

RISING SUN, FALLING SHADOW

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Chapter 1

January 20, 1943, Shanghai

Soon Yi Adler—“Sunny” to almost everyone—craved a few moments of fresh air. She still had hours to go in her shift and would be alone with the patients once Irma had changed out of uniform. The older nurse was reluctant to leave the refugee hospital, but Sunny insisted. Irma’s husband had developed a fever and, like most refugees, she was terrified of malaria. The mosquitoes that carried the parasite were dormant in wintertime, but the paranoia of it lingered year-round like the stench from Soochow Creek.

Still, Sunny had to escape the ward, if only for a minute or two. The demands of running a hospital through wartime occupation—the constant shortages of food and medicine, the frequent disruption of the power and heat and the unexpected seizures of what little supplies they had—weighed on her more heavily than ever. Especially today, when the embodiment of all her frustration and futility lay on a stretcher in the hallway draped by a fraying cotton sheet.

Magda Fleischmann had died less than fifteen minutes earlier. She was twenty-eight years old, six months younger than Sunny. The *shomer*, a male volunteer, had already arrived to sit with the body to accompany her soul while awaiting the burial, which, by Jewish law, had to be conducted within two days. Had Frau Fleischmann come to the hospital only a week earlier, when the dispensary still possessed a few sulpha pills, her

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fate might have been so different. Without antibiotics, Sunny could do nothing but administer fluids, morphine and hollow words of encouragement while the typhoid fever ravaged the young mother of two in front of her eyes.

The tragically familiar pea-soup odour—the hallmark of typhoid deaths—still hung in the air as a ghostly reminder of the woman’s departure. Desperate to escape the smell, Sunny bolted down the hallway, yanked open the door and stepped out into the afternoon chill. It was not yet five o’clock, but the sun—hiding behind the layer of cloud that seemed to permanently enshroud Shanghai this winter—had already begun to set.

Sunny heard men shouting in Japanese and froze halfway down the short pathway between the hospital and the street. She blanched when she spotted the source of the commotion. Four soldiers, their white armbands marking them as members of the dreaded Kempeitai, were shoving two boys, maybe fifteen or sixteen years old, toward the abandoned building across the street. Sunny recognized the taller boy as the son of one of the Jewish women on the ward. His face was ashen with terror but, unlike his companion, he silently complied with the Kempeitai men.

The other boy’s arms flailed as he desperately tried to resist the manhandling. “*Es war nur ein Scherz!*” he cried before switching to English. “It was only a prank! We were not going to take it.”

One of the Kempeitai men wheeled around and rammed the butt of his rifle into the boy’s midsection. The boy clasped his belly as he crumpled to his knees. Another soldier grabbed the scruff of his jacket and dragged him through the street.

“Just . . . a misunderstanding,” the boy gasped as he was hauled along.

As soon as they reached the wall, the soldiers spun the boys around to face the road. The taller teenager’s eyes locked onto Sunny’s, imploring her to help. But her feet felt as though cast in clay, her tongue as if glued to the roof of her mouth. She had a flashback to a violent night four years earlier, when she had been attacked in the street by a drunken Japanese sailor—and the much greater tragedy that had followed.

Sunny hid her terror behind what she hoped was a comforting

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expression, the same one she had offered Magda Fleischmann in her last conscious moments. Her chest ached from the shame of her passivity, but she managed to sustain eye contact with the petrified boy.

“Stand straight!” one of the Kempeitai men barked in English.

Two of the soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder in the street, ten feet in front of the boys, and simultaneously raised their rifles. Dread overcame Sunny, and her throat tightened.

The taller boy began to tremble. His companion raised his arms to shield his chest and face. “Please, please!” he whimpered. “Our families were hungry. We have to eat. We are not thieves!”

The door whooshed open behind Sunny. She glanced over her shoulder to see Irma filling the doorway. The plump woman instantly appreciated what was happening and rushed toward the soldiers without hesitation.

Sunny shot a hand out to stop her, but Irma swept past. “*Stop!*” she shouted. “They are only boys! This is madness!”

One of the soldiers spun around. The muzzle of his rifle flared twice. Sunny flinched at the crack of gunshots, a cry lost in her throat.

Irma dropped to the pavement in midstride, as though someone had cut her legs out from beneath her.

“*Gott hilf uns!*” the shorter boy screamed.

The rifleman turned back toward the boys. Sunny covered her face, unable to watch. She could hear one of the men calling out in Japanese and, from his cadence, could tell that he was counting.

“No, no, no,” she muttered.

Two more shots rang in her ears and echoed along the street. A sulphuric smell drifted toward her. In the silence that followed, she kept her eyes squeezed shut, unwilling to face the inevitable.

Moments later, Sunny heard footsteps pounding the pavement as the soldiers marched off. Finally, once the worst of her shaking had subsided, Sunny opened her eyes.

Irma lay face down in the street. The two boys were slumped at the foot of the wall like a pair of discarded rag dolls.

Chapter 2

February 18, 1943

Franz Adler's black oxfords—twice resoled and polished until the leather had thinned—sank even deeper in the field's muck. The wet breeze seemed to penetrate his coat's lining, and he fought off another shiver. Franz didn't mind the cold, but the dampness was dismal. He would have gladly traded Shanghai's dreary rain for the snow that often blanketed Vienna at this time of year.

Franz's gaze drifted to the oval fence surrounding him. It outlined the track where the horses had once run, but he barely recognized the Shanghai race course. How different the place had looked on his previous visit, before the war. That sunny afternoon, Franz rubbed elbows with American and British Shanghailanders, along with the wealthiest of local Chinese. The city's upper crust snacked on eclairs, strawberries with cream and chilled champagne, many betting more on a single horse race than most of the sampan families—who often spent their entire lives aboard their houseboats on the Whangpoo River—would see in a lifetime. With its vibrantly painted stands and ultra-fashionable guests, especially the women in bright silk cheongsams, the track had been an explosion of colour. But now, everything around him—the sky, the grounds and even the people—looked grey. In his mind's eye, he framed a photograph. The scene epitomized the kind of faded glory that he loved to capture through

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the lens, although these days a roll of film was a rare and precious commodity that was usually beyond his means.

Several Shanghailanders stood near Franz, but little about the ragtag crowd hinted at its members' former standing or prosperity. Most stooped under the weight of overstuffed knapsacks. Pots and pans dangled from their packs, clanging noisily. They might have resembled a gathering of one-man bands if not for the sense of gloom that engulfed them. The men wore red armbands imprinted with a single letter; almost all read "A" for American. A few women hovered near their husbands, their worry palpable. The Japanese were trucking the men off to the internment camp, which they insisted on referring to as the "Chapei Civic Assembly Center." No one knew when, or if, the wives would join their husbands.

Infantrymen in khaki uniforms and brimmed caps formed a loose ring around the captives. Some soldiers stood at ease, rifles slung over their shoulders, while others held their guns across their chests, at the ready. The soldier nearest to Franz tapped his finger on the weapon's trigger casing as he viewed the prisoners with unconcealed loathing.

Simon Lehrer nodded at the scowling guard. "What do you figure, Franz?" he asked in a low voice, winking. "Is that the guy to turn to for special treatment?"

Franz covered his mouth with his hand and muttered, "Take care with him, Simon. With all of them."

"You know me, Franz. I'm only about self-preservation."

Franz hoped that Simon's show of bravado was intended to calm his wife, Esther, who clung to his arm. Franz's own wife, Sunny, stood on the other side of them, silently surveying the tense scene.

Simon stood out among the American prisoners. Not only was he taller than most, but his was the only smiling face. He had drifted to Shanghai five years earlier to avoid managing his family's furniture business in the Bronx but, ironically, ended up shouldering a far greater responsibility as the director of the CFA, the Committee for Assistance of European Refugees in Shanghai. Since the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American and British citizens who ran the CFA, including Simon, had

all been deemed hostile aliens. They were, arguably, even worse off than Shanghai's twenty thousand German refugees, many of whom they had once helped to house and feed.

Another gust of wind swept over the track. Franz flipped up the collar on his tattered coat and dug his gloveless hands deeper into his pockets. Unlike the Americans, he had come to the racetrack voluntarily, and only to say goodbye to his friend. Franz was not a prisoner of war. Not yet, at least. As an Austrian Jew, he held no official nationality. The Nazis had stripped him of his citizenship—along with his academic standing, his career and his savings—years before, back in Europe. In the eyes of the Japanese, Franz was a stateless refugee—“a nothing, a no one, a non-person,” as one of his refugee colleagues often put it.

Why now? The question had been on the lips of Shanghailanders for weeks. The Japanese had originally conquered Shanghai in pieces, overrunning the Chinese-controlled neighbourhoods five years earlier and then seizing the International Settlement—the European enclave—on the same day that their bombs decimated Pearl Harbor. They had frozen bank accounts, appropriated assets and rationed everything from rice to heating oil, but had allowed most Allied citizens to live relatively freely for the past year. Some speculated that the sudden roundup was in retaliation for the wartime internment of Japanese citizens abroad, while others saw it as a sign that the Japanese were running scared after a series of military setbacks at Guadalcanal and in New Guinea. The rumour mill ran rampant among Shanghailanders still awaiting internment. Stories of food shortages, lice and beatings inside the prison camps electrified the ever-shrinking Shanghaileander community.

Esther wrapped Simon's arm in both of hers. The bulge of her seven-and-a-half-month pregnant belly was visible through her wool coat, though her face appeared thinner than ever. With her deep-set eyes and stoic gaze, she was usually the epitome of poise, so it was unsettling to see her now on the verge of panic.

Franz understood her anxiety only too well. Esther had once been married to his younger brother, Karl. Four years earlier, on the night

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of Kristallnacht, Franz had found her crouched in the alley behind her husband's Vienna office building, bleeding from her lacerated arm. Out front, Karl's body dangled from the lamppost from which a Nazi mob had hanged him. Now, seven months into a precious unexpected pregnancy, Esther was facing the prospect of losing a second husband.

She tugged at Simon's arm. "*Ich will mit dir kommen,*" she implored in a thick voice. "Let me come with you. Please, Simon."

"To have our baby born in a prison camp?" He patted her belly. "Never, Essie. It's better this way."

Esther clasped his hand against her abdomen. "She needs her father."

"Soon, Essie." Simon stroked her cheek. "Meantime, his aunt and uncle will have to look out for the little fella."

"Of course we will," Sunny spoke up. "After all, Essie and the baby will stay with us until your release."

"I'm still not convinced that is necessary," Esther murmured.

Sunny laid her hand on Esther's shoulder. "Necessary or not, you are family."

"There is more than enough room for you and the baby," Franz said. "We want you with us, Essie."

"It will give me a whole lot of peace of mind, too." Simon grinned. "After all, what Jewish parent alive wouldn't want his kid living with a couple of doctors?"

"Besides," Sunny added with a small laugh, "Hannah has already decided for you. You do realize that she intends to be the baby's amah?"

Franz bit back a smile. His daughter would be a teenager in a few months. Despite her mild left-sided weakness—a consequence of her difficult birth, which had also claimed her mother's life—Hannah had adapted to life in Shanghai better than anyone else in her family. She spoke Mandarin and Shanghainese fluently. And ever since Hannah had learned of her aunt's pregnancy, she had been preparing for the new arrival as though the baby would be her own.

Esther nodded in gratitude, but her expression showed little relief. She continued to speak softly in German so as not to be overheard by the

guards and other prisoners. “Simon, these camps . . . the rumours . . . How will you manage?”

“I’ll be fine.” Simon winked. “You’ll see. I will be the one on the inside with all the cigarettes and chocolates. Silk stockings, too, if you need those.”

Esther was unappeased. “The last time the Japanese took you away . . .”

Simon winced. Franz shared his friend’s revulsion. The previous summer, the feared Kempeitai had arrested both of them on suspicion of spreading a rumour among the refugee community that the local Japanese government was complicit in an SS plan to exterminate Shanghai’s Jews—a plan that, thankfully, had never come to fruition. Those six days of interrogation and torture at Bridge House still haunted Franz. Some nights he would wake in a cold sweat, still able to taste the mouldy towel that had been stuffed in his mouth and the foul water that had trickled down his throat, choking him.

Simon shook his head. “This time is different, Essie. We’re being interned, not arrested.”

“How does anyone really know?”

Simon cupped her face in his hands. “We’ll be one happy family—all three of us—in no time. Trust me, Essie.”

“I do, darling.” Esther switched to English. “I am being selfish. I will miss you so much. I so want you to be here when . . .” She looked down at her belly.

Simon tapped his chest. “They can’t keep us apart.”

“No. Never.” Esther showed her first smile of the day. “Besides, this is not so bad as the catastrophe that befell your precious Yankees.”

“You got a point there.” Simon laughed. He had sulked for days when the radio broke the news that his beloved Bronx Bombers had lost the 1942 World Series to the St. Louis Cardinals.

One of the Japanese officers lifted a bullhorn to his mouth and shrieked, “All American men line here for transport you to Civic Assembly Center. All now! All others to go immediately.”

The soldiers advanced toward the prisoners with their rifles levelled.

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Sunny hugged Simon and kissed him on the cheek. “We will bring you supplies as soon as we can.”

Simon grinned. “I would never say no to more of Yang’s treats, that’s for sure. Kosher or not, I love your housekeeper’s rice balls.”

Franz stepped forward. Lost for words, he simply clapped Simon’s shoulder and shook his hand.

“I give the Nazis and the Japs six months tops,” Simon said, though Franz doubted his friend believed that fantasy any more than he did.

Sunny reached for Franz’s hand and guided him back a few steps, allowing Simon and Esther a moment of privacy.

Even after the other prisoners had fallen into line, Esther and Simon stood with their foreheads touching, exchanging whispered words. A Japanese soldier hurried over and jabbed Simon in the back with the butt of his rifle. After regaining his balance, Simon kissed Esther on the lips, then turned and headed for the end of the line without a look back.

* * *

Sunny, Esther and Franz trudged down Bubbling Well Road in sombre silence. Tall neoclassical and art deco buildings loomed overhead, including the city’s tallest skyscraper, the Park Hotel. Rickshaws and pedicabs rushed down the four-lane road. Until recently, roaring American automobiles and coughing trucks had lined the thoroughfare, but the Japanese, in their need to stockpile fuel, had since prohibited the use of non-military vehicles in the city.

They reached the main road, named Avenue Edward VII on the north side and Avenue Foche on the south. Until Pearl Harbor, it had served as an informal border between two separately administered entities within the city: the International Settlement and the French Concession, known by most as simply Frenchtown. The sovereign distinction was long gone. Still, it was hard to ignore the sudden shift in architectural style from the prim and proper British rigour that dominated the International Settlement to the more laissez-faire approach of Frenchtown.

“Why don’t you come home with us, Essie?” Sunny asked. “We can collect your belongings later.”

“No, thank you,” Esther murmured. “I need a little time to organize my home first.”

Franz suspected that she also needed private time to grieve. His heart ached for Essie. After more than a decade as a widower, he could not stomach the idea of being forcibly separated from Sunny again. Their eight-month marriage had been the bright spot in an otherwise dark and difficult few years. During the week that he had been held captive in Bridge House, the idea that he might never see her again was harder to endure than the physical torture.

Franz had met Sunny on his first visit to the refugee hospital more than four years earlier. She was the only volunteer nurse there who was neither German nor Jewish. After years of unofficial apprenticeship at the side of her father, a prominent local physician, Sunny was as knowledgeable as any doctor. Franz offered to mentor her in surgical technique and, within a few years, she was performing at the level of a junior surgeon or better. He had been struck from their first encounter by her delicate Eurasian features: her teardrop-shaped eyes, sloping cheekbones and glowing alabaster skin. But it was her poise, compassion and empathy—the way she could read his mood in a glance and know exactly when to offer him a reassuring smile—that had stolen his heart.

Franz and Sunny walked Esther home through the damp, littered streets of Frenchtown, passing luckless merchants and skeletal beggars, but like most others in the street, they had nothing to offer them. Eventually, they reached Avenue Joffre in the heart of Little Russia: a neighbourhood populated with White Russians who had fled to Shanghai after the Russian Civil War. Since Japan and the Soviet Union had signed a neutrality pact, the Russians—including a large Jewish contingent—were faring better than most, but even Little Russia had suffered in the face of constant rationing, inflation and shortages. The broken windows, backed-up gutters and stench of stale garbage

reaffirmed for Franz that Shanghai was a shell of her former self, little more than a ruin in the making.

A girl rushed down the street toward them. Even before Franz could make out her features, he recognized his daughter by her slightly lopsided gait. He opened his arms to greet her, but Hannah stopped short and thrust a sheet of paper out to him.

“Papa, have you seen this?” she panted.

Franz took the page from her. “No, *Liebchen*.”

“What is it, Hannah?” Sunny asked.

“A proclamation! The Japanese have posted them all over.”

Sunny and Esther crowded in while Franz read the English words aloud: “Proclamation concerning restriction of residence and business of stateless refugees.” The hairs on his neck stood up. “Due to military necessity, places of residence and business of stateless refugees in the Shanghai area shall hereafter be restricted to the under-mentioned area.”

“They mean the German and Austrian Jews, Papa,” Hannah murmured. “Us.”

Franz locked eyes with his daughter. He considered telling her that everything was going to be fine, but he realized she would see right through the lie. All he could muster was a meek “Yes, Hannah-*chen*.”

The proclamation went on to declare that all stateless refugees had until the eighteenth of May to sell their homes and businesses and relocate to a narrow area within Hongkew, one of the most crowded boroughs in the city. It concluded with an ominous threat—“Persons who violate the proclamation or obstruct its reinforcement shall be liable to severe punishment”—and was signed by the military governor.

Sunny squeezed Franz’s hand until her nails dug into his skin. Franz knew that she must be thinking about her parents’ house—the only home she had ever known—but all she said was “Three months, Franz.”

Before he could reply, Esther’s gaze darted frantically from Sunny to Franz. “A *ghetto*! Just like the Nazis created in Poland. Like Warsaw and Łódź.”

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All the local Jews had heard horror stories of the ghettos in Eastern Europe. “Essie, you cannot jump to—”

Esther’s anguished expression silenced him. “My baby . . . born in a ghetto. His father gone. *Mein Gott*, what next?”

Chapter 3

The winter sun finally nudged through the canopy of clouds that had hovered over the city for weeks. But the brightness did little for Sunny's mood as she tromped along Ward Road beside Franz.

Reminders of Simon's absence were everywhere. At the end of the block stood the bomb-damaged schoolhouse that he had helped to transform into a functional hospital. Across the street loomed the largest of the *heime*, the hostels, that the CFA ran to shelter and feed the thousands of Jewish refugees who had no means of supporting themselves. Without Simon, and his magical ability to pull supplies out of thin air, what would become of all those hapless refugees? *Would they starve?* But Sunny was too worried for her close friend to dwell on the fate of the rest of the community.

Franz reached for Sunny's hand. "You know Simon. He always manages to land on his feet, as he likes to say."

Not since her father, who had died four years earlier, had Sunny known anyone who could read her mind as readily as her husband. At times, she found it uncanny. "But with the baby so close."

Franz shook his head. "To have to miss the birth of his own child."

Sunny studied Franz, trying to discern his thoughts. She longed for a baby of her own and, while Franz seemed to share in that desire, he

already had a twelve-year-old daughter. Did he really need a newborn? Besides, with their existence growing more precarious by the day, was it fair to anyone to consider it now? She had yet to feel certain enough to leave the issue to chance in the bedroom.

Franz scanned the street. "Can you imagine, Sunny? Another ten thousand of us forced to live here in Little Vienna."

Half the city's Jewish refugees already lived in the square mile that replicated the Austrian capital right down to cafés and bakeries; according to most, it even smelled like home. The Jews shared the cramped space with a hundred thousand Chinese, who had proven remarkably tolerant of their new neighbours. "It will be tight," Sunny said. "At least the refugee hospital is already inside the borders."

Franz shrugged. "Perhaps that will just be one more luxury we have to forego."

She pulled her hand free of his. "We can't give up now, of all times! The hospital is going to be needed more than ever."

"Yes, I suppose it will." His expression fell somewhere between apologetic and resigned.

As they approached the footpath that led to the hospital, Sunny experienced a familiar sinking feeling. Involuntarily, her eyes shifted toward the abandoned building across the street. The weeks of rain had helped cleanse the walls, but she could still make out reddish-brown streaks. The slaughter of the two boys and Irma flashed to her mind so vividly that it felt as though the execution were unfolding in front of her all over again.

She had never learned what the teenagers had allegedly stolen. Summary executions were so commonplace in Shanghai that she had come to expect such violence from the Japanese. Still, her cheeks burned with shame. Never had she felt more helpless or cowardly than in the aftermath of that impromptu firing squad.

Franz gently tugged at her sleeve. "Poor Irma. So brave, but so rash. And for what? Thank God you kept your head, Sunny."

Sunny understood that his reassurance was meant kindly, but it only

exacerbated her self-disgust. She broke free of him and headed down the pathway to the hospital.

From the outside, the single-level structure looked as uninspiring as ever. Inside was a different story. Since opening in 1938, the hospital had weathered a world war and a hostile occupation without ever turning away a patient. The single open ward, with its twenty-one beds, housed anywhere from a handful of patients to a hundred at a time, as during the cholera outbreak of the previous spring. The staff consisted of nine nurses—all, aside from Sunny, middle-aged or older refugees—and seven doctors, whose specialties ranged from dermatology to psychiatry. Sometimes the staff tripped over one another in the small ward, while other times a single nurse managed the entire hospital on her own. Many lives had been saved inside the hospital, not a few of them in the operating room, where Franz and the others had performed surgeries that should have been impossible to successfully conduct in such a rudimentary facility.

In recent months, the Japanese had actually helped to supply the hospital. A year earlier, four critically injured Japanese sailors had been rushed there after the Chinese Underground had allegedly detonated a bomb at the wharf nearby. Three of the four victims survived. Ever since, the Japanese had used the refugee hospital as a backup facility for their injured and ill. Sporadically, and always unannounced, canvas-covered trucks would rumble up to the sidewalk, and soldiers would dump crates, often marked only in Japanese, outside the doors. The supplies, a hodgepodge of bandages, non-perishable food and medications (some long past their expiry dates), rarely corresponded with the hospital's needs, but Simon and his second-in-command, Joey, managed to trade them on the black market for what was most urgently required.

As Franz and Sunny made their way down the main corridor, they slowed at an open door. Inside the office, Maxwell Feinstein ran a makeshift pathology lab. As expected, they found the sixty-year-old internist hunched over a desktop microscope, wearing his usual spotless lab coat and polka-dot bowtie. Max and his wife, Sarah, had been among the

first German refugees to arrive in Shanghai as war loomed in Europe, but their daughter and her husband had refused to leave Hamburg with them. Their son-in-law had been convinced that someone he knew at the American consulate would secure them a visa to the United States. By the time he realized his mistake, the war in Europe had cut off the escape route to Shanghai. Max had not heard a word from his daughter or two grandsons in more than two years. He never spoke of them, but his grief was a persistent underlying presence.

Max wasn't alone in the office. Li Jun—"Joey" to everyone at the hospital—paced what little space he could find on the other side of Max's desk. The wiry twenty-one-year-old was dressed in his usual attire: a navy three-piece suit left to him by a patient's widow.

Though Joey rarely spoke of his past, he had once drunkenly told Sunny how he had ended up in Shanghai, at the age of twelve, after a typhoon and subsequent flood killed his family and wiped out his village. Joey had made the hundred-and-twenty-five-mile trek to Shanghai on foot. In the city, he barely escaped the life of street prostitution that so many rural girls and boys drifted into. Instead, he worked as a coolie—the lowest echelon of Shanghai labourers, who regularly worked themselves to death or died on the street from exposure in the winter and dehydration in the summer. Joey might have fallen victim to the same fate had Sir Victor Sassoon, an Iraqi Jew and the city's most influential businessman, not taken a shine to him. Impressed by the way the young rickshaw runner bartered over a fare, Sir Victor brought Joey onto his household staff, where he acquired languages as easily as he learned his other tasks. Sir Victor had hand-picked Simon to run the CFA, and the New Yorker had come to rely on Joey—who spoke Mandarin, Shanghainese, English, German, French and even a smattering of Russian. Joey, for his part, idolized Simon, treating him as a cross between a big brother and a mentor.

Joey wheeled toward Sunny. "What have they done with Mr. Simon, the *Ribēn guǐzi*?" he demanded, using the common Shanghainese pejorative, meaning "Japanese devils."

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“Simon will be all right, Joey,” Sunny soothed. “He has gone to an internment camp with many other Americans.”

“You can’t trust those Japanese dogs,” Joey spat in Chinese before switching to German. “What about the hospital and the heime? Who will help them now?”

Franz motioned to Joey. “We are counting on you to fill in.”

“I am no good at that stuff.” Joey flexed one of his scrawny arms. “I am only the muscle around here.”

Franz and Sunny shared a chuckle. Joey was a very able negotiator, especially with the local black marketeers.

Max viewed the others impatiently. “How is any of this funny? The hospital cannot survive without Simon.”

“It has to, Max,” Franz said with a glance toward Sunny. “We will make sure of it.”

Max grunted skeptically. “What difference does it make, anyway? You saw the proclamation. The Japanese are herding us together in a ghetto. Probably at Hitler’s request. It will make it that much easier to get rid of us.”

Franz shook his head. “The Japanese had no appetite for it last year when the SS showed up with their poison gas and plans for us.”

“Only because your friend, the colonel, intervened.”

Max had a point. The High Command in Tokyo might have never interceded to stop the Nazis’ plans had Franz not solicited the help of Colonel Tsutomu Kubota, a British-schooled Japanese officer who had always been sympathetic to the refugees’ plight.

“And where is Colonel Kubota now to protect us?” Max continued.

Neither Franz nor Sunny had an answer. No one seemed to know where Kubota had ended up after being dispatched from Shanghai in disgrace for overstepping his professional bounds by helping the Jews.

“Besides, the war is not going so well for the Japanese,” Max said. “Perhaps this time no one will object to Hitler’s plans for us. Never forget how they handled Irma and those boys.”

Sunny fought off a shudder. Franz shook his head repeatedly. “We are

already at their whim,” he pointed out. “If the Japanese want to hand us over to the Nazis, they don’t need to go to the trouble of relocating all of us into another section of the city.”

“It’s true,” Sunny agreed. “If they planned to hand the Jews over to the Germans, it would make far more sense to round us up in camps, like they have done with the British and Americans.”

Max arched an eyebrow. “So why move us at all?”

Franz shrugged. “More living space for their own people?”

Joey waved a hand toward the window. “The harbour is so close. And the radio towers are nearby. Even the rail lines crisscross here.”

Franz snorted in laughter. “*Ja*, of course. Joey is right. There is no more strategic location in all of Shanghai than Hongkew.”

“So why in God’s name cluster us here then?” Max asked.

“As a deterrent,” Franz said.

Max raised an eyebrow. “They are concerned about Jewish saboteurs?”

Joey gestured to the ceiling. “Allied airplanes. The bombers.”

“Are you suggesting that the Japanese plan to use us as human shields for their military installations?” Max chuckled grimly. “The fools!”

“What is so foolish about it?” Sunny asked.

Max gave her a compassionate look that he usually reserved for patients. “You dear, naive girl. When in the history of mankind has the potential loss of Jewish lives ever deterred anyone from doing anything?”

Franz sighed. “You are as cynical as they come, my friend, but you might have a point.”

Joey began pacing again. “Where have they taken Mr. Simon?”

“To Chapei,” Sunny said. “They have converted the Great China University into a prison camp for Americans.”

Joey nodded to himself. “Good. I won’t have to cross the river.”

Franz put his hands on hips. “Joey, you are not thinking . . .”

Joey gaped at him as though Franz were simple-minded. “We can’t leave just leave him to rot at the hands of the *Ribèn guǐzi*.”

The image of the two teens crumpled at the foot of the wall flashed again into Sunny’s mind. She reached out and squeezed Joey’s shoulder.

He reddened at her touch. She had always found his schoolboy crush endearing, but now she chose to use it strategically. “Joey, promise me you will not do anything rash,” she said softly in Shanghainese. “If something were to happen to you, I would be lost. You know that.”

Joey turned crimson, and he dropped his gaze to his feet. “I only want to go see how he is doing.”

“It’s too dangerous,” Sunny said.

But Joey persisted. “Last week, I crossed the Whangpoo to the Pootung Camp to bring food to the Kaplans. That kind old British couple from the CFA executive.” He shrugged slightly. “There were only a few soldiers outside. No one stopped me from going in.”

Sunny gave his shoulder another squeeze before letting go. “Just so long as you do not try anything reckless.”

“I won’t,” he mumbled.

“You must promise me—” Sunny began to insist, but a panicky voice cut her off.

“*Franz!*” Esther croaked from the doorway.

Sunny looked over to see Esther swaying at the threshold. Her face was ghostly pale against the collar of her black coat, and she propped herself up in the doorframe with a trembling hand.

Franz rushed over and slid his arm behind Esther’s back. “What is it, Essie?”

Esther fumbled for her belly and her coat flopped open. She clutched her bulging abdomen. “The baby,” she whispered.

“Is it coming? Now?”

Esther only grimaced. Sunny’s eyes were drawn to the woman’s legs, where dark red blood trickled down the inside of her knee.

“When did the bleeding begin?” Sunny demanded.

“Fifteen minutes, maybe,” Esther whimpered uncharacteristically. Her expression exuded sheer panic. “It keeps coming. Clots, too. What is happening to my baby?”

Before Sunny could reply, Esther’s eyes rolled back in their sockets. Her legs buckled and she collapsed in Franz’s arms.