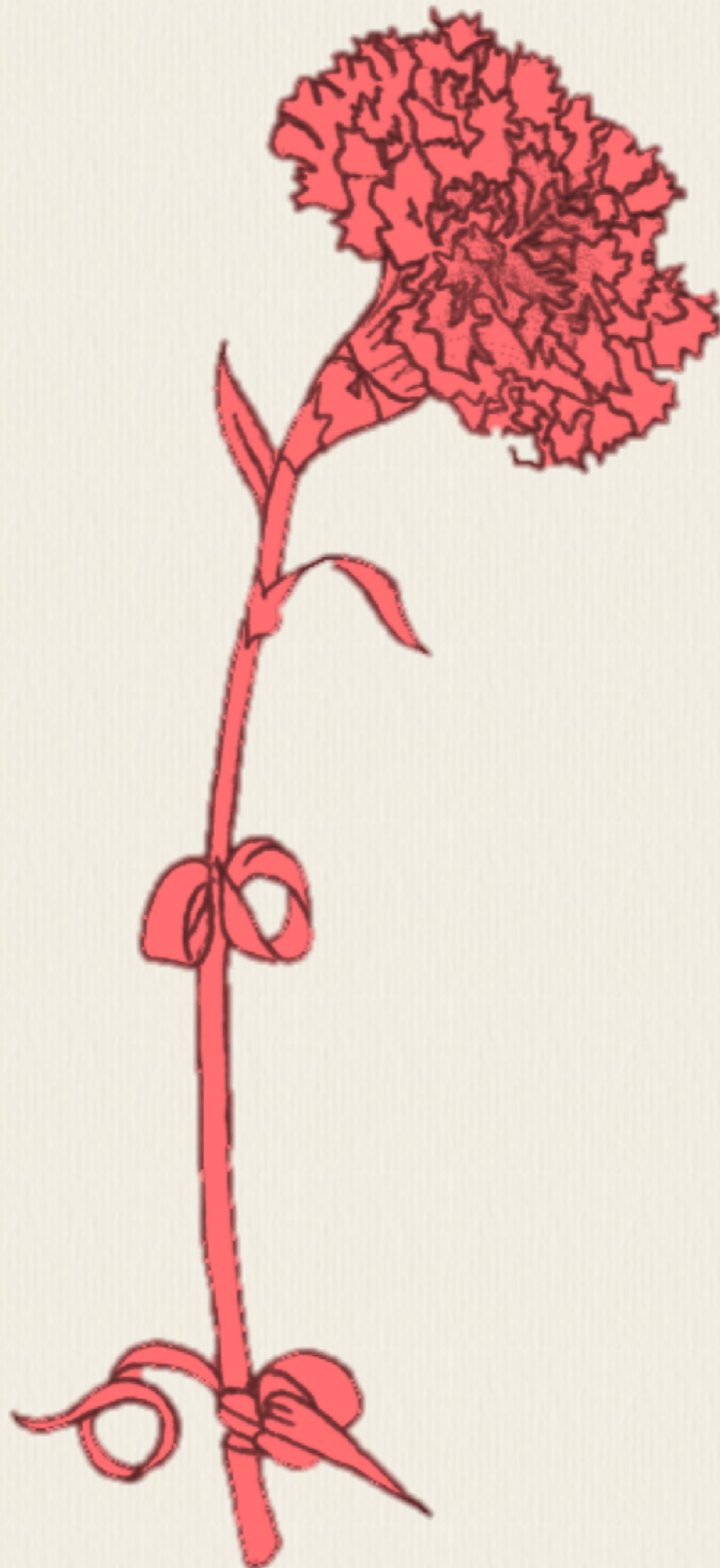




# Carnations



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This book was written, designed, planned and illustrated by the Creative Writers of The American School of Rio de Janeiro, in 2012. Everything in this novel is rightfully ours.

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# Dedicated To...

*To our teacher and helper, Nicole Nagell...*

*To all the creative writers involved in this wonderful process...*



# Prologue

Report, 24/12/2097, Year of The Serpent. Pilot-Officer Vasilli, Shiyue, Second Lieutenant, Company Wolf.

Crash Report: I've crashed in the Tibet mountain range at 21:38 hours Tuesday the 24th of December 2097. I encountered 2 American TF-23s during my Tuesday night patrol around the American-Chinese border in Old-India. While I was waiting for my engage order, one of the Twin Fighters managed to fire a 12-point heatseeker missile. My planes' booster and engine have not survived the heat since the nuclear cooler was heavily damaged during the fight. I've landed about five miles north of the highest peak. The crash was approximately 4000 meters above sea level. My radio and measuring mechanics are broken making me unable to approximate my location. All I have is an SS-Gun. I have scouted around the perimeter of my crash site. I must have gone for about a mile in every direction.

There seems to be no sign of life. Winter has hit these ranges; there is snow in every direction. The plane landed on some type of plateau. It seems as if large mountains surround the plateau on the North, East, and South side, creating a sort of valley. The West does not seem to have a mountain range blocking in, but going there would mean entering enemy territory (if I am not already in enemy territory). I could head East up the mountains, and back into Chinese territory. That is strategically speaking. All I have in my inventory: 2 water bottles, a pack of crackers, and an apple. I will not make it across these ranges. My best bet is probably heading west and maybe taking some supplies so I may make it across the mountains. I will leave the plane with a Constant SOS Signal. Now, I will head east, trying to find supplies. I guess I'll have to skip Christmas eve this year. May the People's Republic of Continental China have many victories. Shiyue Vasilli out.



# May Summers: Boy of War





“May!” The voice of my sister sounds as sweet and innocent as ever, but when used to wake me up, as irritating as nails on a chalkboard. No way I’m getting up. I am way too comfortable right now. I turn to my left side, pulling the brown thick blanket up a little more. “May! Wake up! We have to start shoveling!” The words seemed very distant. I try to remember what I had been dreaming of, it had something to do with spring, like most of my dreams. I just love spring: The colorful flowers, the beautiful clear-blue sky, the green grass. My favorite flower was the Carnation. Even better than those beautiful flowers was Scott. Scott Nollaig. “MAY, YOU WAKE UP NOW OR I’LL SHOVEL THE SNOW RIGHT ONTO YOUR BED!” June exclaimed. For a second I consider getting out of bed, but the bed seems to pull me down. I grab my woolen pillow, stuffed with chicken feathers, and I burry my head under it. Leave me alone! What was I thinking about? It was so beautiful, so warm. Oh right! Scott. We’re finally getting married. After knowing him my entire life, we are finally getting married. Just thinking about him makes me happy. I wonder how our ceremony is going to be. It’s going to be in spring. Spring and Scott. Scott and Spring. They just go together. “Have it your way then May.” A cold heap of snow gets stuffed right under the blanket. I jump out of bed.

“WHAT WAS THAT FOR?” I shout!

“You should have woken up earlier. The snow is blocking the door. We need to start shoveling.” my sister coldly replies. She turns around and walks towards the door of our small room. She is only 12, but sometimes she seems to be like my mom, especially when she imitates her. She walks out the room with a feminine sway; one I wish I had, her short blond shiny hair following wherever she goes. She is tall for her age, with hazel eyes, like summer grass with a little bit of brown here and there. She sometimes puts flowers in her hair. She then looks like a young Goddess, like the ones Grandma talks about, the ones from Ancient Greece.

I go to the mirror right by the door. The big crack running down the middle doesn't make me look any better. At least not compared to June. Unlike my sister, I am a little further away to the perfect woman. The days on the fields have made me lean and tanned. Under the mirror stands a red barrel, filled with water. I take a deep breath and quickly dip my head under. I recoil away from the barrel and its freezing insides, and throw my head into a big towel. I look up again. Instead of my regular face, a monster looks back, with long, wet tentacles dangling from her head. I dry my hair while looking around the room. It's a small squared room, with wooden walls, floor, and ceiling. On both sides you have beds and some small wind shutters with thick blankets over them. Mom seems to make them thicker every day. She is afraid of us being discovered. By now, you probably couldn't even see light if you walked right next to the house. The snow on my bed slowly starts to melt. It's cold enough not to, in the room, but my body temperature has heated the bed a little bit. Small drops slowly fall on the floor, making a soft funny sound. "Blop, blop, blop blop, blop, blop." I repeat. In five minutes it will stop blopping.

When I crawl through our small roof shutter I notice that my sister has already started. She is slowly working with the wooden shovel, clearing out the snow in front of the door.

"Well don't just stand there! Help me for goodness sake!" I jump off the roof, landing in a knee-deep pillow of snow. June throws me a shovel. Shoveling is probably the main reason I dislike winter. Every single morning you have to get out of your bed, go into the freezing snow, and start shoveling. "You know for a 19 year old, you shovel pretty slowly. Common! Even grandma could do better than that!" Grandma is the oldest in the village. She isn't really our grandma but everybody just calls her that. She was alive when the Great War started. She was 42 when the war started back in 2040. She always tells stories of the times before this stupid war. There was plenty of food, and clothes made out of silk and cotton instead of out of wool or animal hides. There was gold, just to wear and something called a shower, but she



never explained what that was for. Everybody had cars, which drove on something called oil. Imagine that! Electricity and things driven by something from the Earth! There were creatures that lived in the sea, and birds other than chickens, and just a lot of other cool stuff. I look around the valley. Not much of that is around this area. Dad says we are lucky. He says many people only see broken buildings of lost civilizations all day long. They live in terror, in envy of the government. I guess we don't see an awful lot of the war. Grandma, and Scott's dad, Mr. Nollaig moved here right when the war started. They created this town, and now there are about 13 families in this village. "Hey May, let's dig our way to Diala's house?" There goes June again, always to Diala. Like she doesn't even know anybody else in this village.

"Yeah sure if you want." I answer.

Later that day, Mr. Nollaig delivered a speech. It was quite boring. Harvest hasn't been big enough. U.S. and China are still going at it. The portable nuclear power plant is going to be fixed! All the same, all the lies. Everything is actually kind-of boring during winter. You don't have labor, but there isn't anything else to do either. When the Gruffly family came, they brought a portable nuclear power plant, or in short P.N.P.P. We could then all watch this projector with funny clips about a duck in a sailor's suit. Too bad Diala dropped it. Now we can't get it to work.

Grandma is telling the kids a story about the beginning of the war, "... then, because we used all of the space in the United States, there was nothing left to eat. There were simply too many people. So the U.N.A. started to buy off smaller countries for food and their resources until they too didn't have anything left. China did the same thing. Slowly all countries disappeared one by one, until there were only two left back in 2040. And these two countries are now fighting for the last bit of food, the last bit of steel, and the last bit of wood."

"But Grandma, what about the Russians? They still exist right?"



“They do June. But their land is not fertile enough to be interesting to China or the United Nations of America. They just keep quiet, just like us, until this nightmare is over.”

I respect Grandma. Every time she tells a story the image is so vivid, so alive. She is 99 now. Almost half of her life was spent in fear, avoiding authorities. She has long gray hair that she ties up in a knot, and then hides under her red hat. She walks around in thick layers of animal furs, with her big wooden stick, making a funny sound along the way. That sound attracts children, like bees to honey. They jump out of the door, most of the times forgetting their scarves and hats. Grandma then receives them with open arms, kissing and hugging them. Then all the kids start shouting, “Grandma, tell us a story! Tell us about Red Riding Hood. Tell us more about knights and princesses!” Grandma then laughs and she sits down on a big wooden log in the middle of the town, and she starts to talk. When she talks all the kids quiet down, their eyes sparkling every time the prince defeats the monster, and they cheer when he saves the princess. I wake up out of my strain of thoughts. I stand before Scott’s house.

“Scott! Scoooottttt!” I call out. From behind the window on the second floor comes a loud groan.

“What? Oh hey it’s you.” Scott answers as he opens the window.

“Can I come in please?” I shout at him, “It’s kind of cold out here!”

“Fine. Come in, but take your boots off! You know how my mom always hates a dirty house!”

I open the door and stamp my boots before I go in. My boots are dark green, and made out of rubber. I am the only one in the village that has rubber boots. My dad brought them from the United Nations when he was my age. My dad and me are very similar in a lot of ways. I have the same dark curly hair, the same bright blue eyes, and the same nose; a little crooked to the left. June once noticed that we have the same sneeze, but I never really noticed

that myself. In personality we are quite the opposite. The only thing we have in common is that we like spring. Oh, and we both can't sit still. I put my boots right by the door, where the other Nollaig families put their shoes too. As mayor of the town, Mr. Nollaig has the privilege of having a glass door. Glass is a privilege. Most people just have a hole in the wall instead of an actual glass window, like in the books from the 20th century. Scott comes down. Only now I notice how upset he is. He is upset a lot. He just doesn't know how to control himself sometimes. He is wearing some old rags, a brown hat, and thick woolen socks. Scott is probably one of the strongest in town. He beat my dad, and the major at arm-wrestling.

“What's wrong Scott?” I ask. The look on his face is quite troubling.

“It's the Goddamn war! The Chinese are winning! And I am just sitting here, in this lame town!” He punches a wall. The wall cracks, and the house trembles.

“Scott, please just calm down. Just tell me what's wrong.” I put my arm around him, trying to comfort.

“I am myself! Just get out of here! Leave me alone! Why did you even come here in the first place?” He pushes my arm away.

Tears well up in my eyes. Scott can't see me crying. He'll see it as weakness. I forget my boots and run out of the house. Immediately I felt I made a mistake. I should have taken my boots. The heat of my socks melts the snow under my feet. The ice-cold water penetrates the warm shield of body heat, which has gathered around my entire body. I look around the town. The tears in my eyes make my vision blurry. Around me snowflakes slowly fall to the ground. I need to be alone right now. It's time to go to the Peak.

The Peak is a place I discovered many years ago. It was a late autumn back in 2090, and I was out to find Betty, our cat. She was gone for about 2 days, and I had to look for her. After I searched for the entire day, I gave up and decided to look another time. On my way back it started to snow. I can still re-

member that moment in which soft thick flakes slowly fell to the earth. I had to run home now. If you don't hurry enough while it is snowing, you'll get buried. The snow then came with more, and with each step you could see less. Panic was about to overtake me, but then I saw a trail of little paws. Betty, I knew. I followed them, as if they were the Star of Bethlehem that could lead my way out. I found a small path, right between two cliffs. Betty went this way. I followed the path all the way deep into the mountains, until I heard Betty. She was stuck, her tail under a big boulder, on a small edge about 10 meters above the path. I knew I had to go up to get her. I barely touched the rock when Betty freed herself. The boulder fell down, blocking the way back. Betty softly landed in front of me, and together we set out, through the pass, right onto a small platform. That's where I sat down and looked at Betty's tail. It was not that bad. I then looked up. The platform had the most stunning view of the valley. The river, the woods, the small streams of smoke coming from the village, everything could be seen. I immediately fell in love with the place. It's where I can find peace.

I go home, and grab another pair of boots. These ones are leather and more beautiful, but if they get wet they will start to shrink. I look outside. I think it is still cold enough for the snow not to melt and ruin my boots. When I am about to go out, mom stops me.

“May, I haven't seen you today. Is there something wrong?”

“No mam I'm fine, thanks.” I answer. I really don't feel like talking to her right now.

“Okay. Just be back before dinner then.”

I step outside. I breathe in the cold mountain air, look around, and step into the deep snow.

“You know mom doesn't like it when you go to the Peak.”

“June, just leave me alone.”



“Can I come with you?” June looks at me with her big round eyes. They are truly beautiful.

“Sure just hurry up.”

Together we walk to the Peak. It’s a half-an-hour walk, and on the way we chat a little bit. We are halfway there, when I see a distant shape.

“June get down.” I hiss. The valley doesn’t have a lot of things to hide behind. It is basically a large plane. Together we look at what appears to be a man.

“He is a soldier. Look! He is wearing a dragon-uniform.” My sister whispers. The Chinese wear dragon-uniforms. “He is coming this way May. What do we do?” I don’t know what to do. Should we warn the people in the village? What if he is dangerous?”

“Let’s observe a little bit.” I finally answer. He comes closer. I can now see his features a little better. He is Chinese (unlike some other people who serve), and around mid-twenties. As the distance between him and us becomes smaller I can have a better look at his face. He is lean, has a buzz cut, and sharp features that make him look somewhat handsome. He seems bright, yet he walks as if he is at the end of his wits. I gather courage, stand up, wipe the snow of my clothes, straighten up, and walk at him with my hand stretched forward.





# Shiyue Vasilli: The Dragon Warrior



“MAY-DAY, MAY-DAY! I’m going down!” I screamed and screamed. No response.

“I need help!! I’m falling straight down!! GOD, someone please help me!!” No one heard. I was alone in the climax of the fall, the incline of my death. I felt nothing. As my black plane flew down the Himalayan winds, the only thing I could remember was Nana. Memories. Thoughts. Life.

My first time out serving. I knew I would die one day. One day. It seemed so far, yet death looked me in the eye. I would die in the exact moment I started living. I laughed with a weird smirk on my face, as tears ran down my eyes. I knew I would die one day. But when was one day? Would it be now? When? Where? How?

I remembered the time I was called to serve for my country. Oh the honor. How good it felt to actually be recognized as a good person that would help its nation out of misery. I couldn't stop smiling, yet the thought of leaving home worried me. Nana Kim was my only family, and leaving her in the province of Kwong did not seem like a good idea. For years I had been awaiting for the day I would be called. Serving as a Dragon Warrior and demonstrating your love for a Republic was an honor to every man, woman, or child through the entire occidental continent. My friends and I generally spoke of this very day, of when we would be given a small golden piece of paper written in green formally inviting us to lead our country to success. The glory corrupted us, and the way we showed our eagerness could not be expressed.

I lived only with Nana Kim. She was the one that taught me how to live. I grew up as a parentless child. My mother Yin Jong passed away as she delivered me into this world. The pain she felt was unbearable. I did not know her; she is a stranger to me. She was a native of Kwong, old Japan. She grew up in the capital city, one of the greatest commerce cities in all of Continental China. Tokyo held my mother’s families for decades. Nana occasionally told me of how beautiful she was, how every man was in love with her. But she ended up with my father. As for my father, he was a Russian soldier that fell in love as he passed by the city during his serving time. His name, Kruskiev Vasilli. A man with no feelings. Even in our

roughest times he did not care to help. After my mother's death, he did not care to stay any longer. He left, when I was about two years old, and never came back, leaving me with one of the only people that love me nowadays. Nana. Since then I was in her responsibility.

Nana is a wise woman; I take in a lot from her. She is the one that lead me to have the urge of leaving the great continent of China. She told me stories of gods and spirits that blessed each Chinese year. She explained to me, over and over, how the war started, and how she predicted it would end. No survivor. She tells me how the old world was; a world of peace where most countries lived in harmony. She speaks in ways that astonish me, and keeps my imagination going. As she describes big rooms just to keep clothes, or holes full of water for swimming, I remain baffled looking at her in awe.

As the altitude dropped, the sweat and tears ran down my red chins. 2400 meters, 2375 meters, 2350 meters... Time went by slowly, as if it would never stop. As life and death merged, the memories once taken in rewind in my head as the height decreases.

As I reached 1000 meters high, I started dodging the rocky mountains full of the whitest snow. Even in this horrible time, I admired the beauty of nature and took a moment to thank and pray to the gods my Nana talks about so much. I hit the side of a foothill and the rear engine exploded. The fire consumed the aircraft and burned my lower back. I tried dodging the vast highlands, but it was of no use. In pain and trouble, I forgot to look forward. A great wall of stone stood before me. I swiftly pressed a small red button, a lifesaver. As the latch above me opens, the chair I sat on, strapped in with great strength, was plunged into the air. The parachute opened with a big yank, and I was drawn back, away from the immense explosion on the mountainside.

I dropped safely onto the snowy ground. The struggle left me breathless, and I passed out on the valley floor.

\* \* \*

I woke up with purple bruises all over my torn body. The burnt part of my back seemed to have healed pretty well. How long had it been? 3 days would be



my guess. I am lucky to have fallen with the parachute near me, for it was the only thing that didn't let me freeze to death. I notice a frost bite on my chin and scream for help.

Echoes. Those are all I hear.

“Somebody help me!” I cry even louder. No answer; just a small grunt next to me. I turn slowly, hoping for the best, expecting the worst. But there it was, a large, frightening, menacing bear. It roars towards me, as a threat. Still weak, and hungry, I flee in the quickest way possible. Its steps follow mine, and before I knew it the bear was catching up. Instantly I begin to climb a tree, tall enough to escape the bear's wrath. Even injured badly, I am capable of doing what the adrenalin in my body permits me to do. I wait on the treetop for about 10 minutes, what seemed to be an hour, and the bear finally left.

My scavenger hunt of survival had begun. I searched the monumental valley for rivers full of fish, trees that bared fruit, or any other source of food. I could not take it any longer. I spent most of my time lying down, to rest my wounds, and the rest of the time was spent in search of a way to live. Each day moving forward, in the quest of survival.

Every step that was taken reminded me of Nana. Her teaching often helped in this rough time; in example, I was able to use the right herbs in order to cure my bruises. She taught me what wild berries to eat, what would kill me, etc. She took all the knowledge from passed down information. The knowledge was all kept in a booklet, passed from generation to generation down the I-Yue family.

I kept in the lookout for birds, something rare in Kwong, but so often they appeared in the cloudy, icy air. They would lead me to other people, people who might not even help me, but they would deport me back to China (in the nicest case).

\* \* \*

Days went by and life was becoming harder and harder. The food gathered in the beginning of the plane wreck was not enough for another day. I would once again face death with an acquainted look. But, as if destiny sent me a sign, my



look in the snowy horizon met with a foggy image of smoke. Smoke that might be coming from a city, which might have villagers, which might help me! I couldn't stop and think. It was all too good to be true. I started running towards it as fast as I could. I ran down the mountainside into the valley, and straight through the forest. I ignored everything around me, and the flame of hope was lit inside of me again.

I ran for about 4 hours straight. I ran until my feet started bleeding, and then I ran some more. As I grew closer and closer, I could see the village from a distance. I thought of calling for help, but my breath was taken away from me. As I approached the village I started walking. The energy that I had for the whole week was used up to get to "safety". I walk, and walk, and walk.

Suddenly, I stop. I see something coming my way. I try thinking but I can't. I just kept moving forward. It was a girl, about my age, and a smaller one. Both beautiful. I kept walking towards them. My tongue rolled, but nothing came out. I was speechless, and now motionless. I came closer to them. I extended my hand, as a sign of help. Boom. Straight to the ground. I try getting back up, and fall again. My drowsiness doesn't permit me to do anything.

There I was, lying down on the ground. Not knowing what to do. Aware that I couldn't do anything.

Blackout.



# Scott Nollaig: The Intruder



Walking around the house impatiently, something I did often, was getting boring. I passed by the same old picture of me when I was little. Things had changed a lot since then. I observed the childish face that had been mine, and looked in the hopeful and happy eyes I once had... As if reality had shaken me, I heard the buzzing of noises coming from the radio in the other room. Walking over there, as I got closer, the noises became clearer, and suddenly became words. I sit down slowly on my bed, next to the pillow, where the radio lays. The radio is the one thing that comforts me. It keeps me updated on what is going on in the world, informing me on the war. But mostly I just listen out for details on the Chinese. If there is one thing I hate in this world, it's them. I can't bare the fact that I'm stuck here like an idiot doing nothing in this stupid village, while others are out there in the war. More than anything I want to fight. Sitting here listening to the radio won't get us anywhere. Suddenly, I feel like I can't stand it anymore. Getting up, I smack the radio hard with my arm and throw it across the room. BOOM! It breaks into tiny pieces smacking against the wall. The sound it made echoes in my ears like a song being replayed again and again. Breathing in and out I sit back down feeling defeated. I need to learn how to control myself, or so May always says.

May. Shining blue eyes that looked like the sky and dark hair that looked like an old telephone cord. She was the future that lay ahead of me. Whether or not I would have chosen her didn't matter, as she was the only girl in the village who was around my age. Don't get me wrong, she is pretty. But I couldn't help but think if this is really what I wanted for myself. Sometimes I would wonder how it would be if May's little sister, June, was my age. I know it's wrong to think this, but she is truly beautiful, and unlike May, she is clever. She understands people better, and is quick to learn. It's too bad, really. Anyways, May and I are getting married this spring. I could tell she was excited for it, and thought about it a lot, but I just didn't want to think of the future. Not when there is a war going on in our backyard.

Trying to put these thoughts away, I searched for something to occupy me. Once again, I start thinking about the war and how badly I wanted to fight for this country. If it wasn't for my dad, I would be there with the others doing everything



possible for it to be us who get the food we need. I knew he was just scared something could happen to me, but if everyone was scared, then we would be defeated by now. He doesn't understand my need to do this and how angry it makes me to stand here useless. I couldn't help but wonder how long this war would go on, or what the outcome would be. All I know is that we are lacking food in the village, and people would go days without food.

I decide to get some fresh air, and take a walk in the woods, and maybe even hunt some game. I grabbed my hunting boots which were in the back of the closet in my room, and forced them on my feet. Looking for a jacket to wear in this freezing cold, I pulled out the first one I could find which was of brown wool and had buttons up to the very top of it. It was my favorite coat, and I had worn it on my happiest days.

On the way out I spotted my axe leaning on the wall next to the glass door. We were lucky to have that door. Glass was rare in the village. I thought that maybe cutting some wood and making a fire would help me keep warm and help me waste some time, so I took the axe with me. I could even call over May so we could spend some time together. I knew we would eventually have to. As I open the door, a huge gust of wind comes rushing through and goes into my face, and I get goose bumps all up my back. This winter was colder than ever and I could feel it slowly getting into my skin. For a second I felt paralyzed by the cold there at the entrance, and when I could move again I ran out hoping to catch some heat this way. I wanted to go a path I had never gone before, and went randomly stomping through the snow looking for a tree to be cut down.

Finally, after searching for what felt forever, a fairly small pine tree with a thick trunk appeared out of nowhere. Since it seemed there was no other one around, I lifted up my axe and started chopping at the wood. I felt my muscles getting tired in my arms, but I didn't stop. I was said to be one of the strongest men in the village. This meant a lot of responsibility, having many people come to me for help when they needed some muscle power. When I finally got the tree to fall over I picked it up using the most strength I could and carried it slowly and carefully.



It was becoming night and the wind became softer on the skin. The moon was bright and full as I looked up to the dark black sky. My arms hurt, and there was nothing I could use to carry the tree back in the house. I had to use the last gasp of air I felt I had to pull it all the way in. When I had brought it close enough to the house entrance I started to break it into pieces as I would need to fill our fireplace with much smaller chunks of wood. My axe was a witness that we had not had good materials to do any maintenance of even our most basic tools. It was rusty and not really sharp around the edge. Putting a fire up was way too much effort, but I knew it would be worth it once I was warmed up by the flames.

I thought about May, and whether I should invite her over or not. Though May and everyone around the village felt the supply shortage, all she could think of or talk about was our upcoming wedding. She would seem to live in a different world for moments. Sometimes she would go on for hours on our future, the house we would have together, even wondering what it would be like to have kids. I never wanted to be rude, but I couldn't help but feel she was completely oblivious to the real world.

Before I could even think twice, I was out the door on my way to May's house, which was around ten minutes away. Practically already there, I saw some smoke high above the trees. Who would be out in the woods making a fire at this time of the night? Hurrying I got my binoculars to check it out. I gasped. My breath was failing, and I could not believe what I was seeing. There it was lying. A plane with the dragon of China. The first thought that came to my mind was, the Chinese are here. I started thinking about what I was going to have to do. I needed to tell someone that the Chinese had arrived in our village. People needed to be warned. Before this though, I looked closer to the plane and realized that the plane was not functioning, and it crashed into the snow. Even though there was barely any light, I could tell the plane was pretty banged up. There was no sign of movement inside of it either. Whoever was in the plane before, had probably gone to get tools to fix it. I began to worry. Actually, I was scared. I didn't have anything to defend myself with if they came at me, and then I realized.

“MAY!!” I yelled out as loud as I could. For some reason, I was worried for her. I started running at a speed I didn’t even know I could reach. Finally, I saw the lights on in her house and shouted once again, “MAY!!”

Using my last efforts to run up the hill to her doorstep, I tripped on a rock hidden in the ground. I fell to the ground with my arm facing the ground, and felt the hard floor on the outside of May’s house scrape slowly and painfully across my skin. Quickly, I got up and put my hand over the cut that was gushing out blood. No matter how much it hurt, I needed to get inside to check for May. I knew where they kept the key, so I didn’t even bother to call for May. I lifted up the small wooden mat they kept in the front porch, and took out the shiny, silver key from under it. Hurriedly, I turned the lock in the door and kicked it open in a rush. I walked around for a while calling out for May and June, but there was no answer. What I thought was strange, is that all the lights were on. I checked for someone in the living room, in the kitchen, and even little June’s room. Absolutely no one was at home. Now I really began panicking. I started getting ideas on what could’ve happened. I thought, what if the Chinese man taken them hostage? What else would he need them for? Having looked everywhere, as a last resort, I called May, using my walkie-talkie. There was nothing but static, for one, two, three, four minutes, but right when I was about to give up, May answered.

“Scott?”

“May , May! Are you okay?! Where are you?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine, it’s okay don’t worry about me, I’ll be back home soon, okay? Over and out.”

“Where are you?”

Click. She had already hung up. This wasn’t like May. She wasn’t the mysterious type, and even though she said she was fine, I couldn’t help but wonder where she was, and why she couldn’t talk. Well, she said she’d be home soon anyways. I guess I could wait for her. I was way too curious to go back home right now. Out of habit, I checked the time. It was exactly nine fifty four. I needed a way to waste time, so I laid down on the soft white couch in the Summer’s living room.



Before I even noticed, I was sleeping, and even dreaming. In my dream I saw rows and rows of chairs decorated with flowers all over them. Everyone was wearing elegant dresses and suits. It was a bright sunny day and the sky was blue, with small clouds, like soft patches of wool. I was on some kind of a platform, wearing a black suit, with my hair all combed backwards. Beside me there was an old man in a robe. He was wearing glasses, and in his hands carried a small book. Suddenly, it hit me. I knew what this was. Before the dream could go any further, I woke up with a startle. Slowly, I started regaining memory of what was happening. Waiting for May seemed eternal. Checking the time once again, I saw it was only ten twenty seven. How much longer would May take? What was taking her so long?

Right as I thought this, I heard someone stepping onto the front porch. The door slowly creaked open, but I heard no one.

“May is that you?” I yelled out.

I wanted to stand up and run to the door, but my body seemed as if it was glued to the sofa. Then I heard footsteps getting louder and louder, closer, and closer.

There was something strange about these footsteps. One person could not make so much noise. I wanted to get up, but I thought I might scare May if I came up out of nowhere. After all, she did not really know I was in her house. I had to go back and think for a moment how much I had really told her over the walkie-talkie. I seemed to still remember that there had been no time for me to tell her what I had seen, that I was at her place and waiting for her. It all seemed so unreal but at the same time so vivid. I could still picture clearly how I found that plane on the snow and it was almost like I was still paralyzed by the fear I felt when seeing it.

It was only seconds that went by while all these things were going through my mind. I simply stood up and stayed right by the sofa.

In a very normal voice I asked once again, “May, is that you?”

“Yes....Scott, is that you? Are you in the house?”



“Yes, it’s me.”

“Oh great ..... we are home.” At first this sounded normal to me, but then I thought. What could WE mean? June? I can't deal with the curiosity any longer; I get up from the couch and go to the door.

“Scott, hi.” May says quietly. On the couch lays a Chinese pilot.



# June Summers: Betrayal



I ask to go to the peak, empty-handed and return with a passed out man, whose weight is more than my sister and me together. I've been dragging this man for almost half an hour, and thinking about the few steps until the house feels relieving; my bones and muscles may snap at any second now. May and I move slowly up the doorsteps and I open the door, pushing it with my back. Placing the man decently on the ragged couch was probably one of the toughest things that I've ever gone through. This man seems to be from a different world. I hope he is, at least. Some place where the conditions aren't this . . . extreme. I squint my eyes as I try to understand the man's face, and what he looks like; the dirt and debris that covers him hide what I'm searching for. I'm sharply interrupted by my sister's faint mumble, "get me something soft." Distracted by the man's appearance, I stand there, unable to comprehend my sister's words. "I said get me something soft!" she yells. Her sharp blue eyes pierce my own, in edginess. I can tell she is nervous by the way she breathes rapidly and paces around the man. Before thinking, my hands land on the softest thing nearby, dad's pillow. I instantly smile to its beauty in relief. Grandma used to tell us that it is made of this extinct fabric, which was called "silk", produced by the most delicate hands of the finest Chinese. I carefully take it in my hands, but it's violently snatched out of them before I could even blink. May slowly reaches under the guy's head and lifts it up, in order to place the pillow underneath it. If there is one thing I learned throughout my seven years of life, is that whenever May is nervous, the best thing you can do is stand quietly and observe. My sister does the same. She stands there, helplessly and unsure of what to do with the paralyzed body of a guy she doesn't know.

"May is that you?" A deep voice calls out.

"Yes..... Scott, is that you?" So that's who she was talking to on the walkie-talkie, I think.

"Yeah, it's me."

"Oh great." May says nervously.

I take uncertain steps towards the couch and find a spot besides the man. I instinctively place my hands on his forehead and I can tell that he is burning. May notes it too and asks, "Get water. It will help" May hands me the cold cloth and I



place it gently above his eyebrows. A slight shake; that's a good sign. At least this man still has a chance in life. Honestly, in the state that we found him, I wasn't that certain of his survival; but now he might as well have a better chance. We're sitting close by and observe the slow and painful progress of the guy, when we hear heavy footsteps nearing the door. May instantly gets up and I can see her desperate expressions. The strong, flawless figure of Scott is going down the last steps. Now this is every girl's dream. The moment seemed to go by in slow motion, like every time he steps into a room. His messy blonde hair intrigues me and his muscles make him look like a really good hugger. Unfortunately, he's taken . . . by my sister.

There's a moment of silence in the room, almost as if nobody was there.

"Scott, hi." My sisters blue eyes sparkled as if full of tears. The silence was broken by the unknown man's moan. All eyes turned. May was paralyzed. "What . . . creature is this?" Scott demands. My sister's mouth opens wide, but nothing comes out. Not one single sound. And as much as I want Scott for myself, I know I have to stand up for my sister. "It's me," I hesitate. The looks are so sharp, I feel like Scott's eyes penetrate my brain, and I can't help but shudder. "Uhm . . . It's my fault . . . he passed out in front of us, and I begged to bring him home . . . to care for him . . . you know . . . village nurse?" I try laughing it off but it comes out as an awkward giggle, which only contributes to this moment of tension. Raised eyebrows and confused stares are directed towards my trembling self. Scott lets out a sarcastic snuffle and rolls his eyeballs. I can clearly tell that he is well . . . furious. Like I said before, I better stay out of whatever my sister does not want me included in.

The unknown man suddenly inhales deeply as if he was underwater for a long time. All eyes pierce him and he coughs desperately, in search of air. I hurry beside him and lift his back up in order to facilitate his breathing. The man slowly opens his eyes. He is definitely from China. Grandma taught me how to differ the people depending on their appearance. Chinese usually had a tanned skin, dark thick hairs, and a round face. This one had some sharp features, with more of a European face, still tinted. He had to be Chinese. Besides, he was a pilot, something not many non-Asian soldiers became. Racism was a known thing in the Dragon army.

I inspect his face and he slowly sips some water off the cracked ceramic cup. His eyes seem to be wine-colored. His eyes are cavernous, almost captivating and mesmerizing. I stand there looking at him, almost stupefied. He is amazingly tanned, almost honey-like skinned; and, his black shiny spiky coal hair is cut short. He is somehow very attractive and I can't help but compare him with Scott, which seems madder than ever. Both had an amazing body type, strong and defined, but they were still complete opposites. Blonde and black; tanned and white. Such different beauty, and what a beauty. My eyes land on his dirty beige uniform, which is completely occupied with badges and pins of the Chinese army. I then feel the urge to recoil, in fright.

I've heard so many stories of bloody battles and massacres that they caused for us, regular people. His eyes wander around the room and he speaks in an undetermined language. Confused looks strike him. He then exhales trying to remain calm. "Who are you? Where am I? And where is my plane?" he asks, "I'm Shi-yue." The room is in profound silence, and rage and fear fill the air. The man gets up and finds his balance and stubbornly walks towards the kitchen for a cup of water. All eyes follow each and every one of his steps, which come to a sudden stop. I then face my sister, who is in tears being stared at by her fiancé, Scott.

My sister gives me a "get-out" look whose response is delayed, as usual. I then hurry across the room and hold myself against the wall of the living room in attempt to overhear the conversation. Screams and cries and high toned talking. I then shake my head and silently weep towards our room. What have I done? I brought a soldier home. An enemy, a shameful presence.



# May Summers: Trouble





I stare at his face. It is fuming with rage and completely red. The vein in his forehead is bigger than ever. I glance at his eyes, but I am too scared to look at him for more than a few seconds. They are usually a captivating beautiful blue, but now they pierce through me with anger and hatred. I feel the tears start to well up again, and I try my hardest to push them down. I see the man that is our enemy out of the corner of my eye. He has a guilty expression on his face, like he knows he was the cause of the fight. He doesn't look like someone we should hate.

“LOOK AT ME!” Scott screams in my face, making me jump with fear.

I reply in a soft tone, “Scott please calm down, he was going to die if we left him up there in the cold!”

“Yes, he should have died up there May! HE IS OUR ENEMY!” Scott yells. His voice is loud and somewhat stable, whereas mine trembles on every word.

“Scott, I'm sorry, please, I was only trying to help the man, I didn't realize what I was doing!” I say with my whole body shaking, as if I were covered in snow. He looks right at me with anger emanating from his body.

“May, you should have thought about it! How could you not see he is our enemy, he looks completely different! The looks of a Chinese! MAY are you stupid? Now I have to marry the retarded girl who brought an enemy home!” Scott suddenly stopped pacing around the room. His face is full of regret of what he had just said. The tears stop welling up, and now just anger comes. I look straight at him, and with no stutter or tremble, the anger in my face perfectly visible. The tension between us grew, I shook my head at him with hatred, because I had no words to say, or to express the disappointment I felt. I then ran to the door, grabbed my boots and left.

I step out into the freezing cold air, the brightness of the snow nearly blinding me. I hear the door slam shut again. I turn around and see Scott run towards me.

“May I'm sorry, please wait I didn't mean it like that!” Scott yells in desperation. I continue to walk and ignore him. He quickly catches up to me, and grabs my arm. I try to fight, but he is too strong.

“ May listen,” he says, “I didn’t mean it like that, its just that you should have let him die up there!” I look at him not knowing what to say. All I know is that I wanted to get out of here.

I reply in a soft, but strong tone, “ Okay, I will be back soon”. I don’t know if I had forgiven him, or if he had even forgiven me, I just wanted to get out of there, and go to the peak. He looks at me speechless. His grip on me loosens and I walk away. Suddenly I remember the soldier. I turn around and see Scott walking vigorously towards the forest. I quickly run to the house. If I leave the Chinese man there, Scott will probably do something stupid. I run through the door, without removing my snow-covered boots. I see the man sitting there, unaware of what he’s supposed to do.

“You should probably come with me.” I say quickly while trying to catch my breath. I walk to the door, and he obediently and silently follows me.

There is a complete awkward silence as we walk to the peak. I don’t even know if he speaks English. But I think he does, because he seems to understand everything that’s going on, or maybe he’s just very intuitive. He doesn’t seem like a bad man, he hasn’t done anything to us. He is tall, tanned and strong, he has sharp features, brown eyes, and short black hair. While he walks he has a charming way about him, though I’m not quite sure as to what it is about him. As I build up the courage to ask him a question, out of nowhere I trip over a rock, and fall to the ground. He quickly comes to help me. He says with a worried expression on his face

“Are you alright?” I look at him in amazement, completely forgetting the slight pain that I feel in my foot. He has beautiful dark eyes, and he speaks English. I am silent for a few seconds,

“Yes I’m fine, thanks” I reply with embarrassment all over my face. He pulls me up, as though he’s picking up a feather. He is strong, like Scott.

“Can you walk?” he asks.

I reply with a smile on my face, “ Yes, I’m fine.”

"I'm sorry that I have caused so much trouble for you." he says. I look at him confused. He can't be the enemy, he is a good man.

"Its not your fault." I reply.

"I'm Shiyue." he says with a slight smile on his face.

"I'm May." I reply.

When we reach the lake, suddenly Shiyue grunts and grabs his stomach in pain. I quickly run to him, and help hold him, but he is a lot larger than me so I gently sit him on the ground beside the lake.

"What's wrong?" I say with fear all over my face. I see a little bit of blood on his shirt.

In a shaky voice, he says "I'm fine don't worry"

Frustrated by his words I lift up his shirt to examine the injury. There was a small cut, which was not that deep on the right side of his stomach. He was very fit. The cut needed to be cleaned though, and even though the water here was so cold, I had no other choice but to rinse it. I rip of a piece of clothing from one of my undershirts, to then wrap it around my fist and brake the glinstering layer of ice covering the lake. As I reach to dip the cloth in the water he immediately reacts, and tries to move away, and says, like a child does when they have to get an injection,

"What are you doing, no way, that water is freezing cold!" I giggle at his immaturity, and he smiles back, but you could still see the tremendous fear in his eyes. I say in a patronizing voice,

"I have to, the cut has to be cleaned, or else it will get infected." He reluctantly cooperates and removes his shirt that was shielding the cut from the cold wet cloth. His face was filled with anxiety, anticipating the tremendous amount of cold that was awaiting him. I place the cold cloth on his wound and he flinches just a little. After I made sure the wound was clean, I threw the cloth away, and continued towards the peak.



When we finally reach the peak, I go and sit in the place I always do when coming up here, but he does not follow my example. I look behind me, and see him staring out at the view, awestruck, completely stupefied. He slowly walks towards me, but never taking his eyes off the view. He sits down, with his arms on his knees. We sat there in silence for what seemed an hour, while he took in the surroundings. Finally I asked him,

“What had happened to you when I found you?” We talked and talked, and even when we seemed to have stopped talking, we talked. He told me how his plane crashed, and about the war. He said he didn’t really want to fight. He was fighting to survive, and that he hated the war, even though he initially felt honored to fight. He was nothing like what grandma had said the soldiers in the war were like. She said they were violent and killers. But he was not like this, he hates the war! He is peaceful. He told me he had never seen anything like this view. All the sights he had seen since he was born were filled with darkness, and fighting. He was nothing like Scott. I had never talked to Scott like this. We haven’t even had a conversation that has lasted more than 5 minutes. He is always so abrupt, and talking about how he wants to fight in the war. When I talked to Shiyue, I completely forgot about the fight I had with Scott, and that he was the enemy.

Finally when there was nothing left to talk about and the sun was going down we realized it was time to face what was waiting for us. I start to panic! I’ve been gone for hours now with the enemy. Scott, my parents, and the village, they are all going to be furious. Then I stop walking, and ask myself, in a quiet whisper,

“What is going to happen to him?” He stops too and looks at me,

“Everything ok?” he says with a smirk on his face. I put on a smile and reply

“Yes everything’s fine, I just remembered something.” We continued walking; he was a little ahead of me. I don’t want them to kill him, he’s not what they think he is, but how am I going to tell them that.

We are almost home, right by the lake, and I am not prepared for what is waiting for me when I get back home. I am going to get into so much trouble for this! I am still, so mad, oh so mad at Scott, not for what he said but for how he was. I know more about this person I have known for only a few hours, than I do

about Scott who I am soon going to have to marry. We reach the town, and straight away June runs to me, and in her high panicked voice screeches.

“Where have you been, everyone has been looking for... oh.” She stops speaking as soon as she sees Shiyue. She gives me her ‘what the hell are you thinking’ look. The panic and fear inside me builds up even more now. I reply in a calm tone, in an attempt to make the situation seem not as significant as it was

“June its fine, he’s not dangerous, go home, and tell them I’m coming now with Shiyue, and that they shouldn’t be worried, he’s not a threat to us.” She gives me a look of desperation, confusion, and guilt for being the cause of this monstrous situation.

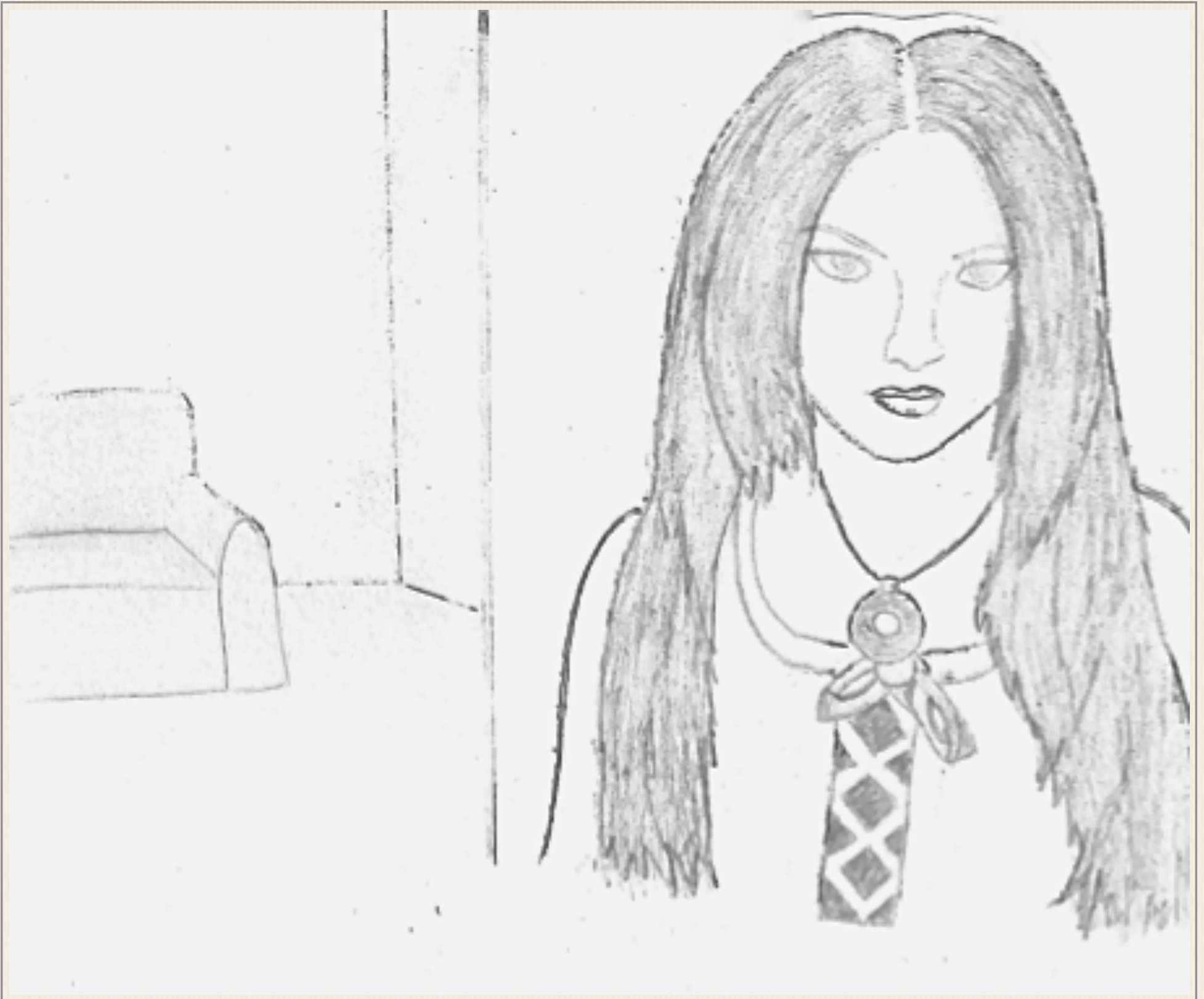
“Ok May” she says in her childish voice, and runs off. I figured it would be better if they all had a warning before I returned, and could calm down a bit. I look back at Shiyue, who is looking straight ahead; his face expression shows he knows what’s coming once we reach the house. He sees me staring at him frightened, he lets out a boyish charming laugh and smiles at me, in pursuit of lightening the mood, and make me feel better. It didn’t work.

As we approach the house, my parents run to meet me, and then Scott appears and stands by the door, even angrier than before. I don’t think it was about the fight, but more about the fact that I’m with ‘the enemy’. Shiyue is quite a few paces behind me. When my parents reach me, my mom embraces me in a big bear hug, and I can see the relieved look on my dad’s face, and the building up of a lecture that I will soon have the honour of listening to. My mom with her voice cracking up from the cold says

“Where have you been May! You said you would be back before dinner.” And then my dad grabs her arm and just looks at Shiyue behind me. My mom quickly catches onto the situation. I am paralysed for a few seconds not knowing what to do, and unable to tell what they were going to do. I look at Scott, but I don’t feel that tingle inside that I usually do when I see him. I look behind me and see Shiyue strongly standing there. And then suddenly I felt this overwhelming feeling of guilt inside me. Trouble is coming.



# Shiyue Vasilli: New Feelings





I've never felt fear of anything. I'm a warrior that should not be afraid of anything. Scared. Yeah, that's the word. I'm scared. I never felt anything like this before. All I can think about is May, and how her eyes are stunning. Maybe I do like her. But I'm chinese, and one thing I do know about is tradition. Marriage. That's a tradition, and I can't interfere in such a holy tradition. She is getting married, I'll go back to China and never have to see her again... Yes! That's the plan. Stick to it. I have to serve my country, and not fall in love with an American. Although I already have...

I can see hate in Scott eyes as he looks at me. I don't want any trouble, and I don't want May to get in trouble for me, or for what happened.

"Uh.... Shiyue took me to the place where he crashed, to see if there's any belongings left." said May.

"I did?" I stupidly asked, very confused. Her parents and Scott just stared at us, with a "we're not fools" look. I guess I spoiled everything by opening my big mouth.

"Yes, yes you did." Quickly replied May while giving me a light slap on the back.

"Oh, yes. I did. I just needed help. I'm sorry for leaving concerns."

"Oh... It's okay. You worried us, next time let us know." said her mother, and then her parents left the room, leaving us three alone, with an awkward silence. Scott grabs her waist and starts kissing her neck.

"I was just so worried. I missed you... Sorry for everything." he said in a hoarse voice. My heart stopped. I'm not sure exactly what this feeling is. I just feel like cutting off his head. A man knows when another man is trying to make him jealous. This is exactly the situation. Although I didn't want to leave, and leave May all to him, I left the house. I know it's not right to love her, I can't, but I do.

I spent the night thinking about her, and how she loved him, not me. I feel this need of telling her everything. I feel she needs to know my feelings for her, because I can't keep them inside. I'm choking these words and I need to put them out.

The next morning I wake up, and rush over to May's. I'm excited, my stomach has a thousand and one butterflies in it, and I can't wait for them to fly away. I figure knocking on her door is not the best way to reach her. What if she doesn't open the door? What if her mom opens it? What am I going to say? "Hey I'm here to declare my love for your daughter." No. Too risky. Think, Shiyue, think.. I look to the ground, and there's a rock in the ground, a tiny rock, I pick it up and gently throw it on her shutter.

"Are you crazy?" Said May when she sees me out, whispering loudly.

"Let me in, we need to talk." I whispered back. She closes the shutters, and I feel so ignored. I can't believe she closed them, and didn't want to talk to me. I turn around, to leave, and to forever leave this girl without knowing my feelings for her. As I give my first step, I hear a door sound, being unlocked. My eyes sparkle as I turn and see May standing in the front porch. I give her a hug, and without saying a word, she guides me in and takes me to her room. I can feel that cozy smell that makes me think of her. I'm addicted to that smell.

"What do you want? My marriage was almost canceled because we went missing yesterday. It's not okay to see you anymore. Scott doesn't..." And I interrupt her, with a kiss. I couldn't handle myself. My lips pressing against hers is the best thing I've ever experienced. I felt so warm inside, and I bet she did too, because she didn't stop.

After a while, she finally stopped.

"What was that for?" She asked, blushing.

"When I'm with you, May... The world... The world stops. There's nothing else around, only you and me. I know I can't. But I.. I.."

"Oh no. Don't say that. You are just confused because I'm probably the first girl you've met. I'm getting married and.... And I'm getting married." She interrupts me.

"I know you don't feel the same way, but something inside me tells me we belong together and that you do feel this way about me."

"This way? What way?" She says still blushing.

"This way." I grab her waist, pull her closer, and press my lips against hers again, slowly...

"Maaay, how about..." the door opens, and an the voice gets interrupted. May pushes me very hard, we both stand there, staring at Scott, who apparently is in shock.

The three of us have no reaction.





# Scott Nollaig: Justice



I'm still amazed with the scene I just saw. Perhaps I should call May and let her know I'm already aware of the fact she was, urgh, making out with that annoying Shiyue guy. Truly disappointing walking in her room and seeing that scene. I can't blame him though, she really is beautiful. Anyways, she's mine, taken, back off! We've been through too much... How could she do this? I've always hated Shiyue or whatever his peculiar Chinese name is, but now I hate him even more. Obviously he's not as amazing as I am, I shouldn't be jealous. Taking my girl away from me is not going to happen. I need to destroy him and I'll do anything to see him gone, he's not welcome in our village.

I slide my hand out of my pocket, reaching out for my radio. It was time.

"Scott Nollaig on." I say it on my radio as I walk into my room, pressing the speak button. I shut the door. "General Tai, are you on?" I ask.

"Tai on," He replies.

"There's a secret passage. It leads right through the Himalayas. I'll tell you," I say.

"It has an access to India, correct?"

"Yes, you may invade them if you please... It doesn't matter to me. All I want is something in return."

"500, maximum," Tai already blurts out before I even ask.

"Not money, I don't need that. I mean, of course I do, but that's not my biggest concern right now. There's a guy, Shiyue, and he serves for your army, general. His plane crashed right by our village, and he's enjoying it here. Take him away, he belongs in your army, and I don't sympathize with him, I don't welcome him into our village," I say determined.

"Oh! So, Second Lieutenant Shiyue is there! He disappeared from our sight and never came back! Glad to know where he is," the general says with a small chuckle. I can hear a faint laughter in the background.

"So just take him away, will you? The passage is the following; if you go East of our village, there is a big forest, no one pays much attention to it so it's a good way



to get in being as least noticed as possible. When you get in, you just cross right through; there's a river closeby, pass through that and you'll have direct passage to India. It may seem crazy but I'm not lying, I promise. I've told you how to get here, I hope you've written it all down. When you arrive, don't tell anyone that you know me. That's our secret, no one can even dream about it. You just come here take Shiyue and get out, got it? I want no complications. People here are really weak and scared of armies, so please don't intimidate too much. I'll be on my radio while you invade. I'll be alone, so if you have any questions, you can contact me. Don't forget to be discrete, as much as you can."

There's no response after that. The only thing I want is Shiyue out of here, so I hope there will be no further complications with the Chinese army invading our village. For a second I thought I may be doing something wrong. Maybe taking Shiyue away is not that important to the rest of the village as it is for me. Oh well, now it's too late to regret and I do want him out of here. I'll do anything for him to go away.

"I'll take my army with me," stated the general after five minutes or so.

"Scott's out."

I turn off the radio and hide it under my pillow. If anyone in this village sees 10 soldiers, that would be enough to drive them crazy. Probably it would affect old grandma the most, who already experienced so many traumas with armies and wars.

As I remember that disgusting scene, I get mad. Was it May who kissed him? No... She wouldn't do this to me, she couldn't. She loves me too much. Before I realize it, the door doesn't exist any more. I rip it out and break it on my knee. Tiny pieces of wood are scattered around the floor. I guess May is right; I need to control my anger before it gets out of control. I go down the stairs, but my dad stops me.

"Where are you going?" he asks.

"To May's, I'm in a bit of a hurry so excuse me," I say as I push him as gently as possible.



“May I ask you what you’ll do at May’s house?” he says as he stops me again.

“NOTHING, ALL RIGHT, DAD. MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!” I say as I push him again, this time harder, and before I knew it, he was on the floor. I’m not the type that feels regret over my actions, so I run out into the snow. While I run to May’s house I think about what I’d tell her. Definitely I’d say I know about her and Shiyue, how I saw it with my own eyes, how I realized that she loved him, and how mad I was, how she’s mine and only mine, not from any other guy, especially not a Chinese.

As I arrive at her house, I knock on the door and patiently wait for someone to come open. No answer. I knock once more, and I hear someone unlocking the door and opening it.

“Oh hey, it’s you!” Shiyue says. As soon as I saw him I knew I was going to lose control. Anger passed through my veins as I saw him there smiling as if nothing had happened. I made a run for it again, I was sure if I stayed there longer I’d end up losing my control again, and I don’t know what I would have done with that annoying guy.

When I saw him again I was more certain I did the right thing on calling the army to come get him; he was definitely not welcomed in here. I lose control and go straight into the woods, not even telling May my feelings. I feel like hitting everything I see out of rage. I run as fast as I can, until I stop, out of breath. I look at the tree in front of me and punch it with all the anger accumulated inside of me, trying to get rid of it.

My hand immediately becomes red and swollen, it hurts a lot and I can’t even wipe the tears of my eyes of pain. But I know more than that, it isn’t only the physical pain making me cry; it is also the pain of seeing someone whom you love with someone who you hate. I loved June, I cared for my wife, but I had to protect her from people trying to steal her from me.

My biggest fear was that Shiyue had seduced her, imagine if they married and got together forever, and he’d live in our village and I’d have to see his face every single day, and he’d take my woman. That couldn’t happen. Mine. Mine. Mine. May is mine and will always be. That thought crept me out as was enough to

make me punch the same tree again. I saw my hand get even redder, it hurt, but I tried to forget this pain. My plan on taking Shiyue was going to happen and I'd get rid of that annoying boy who wants my future wife for himself.

I walk back to May's house again, this time determined that I am going to go talk to her and forget about this Shiyue 'competitive' guy. I was about to knock on the door but I couldn't move my hand, and I was in a lot of pain, so I found it better to just call May, politely.

"Yo, May! Hey, May! May, you get down here! May? I need to talk to you," I try screaming. No answer. "MAY? MAAAY!" I scream.

I notice she's not home so I go walking back to my house, maybe she's there waiting for me. When I arrived there, no one was in the living room, I went walking to my room and didn't hear anyone, I guess she's not here, nor my parents. I open the door of my room to face May lying on my bed.

"Where were you?!" she screamed "I got worried Scott!" she said nervously as she ran into my arms, hugged me and tried kissing me. I instantly turn my face the opposite way. She hesitates and backs away.

"Nervous about what?" I say confused.

"Well your dad called me and told me you had one of your anger attacks so I thought I'd come see you so I can know what's wrong." She says followed by a sweet smile. "So, what happened?" she asked me. "Your hand is red and its huge Scott, what happened with it?"

"Nothing much." The words got out of my mouth before I even knew. "Well yeah, something happened, but its not relevant" I correct myself.

"Tell me about it, though." May says determined to know what's wrong.

"You just won't get it." I say, as I get angry again.

"What is the problem with it? Can you please explain it to me?" I was in love with May, and only May. I was going to marry May.

I tried to understand myself but it didn't really work. I guess I just hated Shiyue so much I'd try and find any reason to be mad at him. I needed to prove to her I was better than him, and that I deserved her, and not anyone else.

As I'm walking I pass through a small garden which in the Spring is full of flowers, oh Spring. May loves spring, I saw a little flower sticking out, a carnation I got it, and as soon as I got to May's house I handed it to her.

"A flower, for another flower. I know you love spring, so this flower reminded me of you. You know, carnations means..." I say shyly.

"Pride and beauty." she interrupts me with a faint smile, which I guess proves everything's okay in between us. She says she's taking me to Grandma's house, since I probably broke my hand. I couldn't care less about it. We're walking but she starts going slower until she stops. Her eyes gaze to the distance where the faint movement shows. As if a spark ignited inside of her, she started running to the other side of the forest. After looking at something in shock

"Scott! Scott!" She says rapidly "There are soldier's a pack, its like 50,000 soldiers coming from the forest. They are Chinese Scott, CHINESE," May says desperately.

"Oh my gosh" I start thinking.

"COME ON, RUSH, WE NEED TO GO TELL EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE!" May exclaims while she runs as fast as she can in order to warn our people.

I just look at all these soldiers, so evil, as my radio beeps.

"Scott on?" I hear General Tai's voice saying.





# Shiyue Vasilli: Escape



“WHERE IS HE!!” Someone shouted out. ‘What’s going on back there?’ I thought to myself. I had taken the liberty to go work out in the forest, early in the morning so as to not bother anyone. Now it seems as though I should have stayed a little longer. I started off at a jog towards the town, the beautiful little place of peace in the middle of a war. It felt like I was exactly where I should be except for that mean Scott. He was always pushing me away, excluding me from everything he could. I finally reached the outskirts of the village and stopped in shock. There were at least 30 men standing in the middle of the village, each wearing the Dragon Armor, and on their left shoulder were 12 pointed star. A 12-pointed star in the Dragon Army represented the Major General. Each Major General commanded corps of 20,000 men. Standing in between all of them was an easily recognizable face, my own commanding officer Tai Rong Pei, the cruelest General in the army. The only other man higher ranked was our Supreme Emperor. What the hell were they doing here?

Then it struck me, “Gosh, Darn it!” I whisper to myself furiously. That stupid SOS signal had ended up working! I steeled myself and walked into the village, my back straight, my head high, and my eyes defiant.

“There he is!” the loud booming voice echoed over the now completely silent village, “It took us quite some time to locate your SOS signal young, soldier.” Tai said loudly.

All around, people let out small gasps while others just shook their heads sadly. I scanned the crowd looking in all their eyes, trying to convey just how sorry I was. I had finally been accepted, these past few weeks had been so complete and here I was, I betrayed them all. Worst of all May, I betrayed her. She stood there, her eyes downcast, covered by her beautiful brown hair. She was no princess, yet she was still the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. It tore me apart that she wouldn’t even look at me.

The hard hand on my shoulder brought me back to what was happening and I looked my general in the eyes. He smiled then nodded to one of the Major Generals who came up behind me, and without any hint snapped handcuffs on me. A evil-like snort of laughter came from behind me and when I was turned around I

saw that it had come from Scott. His eyes gleamed gleefully; he was enjoying this way too much. Tai, being the cruel man he was, decided to push the nail deeper.

“We are going to need someone to accompany us, just to make sure you don’t try anything sneaky with that radio of yours.” He said and he walked straight up to June. He grabbed her by the arm and pulled her away from her father. May let out a deafening scream and Scott jumped forwards to stop the General. He barely made it a foot before one of the Major Generals took him down. I struggled. I really did, yet there was no way I could break free of these bonds. Then a sharp, high voice cut across the wind interrupted my struggle.

“Who the hell do you think you are for coming into my town,” Her voice, though not loud, cut across the noisy square and brought everyone to attention.

She approached Tai and continued her speech, “with an army! Destroying the peace we have found, disrespecting our people and stealing one of our own!” She had walked up to the big General and was now looking him straight in the eyes.

He smirked, cocked his hand back and brought it down. The whole world seemed to have slowed as the gun handle streaked towards the old woman’s neck.

I broke free of the grips of my peers and ran as fast as I could with the handcuffs holding my arms back. Even though I was trying my hardest I still couldn’t make it, there was no way I would get to her on time. I tripped on a rock and landed at the same time she did, before her last breath.

“Grandma!” I hear May screaming, with tears in her eyes and an angry look.

“YOU BASTARD!” I screamed indignantly, “YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE THAT OLD WOMAN’S LIFE, AND NO RIGHT TO TAKE THAT LITTLE GIRL!!”

“Well my dear friend,” continued Tai with his cynical speech, “maybe you should have gone by the normal procedures and lit your S.O.S signal.” He turned around and marched out of the small town without looking back, leaving the poor citizens to cry in his wake. I looked up from the dirt and felt the two rough hands grab my shoulders. They pulled me up from the mud and my eyes connected with those of Scott. His eyes burned with anger and humiliation even though he hadn’t moved. Then, as I was swung around to be marched out my eyes con-



nected with May's. Her eyes were pleading, desperate; I was the only one here that could help her. I turned and steeled myself for the beatings to come.

\* \* \*

“ARRGHHH!” I scream uncontrollably. So the famous tortures were true. 1 year ago I would have never believed to be where I am right now.

“Speak gosh darn it!” The General exclaimed demanding answers, which I had none, “I don't want to kill any of my soldiers! What were you doing in that village?!”

“I was trying to get better, go check the crash site, my SOS signal had been on!” I tried explaining, yet it was no use, “How else would you find me?”

“Stop lying, dog!” his indignant voice resounded in the empty silence. His eyes flamed with an ember of madness I had never seen, or maybe I have, but was just used to it. He lifts his hand up right before exercising the tremendous force with a burning slap across my face. “Get your uniform on. You'll be in the front lines tomorrow.”

\* \* \*

“Excuse me, have you seen the little girl we took from that town?” I asked.

“Who cares?” the group of soldiers replied. I really needed to find June. If we were going to fight tomorrow then she was in grave danger. I hadn't felt the time pass, being locked in that dark cage, being beaten and starved. I wasn't quite sure why he had let me leave his confinements but I had to get to work now. As I walked around hurriedly I heard a high girly scream. Instantly I recognized the young voice. I ran towards it and noticed the slightly bigger tent. Inside of it there were a couple of girls all dressed horridly. There in the middle stood June, her once beautiful hair was oily for days of not being cleaned. In front of her stood a huge man, his dragon armor shone brightly with a 4-pointed star on it. This man was a lower rank than me before I was shot down but now he easily outranked me. So, instead of asserting my authority, I dove into him, taking him down and stabbed my boot knife into his hand, pinning it to the ground. I had always been fast and strong and it wasn't too difficult. All the girls had started

screaming and running. In the chaos, I grabbed June by the hand and left the tent running. We slowly reached the outskirts of the camp and were running in the forest. We ran on for another hour, I felt her start to lag behind so I stopped for her. That's when I noticed her feet, they seemed frozen; so I quickly took off my boots and gave them to her. I knew that with the tracker robots they would find us in no time so I tried to encourage her.

“We're going home, June. June, look at me -- look at me. We are going home, we are going to see you family again.” She got back to her feet, and stumbled slightly.

“Weird...” I murmured to myself examining the scenery surrounding me.

“What?” June asked with her pale face looking at mine.

“They haven't come after us yet... Strange.” My eyes looked in the horizon, thinking of what might be happening. June, after a cold shiver, stumbled, almost falling to the ground.

“Okay, lets go, June.” We set off again in the night stopping every so often so that she could rest, and so that I could erase our traces.



# Epilogue

The cold snow bites through the thick leather of my gloves. Nothing can stop snow. Nothing. It's worse than sand for all I know. It creeps through wood and stone, through glass and rubber, through plastic and steel. Nothing can stop snow, especially that of a snowstorm.

I don't know exactly where I'm going. I don't know exactly where I am. This is the furthest from home I have ever been. Home. Just thinking of home makes me doubt my decision. Should I have left the safety of the valley? No. Insecurity is not something I can afford right now. I have to think of saving June. I owe her. I also owe May. Oh May, if only I had realized earlier that it was you I wanted, not war. 'After winter comes spring.' She said to me once. I ignored her, listening to the latest updates of the war in my house. The late summer sun shone softly through the windows that day. She talked and talked, and I didn't hear anything of it. Something was wrong, yet the only thing I heard were those words. After I sent her out, screaming, "JUST LEAVE ME ALONE! YOU ONLY CARE ABOUT YOUR STUPID SEASONS." It was always about me.

It was a mistake to call the Chinese. I should have never done that. I loved May, but she did not feel the same for me. She loved that other guy. Shiyue. Shiyue the Chinese, the guy that arrived the 24th of December, year of the serpent, they guy who took May away from me. You don't realize what you have until you lose it. It was a wild action, yet it worked out better than expected. Who knew that Shiyue had turned on a S.O.S. signal? It was perfect. I thought it would resolve things. Sending him away. I just didn't know how much it would hurt May. She tried to hide it. She missed her sister, that's for sure. She cried every night calling



out her name, but when she was alone, when nobody heard, she cried softly for Shiyue. When nobody looked, or when she thought that nobody looked, the tears slowly rolled down her soft cheeks, but she never made a sound. Never once, did she cry out for Shiyue, at least not from the outside. And just like that, she was gone. Her tracks led to the East, opposite to where both Shiyue and June went. I don't know why, but I knew that I too had to do something. I couldn't just sit around, waiting for the world to change.

So I left one day. I said goodbye though, promising everyone that I would bring back June or die trying to. It was said that Dad couldn't see his only son go away. He stayed at home the day I left. May's parents just nodded. They had gone through a lot of pain. May's mother, once just as beautiful as June, with long light-brown hair, blue eyes, and tall legs, had shrunk to a fragile looking woman, appearing not much younger than grandma had before passing away. Her dad was even worse. Once he was one of the strongest and most respected men in the village. He was buff and hairy and all that a young boy can look up to. Now, on the other hand, he looked as if the years had caught up on him, his thick blond hair fell out of his head one by one, and only the grey thick hairs stayed behind. His muscles shrank from arms as thick as trees to slim snakes, only the tattoos on it reminding us of how strong and mature he used to be. War, after years of searching, had finally found us, and its destructive power quickly demolished the seemingly everlasting peace in the valley.

I packed heavily, my backpack being filled with lots of luggage. I wonder how May was packed when she left. Or Shiyue. I actually am beginning to feel bad for Shiyue. I stabbed him in the back while he was looking forward. Like a poisonous snake whose venom kills slowly yet steadily. How ironic. I thought I was going to be the hero of the village. Instead I became the villain. I guess karma had its turn on me.

The army was easy to track. They left a trail of garbage of 600,000 people. Besides, I knew the terrain better. I caught up on them in less than a week. They were on the edge of the valley, the passage between the Himalayas and India the only border they needed to cross in order to attack the U.N.A., which had a major base there. Then a snowstorm appeared, as if the heavens had heard my prayers.

The Chinese were not used to such weathers. They were thinly dressed in their dark green uniforms. It was spring after all. Their tanks kept slipping out in the pass, their tracks sliding over the compressed snow. After a day's march, the General decided to stop until the worst was over. Spring snowstorms were actually pretty common. It's the perfect distraction for a kidnap. Or a rescue. Whatever you want to call it.

I look at the encampments several hundreds of meters below. I might approach disguised as one of them. I have Shiyue's ragged uniform with me. My stream of thoughts is being interrupted by a soft click, however.

"Scott Nollaig. How funny is it to encounter you here. I knew you would pull off something funny." The ice-cold voice of general Tai Rong cuts through my protective layers like no snow ever could. The viewpoint I was laying on held its breath, the winds tugging my coat every now and then. My chest is going up on down, each time I inhale hitting the soft snow beneath it. I start sweating and hyperventilating and the snow under my belly slowly starts to melt. I can feel the point of the gun staring at me in the back of the head.

"Are you going to kill me?" I ask in a dry voice.

"Yes," he answers, "but first you will tell me why you even think you can save a pretty girl surrounded by 600,000 men, all armed to the teeth."

I swallow trying to find my voice back.

"I am not here for the girl."

"Why are you here then?"

"First I came here to rescue her, I admit. Then I came here to find them both. I owe them. Only now I realize I came here for nothing less than your death."

"Too bad your plan failed."

"I don't think so." I quickly kick up my feet, planting them in the belly of the general. A loud "BANG!" echoes through the mountain ranges but the snow-

storm drains the sound. I am not hit. Instead I am up on my feet, holding the general by his uniform on the edge of the platform.

“Don’t think you can get away with this Scott.” He whispers.

My reply consists of pushing him into the white depths below. I quickly look over the edge to see what will remain of him. He is still falling, screaming, his back facing the encampments below, the loop of the gun pointing at my head. The snowflakes move aside as he falls, as if they were saying, “You deserve to die.” The last thing I see is a flash.



# Carnations

Also known as “*Dianthus Caryophyllus*”, Carnations are a double-flowered variety of flowers with gray-green leaves and strong pink, white, or red

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## Related Glossary Terms

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**Index**

Find Term

# P.N.P.P

Stands for Portable Nuclear Power Plant

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## **Related Glossary Terms**

Drag related terms here

# Shiyue

Shiyue is an invented name that can mean months such as April, October, and November.

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## **Related Glossary Terms**

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UNA

United Nations of America

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