dear."

Within minutes a nurse with a clipboard joined them and took down essential information, including what the midwife saw as a problem. Another brought towels to replace the ones now soaked in blood. Both the sheet and blanket were bloody where they had been around Yan's middle.

Half an hour later a doctor came, read the nurse's report, and immediately yelled at a nearby nurse, "Call Doctor Day. He has another one." He turned to a nurse's aide and said, "Rush the patient to S-5."

As the aide prepared to push the gurney off, Yan kissed the infant's forehead and reluctantly handed her back to Jia Li. There were tears in her eyes. "I wish Shihao were here." The words lingered in the air as the aide pushed the gurney through the double doors.

The doctor then pointed to a room off the entry area and told them, "You can wait there. Doctor Day is our obstetrician. He will take her placenta out and make sure she is okay. Then he will check the infant to see if he—"

"She."

“—is okay also.” Then he asked, “She wears a wedding ring. Where is her husband?”

“Dead. Eight months ago.”

The doctor nodded as though it was an everyday occurrence, and walked off.

The waiting room was comfortable. A table piled with communist magazines from Hanoi and the Soviet Union, the Soviet ones in English, was surrounded by three easy chairs and a couch. In a corner, a TV set blared a report on Cambodia’s continuing expulsion of ethnic Vietnamese, its attacks across the border on Vietnamese villages, and the secret help the Cambodians were supposedly getting from China.

Jia Li sat down in one of the chairs and held the infant on her lap, while Jy-ying squeezed in next to her.

“We will name you Ting,” Jia Li told the infant. It had been one of Shihao’s favorite names.

Hours went by. Jia Li had no way of telling how many; she had no watch and there was no wall clock in the room. She told the midwife several times that she need not wait, but the woman insisted.

For the hundredth time, Jia Li dammed herself for persuading Yan to have a midwife help her in the birth. But she had heard rumors about the disorganization of the hospitals, and how those going in with relatively minor problems like a broken finger contracted serious infection or disease and died. She’d also heard that poor people, unlike communists and high officials, received shoddy treatment. *Besides, having a baby is so routine, Jia Li thought. A midwife aided my birth of Shihao with no problems, and Jy-ying was born that way.*

So she’d sought a midwife. The one who had helped in Jy-ying’s birth had disappeared, but she found one with good references and more than twenty-five births to her credit. *Oh Buddha, who would have thought Yan’s placenta would not be ejected by her body?*

“I’m sorry, Shihao,” she murmured.

Jy-ying and the infant were asleep when a doctor appeared in the doorway. He wore a somber expression. He looked from the midwife to Jia Li; seeing that Jia Li held the infant, he came over to her. “Are you Yan’s mother?”

Her lips began to quiver. “Yes,” she replied.

The doctor stood before her, his head slightly bent to look down at her, his arms hanging aimlessly at his sides. In a low but firm voice, he said, “I am Doctor Day. We operated on your daughter and got her placenta out, but we could not stop her bleeding, and she soon had a total kidney failure. I am very sorry. She went into shock and died.”

Jia Li sat speechless. The bottom fell out of her stomach with the doctor's words, and her mind felt shattered. She tried to pull herself together enough to speak, but could not.

The doctor put out his hands. "Can I see her child? I want to make sure he will survive."

She heard him, but for a second did not know what he asked, and then what to do. But something within her held out her arms and handed the child to the doctor.

"I'll be back in about fifteen minutes. I just want to check him out."

Jia Li did not think to correct him about the infant's sex as he left the room.

She heard a strange sound that gradually became familiar. She automatically turned her head toward it. Leaning over her thin legs, the midwife keened into her hands.

That stopped Jia Li's descent into the ugly, self-flagellating world of "What if," and "If I only." She sat up straight, wiped her eyes with her hands, and gently got out of the chair so as not to wake Jy-ying. She knelt down on one knee next to the midwife, and put her hand on her arm. "This was not your fault. You could not help an accident, nor could you do anything once it happened. You did your best, and infant Ting will survive, thanks to you."

The midwife looked up at Jia Li, her face lined with grief, and wiped her eyes with one of the extra towels she had brought with her. She gripped Jia Li's hand, and said, "I want to make sure . . . Ting?"

Jia Li nodded. "Ting is healthy."

"Then I'll go home with you, and help clean up."

Jia Li shook her head vigorously. "No, I want to do this myself. I hope you understand."

The doctor soon returned with Ting. "She is in fine condition, but hungry. We have a list of milk-women, ones whose infants died in or near birth. I suggest you contact one, and begin the infant's feeding."

She nodded, but that was not her way.

As soon as she got home, and saw the mess of bloody towels and fluids on the bed, she took Jy-ying into the tiny, screened-off kitchen and sat down with her back to the cold wood stove. She told Jy-ying, "Sit here, next to me."

She opened her blouse and took out her breast, and offered her nipple to Ting to suck on. *It must be true . . . all the old women mentioned it. And they had heard it from their mothers, that women will soon produce milk for a suckling child that is not their own if it persists, even if they've not recently been pregnant. It should work . . . I'm forty-seven, and not into menopause.*

The suckling was painful at first, then sensual, and finally she thought she might be producing some milk. Jy-ying watched wide-eyed at first, but soon got bored and went to sleep next to Jia Li's leg.

As the suckling went on and on, tears freely flowed down Jia Li's cheeks, and she used the time to control her heartbreak and grief, and shape her thoughts. *Nothing can be the same. Everything must change. My family is gone . . . I've lost a loving husband, my precious son, a daughter-in-law I'd grown to love.*

She choked up and her body tried to convulse with sobs. She held it rigid, pinching her leg painfully as distraction, and as the tears rolled down her cheeks, she tried to tilt her head so that they would not fall on Ting as she suckled. She shuddered as she fought nausea and growing panic. She tried to focus on the children. *I have their children now to nurture and educate. I will not bring them up under this communist tyranny. Escape—we must escape, not for my future . . . for theirs.*

She felt her control returning. Her body grew still, but her tears still flowed. *Their children must be free, to become what they want, to do everything they are capable of.* If she was the only one, she would stay. This was the only country she knew. She loved its culture, its smells, its tastes, its sounds . . . *Neither the French nor the Americans could change what is dear to me about my country, she reminded herself. The communists won't change it, either.*

She looked down at Ting, still suckling, and then spoke loud enough for anyone in the shack to hear. "Yes, my dear Shihao, I will take your children and finally escape Vietnam. Your spirit should be happy with this."

Chapter 40

2001

John Banks

His visits to the psychiatrist didn't seem to be helping. *I've been hypnotized twice, and I know I said something or other about my dreams. I know that it's no longer an "if"—something is not right, and I'm sure it's in my head. But he doesn't seem to be helping.*

He was still restless, waking at odd hours and having difficulty getting back to sleep. He'd catch hazy images, and often had the crazy feeling that he was shooting a gun. *Me, the near pacifist, shooting a gun. I don't even know where the trigger is on one.* And the evening before, he had made vigorous, delicious love to someone so indistinct, he only knew she was a woman. That he would make love he could understand, but the gun?

He sighed as he entered his class, barely on time. He was over his chagrin at his stupidity with the note. *Not Miss Phim's fault.* He looked her way to see her looking back. He quickly averted his eyes.

He pulled his outline from his briefcase. He hadn't reviewed it; he hadn't tried to impress on his memory the figures he would use to demonstrate his command of the material to the class. He didn't need to. They were seared into his memory.

"Good afternoon, students."

After their murmured response, he launched immediately into his lecture. "So, the war ended with the withdrawal of the American forces, by withdrawal of American military aid from South Vietnam, and by outright military victory of the North over a dispirited, collapsing South Vietnamese army. Obviously, the Vietnamese on both sides suffered grievously during the war, which can only be partially measured by the overall death toll through democide and war casualties. Nevertheless, on these scales alone, the human cost was horrendous. Slightly over 2.1 million North and South Vietnamese were killed or murdered: ap-

proximately one out of every seventeen. From 1954 to the end of the Vietnam War, the democide in the South by its own regimes, or by the North Vietnamese, Americans, or Koreans, probably accounts for 261,000 of the total dead—slightly over twelve percent. Most of this democide, over sixty-two percent, likely was committed by the North and its guerrilla front, the Viet Cong.

“After the South surrendered to the North in April 1975, and the North had consolidated its military control over Saigon—now Ho Chi Minh City—and the most vital sections of the South, the North moved to disband and absorb the most important personnel of the Viet Cong, the National Liberation Front, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government, whose pronouncements and declarations had been credible to so many in the West as an independent third force. If there is any doubt about the true nature of such groups, consider that the Northern party historian Nguyen Khac-Vien said the Provisional Revolutionary Government was always a group emanated from the North.”

John read from his outline. “He said further that ‘If we had pretended otherwise for such a long period, it was only because during the war we were not obliged to unveil our cards.’ End quote.” He looked up and scanned the class.

“Although the American antiwar demonstrators, as they were mislabeled in the press, and their pro-North Vietnam supporters chanted, ‘Stop the Killing,’ or ‘Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?’—LBJ were President Johnson’s initials—once the United States withdrew and the war ended, the killing did not end. Not in Cambodia. Not in Laos. Not in Vietnam. Vietnamese armies fought in Laos to consolidate their control. They fought against the Khmer Rouge army in Cambodia and, with victory in January 1979 and the installation of a puppet regime in Phnom Penh, they fought a nearly decade-long war against both the Cambodian Khmer Rouge and anticommunist guerrillas. This alone cost 150,000 Vietnamese lives.

“In 1979, they fought a border war against China, which had invaded Vietnam across its northern border in order to ‘teach it a lesson’ over its colonization of Cambodia. This probably cost at least another eight thousand Vietnamese lives, and perhaps another five hundred died in postwar border clashes and artillery duels with China. They also fought internal rebellions in the South, where perhaps twelve thousand to fifteen thousand insurgents mined roads, laid booby traps, threw grenades in Ho Chi Minh City, and possibly fought pitched battles against communist troops. And they fought armed remnants of the National Liberation Front, many of whom believed that they had been betrayed by the North’s complete and utter takeover of the South after victory.

“In these post-Vietnam years, over 160,000 more Vietnamese likely died from war and rebellion. This is no small number. It is over three times the 47,321 U.S. battle dead from the Vietnam War. In no way, then, did peace come to the Vietnamese people, nor to Laos and Cambodia. And neither did democide end in Vietnam or her neighbors.”

John stopped to let what he'd said so far sink in. Then he raised his voice. “The number murdered after—*after* the Vietnam War, I say again—was about 3.5 million in these three countries.”

Then he enunciated clearly and slowly, “The mass murder after the Vietnam War exceeds by over one million those killed during the war. Part of this incredible toll—I estimate 528,000—were those murdered by the triumphant communist North when it took over the South and erased it as a separate social, cultural, and political system. From then on there was only Vietnam, that is, North Vietnam extended over all the land formerly comprising the South.

“After victory, under the pretense of giving them lectures, the communists rounded up former South Vietnamese government officials, military officers, party leaders, police, and supporting intellectuals and imprisoned them in what were called reeducation camps. Presumably they were all to be indoctrinated in communist thoughts and ways, and to discover the errors of their old behavior and beliefs. In reality, these were concentration camps whose purpose was to systematically weed out of the new society true enemies of the people—that is, potential critics and opposition—and to take the victor's revenge on the communists' die-hard enemies.

“But the camps were not limited to those the communists called the South Vietnam government's henchmen and puppets. Former South Vietnam ‘antiwar’ or antigovernment opponents, or ‘Third Way’ activists who were arrested after the war also ended up in the camps. No such independent thought could be allowed. More tragic still were the common folk the communists sent to the camps simply for joking about communism, idly criticizing the new regime, showing insufficient sympathy for Northern rule, or otherwise displaying ‘improper’ attitudes. At any one time in the early years, some 150,000 to five hundred thousand Vietnamese apparently suffered in these camps. Like the Stalinist gulag, living conditions in these camps were so poor that the inmates' health rapidly deteriorated. They were weakened by malnutrition, and many soon died.

“But inhumane conditions and constant thought reform—brainwashing—were not all the prisoners had to worry about. The

communists viciously punished prisoners for minor violations or insufficient obedience, or for inadequate dedication to changing one's beliefs. Many were simply executed.

"The poet Nguyen Chi Thien, who by 1980 had spent over sixteen years in prison camps, must also have been expressing the feelings of reeducation camp inmates in a poem he called "From Ape to Man" that was smuggled out of the camps to the West."

John had clipped the poem to his outline, and read it to the class:

*From ape to man, millions of years gone by.
 From man to ape, how many years?
 Mankind, please come to visit
 The concentration camps in the heart of the thickest Jungles!
 Naked prisoners, taking baths together in herds,
 Living in ill-smelling darkness with lice and mosquitoes,
 Fighting each other for a piece of manioc or sweet potato,
 Chained, shot, dragged, slit up at will by their captors,
 Beaten up and thrown away for the rats to gnaw at their breath!
 This kind of ape is not fast but very slow in action, indeed
 Quite different from that of remote prehistory.
 They are hungry, they are thin as toothpicks,
 And yet they produce resources for the nation all year long.
 Mankind, please come and visit!*

John introduced a moment of silence after that by slowly removing the poem from his outline and dropping it in his briefcase. Then he returned to where he had been standing and said, "In sum, reeducation was a label for revenge, punishment, and social prophylaxis."

A hand up. "Yes, Mr. Svestka."

"What is social prophylaxis?"

"In this context, it is the communists purging society of people, ideas, thought, and elements that might oppose or threaten them."

He waited a moment for a follow-up question. When none came, he continued. "The communists cleverly and at first successfully hid their

mass murder from the outside world. They claimed that reeducation was a humane alternative to a bloodbath. But in private they boasted about their bloodletting to those they trusted. This was pointed out by Nguyen Cong Hoan, a member of the Buddhist antiwar opposition in South Vietnam during the war and of the postwar Vietnam National Assembly until his defection.”

John again referred to his outline. “‘The party leaders themselves have told me,’ Nguyen said, ‘that they are very proud of their talent for deceiving world opinion. ‘We’ve been worse than Pol Pot,’ they joke. ‘But the outside world knows nothing.’”

He went to his deck of student names. “Miss Bauernfeind, who was Pol Pot?”

“A former dictator of Cambodia.”

“And what can you add to that, Mr. Reantillo?”

“Ah . . . a communist dictator. He led the Khmer Rouge.”

“And . . .” *oh, it’s her card* “. . . ah, Miss Phim?”

“The Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot murdered about two million Cambodians, about a third of the population.”

John nodded. “Thank you.”

He returned to his lecture. “To repeat, the North was committing massive democide in the South, but hiding it well. Much of the killing took place out of sight, in prisons and reeducation camps. Many notables and famous artists, politicians, government officials, high military officers, teachers and professors, and other professionals met their end in the camps. Based on a 1985 statement by Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, the communists may ultimately have imprisoned 2.5 million people in these reeducation camps. One estimate is that of these, at least two hundred thousand of them died or were murdered. This is probably high, however. Taking account of the death toll in the similar Stalinist and Maoist gulags, a more likely figure is around ninety-five thousand.

“For those who were less than an actual or potential threat to the regime, who were just excess population in the cities or had committed minor infractions, the New Economic Zones—a nice term for wildernesses—waited. Accepting the blandishments of the regime or wishing to escape the deteriorating conditions of the cities, some also volunteered for these zones. Most, however, were forcibly sent. Work in these zones was hard and living conditions harsh—in some places, deadly. But the only choices one had were to work or try to escape. If caught, though, one faced an even worse fate: prison, a reeducation camp, or execution. No numbers are available on the resulting deaths in

these zones. Judging from their description and the toll at forced labor camps in the Soviet Union and China, possibly forty-eight thousand Vietnamese lost their lives, maybe even 155,000.

“One could be sent for reeducation and die there from the abysmal treatment; one could be sent to a New Economic Zone and possibly perish there from the labor, exposure, or disease. Or one could be marked for execution on some communist list, or summarily executed for anticommunist behavior.

“Jacqueline Desbarats and Karl Jackson carried out a survey of Vietnamese refugees in the United States and unexpectedly found that about one-third had seen executions or had detailed information on them. Thinking that they might be dealing with a biased sample of refugees, the two researchers traveled to France to interview refugees there. They found the same story. From the refugee reports, they calculated that at least sixty-five thousand South Vietnamese had been executed. Desbarats believes that these strictly extrajudicial executions might even have been as many as one hundred thousand.

“Nguyen Cong Hoan, a former official of the new postwar government of Vietnam, estimates that in perhaps one year after the war, from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand people were executed outright. Others put the toll at around 250,000. Many of these estimates may include those executed in the reeducation camps. Then there were the pick-them-up-and-shoot-them type of executions; the various reports and estimates suggest that some one hundred thousand people were killed overall. In the months after South Vietnam’s defeat, the victims were most commonly high officers of the previous regime; after 1975, they were usually those characterized as antigovernment resisters, which could mean nothing more than not registering for reeducation.

“I want to stop here, and pick up on what were called the ‘boat people’ in the next lecture. They are an incredible aspect of this truly terrible and fearsome period of Vietnam’s history, and twentieth century democide.”

He looked around. “Questions, comments?”

“Professor Banks.”

“Yes, Mr. Lyons.”

“There were all these antiwar demonstrators that opposed the war and . . . ah, sided with the North. What do they think of all this killing by the North when it won? And about taking away all rights?”

“It seems most don’t care. Some protested as an opposition to the possibility of being drafted. To some it was a social and fun thing to do with friends, something involving drugs, booze, and sex. For some it was an expression of their anti-Americanism, or procommunism.

“Keep in mind that the true repressive and murderous nature of communism was shown by Ho Chi Minh in the North against his own people, by China under Mao, and by the Soviet Union under Stalin, and their examples should have been an even greater warning of what would happen in the South once the communists took over. After such blatant examples, these antiwar demonstrators were either supremely ignorant and only doing their anti-draft or social thing, or procommunist to begin with. In either case, what happened in the South after the war hasn’t touched many of these people.”

Chapter 41

1978–1979

Cholon

Jiang Jia Li

Reliable information about escaping Vietnam was as easily available in Cholon as the price of black market rice. And Jia Li had thought it through. *The best time for our escape on the ocean is the dry season, January to August. So, it will be July of 1979 . . . almost a year after poor Yan's death. This will give Jy-ying and especially infant Ting a chance to grow some, and better withstand whatever they will face on the ocean or . . . whatever.* She had the gold and jewels that Shihao had hidden underneath the toilet pot, and she hoped that would be enough. *It all depends on the secret syndicate or boat procurer But I will not be stopped.*

She hired a fourteen-year-old girl to watch Jy-ying and Ting while she carried or dragged her furniture, piece by piece, to Cholon's Ben Tai Market to sell. Last to be sold was her precious heirlooms, and most of her jewelry. The North Vietnamese soldiers, officers, and officials frequented the market. Ho Chi Minh City's wealth still amazed them, compared to the cities and towns in the North, even glorious revolutionary Hanoi. So they were always on the lookout for something they could "borrow," "requisition," steal, or buy to take home with them when they left the "capitalist-raped" South.

Her wedding ring with Dewu's love engraved inside the band, her mother's old wedding ring, and her father's sapphire ring, she kept. All money she converted to gold taels. Finally, in May 1978, sitting in her empty shack and checking her list of all the taels she had hidden, she told herself, "Enough. I have enough."

Sino-Vietnamese were still being driven out of the country by the North Vietnamese. It had begun in 1977 when tension with China developed over Cambodian attacks across Vietnam's border. The

Vietnamese communists, believing that the Sino-Vietnamese were pro-Chinese and would support them in the event of a war, began expelling them from the Communist Party and government positions. They also discriminated against them in jobs, rations, and in all the approvals everyone had to get from communist officials for personal activities, such as travel. As a result, Sino-Vietnamese were fleeing into China, or taking boats to other countries.

Earlier in the year, the communists had regularized these escapes to make money off them. They contracted with foreign syndicate operations to buy ships, loaded them up with Sino-Vietnamese while offering no guarantee that the ship would reach some foreign shore or sink, and unofficially charged around ten gold taels for an adult and five for a child. The old cargo ship *Tung An* alone carried twenty-two hundred escapees, some of whom had paid three ounces of gold for forged papers that documented they were Sino-Vietnamese.

But that unofficial communist escape operation was over. Sino-Vietnamese, like all escapees, now had to take the risk of being caught and sent to a reeducation camp or prison, shot by shore security patrols, or drowned when their boat was sunk by the Coast Guard, storms, or pirates. Many died of starvation or exposure on the open ocean.

Jia Li knew all this. She had asked around in Cholon, the Chinatown of Ho Chi Minh City, where close attention was given to the potential for escape. One could buy very good information, including where in Vietnam it was best to escape by sea, what captains were available, and how much it all would cost. For those willing to pay, there was even a register for notification of the next boat leaving. Bribes provided the best intelligence, but bribes cost money.

So Jia Li had to dig into her accumulated escape funds for what information she got. Finally, after all her payments, all her secret work through intermediaries, all her careful weighing of this boat or that, this captain or another, this escape route or some other, she had made her decision, and she and the children had been accepted.

She now often talked to Jy-ying, who understood very little, but that didn't matter. So now, as Jy-ying ate her small portion of cold rice and wilted vegetables, Jia Li told her, "We will be included on a boat leaving in two weeks. Two weeks, and we will be gone. I cannot believe it, but it's all set. Passage cost me nine taels. Then I had to bribe the *Cong An Bien Phong*—frontier police, and *Cong An Noi Chinh*—security police. And I had to pay the organizer of the boat escape. He is not going himself, but makes these escapes his business. Overall, Jy-ying, everything cost me eighteen gold taels. I had that and then a little more."

At the prevailing world price of gold, \$11,000 in American dollars.

She was almost ready. She had to catch the boat from the coastal town of Vung Tau, about seventy-eight miles southeast of Saigon, as she would always call that city. She would take a bus there in one week, to allow herself time to survey the area.

The organizer had promised that there would be enough food and water aboard for ten days, more than enough to reach the Philippines. They would not head toward Thailand because the Gulf of Thailand was infested with Cambodian and particularly Thai pirates. Even heading south toward Indonesia risked the same danger, and Malaysia was forcing Boat People back into the ocean when they arrived on its shores, even if it meant their death.

Two days before leaving, she prepared their food for the trip. She mixed sugar with lemon juice and dried the mixture in the sun until it coagulated into slabs. About two pounds would keep her and the children going for a day; she made six pounds. She made hard cookies out of powdered milk with sugar that she poured into molds, then dried over a fire she risked lighting next to the shack. She bought hard biscuits, and four half-pound bags of rice. She scoured Cholon and bought seasickness pills from a trusted black marketer. And she had bought three military canteens for their water. She would fill them just before she left her hotel for the boat.

She packed a large, broken suitcase—she would tie a rope around it to hold it together—with everything, including what clothes she thought Jy-ying and Ting would need. They would be on the ocean in the hot summer sun, so to protect them from the sun she also included three umbrellas of a type that she could turn upside down when it rained, to capture rain water and funnel it into a container through a hole in the top nib. At three years of age, Jy-ying was able to carry a small case. Jia Li put her favorite stuffed animal into it, a furry, cuddly bear, and toiletries for them all, including a big bottle of aspirin.

And in her purse she carried her most prized possessions of all. Tightly wrapped in cellophane to protect them against moisture, she carried colored photographs of Dewu and their wedding, her parents, Shihao, Yan, and their wedding picture. She had paid much to have them all copied, and she sewed the copies into the hem of her one summer coat. There she also inserted a little tube with the ashes of her parents.

Over these many years, she had kept the little plastic container with a screw lid that Shihao had given her to hide some of their money inside her vagina. She would do that again with her most precious jewels, and wear her menstrual pad to keep it in and discourage a finger search.

There was still a high demand for living space in the city. She easily sold her shack with its remaining contents for one tael.

The day came. Before heading for the An Dong Bus Station, she prayed to Buddha. She was not religious. It was for her own comfort rather than divine intervention.

Chapter 42

1996

Cyril Clement

His thoughts came in explosive exclamations after he found out that Banks was a graduate student at Yale. He could not sit still and had to bounce and jiggle around his office, almost colliding with his bookcases. He was not even aware that he was in motion. Several times he just smacked his forehead with the heel of his palm. *Holy Christ. Finally, finally, after all these years, I'll meet the Banks of the Banks folder . . . the Banks who may have saved my life, the Banks who made my career. For sure. the Banks who gave me the two greatest ideas—the democratic peace and democide—the Banks who gave mankind the solutions to war and democide. Holy Christ, I'm going to meet him. And shake his hand.*

Cyril could hardly eat that evening. The next morning, he called his travel agency and had them make reservations for a round trip to New Haven, Connecticut, where Yale University was located. He told them, "This is rush."

Then he taught his graduate seminar on war and peace almost mechanically, and tried to control his impatience when he met several students to go over their term paper grades. Afterward he called the travel agency to find out if he had reservations yet. He did, for arrival in the Tweed New Haven Airport late Tuesday night the following week, and departure very early the following Saturday morning.

He then emailed a colleague in Yale's Political Science Department with whom he had often corresponded about his research:

I will be New Haven from Tuesday night to very early Saturday morning. While I'm there, would you like to set up a university or department presentation

for me, any day or time, Wednesday through Friday, to talk about the history of democide, especially in our century?

Academic departments jumped on an offer of a free presentation, since it usually cost them a couple of thousand dollars plus all expenses paid to bring in somebody as well known as he was to give a talk about his research.

He got a return email the next day. Yes, his colleague had discussed it with the department chairman, who would arrange a two-hour, one-day seminar for faculty and students on the Thursday at two p.m. Cyril immediately responded to confirm the day and time.

Next he called the secretary in the History Department again and asked her, "Would you please pass on a note to graduate student John Banks, asking him to contact Professor Clement by phone, collect, ASAP? It's about meeting him when I visit Yale University next week. It's important, so if he is in class, can someone please make sure he gets the message when the class is over?" Cyril then gave her his phone number and email address, and thanked her.

Cyril waited at his desk, leaning over a biography of Peter the Great with his chin in his hand, unable to absorb a paragraph. Every minute or so, his eyes flicked up to his phone. He even picked up the phone once to make sure he got a dial tone.

Many hours later—at least it seemed that long—the phone rang. Cyril jumped in his chair, and then waited, poised in anticipation, through four rings. Then he whipped the receiver off its cradle and almost crushed it against his ear. "He . . . llo," Cyril squeaked. He cleared his throat, swallowed, and tried again. "Hi. I'm sorry. I had something in my throat."

"Hello. This is John Banks speaking." He had a pleasant and masculine voice, which Cyril noted even through his initial nervousness. But once he heard "Banks," he would not have noticed if Banks sounded like a choir boy.

Oh my God, it's him. "Thanks for calling, Mr. Banks. Ah . . . I will be at Yale next week beginning Tuesday evening, and would like to get together with you for a chat." He felt his voice firm up. "Ah, I'm giving a seminar Thursday afternoon, and I hope that you'll be free to see me before then, someplace in the history department."

Can't make this too friendly in the beginning, he decided.

"Yes," Banks responded. "Just a minute, please."

Cyril heard him asking the secretary about the availability of the department conference room, which received a vague response Cyril couldn't hear well. He realized that he was pressing the phone so hard against his ear, it was beginning to hurt.

Banks came back on the phone. "We can meet at nine a.m. on Wednesday in the History Department office, and then we can go to an empty conference room nearby to talk. That okay?"

"Yes, fine. I'll see you then. Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

Cyril's heart was beating hard. The phone shook in his hand as he replaced it on its stand. He stared at it, and then slowly shook his head. *Oh my God, I talked to John Banks. Oh . . . poor Banks . . . he must be scratching his head, trying to remember where he met me—especially a professor well known enough to be giving a seminar at Yale! No problem, I can handle that when we meet . . . it will be handling me that's the problem.*

Chapter 43

1979

Vung Tau town

Jiang Jia Li

The two hour bus trip to Vung Tau was uneventful. Jia Li expected the bus to be checked by security guards, and she'd prepared for the worst of all—her suitcase being searched, which would make her intentions obvious. She'd planned to offer a bribe, and had the gold ready in innocent-looking packets in her large purse.

She stayed at the Saigon Hotel on Thuy Van Road. It had been recommended by her contact in Cholon. She had a week to settle in, inspect the beach area from which the boat would leave at night, and make herself conspicuous in case the town's security police were watching for strangers staying for just a day or so before trying to flee Vietnam by boat—only those security police who patrolled the beach or shore had been bribed. For six days she went everywhere with a baby in her arms and a child tugging along, fingers wrapped in the hem of her long white shirt.

"I feel so free," she told Jy-ying while they walked on a beach. "I feel as though we are on a vacation." She explored, she ate in a variety of cafes and restaurants, and she enjoyed standing on the beach, letting the trade winds blow through her hair. She played in the sand with Jy-ying and made Ting giggle. In the evening she took out the photos of Dewu, Shihao, and Yan and propped them against a lamp on the chest of drawers. Their love kept her company during the night.

On July 14th, as instructed, she asked the registration desk clerk the key question: "Do you think that Vung Tau is as beautiful as Hanoi?"

She got back the answer recognizing her as an escapee: "Yes, I have been there many times." He prechecked her out for the next day.

She waited the rest of the day in her room, playing with Jy-ying and Ting, or keeping them busy until they got tired and fell asleep. Then she watched the *do khung*—crazy soap operas and TV movies from Hanoi. *I can't believe it. I'll never see such propaganda crap again . . . never.*

At one a.m., she went to the front entrance of the hotel carrying her suitcase in one hand and Ting in the other arm, and a confused and sleepy Jy-ying tagging along with her little case. The Peugeot 203 she'd been told to expect, modified to hold about a dozen passengers, waited there. Three couples were already seated inside. Jia-Li took her seat with Ting on her lap, and Jy-ying huddled next to her with her feet on their suitcase and bags.

The Peugeot drove a short distance and picked up a man at another hotel. Then it headed for *Bai Dau*—Mulberry Beach, a narrow, sandy beach at the foot of a steep hill, tucked between rocky beaches and the cliffs of Truong Ky and Tao Phung, two mountains forming a peninsula jutting into the ocean southwest of the city.

The Peugeot discharged them by a narrow, brush-strewn path down to the beach. Men with dim, half-lidded flashlights directed them onto the beach, which seemed awfully crowded. The waves were small; Jia Li thought this must be because the ocean was shallow here for quite a distance out. Then she saw the shape of a boat offshore, darker than the night. Men were ferrying people out to it in a rowboat; the two oarsmen rowed slowly, just dipping their oars into the water so they wouldn't create telltale white foam.

A man came up to Jia Li, pointed the dim flashlight in her face, and whispered, "Ho Chi Minh."

She responded with the password: "Stalin." Then she gave her name and those of the children. The man checked the names against a list he held under his flashlight, then took her by the elbow and Jy-ying by the hand and led them to a line of escapees waiting to be taken to the boat. Their organization surprised her. She had heard many stories about fights and even shootings as people tried to get on boats already too full, or when their forged papers were discovered, or they had not paid in full for the escape. After all her family's bad luck, she felt it was about time something went right.

She did not realize how lucky she really was. For once, those fleeing had found an honest arranger and an honest captain. The boat, VT 473, was well provisioned, as promised. It was eleven feet wide by forty-five feet long, and fitted with two forty-horsepower engines. It also had a mast, with a folded boom and sail, so although clumsy, the

boat could still be navigated if the engines quit. They had sufficient fuel to reach the Philippines, unless they raced their engines or ran into a bad storm from the east.

The night air chilled Jia Li, and she was shivering by the time their turn came to be rowed out to the boat. There, men helped her up and over the gunwale; since she had a baby and child, they directed her to sit down inside the small pilothouse.

In the dim light cast by an instrument panel, she found a place where she could sit out of the way with her back to a cold metal wall. She took her coat out of her suitcase and put it on, and put a child's wool blanket around Jy-ying. She cuddled Ting under the coat, close to her breast, and sat down, then motioned for Jy-ying to sit next to her.

What a good little child, Jia Li thought, putting her arm around the little girl. *She has suffered through the worst of our life in the last year, yet I've seen almost no tears or temper tantrums.* But Jia Li had seen the fear in her eyes. *Maybe she knows all this is very serious and she must be good—she is very intelligent.* Jia Li smiled down at the somber child. *Anyone who doesn't know she can already speak some Vietnamese would think she is retarded, she's so quiet.*

Jia Li sniffed. The pilothouse smelled of fish, oil, and salt. *A good smell—the smell of escape.* She kept hearing the thumping, scraping, and chattering of people arriving, and more couples with their children and babies came into the pilothouse. Occasionally a baby cried, the sound quickly muffled. Then she heard grunting and scraping and then a loud thump, which she thought might be the anchor.

Three men squeezed into the pilothouse. One inserted a key in the ignition, turned it, and the engines started up with a low rumble. He adjusted a knob that was lit internally, and gripped the steering wheel. Jia Li could not feel the ship moving, but it had to be, for the man was turning the big wheel.

Shihao! Shihao my loving son, she yelled in her mind. *Your wish is granted. We are leaving. Your children will be free.*

She leaned forward to look out the pilothouse entrance. People on deck blocked the view, but she glimpsed shore lights. The pilot still moved the boat slowly away from the lights, evidently feeling he was too close to shore to attract attention with the sound of his engines. She kept her eyes on what lights she could see as they gradually receded. The rumble of the engines got louder as the boat speeded up. The lights now looked like stars in the distant blackness.

“Goodbye my ancestors,” she murmured. “Goodbye Vietnam . . . goodbye my country. *Vietnam, muon nam*—long live Vietnam.” She hunched over, put her head in her hand, and quietly cried.

Chapter 44

2001

Ralph Nieman

Ralph Nieman was looking forward to Banks' third visit. He was more than professionally curious about the man's unusual dreams, and made some preliminary notes about what he might expect this third time. He predicted that the dreams formed a loop and that about now, or by the next session, his dreams would begin to repeat the terror he experienced on 9/11, and his sex with the beautiful woman he called Joy, and his personal horror over killing another human being. If Banks was indeed locked into such a loop, this would explain much.

When Banks arrived, Nieman led him through the same routine as the previous session, and his answers were similar. Not much had changed; he still had his dreams, and he felt physically down. So Nieman put him under hypnosis—after Banks took off his shoes and lay back on the couch—took in hand his yellow notepad, and began to probe. Soon, in the same wooden monotone as before, John began describing his dream.

“Joy and I . . .” Nieman noted the smile that touched Banks' lips as he said that “. . . have become well known and honored in the future democratic world we've created . . . dictatorships still exist in a few isolated countries. Everyone in the future knows they will soon disappear, to be replaced by democratic governments.

“One Islamic dictator fears what this will mean for the future of Islam . . . he seeks a way to return it to its former glory, when it conquered half the known world. He's . . . impressed by what Joy and I were able to do for democracy . . . believes he can do that same thing for Islam—create an Islamic world. The technology of time travel is a closely guarded secret among a few democracies, but his well-paid spies are able to uncover enough about it that his own scientists are able

to build a time machine for him. He sends back to 1906 a pair of warriors . . . Carla and Hadad . . . to kill Joy and me with their modern weapons. Once they have accomplished that, they are to promote Islam throughout the world using the incredible wealth they brought with them.

“Stupid choice of warriors . . . these two never get along, not like Joy and me.” Banks startled him by barking out a sharp laugh that made his body jump. A smile lingered on Banks’ face as he continued. “Their various assassination schemes fail; Joy and I are alerted to their attempts.”

“Jy-ying, whose ultimate goal is still to save Sabah and kill Joy, has joined us to protect our mission from the two assassins.”

Jy-ying? Nieman quickly leafed to his list of characters in Banks’ dreams. *Oh yes, Joy from another universe.*

“Finally, Carla and Joy have one battle in which Joy is wounded . . . Carla contrives to set up a second battle between them that Joy will not survive. However, a time policewoman . . . Jill . . . intervenes to save Joy . . . she arrests Carla and sends her to the future for trial . . . I capture Hadad and turn him over to Jill.”

Banks stopped and remained still. His face contracted in remembered anguish. After a moment, Nieman asked, “What happened?”

“Jy-ying is killed in a trap that Joy set up to kill Carla if Joy did not survive their battle, and thus save me from her . . . poor Jy-ying . . . I think we had won her over.”

John let out a shuddering sigh. “Shit happens,” he mumbled. After a moment, he continued.

“Well, anyway . . . Joy asks Jill for a favor . . . to bring her forward in time to see her mother Tor, so she can tell her about our success. Jill says she will ask permission from the authorities of her time. She also tells us that the new universe created by Carla and Hadad’s appearance in 1906 will have to be reset back to the point of Joy’s and my arrival. Otherwise the future will have been changed in unpredictable ways.

“Jill leaves for the future . . . another time policeman named Jomo appears in her place. He tells us Jill has been killed while trying to arrest the Islamic dictator who sent Carla and Hadad to 1906. Jomo has permission for Joy to visit her mother. He takes her to the future, when Tor is about to die in a hospital . . . the only way this intervention can be done without changing the subsequent future.

“After her visit, Joy returns to the past, and Jomo resets the universe.”

Nieman scratched his head. *I can’t believe this. He must be getting these dreams out of some book.* In response to his questions about the

dream, Banks provided more details. *A contemporary police detective pursuing these Carla and Hadad characters . . . a little dog that saves Jy-ying from suicide?* Nieman shook his head. But the more he pressed, the more Banks told him.

By the time the appointment was over and a somewhat dazed-looking Banks had left, Nieman's thoughts were no clearer. *Another coherent dream. In fact, a sequence . . . it builds on the last dream, just as that built on the one before. This must be something he read . . . he is putting himself into the story as one of the characters. Except maybe for 9/11. Maybe that was added. I'll go in that direction next time he's here . . . and I'll ask him about his reading material. What he's read may be the clue that unravels all this.*

Chapter 45

Day 4, August 1979
South China Sea

Jiang Jia Li

"There is a boat behind us," somebody yelled. Soon everyone saw it, and the yelling and crying began.

"Is it the pirates?"

"They are going to catch us. What are we going to do?"

"Buddha, please help us."

Jia Li felt the boat speed up as the captain went to full power, but after half an hour at full throttle, their boat had not outdistanced the other; in fact, they could all see that the other boat was catching up. Jia Li watched the boat approach from the gunwale. As it gradually drew closer, she could see that it was a large fishing boat, with many men standing in the bow, waving rifles, machetes, fish-gutting knives, and handguns.

Pirates!

She picked up the suitcase that was never more than an inch away from her leg, told Jy-ying to hang onto her pants to keep the child with her, and toted Ting into the pilothouse. It was practically empty except for the captain and one other, and they were arguing about what to do. Setting Ting gently on the floor, she took out of her purse her little plastic tube, which still had her small jewels and rings inside, wet it with her mouth, and turned her back to the men. She slipped her hand inside her pants and inserted the tube into her vagina. She then put on a menstrual pad.

She'd noticed a narrow door in one corner. Glancing back at the arguing men, she quickly opened it. A little closet, as she'd hoped, containing a storm slicker and hat, what she guessed were manuals, and some bottles. She put her purse and the remaining gold from her suitcase on its floor amidst some bottles, and then dropped the coat

and hat on top of them. She shut the door, picked up Ting, and grabbed Jy-ying's hand. They moved to a corner and waited.

Brrrrttt! Brrrrttt!

Automatic rifle fire zinged across their bow. Someone yelled in a foreign language. The captain must have understood, for he slowed their boat down. The man with whom he had been arguing tried to grab the wheel. The captain slugged him, knocking him to the floor.

Jia Li looked out the door. Men from the other boat were jumping aboard, brandishing their weapons. She sat with her back to the corner and drew her knees up to her chest. She held Ting tight to her with one hand; her other clutched Jy-ying's hand. The child's eyes were wide, her lips puckered with fear.

More yelling. Screams. Several more sharp reports as the pirates fired their guns.

Three men burst into the pilothouse. Two brandished knives; the third pointed a handgun at the captain, who flung up his hands. The one with the handgun barked something at him and held out a bucket. The captain emptied his pockets, throwing everything into the bucket. His watch followed.

The two with knives stood in front of Jia Li. She stared down at their black boots, struggling to keep calm. Then she gasped as one of them jerked her to her feet by her hair. Eyes watering from the pain, she looked into a deeply lined, bewhiskered face that leered crookedly at her. She stared at a black gap where one front tooth should have been. The other man was young, bearded, his face ruddy from sun and wind. Straight black hair poked out below a Yankees baseball cap.

Gap-tooth made motions for her to strip. The other threw open her suitcase and began rifling through its contents.

Jia Li gently put Ting down next to the metal wall. She pushed down her pants and pulled her underpants aside sufficiently to show her menstrual pad.

Gap-tooth took a step back, his face screwed up in disgust. Then he unzipped his pants, wiggled to work out his erection, and then pushed her down on her knees and pointed to it. She looked away. He picked up Ting and shook her at Jia Li; the baby writhed in his hands and began screaming as only a baby can. Jy-ying began to cry herself and quickly crawled underneath a tarp jumbled in another corner.

The boat had erupted in a cacophony of gunfire, screams and wails, cries and moans, the piercing cries of children yelling for their mothers, and the deep, demanding shouts of the pirates.

Jia Li did what the man wanted while he held onto Ting, whose panicked screaming added to the roar of terror and death throughout the boat. When he arched his back and released himself with a loud grunt, he pushed her head away, left his penis hanging out, and yelled something to the young man.

The younger pirate, still kneeling over the dumped contents of Jia Li's suitcase, rose and unbuttoned his thick oiled pants in front of Jia Li. The stench of rotting fish made her gag. While Gap-tooth held the screaming Ting, she also did Yankee-cap.

He ejaculated and stepped back. Jia Li spit everything out, then held out her hands for Ting. Gap-tooth laughed. Shoving his limp penis into his pants with three fingers, he strode out of the pilothouse, gripping the crying, wildly shaking baby by one arm.

Sobbing, Jia Li stumbled after him, weaving through the unmoving bodies and the naked women and girls being either raped or sodomized. Their husbands, fathers, and brothers huddled together to one side, their backs turned.

Jia Li screamed, "No! Please no! Give her to me. I have gold."

The man did not understand. He stood at the gunwale and tossed the screaming infant into the ocean.

She shrieked, "Ting!" and hit him full body with her shoulder, knocking him over the side. She fell in after him.

She could barely swim, but she managed to flail to the surface. Her sodden hair covered her face, half blinding her as she swung her body around, searching frantically for Ting. She could not see the baby in the waves. But she did see Gap-tooth as he swam past her toward the boat.

She arched her body toward him, stretching out her arm as far as she could. Her fingers sank into his hair, and she pulled them together and wrapped her other arm around his neck. Twisting and turning under her, he tried to beat her off with his fists, but the water hampered him.

She climbed up on his head, put her full weight on him, and held him under the waves with all her strength. His arms flailed above the water as he tried to punch her, but he could not reach a vital place. His struggling grew weaker and weaker.

And then he was still. When his body started pulling her down, Jia Li released him. She paddled desperately on the ocean's surface, gasping for air. She was now so weak, and she had gulped so much seawater, that she could hardly keep her head above water. She vomited, spewing out water, and started thrashing around in a circle, looking for Ting again.

She was nowhere.

Jia Li jerked her head toward her boat as the horrible screams, shouts, shrieks, and gunfire escalated. The pirates had tied the hands of some of the naked girls and were pulling them onto their fishing boat. One of the girls twisted free and threw herself into the waves.

Other pirates were shoving overboard the men and older women, some unmoving and bloody. They threw shrieking children after them. All around the boat, heads bobbed in the water and outstretched hands pleaded mutely for help. Jia Li squeezed her eyes shut. Never before had she heard such pitiful cries.

She knew it was hopeless for her, for Ting, and for poor Jy-ying, still alone somewhere on the boat.

She turned her head to look up at the beautiful, baby-blue sky, where cottony clouds floated effortlessly, and seabirds coasted back and forth on the wind currents. The captain had been on a watch for them. He'd said they were a sign that land was close. She thought of Dewu and Shihao, and caressed their images in her mind, and told them of her love. She cried for Ting and Jy-ying, her tears mingling with the lapping sea.

She remembered a few of the Buddhist psalms and hymns her mother had taught her, and then only parts of them. As she tried to keep her head just above the water, she made part of one into her death poem:

All passion have I put away, and all
 Illusion utterly has passed from me;
 Cool am I now. Gone all the fire within.
 Only love remains.

She gave her mother and father a mental kiss. Then she let herself sink into the water, breathing it in. At first her body convulsed, trying to cough the flood out of her lungs, but that soon stopped. She felt a great quiet. She sank into the peaceful embrace of the ocean, and the darkness slowly came.

And then the light.

“Hello my love.”

“Hello, Mom.

Is that you, Dewu? Shihao?”

Their arms were open for her. She ran to them, and then the light dimmed.

And went out.

Chapter 46

2001

John Banks

He was tired, more tired than usual. Again he considered calling in sick to the History Department, but today's lecture was one he had looked forward to and for which he had prepared well. He did get his nap, and that helped.

As he walked to his class, he tried to make sense of last night's dream, for what felt the hundredth time.

I've gone through this one before. A number of times, I'm certain. And again I woke up screaming "No!" and wet with sweat, my heart beating like a drum in my ears. My teeth hurt . . . must have ground them together. Again, a gun in my hand . . . the smell of smoke, men rushing me with knives . . . I was running with someone in my arms . . . something about medicine . . . a heart monitor?

I can't put it together. Can't understand. Why the gun in so many dreams? I'm a gangster? I have a repressed desire to shoot someone? Hope Nieman is making something of it all. John didn't remember much of what he said during the hypnosis sessions. He was glad Nieman was taping it all. *It's like I've been sleeping through the hypnosis.*

He'd been so upset by that damn dream that he couldn't sleep afterward, no matter how he tried. He'd spent the remainder of the night tossing and turning, and again rose with a headache to swallow three aspirins. *At least that helped.* He'd sagged onto his couch and watched with drooping eyelids the old movie *The Girl Who Had Everything*. He'd been unable to fall asleep during the movie, or even after it. *Shit.*

He got to class barely in time. And everyone was there for a change. He took his outline out of his briefcase and stood alongside the lectern, one hand resting on it. "Good afternoon, students."

And then he began. "Throughout the Indochina and Vietnam wars, with all the associated killing and democide, Vietnamese generally re-

fused to leave their country. Not even when many were forced to flee for their lives from vicious battles, as did 417,300 such refugees in 1974 alone. Even then, they returned to their home villages when they could. Vietnamese are loath to give up their family, their ancestral roots, their traditional customs. But after the North seized the South, they were faced with a new terror—that of the reeducation camps and the New Economic Zones; of torture and execution for who knows what, or formal isolation and a slow death from starvation, exposure, or disease; of being conscripted to fight another of Vietnam's wars.

“As the communists tightened their hold on the South, they intervened more and more in all aspects of life, imposed and enforced more rules. Totalitarianism became another kind of war the North inflicted upon the Southern people. In this new police state, the North controlled everything, including when and where one could move or visit, employment, production, prices and wages, education, food rations, personal consumption, entertainment, speech, associations, and religion. The North abolished all private trade in the South, and took over or abolished all private firms.”

Banks looked from one student to another. “Class, when I use the term, ‘the North,’ to what am I referring?” He shuffled his name cards and pulled one out. “Miss Garfield.”

A girl near the front put up her hand to identify herself. “North Vietnam.”

“True, but ordinarily it refers to both a geographical area and a political division. There is a more specific meaning when I say, for example, ‘the North eliminated all private trade.’ In that example, the North means what?” He looked around. “Miss Stanton.”

“The government of North Vietnam?”

“True. And who was the government of North Vietnam? Mr. Wong?”

“Hmm . . . Ho Chi Minh?”

“He died in 1969. When I refer to the North doing such and such, I'm referring to its Communist Party, which in effect is the government of North Vietnam, and with the capture of the South, the government of all Vietnam.

“To go on—the alarm, dismay, and dread, the trembling fear the North created in the South with its imposition of totalitarian communism, was already the lot of Northerners. However, in 1976, the communists began to focus particularly on those of Chinese ethnicity in the North. It began expelling thousands of Sino-Vietnamese, calling them ‘fifth columnists,’ a rhetoric that forecasted more serious conse-

quences. Indeed, as relations with China soured, this soon became a label used to indict all such Chinese, North or South. In the North, Sino-Vietnamese living in the provinces, especially in important areas bordering China, were deported, while their homes were burned and property stolen. Others in the cities suddenly found themselves without jobs and subject to sharp discrimination.

“Understandably, more and more Vietnamese, including Sino-Vietnamese and other minorities, began to seriously consider escaping the country. But there were few options. China to the North was also communist and, in any case, refugees who were not Sino-Vietnamese could be forcibly returned to Vietnam. Laos was a Vietnamese satellite. From 1975 through 1978, Cambodia was under rule of a Khmer Rouge that hated and killed Vietnamese; after the short 1978–79 Cambodian-Vietnamese War, Cambodia also became Vietnam’s colony.

“That left trying to get across at least several hundred miles of open ocean to reach Hong Kong, the Philippines, Malaysia, or Indonesia, or hoping that some passing ship would pick them up.

“I want you to take a moment to look at the map of Southeast Asia in your text, and note particularly the countries to which the Vietnamese could flee by boat.”

Banks gave them a moment so he wouldn’t have to compete with the clatter of books and the rustling of pages, and the whispers to neighbors of those who’d forgotten their texts. He grinned at the mild chaos that occurred whenever he unexpectedly asked students to do something with their texts.

“Okay. Aside from the problem of finding someone with a boat, and the risk of being swindled out of one’s life savings, being turned in to the communists, or captured while trying to escape, few seaworthy boats were available. And not many knew how to navigate the open ocean. Some of this risk was alleviated when, for an often-quoted amount of \$2,000 in gold or hard currency, government officials or quasi-government organizations secretly aided those Vietnamese, especially Sino-Vietnamese, seeking to escape.

“Getting out of the country was only part of it. The primary danger lay on the ocean. Once out in the South China Sea, often in old, unseaworthy, and overloaded boats, some simply not constructed for deep ocean travel, these escapees—whom I will henceforth call *Boat People*—were subject to deadly storms. And they were prey for Cambodian and Thai fishermen turned savage pirates. Typically, these pirates would pull alongside a boat, brandish their weapons, forcibly board it, rob the escapees of their valuables, selectively rape the women and

girls, kill those who tried to interfere, and take a few of the women with them when they left. Sometimes they would allow those still living to continue. Sometimes they would kill everyone or sink the boat and leave all on it to drown.

“This piracy went on day after day, week after week, and year after year. In 1989, these pirates were still operating. For example, the UN high commissioner for refugees in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, reported in May 1989 that . . .” Banks read from his outline, “seven pirates armed with shotguns and hammers killed 130 Vietnamese refugees and set fire to their boat off the Malaysian coast The attackers shot and bludgeoned refugees to death after raping several women Other boat people died of exhaustion after floating in the sea clinging to bodies of fellow refugees.’

“If the—”

A sudden thump from the rear stopped him. He and most of the students turned to stare at Miss Phim, who had knocked her book off her chair. She had her shaking head in her hands, and looked to be sobbing. He didn’t know what to do. This had never happened in any class he had been in, or those to which he had lectured.

Then his male instincts took over and he quickly walked to the rear of the room where she sat. He could tell that she was trying to keep her sobbing quiet, but it seemed otherwise out of control. He put his arm around her shoulder—it felt so right—and asked quietly, “What is it? Is there anything I can do?”

Miss Chisholm, a student who sat nearby, came up on the other side of her and put a hand on her arm.

She soon gained some control and stopped shaking. She dropped her hands and looked at him. Her face was wet with tears that still trickled from red eyes. She almost shuddered with some kind of grief. Lips trembling, she tried to whisper something, but it wouldn’t come out. Then she set up straight, raised her chin, and stammered, “When I was maybe four . . . they didn’t know my age . . . I was . . . on one of those boats. . . . Pirates killed everyone.” She shook her head as though to clear away the pain. “They missed me . . . but must have killed my mother and father . . . I was alone.”

John stood and looked at the class. “Miss Phim has had a terrible experience that has devastated her, as you can see. I don’t want to say any more without her permission. Class is dismissed. I’ll catch up next time.”

The class broke out in agitated whispers. Chairs scraped, books thumped. The students left the classroom, accompanied by an unusual amount of chatter.

Banks looked at Miss Chisholm on the other side of Miss Phim. “Could you take her to the restroom and help her . . . whatever—you know. I’ll wait outside. I would like to talk to her and try to help her afterward.”

He told Miss Phim, “Take your time. When you are ready, Miss Chisholm can take you to the restroom to . . . ah, refresh yourself.”

She nodded, the grief still in her eyes, but her tears had stopped. “I’m alright now. Thank you both. I don’t need to go to the restroom.” She started to put her things into her backpack, and then took out a handkerchief and wiped her eyes and face.

John glanced at the other student and said, implying by his tone that he wanted to be alone with Miss Phim, “Thanks for helping her.”

Chisholm replied, “Glad to help.” Then she leaned over Joy Phim and said, “Hope you feel better soon,” and left.

They were alone in the classroom. John pulled up a chair so that he could sit down facing her. “I caused you grief, and I’m sorry. I didn’t know your background. If I had, I would have suggested you skip this lecture.”

She looked at him with swollen eyes, the only residual of her grief. Her tilted head was so familiar; he must have seen it a million times. His heart began skipping—no, impossible. He found himself struggling to control his own emotions.

She said, her voice almost normal in its smooth femininity, “I thought I could handle it. I was ready for your lecture. But the example of what the pirates did to the one boat . . .” She let out a wavering sigh. “I was found alone, barely alive, in a boat off the Philippines. It got into the local newspapers, was picked up by *The New York Times*, and when a Cambodian refugee in the United States read about it, she crashed through the United Nations refugee bureaucracy to adopt me. Her name is Tor Phim, and she is like a real mother to me. I love her very much.”

She paused and sniffled. “I am sorry to bother you with all this personal—”

“It’s no bother. I teach this, you may remember.” He let the dimples begin to form at the sides of his mouth—all his past female friends had commented on them, and she seemed to appreciate them, as well. Her eyes opened wider, and she gave him a hint of a return grin. “Would you mind if I ask you some questions?” he asked.

“After I busted up your class—please do.”

It started out as questions, but turned into a conversation as she asked her own, and before either of them knew it, students were beginning to come into the room for the next class.

“Would you like to come to my office so that we can continue?” John asked. “If you don’t have another class, that is.”

“I would be happy to,” she answered. “I am only taking—auditing—your class.”

John felt his eyebrows shoot up. “No other class?”

“No. I wanted to hear what you had to say about the democratic peace. I already have a BA in political science and an MA in computer science.”

John imagined his jaw making a loud thump as it hit the floor. He rapidly recovered and started to say, “I don’t under—”

“Hello,” a heavy, middle-aged man yelled at him. “We have a class starting in this room.”

John yelled back, “Sorry.”

As they got up to leave, John wondered, *Why was I so surprised? It felt like I could have completed her sentence when she told me that . . . but I couldn’t have known that Crazy.*

He led her to his office, where he motioned her in first, then left the door open behind him—he never closed the door with a female student in his office. His desk faced the wall, since he hated to put a desk between him and a student. He offered his own cushioned captain’s chair to her, took the desk chair, and turned it to face her.

They picked up the conversation where they’d left off. He found out that her mother owned Nguon Industries and was very rich—he was not told this, but surmised it—and Joy worked on computers at her godmother Gu Yaping’s company, Peng Magnetics and Propulsion. Her mother had her trained at a very early age in karate and judo.

He told her about his mother the top-ten tennis pro, and the father he hardly saw as he grew older, and who died mysteriously while working for the CIA. Then he told her about his growing interest in doing something about war and democide, and that the democratic peace seemed the solution, the more he studied it.

Totally lost in her eyes and manner, her tilted head, her caressing voice, he couldn’t recall where in the discussion they started calling each other Joy and John. But he did remember that she had said, “I’m Joy—that Miss Phim is a turnoff,” and emphasized it by jabbing a delicate finger into his shoulder.

He had resisted. “You are my student. I can’t call you Joy.”

“I am an auditor, not really a student,” she countered. “Besides, as I told you, I have already completed college and graduate school. And I am almost as old as you are. You’re twenty-six, and a fresh Ph.D. from Yale. I’m twenty-five. Call me Joy or henceforth I will forever call you Dr. Professor Banks.”

He stared at her. *That's right . . . political science? Computer science? Holy Christ.* He threw his hands up and replied, "I'm John. Nice to meetcha."

He hesitated, trying to get his mental feet under him. "Ah . . . why are you taking my class? With, ah, your degrees and all?"

"It's not strange at all, John. Some of my courses at Berkeley went into the democratic peace as an idealistic alternative view to the realist emphasis on diplomacy and the balance of power, and in my course on international relations from Professor Schuman, I wrote a term paper on it. Then I heard a speech by the former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he emphasized the democratic peace. That stimulated my interest all over again. Here, it seemed, was a solution to war and what you call democide. Amazing. So, I wanted to know more about it. I talked to some professors in the area at the American Political Science Association meeting, including, it turned out, your dissertation chairman at Yale. He was highly complimentary about your dissertation, and said you would be teaching it here.

"So I asked my mother to investigate you. She is as interested as I am in the democratic peace. You passed her scrutiny, so I took time out from my computer work, got an apartment here in Bloomington, and here I am in the office of the very person I wanted to hear lecture about it."

Investigated? Jesus. He shook his head over that. But he wasn't insulted, or even shocked, as he would have been normally. "You must know so much more about me than I do about you."

"Well," she said, giving him a beautiful smile, "I'll have to change that."

Wow, he thought.

Outside his window, daylight was fading, but he didn't want this to ever end. He was more than smitten. He was overcome. But he liked so much about her, was so comfortable around her, that he knew it wasn't love at first sight. And it went beyond the familiarity that grew from seeing her in class. It was like *déjà vu*, as though he had gone through this before and he was rediscovering his love. That couldn't be. No way. But the feeling was, mysteriously, there.

"Would you like to join me for supper? We would have to eat in the cafeteria, which is the only legitimate place I can be seen with you. This is a college town, you know."

"John, I am an auditor, as I said. You are not grading me."

"Afraid of the grade I would have given you, eh?"

That lilt to her voice, her "don't you dare contradict me" way of asserting something, and his reaction—too comfortable, like a well-used easy chair.

Her eyes narrowed briefly and her lips tightened, then she looked at him askance before seeming to relax. "I have never been afraid of any grade I would get."

Oops.

Then she added, strangely, "Are you afraid of the grade I will give you?"

John's response just came out without his thinking. "I have never been afraid of any grade I would get from a beautiful, intelligent woman."

She laughed. "Does that include me?"

"Don't know, do you."

She hadn't accepted his invitation to supper yet. He just assumed it, and said, "Let's eat."

"Since you're so sensitive about me being a student, you're welcome to eat at my place. I'm not a good cook, but I have pizza in the freezer and beer in the refrigerator. I could sneak you in with a blanket over your head."

"Well now, that is very friendly of you, but the blanket might slip and I could be recognized. And then there is my moral reputation to uphold. It would appear that I'm sneaking into a student's apartment for immoral purposes, and then where would I be?"

Joy's eyebrows disappeared into her bangs, and she gawked at him.

He added, "Anyway, I don't go to a woman's place until the tenth date. I keep track." He tried to keep his face straight, but he felt the dimple forming at the corner of his mouth.

She looked into his eyes, then at his dimples, and finally studied his overly bland expression. And burst out laughing. "I'll get you for that."

She hesitated, obviously thinking of something. Then she admitted, "I've never invited a man over to my place like this. We really haven't dated. Except for seeing you teach and hearing you make corny jokes, you are a perfect stranger. But for some reason, it feels as though I know you" She shook her head. "Enough of that. Should I get the blanket?"

Chapter 47

1996

Cyril Clement

When Cyril walked into the History Department's office, aflame with excitement over the upcoming meeting, a young man was standing by the secretary's desk. Cyril almost stopped at the door and gawked. *That's him. That's Banks. He doesn't look like an ordinary student—too rugged-looking and masculine. More like he should be training horses.*

Cyril felt weak in the knees. His heart fluttered as he walked up to Banks and put out a hand that he was sure was moist and trembling. Struggling to keep his voice calm and straightforward, he said, "Hi . . . John. Great seeing you again."

John? Christ. Ever since I found his stuff, he has always been Banks.

Banks . . . John shook Cyril's hand firmly, his eyebrows slightly raised, his forehead slightly wrinkled. "Glad . . . good to see you again."

He quickly recovered himself and led a shaky Cyril to the conference room. Cyril sat down at the head of the table, and John pulled out the nearest chair and sat down.

Cyril had to use every trick he knew to control his exhilaration and awe. *Here, sitting by me, is John Banks! The John Banks who wrote the "Remembrance" . . . the John Banks who traveled back in time to 1906 . . . the great John Banks whose mission was to end war and democide and foster the democratic peace. One of the world's greatest peacemakers, along with Joy. They prevented the bloody Mexican and Russian Revolutions, the War Lord period in China, World Wars I and II, and democratized China, Russia, and Japan—Jesus. Cyril mentally shook his head. Banks . . . he personally shot Hitler dead.*

A shiver ran up and down his spine. *Damn, my heart's beating so rapidly, he must see it thumping in my throat and shaking my body. If only Alice were alive . . . Oh, how she would love this moment.*

Cyril mentally shook himself. He finally spoke up when Banks began to frown, seeking a topic that wouldn't reveal they'd never met. "So, aah . . . John, how are your studies coming?"

The frown deepened for a second, and then disappeared. Banks seemed to settle himself comfortably in his chair. "Well, this is my first semester here, and I'm just beginning to get a feel for the different specialties the History Department offers. Every one here is so respected and such experts in their fields, it's hard to pick a course to take. I want to take them all."

Cyril was relaxing. The small talk did it. He was able to wave his hand and say, "I bet you signed up for twice as many courses as you could take, so that after week or two you could drop those that were the least interesting."

John nodded.

Cyril couldn't delay any longer. He had to ask, "Do you have any particular interest?"

"I'm especially fascinated by the Spanish Inquisition. I can read Spanish, and might focus on its genesis and toll. But I'm also interested in the history of pacifism, particularly in the United States."

No wonder he did his dissertation on the democratic peace and democide . . . the basic interest is already there. Aloud he asked, "Do you know anything about my research?" *I'll bet he did research on me before this meeting.*

"Of course," John answered. "I know your work on democide and the democratic peace."

"Does it interest you?"

Cyril could see the fascination in John's eyes. "Well, your research provokes a lot of questions."

Cyril made a point of looking at his watch. "I have some time. Go ahead, ask away."

For the next hour Cyril answered whatever questions troubled John, trying to be as provocative as possible but also suggesting possible areas needing research, particularly historical scholarship. Finally Cyril said, "I have to leave for other appointments," which he did, with Political Science faculty. "I'm giving a faculty-student seminar on my research tomorrow, as you know, and I hope that you can attend. Afterward, perhaps you could join me for supper."

Banks seemed startled by the invitation. "Ah, I'd be glad to . . . and to also attend your seminar."

When they shook hands and parted, Cyril could see the deep confusion in the other's eyes. He had no better idea how Cyril knew him, or especially why Cyril took such interest in him.

Cyril floated through the rest of the day, stuck in a mental and emotional loop. *I met the John Banks . . . I shook hands with him. My God, I talked to him . . . he's coming to my seminar. The man to whom I owe my life and career.*

He was barely able to function when he met several faculty members in their offices. He answered their questions almost by rote, and hoped they put it down to jet lag.



That evening, after a supper with the chairman of the Political Science Department, he stretched out on his hotel bed, eyes unfocused on the CNN programming on the TV, ears deaf to the parade of commentators. All he could think about at first was his meeting with Banks. Then, almost with a mental click, the image of Banks' partner, Joy, popped into his mind. *Joy? My God, Joy? She was half the Banks mission. She's alive now somewhere. God, do I want to meet her face to face—to see this beautiful . . . warrior in person.*

Let's see, where could I find her? I know she was a member of the Survivors' Benevolent Society, but that society is secret . . . no address or phone number. He'd checked. I know that Joy's mother, Tor, named her industrial conglomerate after her husband . . . can't remember the name, though, nor Joy's last name. Goddamn it, I can't even remember where she got her BA in political science and MS in computer science . . . He did know that afterward, she worked for her godmother from China. Gu something or other. . . but I can't recall that company name, either, if it was ever there. He sighed. I'm getting too damn old for this memory mining. I give up. But there will be an opportunity to meet her in the future.

Until then, after I return home . . . He didn't know what more to do with his life. Maybe I'll just learn to write HTML and build a Web site to display my—Banks' future research. Cyril had to laugh at that. And try to educate people about the democratic peace and democide. Yes, that's what I'll do. After all, it's still part of Alice and my mission . . . and Banks' . . . John and Joy's.



Banks attended Cyril's seminar; in fact, he was there well before Cyril and most of the attending faculty had arrived. When Cyril walked in and saw him there, he gave him a little wave and a smile, and tried to ignore him the rest of the time.

Cyril thought he had his emotions under control, but when he started to explain the democratic peace, the very idea he had taken from Banks' stuff, he stammered and chewed up his words, and had to fake a cough to cover the awkwardness. "I must have caught a slight cold somewhere," he apologized with a strained smile. He fumbled again when he introduced the idea of democide. He stopped, turned away from everyone, and faked a cough, then took out his handkerchief and wiped his nose and mouth to buy more time. Again he turned back and apologized for the interruption. He hoped his act would explain why his voice wavered slightly as he continued with his presentation, defining democide and then detailing the great extent to which such murder by government had been practiced.

This was after all a seminar; with a mental sigh of relief, Cyril ended his presentation and allowed almost thirty minutes for questions and discussion. Banks left all the questions and interaction to others, either out of shyness in such a group of esteemed faculty or, more likely, Cyril thought, because he'd have what he must perceive as the privilege of asking questions privately when they met for supper. *Truly, the privilege is mine.*

When they met for dinner at CO Jones Restaurant, John was now clearly into the subject. At first he expressed doubt, as so many historians did, and tried one argument after another to deny the truth of the democratic peace. By the time their Kendra's Dip & Chips came to be picked at by both of them, Banks had moved from "can't be true," to "doubtful," to "maybe."

Maybe is enough, thought Cyril. *That will get him going into his own research and the dissertation I know he will do.*

When they discussed what Cyril had said about democide during his seminar, Banks was truly into it. "Its like the Inquisition," he said, "but bloodier and more pervasive than any historian knows."

"That's right," Cyril said. "Historians have little chunks of it, depending on their specialty; one might know of the democide in Russia as part of his studies in Russian history, another as part of her Islamic studies, another through research into the Christian Crusades, or the Middle Ages, or the Roman Empire, and so on. No one, until I did my research . . ." *based on your mission,* Cyril mentally added, hoping that he was not blushing, "has tried to put all these chunks into one whole."

Banks was even more skeptical of the relationship of democracy to democide, and offered a number of common arguments, which Cyril answered in each case.

“I will be here until very early Saturday morning. If you have any more questions or simply want to discuss this, let me know,” Cyril said when they parted. “Anyway, you have my email address—write me whenever. And if you need any help or encouragement if you make this your focus, I would be more than willing to help.”

As Cyril watched this incredible man of the future and the past and of a new peaceful universe walk away, “how could this be?” no longer troubled him. That he had read Banks’ stuff as a young man and discovered the ideas of the democratic peace and democide that he’d now introduced to Banks had happened. This was the way it was. And reality trumps doubt.

When he returned to his hotel room at the Branford-Days Inn, he took a photograph of Alice out of his wallet with a trembling hand and kissed her face. “I wish you had been there,” he told her in a quavering voice, and then he held her to his heart, and cried.

Chapter 48

2001

John Banks

Joy's one-bedroom apartment had a small kitchen off the dining room, itself simply an extension of the living room. When John followed Joy into her apartment—no blanket—she asked him to take off his shoes at the door, and then invited him to take a seat on the couch. “I’m going to change into something more comfortable. It’ll take a moment. Meanwhile, there are things you can look at on the coffee table.” She then headed for what must be the bedroom.

One eye on her bottom as it disappeared through the door, John sat down. He stared at the closed bedroom door, head tilted, one finger rubbing his chin. *What’s she doing? I don’t understand. Her usual gray sweatshirt and Levis seem as comfortable as she could get. He lingered on the thought of the tight Levis: Those would heat up a eunuch. Then: Unless . . . no, impossible. Don’t be stupid.*

He ripped his eyes from the bedroom door and looked around the apartment. *Neat . . . not fussy. Comfortable. A place where I could relax.* On the coffee table she had a pile of journals, news magazines—some dated months previous—and a little stack of folded newspapers. He looked through the stack. *The New York Times, Washington Post, and the Washington Times.* All current. A Mac laptop computer sat off by itself; though closed, its light told him it was active.

He heard the bedroom door open, and she came back into the room. She had changed into a pink blouse with a V-neck that plunged down to her cleavage, and a tight denim skirt. *Does she ever wear anything that isn’t tight around her hips?* But what took his breath away was her hair. She had unleashed it from the ponytail she always wore to class into a black waterfall that fell with a slight curve to her hips. It emphasized her beauty and her figure both.

He could only stare.

She curtsied and said, “Ta-da. I got tired of my class uniform.”

The hours went by in minutes. He knew he had eaten pizza and drank two bottles of beer, for the empty bottles and the pizza box were sitting on the kitchen counter when he happened to come up for air and see them. Afterward, he could not track what they talked about specifically, as their voices slid imperceptibly from conversation, to closeness, to comfortable intimacy; nor was he really aware of Joy going back and forth with the pizza and beers and cleaning up, for they kept communicating at all levels right through it. As the distance between them decreased, each assumed an unconscious physical openness to each other. He was soon drowning in Joy’s pheromones. The only break came when he had to use the bathroom, but then his mind was full of her and he could only hope afterward that he hit the toilet bowl.

At some semiconscious level, he felt this was impossible. Many hours ago, before she’d emotionally broken down over the merciless death of her parents, she was the gorgeous, untouchable student sitting in the back of his class—free to desire, but forever unattainable. Now, in the same day, he was in her apartment, besotted by her, with all his quivering instincts telling him that she wanted him, too.

Women found him attractive, and he’d had many relationships over the years. He had honed the choreography from “Hello, my name is . . .” to “Your place or mine?” The sequence had never been as rapid as now. He felt the heat, he felt his partial erection, he felt his mind losing control to his desire and tried to stop it. *Too fast . . . too fast, stupid . . . I’m letting my desire misinterpret the situation. If I try to kiss her she’ll slap my face and yell, “Go!” Slow this down . . . don’t ruin a possible future. Or am I over-intellectualizing what is naturally progressing? Boy, this one is beyond my experience . . . but then, there is that curious sense of familiarity.*

He fought his lust, and the time to put his arm around her came and went. The time to kiss her disappeared into what might have been. *Yes, if it had been another woman, but not this one.*

They were both leaning against the back of the sofa, nearly facing each other. Joy had her legs drawn up under her and her arm resting along the sofa’s back cushion, almost touching John’s shoulder. She had been smiling invitingly, her voice soft and silky. Finally she tilted her head, looked sidelong at him with half-lidded eyes, her lips parted in a wanton, almost feral look. It was unmistakably female in heat.

She stood and walked toward the bedroom.

Oh my God, I’ve done it. I’ve turned her off. No, worse—alienated her. Oh, shit.

Joy turned at the bedroom door, thrust out her right hip and put her hand on it, let the other arm fall across her other hip, and tilted her head. "Let yourself out," she said evenly.

Shit, shit, I screwed this up, John's dejection screamed at him as he started to get up.

"Or . . ." an I-got-you grin slowly lit up her face, and her voice took on a sensual tone that suggested he had died and entered Paradise ". . . you can join me in bed."

Chapter 49

2001

Ralph Nieman

Nieman's appointment book was half empty, so he had asked his secretary to schedule Banks on alternate days. He looked forward to seeing him in a few minutes. He had listened to the tapes of the last three dreams with an increasing insight into what was troubling the young professor. He had written down what he expected to hear in Banks' recollection of the next dream, if in fact there was a new one.

When Banks arrived, Nieman asked him the usual questions about how he felt, what he was thinking about his problem, and what he read in his spare time. No mention of science fiction, or anything similar. When he asked about the dreams, Banks replied, "I know that some of my dreams are repeating themselves, but I don't know whether it is one dream or if they get mixed up. Guns always seem to be part of my dreams . . . and using them in a fight. And I seem to be learning, or . . . I don't know, using martial arts—which is funny. I think I'm being taught, if that's what it is, by some small woman. It's damn annoying, not to remember."

He automatically moved over to the couch. "Anyway, they seem not to bother me as much. Last night my sleep was not as fitful, and the dreams seem almost ordinary in how they affected me. You know, I woke up when my alarm when off, and then as I was shaving and later eating breakfast, I hazily recalled patches of the dream, as I'd do with normal dreams. No waking up with screams in the middle of the night, no sweating. My face and pillow were wet for some reason, however."

"Has anything changed in your life that might account for this?"

"Ah . . . hmm. Well, since you're my psychologist and I can trust you to keep this secret, I've developed a relationship with the beautiful Asian student in my class." Banks immediately held up his hand as

though warding off an objection. “She’s twenty-five, and not taking any other class, and only auditing mine. So, I don’t see a faculty-student relationship problem.”

“What’s her name?” Nieman asked.

“Joy Phim.”

Nieman tried to prevent his eyebrows from flicking up and down; before Banks could see his eyes widen, he dropped his head and started writing on his yellow pad. A key. He had just been given a key to this young professors’ psychological problem. He leaned back to his desk and pressed the button on his phone for his secretary.

“Sandra here,” she responded.

“Sandra, please . . . oh, just a moment.” He looked at his patient. “John, do you have an extra hour this morning? It’s important.”

Banks nodded.

Nieman again spoke into the phone. “Please reschedule my next meeting with Mrs. Hargrave with my apologies. Tell her an emergency has come up. If she gives you trouble, say the next meeting is half-price.”

Then Nieman turned to Banks. Keeping his voice professional, he said, “Please tell me all that you know about this woman . . . ah, Joy Phim.”

Banks did so for the next forty-five minutes. Then Nieman suggested hypnosis. Banks took up his position on the couch, minus his shoes, and Nieman pronounced the phrase “P,R,t,i” that put him under.

At first, Nieman asked a series of questions about Joy to see if anything about her was hidden from Banks in his subconscious. *He was straightforward about Joy; it’s clear that he is already deeply in love with her.* He looked at his watch. *Okay, time to move on. Let’s see about his dreams.*

In response to his questions, Nieman learned that the dreams he’d thought might repeat were indeed almost identical to the last dreams Banks had recounted. Then he asked, “Did you have a new dream?”

“Yes,” came the wooden response.

“Can you recall it?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“Please describe it to me.”

“A strange man killed Stalin in 1903, and then helped Trotsky successfully revolt against the Russian Czar in 1905.”

Nieman was surprised. Banks’ usually wooden tone under hypnosis had melted into a well-modulated storytelling voice. *Hmm, what other surprises does he have in store for me? Not his shoes, he took them off again.*

“When Joy and I arrive in 1906, the Bolsheviks have seized power in Russia, and the anticommunist Civil War is eating up lives. This so-called Russian Revolution should not have taken place until 1917. But now, in 1906, the Red Terror and associated famine are killing millions of Russians! And Lenin isn’t leading the revolution this time. Trotsky is.

“When Jy-ying—Joy’s double—Joy, and I discover this horror taking place in Russia, we have to believe a time traveler from the future is trying to change the past . . . we can only assume that his goal is to communize the world. We have to defeat him. Since we don’t know who he is, we decide to lure him to us.

“In the meantime, Jy-ying and Joy discover they aren’t just doubles, they’re the same person, from separate universes. Joy also discovers that Jy-ying is as much in love with me as she is. And since they are one and the same, although from different universes, Joy invites Jy-ying to enter into a *ménage à trois*—a three-person sexual relationship—with Joy and me . . . She accepts, and I’m . . . seduced into it.”

Nieman waited, but Banks only started squirming on the couch. Finally he instructed, “Please go on.”

“It was a wet dream. Then, when I woke up, I made love to the real Joy lying next to me in bed. It was a twofer.”

Banks was actually grinning, and so was Nieman. “Was there more to your dream?”

“Well, after I made love to the real Joy, I went back to sleep and the dream continued . . .

“The time traveler—we learn later it’s one man, a rogue time policeman—wants to change the universe, make communism triumphant. To lure him into revealing himself, we publish a book about the development of communism in the future, including references to Stalin, and use the *nom de plume* Adolph Hitler—a name only someone from the future would recognize. That gets him searching for us. Like us, he knows only other time travelers could have this information, and from the history he learned in the future, the history in which we are famous for what we did for democracy, he realizes the time travelers have to be us.

“He finds us, as we planned. But we didn’t realize what powerful weapons he would have. He uses a device to teleport himself into our bedroom when only Joy is there. He partially paralyzes her and . . . rapes her.

“A little dog Jy-ying adopted warns us of an intruder . . . we rush to the bedroom. Jy-ying springs into the bedroom from a side door with her dog, which distracts him long enough for her to shoot him dead.

“But . . . he had . . . k-killed . . . Joy. Joy was dead. My Joy . . . was *deead!*”

Tears flooded from Banks’ eyes to run down the sides of his face. He lay rigid on his back, the hands at his sides clenched into fists so tight, his knuckles were white. Nieman waited. He didn’t want to interrupt what might be a necessary, purging grief. Soon the tears stopped and Banks’ body relaxed, as did his hands.

Nieman asked softly, “Can you continue?”

“Yes.” A long pause. “Our mission, that of Joy and I, now becomes that of Jy-ying and I. As the months pass, my love for Jy-ying grows . . . but I cannot physically return her love for me, which is as great as was Joy’s. Until . . . Joy appears in a dream, to give my love for Jy-ying her spiritual blessing. With that, Jy-ying and I become true loving partners.”

Nieman waited, and then asked, “Is that the end of the dream?” John’s eyes opened, and he turned his head to look Nieman in the eye. A dimple formed at the corner of his mouth, and he waved his hand across his body, as if including somebody invisible next to him. “Well, other than that,” he said, “we defeated the Russian Revolution, eventually democratized Russia, and still succeeded in promoting peace and democracy as Joy and I did in my first dream. But no biggie. What was most important was that Joy came back to me in my dream within a dream.”

Nieman hid his chuckle, and then sat back and stared at the other man. *Extraordinary. Is he still under? Maybe it’s his natural personality asserting itself.* Nieman asked him, “Are you still asleep?”

“Yes.”

Nieman brought John out of hypnosis on the count of three, and studied him for a moment. “Do you remember what you said under hypnosis?”

“Not really.” He brought a hand up and slid it across one cheek. “But, could you tell me why my face and hair are wet?”

“You cried while describing part of your dream.”

“I cried?” He paused in thought. “My dream must have been about what I’ve been teaching in class—the Vietnamese Boat People and what happened to them on the open ocean.” He hesitated. “I bet I cried about Joy Phim, who miraculously survived while everyone else on her boat was killed by pirates.”

Almost gleeful over the success of this session, Nieman said without thinking, “It was about Joy.”

Chapter 50

2001

John Banks

He walked toward his classroom with a buoyant step, happy over the way his and Joy's relationship was going. They had spent almost the whole weekend together, and during each hour, he felt his feelings for her deepen. He was falling in love with her.

I still can't believe my day-by-day, almost hour-by-hour discoveries about her. He thought about their lovemaking. It had bothered him at first that she was extraordinarily good, and inventive; he was convinced that such skills could only be acquired in the practice of the world's oldest profession. But then she'd told him that, at the age of seventeen, her mother Tor had enrolled her in a secret Three Pillows Art Academy in Chinatown to learn the arts of love. *Just in time. I almost proved to her how stupid I am.*

He almost walked into a student cutting in front of him. "Oops, sorry."

He wondered how this afternoon would go. He'd told her that he would like to learn karate and judo from her, so after class she was taking him to the dojo she had found in Bloomington. "Not very good," she'd said, "but adequate to begin your training."

He'd learned she was also an expert with weapons, particularly the knife. When she discovered that he'd never so much as held a BB gun, she'd volunteered to train him in weapons, as well. "Then you could be my backup when I clean the streets of muggers and rapists," she said.

Ha! Me, shoot a gun . . . not until pigs fly. Just to be extra sure, add horses to that. It hadn't sounded like she was joking, so he'd hurriedly admitted, "No, I don't like guns."

Then she'd revealed another of the million or so facets of her personality. She had stood back and stared at him as though he'd said he didn't like puppies and kittens, or roses. She sighed loudly, and com-

mented, “Well, good thing you have other upstanding virtues.” *And then she leered at . . . my crotch, of all things.* He was speechless. He felt the heat rising in his face. He had never been subjected—*Yes, that’s the word . . . subjected to that kind of humor from a woman before, not by one so beautiful and desirable.* She’d seen his expression and started laughing from the belly up, and after trying to look insulted, he gave up and joined her.

He had told her about his dreams, about his inability to get a good night’s sleep, that a psychiatrist was trying to help him determine what the problem was. *Now I know what the problem was. No lovemaking. Ha-ha.*

That first night with Joy had been . . . joyous. When they finally did go to sleep in each other’s arms, exhausted, he’d slept soundly for ten hours and woke up in the afternoon. It was Saturday, fortunately. He’d also slept well Saturday night, with Joy’s naked body against his, and woke up feeling rested, without the usual headache, not even a mild one.

But there’d been one episode on Sunday night, when he awoke too early to get up, and his tossing woke Joy. “Did you have one of your dreams?” she asked. When he said he didn’t remember, she had been sympathetic, and tried to help him remember. *All I could recall was shooting guns again, and people being killed, but I didn’t tell her that.*

A cluster of his students stood outside his classroom, sharing notes, and he nodded to them before entering the room. He was a few minutes early. Half the students waited in their seats. Just as he opened his briefcase to take out his outline, he saw Joy come in the door—in pig-tails, sweatshirt, and tight denim jeans. Without looking at him, she took her usual seat in the rear. A number of students watched her, their curiosity obvious. Miss Chisholm, who sat next to her, struck up a conversation. He guessed that she’d asked Joy if she was alright.

The rest of the students slowly filed in. John checked his watch. *Time.*

“Good afternoon, students. I have Miss Phim’s permission—” *Still using her surname like that . . . delicious* “—to explain what happened to her during our last class. When I described to you what happened to some of those fleeing Vietnam when their boat was attacked by pirates, this is close to what probably happened to her. At the age of about four, she was on such a boat when it must have been attacked by pirates. They may have kidnapped into sexual slavery some of the younger women and murdered the rest, or murdered everyone. No way of knowing. But somehow, they missed Miss Phim. She may have been hidden somewhere on the boat by her parents before they were murdered. For

whatever reason, the pirates overlooked her, and a Filipino fisherman finally found her on the boat, hungry, sunburned, and near death from thirst.”

“Oh no,” one student exclaimed.

Miss Chisholm put her hand on Joy’s arm, and some of the students close by turned to say something to her. Prepared this time, Joy maintained her composure; her face looked strained, but she thanked them graciously.

John gave it a moment, and then continued. “This is the first time I’ve had someone in class who experienced the democide or killing episode I was lecturing about. I normally would ask them to talk to you about their experience, but in Miss Phim’s case, it is too personal and too sensitive. Also, I ask you, please respect her privacy on this. I’ve told you as much as she feels up to revealing. Now, to move on. Regarding the Boat People—”

He walked to his briefcase and took out his deck of names. He shuffled it. “Miss Carden?” When she put up her hand, he asked, “What are Boat People?”

“I think they are Vietnamese who tried to flee Vietnam by boat.”

John nodded. “Thank you.”

He strode back to the center of the room. He leaned forward, one hand holding his outline behind him while he gestured to the class with the other hand. “Those Boat People died in prisons or reeducation camps when caught in the process of fleeing Vietnam, or they were executed outright; they died on the ocean when their boat was shot out from under them by the communist Coast Guard; they died in storms, from thirst, or from starvation; they died at the hands of pirates.

“Those refugees who did make it to another shore might be forced again out into the ocean in a rickety boat, perhaps to die this time. This is what Malaysia did; this practice may have been responsible for the death of seventy-six thousand Boat People.

“If allowed to remain where they landed, they faced life in squalid refugee camps until maybe, eventually, some country whose culture and land was alien accepted them.

“Yet at first thousands, then tens of thousands, and then hundreds of thousands of these Boat People fled their homes, relatives, friends, and country. And they fled largely during a time of peace. They truly used their bodies and lives as testimony against the kind of life the communists imposed on them.”

John let that hang there as he raised his outline to glance at his figures. “In 1978 and 1979, this flight reached incredible numbers. In just

one month in 1979, over sixty thousand Vietnamese risked pirates, storms, and other causes of death on the high seas, often in ridiculous boats, to reach Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macao, the Philippines, and even Japan. According to the UN High Commission on Refugees, as of 1984, a total of 929,600 Vietnamese were actually given refuge by the first nation they reached. The American Department of State estimates that from 1975 to 1985, one million Vietnamese fled Vietnam. That number may be a minimum. No one knows for sure. But judging from the variety of estimates, it seems that probably 1.5 million attempted the dangerous escape from Vietnam by sea, possibly even two million.

“The toll on the ocean is, of course, unknown. There are percentage estimates of these dead, however, which vary from twenty to seventy percent of the Boat People, the latter from an official of Ho Chi Minh City. Many refugee officials believe that up to 50 percent died on the ocean, the figure given by the Australian Immigration Minister Michael MacKeller. Some give actual numbers of dead. One source claims that three hundred thousand to one million died in the period from 1975 to about 1979. One ranking American official believed the toll was thirty thousand to fifty thousand per month up to 1979. For the period up to April 1988, the United States Committee for Refugees estimates that five hundred thousand died.

“Such figures and other estimates of the percentage that died suggest that from one hundred thousand to 1.4 million Vietnamese drowned at sea or died of other unnatural causes. A prudent estimate seems to be five hundred thousand. If, of this number, we only count those fleeing for their lives under communist pressure, which I conservatively calculate at about half of them, then the deaths of 250,000 Boat People constitute democide.”

Some of the students seemed overwhelmed; a few seemed to be going to sleep. He picked up his deck of names, shuffled it, and said, “Let me pick a name out randomly. I want this to be truly random so that my biases don’t influence my choice.” Trying to look very serious, he picked out a card, held it up and looked at the name, then shook his head. “Not this one.” He ostentatiously put it on the bottom of the pack. He picked out another and did the same thing. Some students caught on; they chuckled. Finally, a third card. “Ah, yes, Miss Asing.”

No answer; no hand went up. He put an X at the top of her card to indicate her absence, and pulled out another one. “Miss Mahoney.”

A hand went up.

“Could you tell me how many Vietnamese fled Vietnam in boats?”

She looked down at her notes. “One and a half million.”

“Don’t forget the ‘probably.’ We don’t know for sure, and even the probability is a subjective judgment on my part.”

Another card and name: “Mr. Sosa.”

“Yes, sir.”

“How many of the Boat People did I estimate probably died while fleeing?”

“About half a million, sir.”

“Yes; thank you.”

John put his hands behind him and looked over the class. Joy was looking at him with her head propped on her hand. *Probably can’t wait to get me in bed tonight*, he thought with a mental laugh. Then he swallowed it. *That was a hell of a thing to think in this context. Jesus, what she must be going through, listening to all this.*

He took a few more seconds to emphasize by his silence the section break in his lecture. Then, gesturing with his hand as though opening his mind to them, he began his conclusion. “Now, I want to sum up my lectures on Vietnam by providing an overall picture of the killing that took place from 1945 on. But first, I should mention Vietnam’s democide in neighboring countries. Vietnam fought alongside the Khmer Rouge guerrillas in Cambodia until their takeover of the country in 1975, and then in 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia and occupied the country. During all this, Vietnam appears responsible for the death of 461,000 Cambodians.

“It fought in Laos to establish a Vietnam-controlled puppet government and murdered another eighty-seven thousand.

“Adding these to the figures for the post-Vietnam War democide in Vietnam, the Communist Party of Vietnam likely murdered about 1,040,000 people. Just this post-Vietnam War toll makes Vietnam one of this century’s megamurderers.”

John took the top card off his pack, looked at it, and asked, “Mr. Stein, what does mega mean?”

“Huge.”

“Right. That is one of its meanings. But what does it mean in the way I use it for Vietnam? That is, that communist Vietnam is a megamurderer?”

“Ah . . . it murdered . . . a million or more?”

“Yes, very good.” He continued. “Vietnam is already a megamurderer even before we add those it murdered during the Indochina and the Vietnam Wars. Including this number, this Communist Party is

probably responsible for the murder of almost 1.7 million people, nearly 1.1 million of them Vietnamese. The figure might even be close to a high of 3.7 million dead, with Vietnamese around a likely 2.8 million. This means that from 1945 to 1987, the Vietnamese communists probably murdered about one out of every seventy-five Vietnamese men, women, and children. On an annual basis, this was about one out of every one thousand Vietnamese per year for each of slightly more than forty-four years.”

A hand. “Yes, Mr. Watson?”

“I still don’t understand why they did so much killing.”

“They were communists, Mr. Watson. They killed for the same reasons that Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot, and other communist dictators murdered their people. It was the Marxist imperative. The revolution had to move forward, the utopia had to be realized. This required, in communist eyes, that actual and potential opponents be eliminated and that, like cogs in a machine, those that remained obeyed commands from the Communist Party, absolutely. No competing power structure could remain; not religious leaders, not village and hamlet leaders, not alternative voices. Nor could land or productive machinery be allowed to remain in private hands, for these might be used in a way contrary to the communist restructuring of society. Capitalists were seen as evil.

“And for a whole society of millions of individuals, each with different interests and values, none of the most fundamental social engineering and reconstruction envisioned by the communists could be carried out without corpses. After all, this was a war on exploitation, poverty, and inequality, and in wars, people are killed. As the communist saying goes, ‘You can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs.’

“As for democide in the Vietnam War, this was after all a revolutionary war, a war ultimately for utopia. And, as in the war on domestic capitalism and feudalism, whatever is expedient, whatever is necessary to win the war, must be done no matter the number of civilians sacrificed.

“And certainly the imperatives of power played their role. History teaches that power aggrandizes itself. Those who have power seek more power, and more power demands even more to protect itself. Nor can one deny that envy of the rich and productive, or individual greed, played a role, especially among lower cadre. But among the top communists it is clear that Marxism, as it became interpreted by the Soviets and Chinese, and the dynamics of power set in motion by the Vietnamese communists, were paramount.

“In sum, the Vietnamese have suffered through horrible wars and horrible democide. Probably nearly 3.8 million of them were killed

over forty-three years. Of these, 1.25 million of them were murdered by South Vietnamese regimes, by Frenchmen, Americans, Koreans, and Khmer Rouge, and particularly by the Vietnamese communists ruling in North Vietnam—they alone wiped out about 1.1 million Vietnamese.”

Silence. He looked around at a room full of somber faces. *Good.*

Chapter 51

2001

Ralph Nieman

Nieman thought that the upcoming session with Banks would be the last. He closely studied the first four tapes, did an analysis, and predicted what the fifth tape would record about Banks' dreams. Now he could take Joy into account, the new element in Banks' life, and the expectations he'd had about the fourth dream were pretty much on the mark. So, if this fifth session further verified his analysis, the rest would be up to Banks. This was an easy one. Some of his clients had dragged on for many months—he never let it go beyond six.

When Banks arrived, he started off with the usual questions. Banks responded, "I'm much better. In fact, I think I'm back to normal. I sleep soundly now, and although I still have dreams, they don't upset me. No headaches. No fatigue."

"Are you still involved with Joy Phim?"

"Oh yes, the more I'm with her, the more I like her."

Nieman mentally grinned at that. *Probably doesn't want to seem too hasty in falling in love with the woman.* He asked more questions just to be sure that the only recent change in his Banks' life was his new relationship. Then he put him under hypnosis.

"Have any of your dreams repeated themselves since last I saw you?" he asked Banks.

"No."

"Have you had any new dreams?"

"Yes, one."

"Please tell me about it."

"When that damn rogue policeman changed the universe by killing Stalin and helping launch an early Russian Revolution, he produced waves of change throughout the world. The history we know was no longer the same in that universe. One big change was in the Balkan

Wars involving Turkey. They were far more intense and far-reaching in their effects, especially in when the Young Turks began their genocide of millions of Armenians.”

Nieman raised his eyebrows and asked, “Was there such a genocide of the Armenians in our history?”

“Yes, over a million were murdered by the Young Turks.”

“Please continue your dream.”

“When Jy-ying and I—oh, God, that’s right, Joy was killed . . .”

Nieman waited. A few tears squeezed from beneath Banks’ closed eyelids, but his body remained relaxed. In a moment he continued without prompting.

“When Jy-ying and I find out about the ongoing Young Turk genocide, we aim to stop it. We make preparations . . . hire a Turkish immigrant to help us learn about Turkey and the language . . . the bastard tells his wife, a Turkish patriot . . . she informs her nephew, who is actually a Turkish agent in Britain.

“So when Jy-ying and I travel to London to request that the editor of *The Times* help us stop the genocide, we are assassinated by the Turks. We are killed. Jy-ying and I are dead . . . like Joy.

“The twosome became a threesome became a twosome, and then a zero-some. Ha-ha.”

Nieman frowned and looked sharply at Banks, but Banks’ tightly furrowed brow and down-turned mouth told him that the laughter was the same as a sigh of emotional pain. He waited, and then softly said, “Please go on.”

Banks returned to his dream and his face gradually relaxed.

“Those three young men that Joy and I hired in 1906 for our import and export company . . . we used it as cover . . . had become close friends. When we finally had to tell them about our mission, they became as dedicated to it as we were.

“One of the young men, Hands, was engaged to a German actress named Kate—oh, what a fearless one! Her brother and his wife were killed in a pro-democracy demonstration, and she was arrested . . . my God, how she was tortured. Now she has her own mission—to execute those who carry out democide, especially against pro-democratic activists She had already executed four or five of them when Hands tells her about the murder of Jy-ying and me.

“Kate becomes the leader of the others as they seek to revenge our deaths, and to stop the slaughter of the Armenians. They travel to Turkey to do so . . . actually assassinate the five top Young Turks with a missile launcher that Joy and I had brought with us from the future. But

their intentions were suspected by a Turkish general . . . had them followed . . . lets them proceed with the assassination, so he can take over the government. When they do succeed, his troops attempt to arrest them . . . firefight . . . all killed. Holy Christ, everybody's dead . . . My God, nobody's left. Oh my . . . God.”

Banks' face turned white as his emotional pain twisted and pulled it into a grotesque mask. He began to thrash about on the couch, and Nieman was just about to bring him out of the hypnosis when he suddenly relaxed, and his face showed immediate relief.

“No, wait a minute. Ah, yes.

“Can you beat that . . . a time policewoman from the future decides . . . against the laws of her time . . . to reset this universe back to the point just before Jy-ying and I are assassinated. As a result of our deaths, and then the deaths of the five others who tried to continue our mission . . . the universe proceeds on a bloody course with a future where not only billions are murdered, but almost all democracies are eliminated. The time policewoman cannot allow this.

“When she resets the universe, Jy-ying and I protect ourselves in a different way . . . we survive the assassination attempt.

“In the future . . . in her own time . . . the policewoman is tried for breaking the law against resetting a universe . . . convicted . . . conviction vastly unpopular . . . threatens the reelection of the president of the interplanetary government. She's pardoned, with the stipulation that she resign from the time police”

The sound of a fire truck's siren and hooting horn came through the window, then gradually got lost in the muted sounds of traffic. Nieman waited, watching Banks' relaxed expression. Finally he asked, “Is that it?”

“Ah . . . yeah, I guess so.”

Nieman thought this story must continue. Banks had not said anything about whether he and Jy-ying succeeded in stopping the genocide, or if, in that changed universe, they were able to prevent World War One or the major democides of the world. He asked again, “That was the end of it?”

“Yes.”

Nieman was surprised that he felt disappointed, a feeling that he immediately tried to squelch. He predicted this would be Banks' last dream of this kind, but his “mission” came to no conclusion. *So what? They are dreams*, he chided himself.

He brought Banks out of the hypnosis, and waited while the young man sat up and put his shoes on. “I think I need only one more ses-

sion,” he told Banks. “Before then, I want to analyze your latest dream, and confirm my analysis. I think I can now provide you with an explanation of your problem.” He wagged his finger at him. “So don’t get restless again, don’t have anymore dreams that give you headaches and leave you fatigued, or I’ll have to take a lot more of your money and charge you for wearing out my couch.”

Chapter 52

2001

John Banks

Cyril Clement had emailed John that he would be in Bloomington and asked if he would like Cyril to give a presentation to his class. Since John was using his book on the democratic peace as a text, he was more than happy to set up the presentation. And to spend an evening discussing it and democide research afterward. Besides, John owed him.

They had remained in close touch after Cyril's fateful visit to Yale. Yet again, John thought of that after responding to Clement's email. *Amazing, how, out of the blue, this renowned professor asked to meet me . . . and as a result I discovered an interest that deepened and ultimately became my Ph.D. dissertation and life's mission.*

After that first meeting, he'd tried to remember Cyril, who seemed to know him well enough to contact him personally when he came to Yale. John had gone through all the possibilities—a meeting at someone's dinner party; a chance meeting when he was an undergraduate or otherwise? After their first meeting, it didn't matter, of course, but it always bothered him. So, when he felt he knew Cyril well enough, he simply asked by email: *How did we first meet? I don't recall.*

Cyril emailed back: *At someone's dinner party. I don't remember whose anymore, but I remembered you because of the story you told me about your mother as a tennis pro, how she would take you into the women's locker room with her, and that once you saw a famous woman tennis player coming out of the shower naked. That kind of thing sticks in the mind. I knew your major was history and you had mentioned you might be going to Yale for graduate work, so when I knew I was going to New Haven, I called the department and asked if you were there.*

Banks scratched his head at that. *I didn't think I had ever told anyone but Joy that story . . . but how else would he know? Well, I must have drunk a little too much alcohol that night.*



John picked up Cyril at the little Bloomington-Normal Airport and drove him to his room at Days Inn. There they talked about John's dissertation, his awful experience in the 9/11 terrorist attack, and his future plans.

The next day, Cyril gave his talk on the democratic peace to John's class, and allowed time for questions. The students were obviously in awe of him, since it was his book they were reading for the class.

Joy asked no questions, John noticed. After the class she came up to Cyril and said sweetly, "Thank you for your talk. I am especially impressed by your book. I hope that it is used by many professors."

Cyril had stepped back when she approached him, and as she thanked him his brow shot up and his mouth fell open. He seemed to have difficulty replying, and finally got out, "Ah . . . thank you, Miss . . . ah?"

"Joy Phim," she replied, and dipped her head a moment before turning to leave.

What's wrong with Cyril? Why so tongue-tied? John wondered, then smiled. *But, nothing odd about how closely he watched Joy as she left the classroom.* John had also noticed him glancing frequently her way during his lecture. *Well, what healthy male wouldn't,* he told himself.

Chapter 53

2001

John Banks

John entered Nieman's office with a certain trepidation. He was feeling good, his sleep had been solid, and he no longer felt tired and headachy in the morning. *Indeed, I couldn't be happier. There's now a Joy in my walks. Ha-ha.* He smiled to himself. *Joy would have kicked me for that pun—no sense of humor.*

Nieman got up from his desk, shook John's hand, and motioned for him to sit in the upholstered chair by the desk. He sat on the corner of the desk facing John. "Well John, I almost hate to say it, but we're through. I'm sorry, but I'm breaking off our relationship." He laughed.

He put both hands on the edge of his desk and leaned toward John to say, "I'll give you the tapes of your fascinating dreams when you leave. After you listen to them, you might consider using them as the plots for a series of novels."

He straightened. "Anyway, what they indicate, as do your answers to my questions before and under hypnosis, is that your problem is . . . was . . . being subconsciously tormented by three psychological tensions and their interplay. They worked their way into your dreams and emotions at night, fully stressing your bio-chemical balance in a flight or fight reaction, and sometimes drenching your body in adrenaline. Your headaches, tight chest, nausea, sweating, and so on were you body's natural reaction to this, and your extreme fatigue was the post-adrenaline letdown."

Nieman lifted three fingers in front of him and touched one with the forefinger of his other hand. "Your extreme inner tension was similar to battle fatigue. You lived a normal life. You were never involved in violence, and you never saw a dead person before. Then, suddenly, without warning, you saw not only dead people for the first time, but

bloody human body parts, people committing suicide by jumping out of windows to escape being burned alive, and all the other horrors of 9/11. That devastated your psyche.

“Since then, you had been in a state of continual, deep emotional shock. You just could not walk away from it, nor, I think, could I have. And like an injury for which you may not feel the pain for days, the psychological injury of 9/11 did not make its way into your dreams for many weeks.”

Nieman touched his forefinger to the second of the three fingers. “I read a copy of your dissertation, and your notes that you loaned me. All that democide—the burying alive, the burning alive, the torturing to death, the shooting, the blowing people up by the millions—is bad enough to read once. But you have researched on this every day for years. You have read many horrible stories from refugees and escapees, observers and participants. You have written about it. You teach it.”

Nieman shook his head, rubbed one hand across his chin, and rocked back and forth for a moment. “As a normal human being, that affected you deeply, and created a profound tension—even a terror—within you. The horror ate at you. And you developed a fanatical desire to stop the democide, to save those people. It became an imperative that was given an extra psychodynamic push by your terrible experience during 9/11. These two sources of psychic tension came together in your dreams.”

Nieman stopped and let that sink in. Then he held up one finger, and added, “Finally, you had in your class a beautiful student who inflamed your passion, and entered your dreams as a transitional element. With your passionate study of democide and 9/11 bursting out of your subconscious into your dreams, this woman, Joy Phim, served as both a transitional element and moderating influence. She served to move your dreams from conflict to crises to resolution, and as a tension release that sex and love provide.

“The subconscious is very clever at this kind of thing, and is superb at great theater. I think you’re lucky. Without Joy in your dreams, you might have developed a severe psychosis that could have prevented you even from teaching, and might have required institutionalization until cured.

“But those tensions within you from the democide research and 9/11 did not accept Joy in your dreams. She was an intruder and they fought her, and contrived to have you kill her or that she be killed. But you kept bringing her back, and finally you just invented a second Joy from another universe to fill her place, to satisfy your sexual desire for her, to moderate your tension.”

John gaped at Nieman. “Jesus, I did all that—my dreams were full of all that—and it was Joy I was making love to? Wait . . . what? I killed her?”

Nieman held up his hand. “It was a dream, John. And Joy is now real in your life. And she resolved these tensions for you both in your dream and now in real life.”

“She did? Oh, of course, I knew she would. That’s why I developed a relationship with her, you know. Can’t be any other reason.” He gave Nieman a huge grin.

Nieman laughed. “Of course.” Then he continued. “As your relationship with her developed, her effect on your dreams decreased. First, you satisfied your sexual desire for her—”

“Satiated,” John interrupted.

“—and then you developed a loving relationship. This being loved and loving in return was just what you needed to emotionally release you from the deep emotional horrors you had suffered and dealt with in your research and teaching. You see, we are very social animals, and consciously and subconsciously, emotionally and biochemically, we need to love and be loved, to have a mate and to mate. Those tensions of yours are now much alleviated by your loving relationship with Joy, and your subconscious has redirected those that remain into your drive to study, understand, teach, and do something about democide and war.”

“You mean I’m cured.”

“That’s too strong a word, John. You have been . . . remodeled, and that’s what a truly profound love will do to a person. Also, keep in mind that something might happen in your relationship with Joy, something might happen to you, to recreate the tensions you have felt. But, I doubt it. Once these kinds of tensions are redirected, they tend to stay that way. So, John, that’s it.”

John spent the next fifteen minutes asking questions, until Nieman stood, walked behind his desk, and took five tapes out of a drawer. He walked up to John and held them out to him. “Your dreams.”

John accepted them, and as he stared down at them, Nieman said, “Oh, one more thing. I could not figure out why you kept taking off your shoes before lying back on the couch. No one else has ever done that, and it would not occur to me. That was never mentioned in your dreams, and I could get no answer from you under hypnosis.”

John shrugged. “I don’t know. I can say that Joy will not allow me into her apartment unless I take my shoes off just inside the door. It’s an oriental custom, she says: ‘Dirty bottomed shoes are for outside. Clean slippers are for inside.’”

Nieman looked puzzled. “But you were doing that before you got together with Joy.” He shrugged. “Well, no biggie.”

He slapped John on the back. “Be good, now, and give me a call if this problem reasserts itself. The first minute is free.”

John chuckled. As he opened the door to leave, Nieman called, “Enjoy yourself.”

John’s groan lasted all the way to the elevator.

Chapter 54

December 11, 2001

John Banks

John entered his classroom for the last lecture of the semester on the democratic peace. He'd arrived early again, and pretended to read his outline while he mused happily over the diagnosis he had received that morning from Ralph Nieman. But within minutes, he felt uncomfortable and took off his sport coat. Many of the students had removed their own coats and sweaters. The building's heating system was not working properly and the classroom was overheated.

Joy came in just in time, and avoided looking at him. They treated their relationship with the utmost prudence. Last night she had asked him how he was going to sum up the semester. He had shrugged. For this final lecture he had worried over the same questions he'd asked himself when he began the class: *How can I make my students feel in their gut what ten million or one hundred million bodies mean in human terms . . . that people died in agony, often for nothing but their ethnicity, religion, or political views, or sometimes only to meet their ruler's death quota.*

This frustrated him. He had lectured much about democide, he had given many examples. *I'm still not sure that I've been able to convey the true horrors of democide. But, I also want to show them that there is hope, that by fostering democratic freedom throughout the world, we could end war and the terrorism, genocide, and democide.*

Finally, at the last minute, he had decided to relate one awful democide to them, to try to communicate the feeling of it, and how inhumane government—nondemocratic governments—could be. It was a new episode, not one they had read about for his class or that he had mentioned in detail. So, he had outlined it, and had typed relevant quotations on a separate page. It would serve as the introduction to his summation.

Okay, time to begin. My first summation.

“Good afternoon, students. As some of you may realize, this is my last lecture of the semester.”

Some of the students looked at him blankly; some grinned.

“I have given you a lot of information about democide and war, and their solution. Some of the figures may have stuck in your minds. No matter. I’m not after you remembering an abstract statistic; I’d rather have you remember that there has been such horrible killing in unbelievable, indigestible numbers. Now, before my summation, I want to give you one final real-life example that sums up the democide that has stolen the lives of over a hundred million people. This example is not unique; it exemplifies the sheer, cold-blooded nature of much of it. And it demonstrates how much of this democide is unknown—not hidden, but put away like all unwanted memories, and in the particular case I will relate, for political reasons. I’m going to tell you what Pakistan’s military rulers did—not the present government, but a previous one. Its genocide is still unmentionable, since Pakistan is an ally of the United States and a part of its coalition in the war against terrorism.”

John stopped and looked over the class. “Please put up your hand if you’ve heard about the mass murders and genocide carried out by Pakistan in 1971.”

No hand went up, except for Joy’s.

“That’s not surprising, since even in the many books on genocide, few mention this particular one. Now, open Clement’s text to page 126, and there you will find a map of South Asia. Look at it.”

Banks scanned his outline while students got out their books, flipped pages, or tried to look over somebody’s shoulder. When they settled down, he continued. “Pakistan is India’s neighbor on the left. Squeezed into the lower right side of India is Bangladesh. Until 1971, that country was part of Pakistan, and was called East Pakistan. Its major ethnic group was Bengali, and their religion, as in West Pakistan, was Islam, although a slightly different variant.

“Leading up to 1971, East Pakistan had been working politically and nonviolently toward independence from West Pakistan—look at the map again and you can see why, with that distance of almost one thousand miles between the two parts. And it was on the verge of success after the 1969 national election, when the Bengali Awami League gained an absolute majority in the Pakistan legislature.

“However, the ruling generals of Pakistan were absolutely opposed to East Pakistan gaining independence, so in 1971 General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan, the self-appointed president of Pakistan and

commander-in-chief of the army and his top generals prepared a careful and systematic military operation against East Pakistan. They planned to murder that country's Bengali intellectual, cultural, and political elite.

John stopped, leaned toward the students, and shook both hands in front of him for emphasis as he repeated, "At the highest level of this regime, the rulers planned, prepared, and executed the cold-blooded murder of the best and brightest Bengalis in East Pakistan, and murdered indiscriminately many of its Hindus, driving the rest into India. This despicable and cutthroat plan was outright genocide."

He paused and looked into the eyes of one student after another. He had their attention. "After months of military preparation, the generals launched their genocidal campaign at night. And what was one of their first civilian targets? Students like you.

"Now, imagine that you were a student there, as you are here. Before going to bed one night, you may have been in the library studying, working on your term paper, or doing a lab assignment. You may have written home or been out in Dacca with some friends. You may have given your friend a secret kiss before parting, already looking forward to seeing each other the next day. You go to bed that night with a future for which you are studying hard, with a future of loved ones and children, with a future of hope and bright dreams. You have not the slightest hint that the next day will be any different than the last; you close your eyes without any thought that you will be lucky to see the dawn, or if you do, that you will not live through the day.

"So students the world over have gone to bed, to be destroyed there by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, tornadoes, and fire. But these are nature's doings. What would happen this night was done by fellow human beings. Intentionally.

In the middle of the night, with no warning, West Pakistani tanks began shelling the dormitories of the University of Dacca, where students like you were sleeping.

Visualize it: you are blasted awake by tank shells suddenly bursting through the dorm walls and windows to explode throughout the dorm amongst your beds, your study rooms. Red-hot shrapnel flies, randomly seeking out those who will die, lose a leg or arm, or have their belly slit open so wide, their guts tumble out. Then the trembling fear, wild panic, and screaming; the mute dead, the crying wounded, the smoke and fire, destruction and blood, everywhere." John dropped his voice. "And the forever unknown courage and heroism as you and others help the wounded and try to escape the flames and explosions.

“You try to run or crawl out of the dorm, and help others to escape. You’re shaking. Your heart is beating wildly. You can’t get your breath. But you finally climb over smoking debris and make it outside.

“But outside, the West Pakistan troops are waiting, and you are rounded up at bayonet point to stand or sit in trembling shock. You don’t know what happened or what they will do to you. You can’t believe it. You think this must be a nightmare as you watch the dormitories burn down with your fellow students still screaming inside or jumping from windows. If you have only minor injuries or none at all, you may try to help the crying, moaning wounded on the ground around you.

“Dawn slowly shows through the smoke, and soldiers begin pushing and prodding all of you through the haze toward a grassy area near a parking lot. The soldiers bayonet those who resist, or who are too wounded to move. You are stunned and trembling—you cannot believe what you just saw. Students are being murdered, some you know, and as they are repeatedly bayoneted their screams and pleas for mercy rip through your mind.

“Self-preservation takes over and you allow yourself to be herded along with the other survivors toward the grassy area, where you see a pile of shovels, hoes, and digging sticks that a small truck nearby has dumped. You are jabbed and shoved toward the pile and then the soldiers form a tight ring around all of you. An officer shouts, ‘Dig a trench. Dig it deep. Or be tortured to death.’

“Your knees are almost knocking together, your heart thudding in your ears, and tears drip from your face as, in utter, mind-devastating terror, you pick up a hoe and begin hacking at the ground where one soldier is pointing. Through your fear, through your shock, through the terror, you have only one impossible realization—this trench is for you. For your dead body. You are going to be *killed*.”

“You hack away; you pull the loose dirt out with the hoe; you hack again and again. You stop crying. You don’t hear the cannon in the distance or the shooting nearby. You hear but barely recognize the scream of the girl who was digging near you, but made a break for it. She is tripped by one of the soldiers, and then is stabbed in the leg—you refuse to look as she writhes on the ground and shrieks and screeches while being stabbed in the other leg, and then in one arm, then the other, and finally in the stomach. It’s a calculated lesson for you, which you dimly recognize, and you blank out the girl’s moans and cries for her mother.

“Now you’re resolute and focused. You hurry up your digging. You want to get it over with. Your body has grown cold. You shiver. Your mind closes down as you hack and pull the dirt, and deepen the trench with the others. Your soft hands, used to books and pencils, are bleeding and sore; your body is getting heavy and fatigued. But you feel nothing.

“You and the others have dug three feet down. You are on automatic. Four feet. Then five. Several of the girls and two of the boys have collapsed in heaps at the edge from the unaccustomed labor, or have fainted from fear.

“Someone yells, ‘Stop. Enough. Get out of the trench and line up on the edge.’ This is it, but your mind refuses to recognize it. Your body obeys and lines up with the others. You see soldiers standing about twenty feet away with automatic rifles, but it means nothing.

“You stand. You think of nothing. There is no passing time. You don’t see that the fire in the dormitories has nearly burned out, or that the smoke is drifting away, leaving the beautiful morning to prize. You don’t see the robin’s egg-blue of the sky, the gentle white clouds; you do not register the sound of birds chattering. You don’t even think of your loved ones, of your lost future, of your lost hopes, of your dead dreams. Of all your wasted study and effort.

“Then, *Brrrrttt! Brrrrttt!*”

Several of his students jumped.

“Your body twitches from the impact of bullets ripping across your chest, blowing your last breath out the holes in a red mist. Now your body is as dead as your mind; you fall backward into the trench to be covered with dirt.”

John held up his hand to stop questions, and waited for a few moments. The classroom was absolutely silent.

He continued. “And how was your death received? The actual messages between the soldiers that killed you and army headquarters were intercepted. We know what was said. Your soul might be happy to know that you contributed to a prized *well done*.”

Lifting his outline, John read the entire quote to the class:

“‘What do you think would be the approximate number of casualties at the university—just give me an approximate number in your view. What will be the number killed or wounded or captured. Just give me the rough figures’.

“Wait. Approximately three hundred.”

“Well done. Three hundred killed? Anybody wounded or captured?”

“I believe in only one thing—three hundred killed.”

“Yes. I agree with you that is much easier. No, nothing asked. Nothing done, you do not have to explain anything. Once again well done. Once again I would like to give you shabash and to tell all the boys . . . for the wonderful job done in this area. I am very pleased.”

John finished softly, “You and other students were not alone in being murdered at the university. Soldiers searched for leading department heads and professors, murdering thirty-two of them in the following two days.”

He had immersed himself emotionally into the tale he told, mentally living the awful images and pain of these Bengali students as he tried to convey what this horror meant in human terms. He’d lost all contact with his own students. Now, he came back mentally to the classroom, breathless and sweating profusely in the hot room. He looked back at the students.

The room remained utterly hushed. Some of the students looked dazed, staring at him wide-eyed, their mouths hanging open. Several dabbed at their eyes with their sleeves or handkerchiefs. Some leaned over their notebooks, eyes intent on the pages as they wrote intensely; others appeared frozen. He could only see the top of Joy’s head; she’d buried her face in one hand.

John cooled his emotions by pacing back and forth a couple of times. Finally he stopped. He had much more to say about this genocide, more awful stories, some as moving. And more quotes. But his sense for timing told him that this was the place to end it. Into the dead silence of the room, in a tone so low and sad that it sounded as though he were playing taps with his voice, he concluded, “The Pakistan military ultimately went on to murder about 1.5 million Bengalis and Hindus. Only India’s invasion stopped them. The Indian army rapidly defeated them, and midwived the formal independence of East Pakistan, which promptly named itself Bangladesh.”

Maybe thirty seconds passed and then the class suddenly broke out in chatter, thumping, scraping chairs, and other noises of students coming alive. John waited. Just to be doing something, he strolled to his briefcase and dropped his outline inside and slowly closed it. He

needed this break. Finally, when the class quieted down, he walked to the center of the room, close to the students in front, and began his general conclusions of the semester.

He gestured, making figures in the air to shape his points. He paced back and forth, every so often writing a crucial word on the blackboard. He slapped his hand on the lectern for emphasis. He was an actor no longer playing out terror and death, but hope. From the horror and terror of democide and war, he would bring them into the sunlight to see the bright future within humanity's grasp.

He reviewed the major wars and democides, and the attempts over the centuries to do something about such killing. He sketched the peace plans, and the different international agreements to limit or prevent war and democide, all of which failed.

Then he paused and stood still. He said, emphasizing each word, "This need not be. There is hope and a solution. Democracies do not make war on each other and, as a historian," he said bluntly, wagging his finger as though each word hung at the end of it, "I say, they . . . never . . . have."

He took two steps to the lectern and folded his hands on top. "But what about genocide and mass murder, what we call *democide*—murder by government—such as what the Pakistan army did to the students?" he asked in a low voice.

He waited as though expecting a student to throw him the answer. No one did. They all seemed mesmerized. He deserted the lectern and stepped as close to the front row of students as he could get. Leaning forward, pointing with both fingers toward the class, he answered, "Democracies not only don't make war on each other; modern democracies, with their civil rights and political liberties, commit almost no domestic democide."

He returned to the lectern, leaned over it with his hand on each edge, and asked, "Is democracy a practical solution? Yes. Democratization is practical and in fact is being aided by many current democracies."

He hesitated, as though turning a page. "Is it desirable for reasons other than ending war and democide? Yes, it is desired by all those enslaved by autocracies around the world. Freedom is their most basic human right."

Now, a longer hesitation for the most important point of all. He looked over the class before he asked, "Is universalizing democratic freedom possible? Yes. Oh, yes. If we work to foster universal democracy, we—*can*—do—it."

He stopped, dropped his hands. Nothing remained. Emotionally and mentally exhausted, he realized he was still sweating; his armpits beneath his flannel shirt and t-shirt underneath were wet, and he imagined that he smelled. This was the first time he'd tried to communicate this horror and humanity's hope to students, this was his first summation, this was now his life and the beginning of his career, and he came close to choking up. His voice nearly broke as he ended his class and the semester with a simple, "Thank you. Have a good future. All of you."

No one moved for several seconds, and then, almost with a gasp, students began to clap. They continued, getting louder and louder. Some of them stood and clapped. John's eyes grew misty and he shook his head in wonderment. He began to clap for the class in return.

Slowly, the students departed, some coming up to shake his hand and share their feelings before leaving.

"You've changed my life."

"I'm changing my major."

"Thank you, Professor Banks. I'll never forget this class."

Dressed in her gray sweatshirt—she actually had several—and her tight Levis, Joy hovered in the back until the last student left, and then she came up to him. Her eyes were still teary, but her smile belied sadness. She looked around to make sure all the other students were gone, and then said, "First you drive me to tears over that horrible genocide, and then you drive me to tears with happiness over the hope you give these students. And then you create even more tears over your success as a teacher and in getting across the democratic peace. I know how much both mean to you."

She stood straight and cocked her head, her eyes gleaming. "Thank you for your class, Professor Banks. You were. . . stimulating, and often deeply engaged my feelings." She rubbed her nose to display the engagement ring he had given her. "Now that I'm no longer your student, if anything comes up, do give me a call. Goodbye." And she glided out.

Students walking by the open door of the classroom must have wondered at the professor standing alone in the classroom, crying and laughing at the same time.

Chapter 55

2001

John Banks

They were in Joy's apartment, where he now practically lived. He still refused to take a chance on her being seen entering his faculty apartment. He had the tapes stacked on the coffee table and the tape machine next to it. Each tape had been numbered. The psychiatrist had said that there was a rough chronology to his dreams, but they were not sequential. So he had put them in their chronological order, regardless of when he told them under hypnosis

They had eaten the stuffed chicken wings and Singapore noodles they had picked up at Mark Pi's China Gate, and each had a bottle of Bloomington's Vision Weiss beer in hand.

"Well," John said, putting the first of the five tapes in the machine, "I hope you're not embarrassed by the high praise I give you in my dreams, or by the undreamed-of lovemaking positions I force on you."

"Ha!" Joy exploded. "Probably all missionary positions, and I bet it's with some young bitch you dreamed up."

For a moment, he was actually worried that might be true. Too late now. He started the machine. He heard himself speaking in a monotone, almost as though he were reading a boring book.

"It's 9/11 . . . I'm horrified by the body parts and people jumping from the burning building. . . .

"Joy is in my class, and I want her . . . The Society had gathered to convince me to join her in one-way time travel back to 1906 . . . mission is to end war and democide . . . promote a global democratic peace. Joy seduces me into accepting."

John stopped the tape. "It's just like when you seduced me in your apartment, that first night." He imitated her voice. "'Oh, I'm going to

get into something more comfortable.’ I bet you straightened out the bed at the same time.”

Joy frowned, her eyes narrowed, and her lips collapsed into a thin line. “Do I understand, Professor Banks, that you are . . . complaining?” The last word came out ten decibels higher.

John felt the end of his nose freezing. “Heavens no, baby. I’m a historian you know, and just want to keep the record straight. You seduced me. But no complaint. I understand how irresistible I was, and to be truthful, I let the evening run on to build up your anticipation—”

Whack!

“Ouch!” John grabbed his shoulder and rubbed the spot where she had hit him. He joined in her laughter.

She shook her head. “You’re impossible, dearest.”

He restarted the tape.

“We travel back in time. . . . Joy begins using her power to eliminate rapists and muggers on the streets. I hate that she acts as judge, jury, and executioner . . . source of much conflict between us It’s the late 1930s; Joy tries to assassinate the American presidential candidate . . . I stop her . . . suffocate her with a pillow to prevent her from ever killing again . . . I write a remembrance of Joy, hold it to my heart as I commit suicide”

The voice on the tape droned on. John finally clicked it off and looked at Joy. Her face had lost some of its color. She sat with her mouth open, her hand seemingly fastened to her cheek.

“God, what an awful dream,” she said. “Where did you get that stuff from?”

“Come on, baby. It was only a dream. I think I was dreaming my favorite thesis. We were sent back in time to fight power. But we were given tremendous power to do so, and that corrupted us. Power kills.”

He hurriedly took out the tape and inserted the second one.

“An Islamic fundamentalist named Sabah seized power in Uighuristan in Middle Asia . . . eventually does the same in China. . . . and Sabahism rules the world Survivors send a message downtime to Joy and I in 1906, asking us to stop Sabah”

“Followers of Sabah in China . . . send back a female Chinese warrior, Jy-ying, to assassinate whomever received the message She falls in love with me, plans to kill only Joy.

“Jy-ying finds out, however, that she and Joy are the same person from separate universes Tries to kill Joy, but I shoot her just when she is ready to deliver the death blow.

“We travel to Uighuristan to kill little boy Sabah . . . decide to adopt him . . . finally, after eight years, I propose marriage to Joy . . . she accepts As we celebrate, we and baby Sabah are killed by a terrorist bomb.”

The tape rolled on.

“Holy Christ,” John breathed. “I dreamt all that?”

Joy’s hand was hanging from her cheek again. “Do you have a death wish? And for me, too? I’m going to keep the kitchen knives away from you.”

“Now aren’t you glad I didn’t go to the range with you to fire those evil guns?” John quipped. “‘Oh, what fun they are,’ you said, trying to seduce me into going with you. ‘And we will be doing it together. If I go alone, I’ll be gone for half a day, or more.’ And your clincher: ‘I hope Charlie is there. He likes to help me with my guns. He’s so good-looking.’”

Joy wasn’t laughing. Or smiling. “Play the next tape. I can’t wait to see how you kill me in this one.”

John shut up and complied.

“An Islamic dictator, impressed by what we’re able to do for democracy, sends back to 1906 a pair of mismatched male-female warriors . . . Carla and Hadad . . . to kill Joy and I and. . . . promote Islam.

“Their various assassination schemes fail Jy-ying, whose ultimate goal is still to save Sabah and kill Joy, joins us in protecting our mission against the two assassins Carla and Joy have one battle in which Joy is wounded, and Carla contrives to set up a second battle between them that Joy will not survive Joy is saved by a time policewoman who . . . arrests Carla and sends her to the future for trial I capture Hadad

Joy taken uptime to see her mother Universe is disrupted by Carla and Hadad's appearance in 1906 A time policeman resets it back to Joy's and my arrival."

John shut off the machine and removed the tape.

Joy frowned, lips pursed. Finally she looked up at the ceiling and murmured, "Hey, how about that? He didn't kill me."

John thrust out his chin and glared at her. "Okay, enough of that. These are dreams. Dreams, damn it."

"Yes, John, and they reveal hidden desires."

"What, that you be dead? Isn't that stupid?"

"Play the next tape, John."

"No."

He reached for tape #4, but Joy grabbed it. She whisked the machine to her side of the sofa where he couldn't easily reach it without going over her, and thrust the tape in with a loud clack. She punched the start button with her rigid finger and, stone-faced, she crossed her arms to listen.

"A strange man killed Stalin in 1903, and then helped Trotsky successfully revolt against the Russian Czar in 1905 Joy and I, and then Jy-ying discover this The one from the future is a rogue time policeman, a procommunist, who wants to change the universe and make communism triumphant Uses a device to enter our bedroom while Joy is there . . . paralyzes her, rapes her, and finally kills her before he is killed by Jy-ying . . . mission now becomes that of me and Jy-ying, who is completely in love with me . . . with Joy's spiritual blessing, I return her love.

"The Russian Revolution is defeated"

Joy let the tape run. She said nothing; she just sat next to the machine, her face frozen in disbelief.

Out in the small kitchenette, the refrigerator chugged to life as its cold sensor restarted it.

John couldn't stand it. "Baby"

When she looked at him, he saw the tear rolling down her cheek, saw the hurt in her eyes. "How can you love me when in your dreams

you kill me again and again?” she asked. “And that . . . other woman— you . . . you love her when I’m dead. You don’t really love me.” She put her head in her hands and sobbed.

John was stunned by the dreams, and by Joy’s understandable reaction. *Jesus. For asking her to listen with me, I’m the missing village idiot.* He tried to put his arms around her, but she shrugged him off. He tried to put a hand on her arm. She withdrew it.

His voice exploded from his heart. “Sweetheart, I love you more than anything. I want to spend our lives together. I want you to be my wife. Forever—you and me, baby.”

“You only think so, John. And you’ll only think so until that other woman comes along. Then, ‘Goodbye Joy.’” Her crying developed a frantic edge.

He lost it temporarily. “Goddamn it, Joy, will you cut this fucking shit out.”

The shock of his own words cooled him down. He had an idea. “Baby, don’t you ever have nightmares where something you hate, something you fear, something you would never want happens to you? Haven’t you ever dreamed about,” he was guessing now, but he knew something about oriental culture, “losing face or failing your mother? Does such a dream mean deep down that you want to do this to yourself, or does it mean that this is your fear? That you die in my dreams can only mean that this is something I terribly fear. This part of my dreams is a nightmare, baby. It’s a nightmare, not something I really want, no more than you want to fail your mother.”

Joy took her wet face out of her hands and looked at him, her eyebrows raised, her puffy eyes questioning. Then she lifted her sweatshirt and wiped her eyes and face. “You think you’re so clever, don’t you?”

“Well, now that you mention it, I—”

“I’m sorry. I love you, dearest.”

He leaned over and gave her a long kiss, which she returned with increasing enthusiasm.

“However,” she said with the first hint of a grin, “I warn you. I’m a light sleeper. And I will have my magnum under my pillow. Shall we continue?”

The tape had run to the end, and automatically rewound. She took it out and put in #5.

*“The rogue policeman had changed the universe
the Young Turks begin their genocide of millions of Armenians Jy-ying and I aim to stop it. We make*

preparations, including hiring a Turkish immigrant his wife informs her nephew, who is actually a Turkish agent in Britain We are assassinated by the Turks.

“Now the three young men we hired in 1906 Hands’ fiancée Kate . . . becomes the leader They actually assassinate the five top Young Turks Their general intent was known by a Turkish general, who let them proceed His troops attempt to arrest them . . . all are killed.

“A time policewoman from the future resets this universe back to just before Jy-ying and I are assassinated . . . otherwise the universe would proceed on a bloody course After the reset, Jy-ying and I protect ourselves in a different way and survive.

“The policewoman is tried for breaking the law in resetting a universe Her conviction is vastly unpopular She is pardoned ”

The psychiatrist added his voice to the tape. “This is the last sequence of dreams. This and the previous ones provided sufficient information for a preliminary diagnosis of your problem. I’ll be more detailed when we meet for the last time.

“Of special note is that, in these dreams, you risked your life to travel one way into a primitive past, one without any modern conveniences, to do away with war and democide. This is your way of redirecting the terror you suffered in the 9/11 attack, which remained in your subconscious to bedevil you. But not only that; you also were doing something about the horror you have been living with as a result of your research on democide for your dissertation, and your teaching of this topic. Another source of tension is your subconscious. You felt you knew how to stop all this evil, to use your word, and you were acting this out in your dreams.

“Finally, you had this not unusual lust for Joy, a student of yours, and you acted this out by including her in your dreams as your partner, through both Joy and her surrogate, Jy-ying.

“I must say, John, that these are the most interesting dreams I’ve come across in a long time. If I’m traumatized by some horror, I hope my dreams are as engaging, especially with regards to your Joy.

“Let me know how you are doing from time to time.”

Chapter 56

2002

John Banks

They were married in the New York headquarters of Tor's Nguon Industries. John invited Cyril to be his best man, and Cyril gave a heartwarming speech at the wedding reception. He took an exceptional interest in both of them, although he had seemed befuddled for some reason when John called him, told him about the wedding, and asked him to be best man. He kept asking, "Is that it? You and Joy are just getting married?"

John had to finally ask, "What do you expect, that we are going to fly to the Moon?"

"Something like that," Cyril mumbled in reply.

Throughout the preparations for the wedding, the wedding itself, and the reception, Cyril really acted as though he were John's father. Joy was taken with him, as he seemed to be with her, and most important, he and Joy's mother Tor got on famously. He visited her constantly in New York, and seemed to stay over weekends. Joy commented on it happily: "I'm glad Mom still has it in her."

"Really, Joy—'has it in her'? What a gutter mind."

Joy looked at him blankly for three seconds, and then yelled, "Beast," and dragged him off the chair by one foot. She jumped on him and tickled him until he apologized.

Joy told him that, "I expect great news about the Tor-Cyril relationship anytime now."

As a wedding present, Tor gave them a million-dollar bank balance to do with as they pleased. She let them know that much more was available when they needed it, adding that, in due course, they would inherit her business anyway.

They set up a Democratic Peace Institute with the money. Joy was John's full partner and officially copresident, but he sometimes jokingly referred to her as his assistant and translator. He didn't know why.

John quit teaching to devote all of his time to the institute. He was happy to thumb his nose at the Marxist professor in the History Department and the bevy of leftist faculty who supported him, but he felt guilty that the students would not have a strong voice countering his propaganda with examples of Marxist democide. He knew the other historians treated democide lightly, if at all. But he told Joy, "I can do more good through our institute than by teaching and suffering the limitations that involves. Teaching four hundred students a year is not the same as reaching thousands and possibly millions through the institute and its links to the Internet. And if we do this right, many teachers will use our material."

Chapter 57

2002

John Banks

"I'm home," Joy yelled as she came in the front door of their San Francisco house, kicked off her shoes by the shoe bench by the door, and slid her feet into the slippers waiting there.

"Welcome home, baby. I'm in the study."

She entered the study and leaned over John as he wrote on his new Mac G4 computer. She gave him a little kiss on the cheek. "What's my hubby doing?"

"Hi wifie," John replied. He reached back and pulled her head down across his shoulder so he could bury his face in her hair. It smelled of the gun range she'd just left, but he didn't care. He kissed her cheek. "You smell of gun smoke."

"And you smell of man. What were you doing?"

"Oh, I was doing some karate exercises in our gym before sitting down here. Anyway, before that I was listening again to the tapes of my dreams, and a eureka hammer smacked me in the head. I realized that I could write them up as alternative history novels. It's a good way of getting the idea of the democratic peace out to the larger public, and maybe the novels will be entertaining, as well. I even have a name for them: the Never Again Series."

Joy grinned. "Why not call them The Death of Joy Series?"

John answered straight-faced, "I thought of that, but too many would interpret that series as being about the end of booze, drugs, sex, or whatever people think brings them happiness."

He continued briskly, "It will be five novels, like the five tapes, I think. But I'm concerned about one thing. If I do this over my or our name, this will become associated with the institute in its early, most important years. No good. The institute should be known for solid empirical and historical research that people can consult and depend on.

When the institute publishes on the Internet and in hardcover that there is a solution to war and democide, and that is democratic freedom, then it has to be backed up with the best, most thorough research possible. Which we are now doing.

“If the institute’s first books, authored by me, are a series of novels, who will take the subsequent publications of the institute seriously? And I can’t use a pseudonym. They are always leaked.” He paused.

Joy regarded him. “You have a solution to this, I bet.”

John smiled. “I already emailed Cyril about the series. I included a synopsis of the books, and asked if he would publish them under his name, all royalties to go to his research and his Web site. He emailed me back within an hour—he’s really excited about it. He understands our problem and would be happy to go along. One stipulation he mentioned: he will revise and edit to his liking. I agreed. It doesn’t matter who gets credit, if any is due. What is important is that the word gets out to the largest number of people possible that freedom is a solution to the horrors of war and democide. Since he is now retired and his reputation is so well established, that he’s published novels won’t subtract from his reputation at all.”

Joy kneaded the muscles of his neck. “Maybe he’ll save the Joy in your dreams.”

“Oh yes, one thing. I think I’ll have to rename the major characters. Too easy to connect them to us.”

Joy looked at him, her brows furrowed. “No, I don’t agree, dearest. If anyone connects them to us, you or Cyril only need say that you gave Cyril the tapes of your dreams with permission to write them up as novels, if he wished. If anything, the novels may help draw more attention to the institute, our Web site, and especially the democratic peace. Anyway, since the Joy of your dreams is so much like the Joy that is me, I want the world to know, even in fiction, my joy over the wonderful woman who adopted me; my joy in how she brought me up; my joy in taking your class. And my joy in our love.”

“Okay,” John conceded, “but I don’t know how I will stand the sheer envy of my friends and colleagues who read the novels. Why—”

Joy quietly put her finger to her lips, then touched his mouth with it. Gently shaking her head, she left the room.

John returned to the opening pages he’d written of his first novel, *War and Democide Never Again*:

*Joy had a body to die for. That’s why the deaths of
over 200 million people—the vast majority murdered—*

never happened. Joy's body . . . and the roar of a 110-story building collapsing before my eyes.

Just thinking about it brings back the suffocating stench of death . . . God, how could I, an ordinary Ph.D. in history from Yale, have ever smelled death? It began with good advice

John wrote far into the night. Finally, when his mind wouldn't work anymore, he went to bed. Joy was lying on her back, the covers pulled up to her shoulders. He slid under the covers and leaned over her and gave her a gentle kiss on the lips.

She murmured something and reached out to touch him in her sleep. His restless nights had disappeared, as had his headaches and fatigue. He stretched out and put one hand on her naked hip. He was asleep in seconds.

A breeze caressed his cheek.

Hello, my dearest.

It was Joy, the Joy of his dreams, in her gray sweatshirt and white shorts, with her hair in a ponytail.

What are you doing in my dream? I thought I was over all that.

She gave him a broad smile, her eyes alight. *I came to tell you how happy you have made me. You finally married me; I am now your real wife, what I always really wanted. And now we can have children and grow old together and merge our souls when we die.*

How can that be, Joy? he asked. You were a figment of my imagination, an object of my desire that I satisfied through my dreams. The real Joy sleeps right beside me.

That is true, my darling, but you don't understand and you cannot, fixed in your three-dimensional universe of this time as you are. The me that you see now is of another place and time, of other universes, of those inhabited by such good people as our dearest friends Hands Reeves, Dolphy Docker, and Sal Garcia; the great humanitarians Edmund Morel and his secret time-traveling wife Janet; the "I see" detective Lieutenant Gary Ryan; the courageous time policewoman Captain Jill Halverson; the "White Knight" actress Kate Kaufmann; and the time policewoman Mari Demirchyan, who knew humanity was more important than the rules. There is also Jy-ying, the me from another universe. And her Little Wei and Prince Wei. You know them all, my love. These wonderful people and little dogs were in your dreams.

The dream John narrowed his eyes and looked at her askance. *Were my dreams of time travel and you, of our mission, of those people, your doing?*

She smiled. *Maybe a little, but at their heart they were you—your fears, your hopes, your humanity, your conviction, and your love.*

And now you will make me live again through the Joy that sleeps beside you. We will be with each other, banter and joke, and make love to each other through your novels. And our mission, dearest, our mission that we fought together and died for in the past and in other universes, our mission to foster democracy will not die in this one. Others will pick this up, and there will be many Joys, Jy-yings, and Johns fighting for freedom. It is the most basic human right that ultimately cannot be denied.

She came very close. Her almond eyes were shining, her lips slightly parted to show her white teeth, and there was a glow to her face. She touched her lips and blew him a kiss. John felt a slight wetness on his lips, and tried to put his arm around her, but it only went through her.

She gave him a long, happy look. She said finally, caressing him with her voice, *I will now leave you. This is the last time I will visit you in your dreams, but you now have the me of this time and place beside you. Eventually, my dearest, all our souls will meet, and we will joyously talk about our different lives. Before then, Jy-ying and I of different universes will live and love you through your novels.*

Now sleep well, my dearest, and make the love we all feel for each other defeat the power that will challenge us, and has challenged humanity.