

## THE DIVIDED HEART

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VIETNAM, FINAL DAYS AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, 1973

EXT. JUNGLE – SUNSET

Inside a canopy of soaring trees, exotic birds drift through shafts of mottled sunlight.

A vast, extended silence envelopes the scene.

Shattering the serenity, BRANCHES BREAK AND SNAP.

Slashing a machete before him, a Marine Corps first lieutenant, GARY SHAW, 25, clad in sweat-stained camouflage, his face streaked green under a floppy hat, breaks from the brush, sheathes his machete and unslings his M-16.

Behind him, three First Force Reconnaissance enlisted men, features fragmented with shadows, lurch from the jungle, fear and adrenaline driving them.

Two lug a wounded black marine on a poncho. The third, an older sergeant, carries a damaged radio over his shoulder.

EMERGING FROM THE WALL OF VEGETATION, GARY FREEZES.

Yards ahead appears a large pond, sunlight shimmering across its surface. A water buffalo drinks lazily among the lily-pads.

Beyond the pond, a valley expands to the horizon.

Seeing something, Gary drops to the ground – motioning for the men to put down the make-shift poncho.

RANSON, the weathered sergeant, grips his rifle, glancing around, while RUIZ, a wiry lance corporal, motions to the wounded man to be silent.

Gary crawls forward, cradling his weapon.

ABOVE THE POND rises an immense rock outcropping.

ON THE VINE-STREWN SUMMIT, a young man in a North Vietnamese uniform, legs drawn under him, sits writing a letter on his backpack. He is framed against the setting sun as though one with the world.

Yards below him, two enemy soldiers, their AK-47's tilted against a niche in the rock, are cooking rice over a low flame -- while another, rifle slung over his back, is busily photographing them.

Ranson and Ruiz lift their rifles and take aim. Gary motions for them to hold their fire.

GARY

(whispering)                      Go back and see  
how close they are. I'll take care of Peetie.

Taking his radio off, the sergeant motions for Ruiz to follow him. They fold into the jungle. Gary crawls over to where the young marine lies sweating in pain. PEETIE tries to sit up – but Gary holds him back.

PEETIE

We'll never make the LZ.

GARY

Stow it, Peetie. You'll be back in Oakland in a week.

Pete's eyes scan the hole in his side – then lift to weigh Gary in their gaze. Gary reads the doubt.

GARY

I ever lie to you?

A grim grin as Peetie closes his eyes.

AN APPROACHING SOUND.

Both men glance toward the tree line.

The jungle pauses -- a great hush.

A HIGH PITCHED ENGINE SLICES THROUGH THE SILENCE.

EXT. SMALL VALLEY/POND – SAME TIME

Out of nowhere, a South Vietnamese propjet tears over the tree line, releasing a set of tear-shaped aluminum canisters.

GARY'S HEAD SNAPS UP.

ATOP THE ROCK, THE YOUNG MAN writing the letter whirls about in surprise.

The canisters fall slowly as though the air itself were trying to prevent them from striking the earth.

The aluminum cylinders break through the jungle canopy and EXPLODE.

The world freezes.

NAPALM ERUPTS, EXPANDING IN A BALL OF FLAME.

Panicked parrots, wings bursting into torches, scatter from the fire.

With a thrust of its horns, the bellowing water buffalo lurches into the trees.

FROM BESIDE THE ROCKY OUTCROPPING, the three North Vietnamese soldiers bolt into the jungle.

GRABBING ONE END OF THE PONCHO, GARY starts dragging the heavy Marine toward the pond.

IN HORROR, the North Vietnamese atop the boulder watches the flames splash over the trees where his comrades fled in panic.

Sliding down the rock, he hits the ground and crouches inside an overhang as the fiery wave of napalm sears toward the pond.

Gary drags the stretcher across the ground.

PEETIE struggles to get up but is too weak – dropping back on the poncho.

AHEAD, THE NAPALM consumes the jungle.

WAVES OF JELLIED FIRE rush toward the pond.

The air sizzles with heat.

At the last instant, Gary turns – the flames yards away.

Yanking Peetie one last time, Gary pulls him to the edge of the pond.

NAPALM BLISTERS THROUGH THE AIR TOWARD THEM. Gary pushes Peetie into the pond and dives underwater.

INT. POND (UNDERWATER) SUNSET

Gary swims under a ceiling of racing flame, peering upward toward the surface -- where Peetie's agonized face stars down at him.

BURNING ORANGE AND CRIMSON JELLY flashes over the top of the pond, obliterating everything.

Forced down by the heat, Gary dives to the bottom, where he clutches a tangle of reeds to remain submerged.

Gary's lungs burst for air – but the surface of the pond is covered by flames.

Kicking his feet, he swims through the water, trying to find a place to break through the burning napalm.

A BLISTERING RED EVERYWHERE.

His last bit of air gone and ready to brave the flames, Gary sees a patch of blue opening behind him –like a tunnel amid the fire.

Gary swims for the circle of unburning water.

EXT. SURFACE OF POND – SUNSET

Gary breaks gasping from the steaming water and looks around.

Flakes of black ash drift through the air.

Smoke obscures the sun as enormous skeletons of gutted trees smolder. Small fires are scatted around the pond. The water buffalo lies blackened in the scorched brush.

Gary turns, waist-deep in the patch of clear water surrounded by dying flames.

THE NORTH VIETNAMESE soldier who was writing the letter has emerged from a crevice in the rock.

Seeing Peetie's smoldering body floating face-down in the pond, the man drags him up on the shore and rolls him over.

Kneeling, the enemy soldier removes his own pack and leans over Peetie.

PULLING HIS K-BAR from its sheath, Gary moves silently through the water.

The North Vietnamese soldier stands, staring down at Peetie.

Gary wades from the water, hurrying across the scorched ground.

Hearing splashing behind him, the North Vietnamese soldier turns and faces Gary.

THE TWO MEN STARE EYE-TO-EYE.

Gary glances down and sees no weapon in the soldier's hand – only a blood-soaked compress.

THE AIR IS RIPPED OPEN with a savage blast of rifle fire from the trees. Bullets thud into the soldier, shredding open his uniform.

More in confusion than in pain, the man looks at Gary – then slumps to the ground.

A LONG RAGGED ECHO ROLLS ACROSS THE VALLEY.

Lowering their rifles, Ranson and Ruiz emerge from the smoldering tree line, loping toward Gary and the fallen enemy soldier.

Gary runs over to Peetie, staring down in despair at the young man's charred features.

A few feet away – blood seeping from his chest, the enemy soldier's eyes flicker and open.

The young man looks up at Gary with an unblinking gaze.

Struggling, he tries to reach into his jacket pocket.

Kneeling, Gary pats the soldier's pockets for a pistol or documents -- and removes A BLOOD-SOAKED ENVELOPE WITH A LETTER INSIDE.

BLOOD HAS STREAKED DOWN PARTIALLY SMEARING THE ADDRESS, LEAVING LEGIBLE ONLY

DR. MUI CONDAY

7, RUE D

ANCE

Ranson gets up.

RANSON

We gotta haiyako, sir. Those gooks are about a click behind us.

Gary starts to get up.

Behind him, Ruiz is rooting through the enemy soldier's backpack, tossing white packets aside on the ground. Finding nothing of interest, he kicks the pack away.

As Gary starts to leave, the young man reaches out to grip Gary's wrist.

Gary pulls back, but the man holds him with all his remaining force.

Gary sees the intensity of the man's gesture.

Impatient, Ranson and Ruiz keep glancing back at the jungle.

With his last remaining strength, the North Vietnamese soldier tries to rise, importuning Gary with his burning gaze: take the envelope.

NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER

Pour Mui.

Not comprehending, Gary stares at the bloodied letter.

## NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER

Promets.

## GARY

(repeating the word) Promets.

With a faint nod, the dying man extends the letter the few inches separating him from Gary.

Gary takes the letter.

With a look of acceptance, the man stares an instant longer at Gary – then drops back, dead.

## RANSON(O.S.)

Fuck!

Gary whirls around.

Ruiz points across the valley. He and Ranson gape like startled animals, their bodies taut, muscles rippling, prepared for flight.

Gary rises to his feet, staring into the distance.

A LINE OF ENEMY SOLDIERS – drawn by the rifle fire, race from the jungle at the far end of the valley.

Instinctively, Gary stuffs the blood-stained letter into his chest pocket.

The three Marines hurry into the devastated tree line.

## EXT. JUNGLE – NIGHT

Bringing up the rear to provide covering fire, Gary moves single-file through a grotto of vines and spokes of scattered moonlight.

His haggard features move in and out of visibility. Ranson looks worriedly back at him. Ruiz darts ahead, hyper with fear.

A HIGH, DISTANT WHINE STRETCHES ACROSS THE NIGHT.

A B-70 ROCKET rips the earth apart, showering the men with dirt and leaves.

SMALL ARMS FIRE CHATTERS from the trees.

Ruiz bolts forward into the darkness. Gary and Ranson follow.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING – MINUTES LATER

Lungs panting, Gary and Ranson pause in the pulsating light.

IN THE DISTANCE, THE FAINT, RAGGED ECHO OF A HELICOPTER.

Ranson pulls his flare gun out of his pack and steadies himself, shoving a shell into the barrel.

The sergeant aims the pistol through a rent in the trees and fires.

A WHITE STREAMER shimmies into the night sky and EXPLODES WITH A MUFFLED PUFF.

A red flare crackles and descends on a swaying parachute.

THE HELICOPTER ROTOR GROWS LOUDER.

The three marines move into a clearing ahead.

THE RED FLARE SIZZLES into the nearby trees and is swallowed by the jungle darkness.

THE HELICOPTER breaks into view and shudders overhead.

RIFLE FIRE roars from the jungle, tearing up wads of grass around the marines. Like angry bees, BULLETS SNAP THE AIR.

THE HELICOPTER buckles above the patch of exposed ground. Rotor blast flattens the high grass.

Ruiz races forward to get aboard first. BULLETS BARK from the trees. HIT AND SPUN AROUND BY SLUGS, the mortally wounded Ruiz drops to the ground.

Ranson glances around and sees Gary running to reach Ruiz.

The sergeant wavers, wanting to get aboard the helicopter, but knowing he can't abandon Gary. He heads back.

RIFLE FIRE CLAWS toward them.

Bending over Ruiz, Gary feels for a neck pulse. Finding none, he grabs the dead man's arms and drags him toward the patch of open ground.

THE HELICOPTER rocks up and down as their guide ropes drop down.

HOT WINDS SLAP against the two marines.

BULLETS SNAP BY.

As the ropes snap around them, Gary unbuckles a D-ring to clamp around Ruiz's wrist.

The sergeant helps pick up the dead marine.

Gary watches blankly -- as Ruiz's body is hauled up, swinging wildly, his empty stare fixed on Gary's face.

The two remaining ropes dance around Gary and the sergeant.

Gary lurches forward, trying to snag the ropes.

A RIFLE GRENADE EXPLODES, spraying shrapnel into the air.

A SHARD SPINS INTO GARY'S RIGHT HAND -- splintering into his wristwatch and shattering the crystal.

Gary staggers back, trying to stay on his feet.

Seeing the lieutenant is wounded, Ranson motions to him.

Dazed, Gary doesn't respond.

Ranson grabs a loose rope and quickly clamps the D-ring around Gary's wrist.

NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS surge from the darkness.

THE HELICOPTER jerks backward into the sky, yanking Gary off the ground.

Startled, Ranson leaps for the lone dangling rope. It snaps out of his grasp.

SMALL ARMS FIRE PEPPERS the helicopter's metal frame with the SOUND OF GRAVEL.

Too late to try for the rope again, Ranson grabs Gary's legs at the last moment.

As the helicopter veers from the clearing, TRACERS SIZZLE from the jungle.

Gary spins around, sagging against the rope.

Higher and higher the helicopter rises, with SMALL ARMS FIRE pinging into the metal skin of the helicopter.

RANSON STRUGGLES up Gary's legs toward his waist.

Gary tries to use his wounded hand to grip Ranson.

THE HELICOPTER CREW CHIEF swings the loose rope toward the sergeant.

THE ROPE snaps back and forth out of reach. Ranson arches out to grab it.

Just as Ranson has the rope in his hand – tracers spin from the jungle, tearing into his body.

His back pack explodes from the impact. Letters, maps, toilet paper swirl from Ranson body in a puff of white paper.

Ranson looks up at Gary – the sergeant's face confused. Slowly, his grip slides down Gary's legs.

With his bleeding hand Gary tries to hold the wounded sergeant -- as the white papers continue scattering from the man's pack into the night.

Ranson's head drops. His hand slips from Gary's grasp.

Without a sound, he plunges into the darkness below.

Gary stares down in horror as the helicopter pulls away from the chattering rifle fire and stray tracers still trying to bring down the helicopter.

EXT. HELICOPTER – SUNRISE

As the Huey heads for the horizon, Gary's body dangles lifelessly from the guide rope in the breaking light.

INT. SAIGON MILITARY HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM – DAY

A team of surgeons operate on Gary's right hand. An arc of light isolates his wounded palm.

INT. SAIGON HOSPITAL SURGERY RECOVERY WARD – NIGHT

In the darkened room with two rows of white beds, only four are occupied, adding a sense of isolation to each patient.

Caught in a wedge of light from the nurse's station in the corner of the room, Gary lies motionless, eyes open, his heavily bandaged hand resting on his chest.

Groggily, he rolls on his side and sees his smashed watch – its two hands stopped. Beside it is the blood-stained Vietnamese letter.

Startled, Gary struggles up, starting to recall where the letter came from -- when his energy flags, and he falls back on the bed.

INT. OFFICER'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER

With a smaller bandage on his right hand, Gary finishes dressing in civilian clothes: short sleeve shirt, beige khakis and loafers, brought over from his officer's billet in an overnight bag.

A STOCKY AMERICAN ARMY AIRBORNE LIEUTENANT sits on the other bed, feet dangling over the side, thumbing through an issue of Playboy magazine.

AIRBORNE LIEUTENANT

I read your mission report. Too bad there wasn't anyone around to write you up for a commendation.

GARY

I'll write up my platoon sergeant when I get back to Pendleton.

AIRBORNE LIEUTENANT

Shit, if I were flying out to the States tomorrow, I'd head down to Tu Do Street tonight, get drunk, get laid, and forget all the shit that happened.

EXT. TU DO STREET – NIGHT

Weaving out of a noisy bar in civilian clothes, Gary pauses to get oriented, then heads up the gaudy street, passing barkers in front of neon-flashing strip clubs.

Down the sidewalk stride four boisterous merchant seamen, forcing Vietnamese pedestrians to step off the curb. Seeing the muscular young American approaching, the men open a hole for him to pass through.

A gaunt Vietnamese prostitute beckons to Gary from a doorway.

He continues on, stepping around a blind war veteran sitting in front of his sidewalk wares: condoms, windup kewpie dolls, brass knuckles, straight razors and fuck books.

He pauses at the corner as a jeep carrying South Vietnamese national police cruise by, the grim white-uniformed men staring at Gary.

He starts across the street. At the curb, two urchins selling chewing gum, move forward to block his path.

Gary spots an open bar entrance and veers toward it.

INT. SMALL SAIGON BAR – MOMENTS LATER

As Gary enters, a jukebox is playing Ivory Joe Hunter's "Since I Met You Baby," and a bored Vietnamese girl is listening to a pair of drunken American soldiers at a back table.

Down the bar, A NO-LONGER YOUNG VIETNAMESE WOMAN

wearing a low-cut dress and push-up bra, is painting her finger nails.

As Gary slides onto a stool a few spaces down from her, she flashes him a plastic smile.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Hi, honey, you buy me champagne, okay?

Gary's gaze wavers over her.

GARY

Yeah, sure.

Putting down her polish, the girl comes over to sit beside Gary. She motions to THE BARTENDER, A CRUSTY FRENCH COLONIAL IN HIS 50'S.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Champagne, Guirard.

She smiles broadly at Gary.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

What you want, baby?

GARY

Scotch. Straight up. No ice. Make it a double.

The girl sees that Gary's hand is bandaged – and that he has been drinking.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

You want short time? Forty dollars.

Gary looks over at the bar girl's mask of lipstick and eyeliner -- behind which appear fatigue and sadness.

Sensing his hesitation, she leans over, rubbing his leg.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Come on, honey, number-one pussy. Hubba-hubba, ding-ding, baby, I do everything.

GARY

No thanks.

She won't give up and drops her hand between his legs.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Come on, I make your dick number-one hard.

The bartender arrives with the drinks and Gary takes out money to pay him.

Feeling something else in his pocket, he withdraws the envelope and glances at the bar girl.

GARY

I'll give you forty bucks if you translate this.

The woman is perplexed -- not sure what he is getting at. She stares at the letter -- then is surprised to see it is written in Vietnamese.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

English no number-one.

GARY

That's okay. Just do your best to tell me what it says.

He pushes two twenties down the bar. She takes the money and begins reading the letter in silence.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

He say he sorry he not come back to Paris.

GARY

Paris?

She glances back at the letter then nods.

GARY

What else?

She reads on.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

He say before he must go with soldiers -- but  
now come back work hospital with you. He say I  
think you everyday.

She reads on in silence. As she reads on, her features soften. The thick  
make-up gives way to the concerned expression of the woman within.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

He say, I go back Hanoi and come soon.

The bar girl looks up.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Hanoi number-ten.

GARY

I know. What else does he say?

Glancing down, she sees the writing stop in mid-sentence.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

No more letter.

She stares at the dried red splotches on the paper.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

This war letter. Where you get?

GARY

From a soldier.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

He bo dai?

Recognizing the term for North Vietnamese soldier, Gary nods.

She hands him the envelope and letter. Taking them, Gary gulps down the  
scotch and gets up.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Him dead?

GARY

Yes, him dead.

He starts for the door -- then remembers something and turns back to the girl.

GARY

Oh, what does promets mean?

The girl shrugs.

Washing glasses at the sink, the bartender looks over.

BARTENDER

(heavy accent)

It's not Vietnamese. It's French. It means promise, you promise.

Grimacing, Gary leaves the bar.

INT. MILITARY JEEP – NEXT NIGHT

With an AMERICAN MARINE CORPORAL driving, Gary, in civilian clothes, sits in the back seat beside his sea bag and his dark blue overnight bag.

Stuck in heavy traffic on the way out of Saigon, the driver glances back.

CORPORAL

No sweat, sir. We've got plenty of time.

DOWN THE STREET, A SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMY TRUCK is pulling away from the curb.

In the back of the truck, a young soldier is trying to pry loose the hand of a Vietnamese girl in a white *aô dai* dress, sobbing at his departure.

Abruptly, the truck lurches away, and the girl falls forward to the dusty street.

The girl lies motionless momentarily. Picking herself up, still weeping, SHE melts away in the passing crowd.

GARY stares long and hard down the boulevard — watching the girl dissolve into the landscape, then he leans forward and grips the driver's shoulder.

GARY

Take me to Tan Son Hut.

The driver glances back in surprise.

CORPORAL

But, sir, your MATS flight's out of Bin Hoa.

GARY

That's an order, corporal.

Giving Gary a strange look, the driver does a U-turn at the corner.

INT. TAN SON HUT AIRPORT - MINUTES LATER

The jeep pulls up in front of the entrance, Gary gives the driver a twenty dollar bill.

GARY

Go have a couple of beers on me and forget you brought me here.

CORPORAL

But, sir, what if they ask me why you missed your flight?

GARY

Tell them I took a taxi.

He gets out, takes his overnight bag, and starts for the entrance.

CORPORAL

Sir, your sea bag.

Without stopping, he glances back.

GARY

Ship it to First Force Recon at Camp Pendleton.

He walks into the teeming civilian airport.

The corporal looks at the twenty-dollar bill. With a “fuck it,” expression, he puts the jeep into gear and drives away.

INT. TAN SON HUT AIRPORT – MINUTES LATER

Gary moves past numerous American civilians and Asians checking in for flights. A sense of impending panic ripples through the waiting passengers.

Gary approaches a line of noisy passengers jostling toward the Vietnamese police check point to show their exit visas.

His gaze moves down to the holstered pistols the police wear.

He glances up at the departure board – listing a Pan Am flight to Hawaii, an Air Vietnam flight to Hong Kong, and an Air France flight to Paris.

Walking over to the window overlooking the flight line, Gary studies the passenger jets parked on the tarmac.

IN THE DISTANCE, a few cargo planes are being loaded in hangers.

A LOUD SPEAKER announces the boarding of the Pan Am flight.

As though in a trance, Gary turns and starts through the lobby.

INT. AIR FRANCE COUNTER – MOMENTS LATER

A SALLOW FRENCH AIR FRANCE TICKET AGENT is doing paperwork as Gary approaches.

GARY

I'd like a ticket for tonight's flight to Paris.

TICKET AGENT

Round-trip?

GARY

Ah, no one-way.

TICKET AGENT

Your visa please.

GARY

I'm in a hurry. I didn't have time to get one.

The agent stares at Gary -- not sure what he is dealing with.

TICKET AGENT

May I see your passport?

GARY

Ah, I'm a military officer. We don't have passports. We just have ID cards.

The agent stares at Gary.

TICKET AGENT

All passengers must have visas and passports to enter France.

Gary steps closer to the counter.

GARY

Look, I have to get to Paris.

With a frantic gesture, he opens his wallet, revealing a wad of American currency inside.

The ticket agent glances around then back at Gary.

TICKET AGENT

It's impossible to get you out on a passenger flight. Security's too tight. But I might be able to help you another way, if you can pay.

GARY

I'm not worried about money.

TICKET AGENT

Meet me in the downstairs men's room at eleven o'clock.

GARY

That's three hours from now. Why so long?

The ticket clerk leans toward Gary.

TICKET AGENT

(a hissing whisper) Do you want  
to go to Paris or not?

INT. MEN'S ROOM – LATER NIGHT

With the overnight bag on the floor beside him, Gary paces in the deserted bathroom. The ticket agent comes in and looks around, peering under the cubicles to make certain they are deserted.

Satisfied, he walks over to a urinal and feigns urinating, then glances over at Gary.

TICKET AGENT

A Sabena cargo flight leaves for Paris in two hours. The crew chief wants \$500 to hide you aboard, and I need \$300 for my services.

GARY

Why so much for you?

TICKET AGENT

You know what'll happen if I get caught helping a deserter?

GARY

(incensed) I'm not a deserter.

INT. CARGO PLANE – LATER NIGHT

With the roar of propjet engines outside, Gary sits huddled on a long wooden bench with cargo strapped against the fuselage.

At the far end of the dimly-lighted cargo area an enormous Buddha is contained within a crate of wooden slats that create an effect of bars. The

Buddha's impassive face stares out through the slats.

Strapped against the other fuselage is a casket draped with a French flag.

Gary stares at the casket as THE BURLY, CIGAR-SMOKING BELGIAN CREW CHIEF IN HIS 50'S, wearing stained overalls, emerges from the front of the plane.

Pausing to check a pallet of Vietnamese-labeled cargo, he continues on toward Gary. Seeing he is shivering, the crew chief yanks an unused tarpaulin from the corner and hands it to Gary.

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

For another fifty dollars I can get you a bottle of cognac.

GARY

No, thanks, I'll be all right.

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

It's a long flight.

GARY

I know.

He glances over at the casket.

GARY

Who's that?

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

Some old colonial who wanted to be buried in Paris. If you want the toilet, it's behind the statue.

He starts back toward the cockpit.

INTL CARGO PLANE – LATER NIGHT

With moonlight filtering through the port holes, Gary lies under the tarpaulin on the bench, his head on his overnight bag, trying to sleep but unable to.

He stares through the darkness at the Buddha, whose eyes seem to be watching him.

The plane hits turbulence and starts bouncing.

The plane drops into an air pocket, then recovers, sending the cargo shifting, tugging against the straps and ropes.

The casket slams against the fuselage. Gary sits up, staring at the wooden container.

The bouncing worsens. The casket strains against the straps. One snaps, sending the casket sliding loose in the cargo bay.

Gary watches the casket shifting toward him in the broken moonlight.

Trying to keep his balance in the bouncing plane, he moves forward to stop the casket. Leaning forward as best he can with one hand, he pushes it back to where it was strapped.

Kneeling, he reworks the broken strap around the casket, putting a double loop around the handle. Looking around, he crosses the plane and grabs two loose straps off the floor.

He wraps them around the casket, fastening it securely. The turbulence stops as Gary ties the last knot.

Standing, he looks down at the panel of wood. Leaning over, he pats the lid as though offering reassurance.

Walking back to the bench, he lies down and pulls the tarpaulin over him.

INT. CARGO PLANE – NEXT AFTERNOON

Tired from broken sleep, Gary is sitting up, staring out the porthole.

The crew chief emerges from the front, carrying a crusty coffee cup.

CREW CHIEF

Here. It's not fresh, but it's better than nothing.

Gary takes the cup and takes a sip of the coffee. He conceals his reaction to the taste.

GARY

Thanks. How long til we get there?

CREW CHIEF

About twelve hours. We've got to refuel in Dubai. You hide behind the pallets when we land.

Gary leans back, spent.

The crew chief laughs through stained teeth – then glances at the Buddha and the casket.

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

Not much company, huh?

Gary grins at the attempt at humor -- as the Belgian goes back to the cockpit.

EXT. LE BOURGET AIRPORT – MORNING

The Sabena propjet lands on the runway and taxis away from the passenger terminal toward the cargo area.

INT. CARGO PLANE – LATER

As a fork-lift unloads the statue crate, Gary peeks out behind a stack of Vietnamese boxes.

At the open hatch, the crew chief is watching the fork-lift drive into the hanger. Turning, he motions for Gary to leave quickly.

EXT. CARGO AREA– MOMENTS LATER

Gary comes down the ramp and hurries alongside the hanger.

EXT. AIR FIELD – MINUTES LATER

Hiking down the road from the cargo area, Gary spots a security gate ahead.

He cuts across the grassy area adjacent to the runway, trying to get to the highway beyond the airport.

No more than 50 yards onto the grass, a POLICE CAR speeds from the security shack, its red light coming on, heading toward Gary.

INT. POLICE STATION – LE BOURGET AIRPORT – LATER DAY

Handcuffed, Gary is being interrogated by FRENCH POLICE OFFICIALS, while a uniformed officer stands guard nearby.

JULES MARCOUS, 46, a lean, chain-smoker, in a rumpled suit, studies the Vietnamese letter then puts it back on the desk beside Gary's overnight bag.

His assistant, LIONEL BOURDET, 37, better dressed and officious, finishes noting down information on Gary's military ID card.

BOURDET

(heavy accent)                      So you just  
decide to come to France without papers.

GARY

I told you. I didn't plan it. I just came.

Bourdet turns to his boss – who is studying Gary's military identification card.

BOURDET

(in French)                      Let's call the  
embassy. Let the Americans have him. He's  
lying or crazy.

Marcous hasn't made up his mind yet.

MARCOUS

And no one helped you get on that plane?

GARY

No. I told you. I went onboard inside the crate  
with the statue.

Marcous motions for the uniformed cop to bring in the crew chief. The officer leaves and returns momentarily with the nervous Sabena crew chief.

MARCOUS

(in French) Did you see this  
man on your plane?

The crew chief shakes his head.

MARCOUS

(to Gary) And have you ever  
seen this man before?

GARY

Yes, I saw him...

Everyone freezes.

GARY

...when he was checking the cargo. But he didn't  
see me hiding in back.

The crew chief breathes easier. Marcous studies Gary, then motions for the uniformed cop to let the crew chief go.

The older French official lights another cigarette and studies Gary.

MARCOUS

You are a military officer, and you risked  
everything to bring a letter to a woman you  
don't know. You don't even know where to find  
her.

GARY

She's somewhere in Paris.

BOURDET

(scoffing) Somewhere in Paris.  
What a stupid lie.

Marcous ignores his colleague's cynical response. He is trying to read Gary's character.

GARY

I know it sounds crazy, but the man who wrote that letter is dead. And I promised him I'd deliver it.

BOURDET

(dripping contempt) Tell the truth.  
You're deserting the war.

Gary whirls on the man, prevented by the handcuffs from hitting him.

GARY

Bullshit! I was four months into my second tour when I lost my men and got wounded.

Marcous walks over, blocking Gary's view of the other official. The older Frenchman takes a long drag of his cigarette then crushes it out on the floor.

MARCOUS

So you have come to give this woman the letter from the dead soldier?

Bourdet sees his boss is starting to waver.

BOURDET

(in French) Jules, don't  
listen to him.

The senior official leans over the desk and takes up Gary's military ID card and studies it.

MARCOUS

You are a marine.

Gary nods. Abruptly, Marcous removes his coat and rolls up a shirt sleeve, astonishing both Gary and the other official.

ON THE MAN'S ARM IS A BLUE DAGGER WITH THE FADED LETTERS

## 3ÈME FUSILIERS MARINS

MARCOUS (O.S.)

I also fought in Indo-China, monsieur, in the  
French marines.

Gary looks the man in the eyes.

GARY

Then you know.

Marcous nods and lights another cigarette.

MARCOUS

You have a 48-hour transit visa in France,  
monsieur, to find this Mui Conday and leave.  
After that, you will be arrested and charged.

Simultaneously, Gary is relieved and the younger official furious.

Marcous hands Gary the letter and ID. Gary picks up his overnight bag.

GARY

How do I get to Paris from here?

Marcous motions to the uniformed cop.

MARCOUS

(in French) Escort him to the Air  
France bus to Invalides.

Turning, Marcous holds out his hand to Gary.

MARCOUS

Bon courage. I hope you find her.

Instantly, he realizes Gary can't shake hands with a bandage on.

Seeing his hesitation, Gary shakes the man's hand, ignoring the pain. Then he leaves.

Behind his boss, the smoldering Marcous notes something down in his agenda book.

## INT. AIR FRANCE BUS – LATER DAY

With the Eiffel Tower poking into the distance and the Seine coursing below the quai, a gaggle of Japanese tourists scurry across the aisle, pressing against the window like excited children, taking photograph after photograph with their clicking cameras.

They scurry down the aisle to another row, passing Gary, motionless — staring blankly ahead as though the bus were crossing the moon.

## INT. INVALIDES AIR FRANCE MONEY CHANGER – LATER DAY

Gary takes the francs he has just exchanged from dollars and walks away.

## EXT. PARIS SIDEWALK – LATER DAY

Gary tries to get his bearings – but is tired and can't get orientated.

He approaches a kiosk near a Metro station. An OLDER MAN is stacking newspapers in the entrance.

GARY

Excuse me, do you speak English.

KIOSK OWNER

Désolé.

GARY

I need to find a list of all the hospitals in Paris.

KIOSK OWNER

Hôpitaux?

GARY

Yes, hôpitaux.

KIOSK OWNER

Lequel?

GARY

Hospitals, a list.

The man takes a Guide Rouge book off a rack and opens it, flicking through the pages until coming to...EMBASSIES, TRAIN STATIONS...HOSPITALS.

He holds up the Paris guide.

KIOSK OWNER

Hôpitaux.

GARY

Thank you. How much?

The man understands enough English to hold up his fingers, flashing them twice: 20 francs.

EXT. COCHIN HOSPITAL ENTRANCE – LATER DAY

Holding the guide book and the overnight bag in his unbandaged hand, Gary starts up the stairs as TWO WHITE-SMOCKED DOCTORS emerge.

GARY

Excuse me, I'm trying to find Dr. Mui Conday.  
Do you know if she works here?

The two men exchange glances -- then shake their heads. Gary turns away.

EXT. PARIS STREET – LATER DAY

Afternoon light is dropping as Gary comes down a winding street in the Quartier Latin.

He pauses, trying to match the street names on the buildings with his guide book.

AROUND THE CORNER comes a band of student protestors late to join a peace march.

All in their 20's, clad in T-shirts and Levis, with red bandanas around their necks to block tear gas.

They carry banners reading USA HORS DU VIETNAM, À BAS

L'IMPÉRIALISME AMÉRICAIN, VIVE HO-CHI-MIHN, UNCLE SAM  
GO HOME.

Several display unfurled Viet Cong and North Vietnam flags. Seeing the  
flags, Gary freezes.

One CURLY-HAIRED BOY misreads his rapt expression for sympathy.

FRENCH BOY

Viens avec nous!

He motions for Gary to join the group. Gary breaks away up a side street.

INT. ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL – LATER DAY

Gary stands at an admissions desk, trying to make himself understood to  
A FRUMPY BUREAUCRAT. Behind him, several people sit waiting.

GARY

I'm looking for Dr. Mui Conday. Do you know  
where I can find her?

FRUMPY BUREAUCRAT

(in French) Take a seat and  
wait your turn.

Vexed, Gary glances up at the wall clock: 3:20.

Wheeling around, Gary scans the faces of the waiting patients.

GARY

Does anybody here speak English?

AN ELDERLY MAN in a frayed overcoat, GABRIEL JANKELEVITCH  
turns from a window where he has just had his prescription filled.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I do.

The dignified man starts toward him.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I was a teacher of English in Krakow before...the war.

GARY

I'm sorry to bother you, but would you ask this woman if she knows a Dr. Mui Conday.

The old man approaches the desk.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

(in polite French) This young man is looking for a Dr. Mui Conday.

FRUMPY BUREAUCRAT

(in French) Never heard of her.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

(in French) I'm sure you understood his question. You could simply have said no.

She looks away.

Turning, Mr. Jankelevitch walks back to Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

The doctor you are looking for is not here.

GARY

Thank you.

The energy seems to fade from Gary's face. He pauses, staring down at THE LIST OF HOSPITALS NOT CROSSED OUT BY LINES OF BLACK INK.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

If you don't mind my asking, what is this doctor's specialty?

GARY

I don't know.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Does she have a private office?

GARY

I don't know.

Mr. Jankelevitch pauses -- trying to decide whether to go forward with his questions.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I don't mean to be indiscreet, but why are you trying to find a doctor you don't know?

For a second, it appears Gary will walk away without answering the old man's questions then sighs, and closes the red book.

GARY

Her friend is dead and she doesn't know.

Mr. Jankelevitch appears stunned by the admission. He glances down at Gary's bandaged hand then back up at his face.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

And you are trying to find her to give her the news?

GARY

And his letter, too.

Awkwardly, Gary reaches in his pocket and removes the blood-stained letter.

Seeing it, Mr. Jankelevitch measures himself up to his full height.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I would be honored if you would let me help you. I know the Paris hospitals more than I would like.

Gary is touched by the elderly man's offer.

GARY

Thanks, but I don't want to be any trouble.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Young man, at my age, what you call trouble is what I call life. Come, let us go find your Mui Conday.

EXT. BOULEVARD ARAGO - LATER AFTERNOON

With a rising and falling of their arms, the old man and the young marine move at a brisk pace down a tree-lined sidewalk, with Gary not aware he is pulling away from Mr. Jankelevitch

Mr. Jankelevitch slows, then begins coughing. Winded, he slumps down on a nearby bench.

Gary glances back then goes to help him.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I'll be fine in a moment.

Gary stares down at the man's ashen face. He feels guilty having accepted the old man's assistance.

GARY

Look, I appreciate your help...

Mr. Jankelevitch holds up his hand, motioning he will be all right. Standing, he continues on. With admiration and concern, Gary catches up to him.

INT. HÔPITAL ST. ANTOINE – LATER AFTERNOON

Mr. Jankelevitch hears the response from an admissions clerk and turns, his somber expression telling Gary all he needs to know: no Mui Conday.

EXT. PARIS INTERSECTION - LATER AFTERNOON

As they reach the curb, a flurry of police sirens and motorcycle cops stopping traffic. A line of black limousines speed past with American and North Vietnamese flags fluttering from their fenders.

Mr. Jankelevitch glances at Gary then down at his bandage.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Where did you come from to find this doctor?

GARY

A long way.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Vietnam?

Gary glances around.

GARY

How do you know?

The old man smiles wistfully.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Only war makes people do things like you're doing. I know. I once searched for someone, too, but I was too late. I never found her.

Both men fall silent, each mirroring the other's discomfort: Gary is reluctant to ask about the old man's past -- and Mr. Jankelevitch senses Gary doesn't wish to discuss the war.

The light changes. Mr. Jankelevitch hesitates on the curb.

GARY

What's wrong?

MR. JANKELEVITCH

You said she is working at a hospital. Maybe she is not a doctor, but an intern.

GARY

I never thought of that.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I know somewhere we can find out.

INT. ÉCOLE DE MÉDICINE – RUE DES SAINTS-PÈRES

Gabriel talks with a white-smocked professor in the marble lobby. The man nods and says something.

Mr. Jankelevitch turns and makes a thumbs-up sign to Gary.

INT./EXT. ÉCOLE DE MÉDICINE ENTRANCE – MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Jankelevitch looks more excited about the news than Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

She is an intern at Pitié—Salpêtrière. It's the largest hospital in Paris. We can go there right now.

Gary places his hand on the old man's shoulder.

GARY

I'd never have found her without you. Thank you, sir.

The old man is moved by Gary's gratitude. They start toward the exit.

As Gary holds the door open, the elderly man seems to falter.

Seeing Mr. Jankelevitch totter, Gary grabs him, holding him up.

GARY

Come on, we'll find a taxi. I'll take you home.

INT. TAXI – MINUTES LATER

Weak, Mr. Jankelevitch leans back against the seat as the taxi weaves through a shoddy part of the 14<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Please come back and tell me what happened when you gave her the letter?

GARY

Of course.

The taxi pulls up in front of a rundown hotel.

Gary starts to get out to help the old man, when Mr. Jankelevitch motions to stay.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

No, I am fine. You go deliver your letter, young man.

EXT. LA PITIÉ-SALPÊTRIÈRE- SUNSET

A lone figure crosses the vast open grounds of the 17<sup>th</sup> century hospital complex.

INT. LA PITIE-SALPÊTRIERE – MINUTES LATER

Gary wanders the labyrinth of corridors. Reaching an intersection in an endless maze of identical passages – with arrows and directions in French, he pauses then continues down one hallway.

AN ORDERLY approaches, pushing a bandaged Arab girl on a gurney.

GARY

Excuse me, where can I find Dr. Mui Conday?

The orderly slows the gurney, thrusting his head to the right.

ORDERLY

Là-bas.

Au fond du couloir. Derrière les grandes portes à gauche.

Gary starts walking in the direction of his gesture.

INT. LA SALPETRIERE HOPITAL – MOMENTS LATER

Gary walks down a long marble corridor. Passing two more open doors, he pauses.

A woman's voice drifts out of a darkened amphitheater.

Gary steps into the darkness.

The vast auditorium, with seats sloping to a stage far below, is filled with white-smocked first-year medical students listening to a lecture.

Gary walks down the side aisle steps and stops.

Below him, on the stage is a full-size human skeleton. Beside the skeleton stands a lovely and confident young Eurasian woman.

MUI CONDAY, 28, has long, black hair and alabaster skin. Her eyes are large and almond-shaped.

Her features are delicate and contrast with her animated expression. She wears European fashions under her smock, yet her posture and presence seem Asian.

Mui moves a pointer down the skeleton's spine as she completes her lecture.

Stunned by the apparition in front of him, Gary moves back toward the wall.

As Dr. Conday finishes her lecture, the medical students applaud and rise to file out of the auditorium.

Gary moves out of the way, all the while staring at the young woman coming up the steps at the far end of the stage.

Mui walks up the aisle directly toward Gary, pausing to answer questions from two students following her.

Gary moves quickly along the wall toward the entrance.

He pulls the letter out of his pocket, gripping it in his left hand. The medical students talking with the young doctor block his way.

Mui moves into the corridor, passing him.

Gary follows a few feet back, waiting for the right moment to step forward and give her the letter.

The doctor finishes with the students and turns, momentarily alone.

With great determination, Gary steps forward, holding out the blood-

stained envelope.

GARY

I promised to give you this. The man who wrote it died. I'm sorry. I have to go.

Startled, Mui doesn't know what is going on.

She peers at the envelope, then slowly she begins to recognize the handwriting.

Numbly, she reaches out and takes the envelope.

Mui(whispering)

Tran...

Backing up, Gary turns and walks quickly toward the exit, leaving Mui staring stunned at the envelope.

Abruptly, she comes to her senses and looks up as Gary steps outside.

She hurries up the aisle after him.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE – MOMENTS LATER

Gary strides down the steps starts across the courtyard.

A few seconds later Mui reaches the door and glances outside, just in time to see Gary speak to A WHITE-SMOCKED MEDICAL TECHNICIAN.

The technician shrugs and walks on. Gary continues on past the gate.

Mui hurries toward the technician.

MUI

Pardon, mais qu'est ce que ce monsieur vous a demandé ?

WHITE-SMOCKED TECHNICIEN

Où il pouvait trouver un taxi.

Nodding her thanks, the obviously upset Mui follows after Gary.

## EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE – MOMENTS LATER

Gary starts toward a taxi stand when he spots a taxi coming from the opposite direction. Flagging it down, he jogs across the street to get inside -- and the cab pulls away.

Mui sees Gary leaving in a taxi. Frantic, she runs to the first taxi waiting at a stand at the corner.

Getting in the back seat, she points in the opposite direction. Pulling away from the curb, the cab does a U-turn and heads in the same direction that Gary's cab has taken.

## EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY – LATER DAY

A taxi pulls up in front of the entrance. Gary gets out clutching his overnight bag and starts toward a YOUNG MARINE SENTRY IN DRESS BLUES standing at a guard post inside the metal gate.

GARY

I need to see the military liaison officer.

MARINE SENTRY

You an American citizen, sir?

GARY

Yes.

MARINE

May I see you passport, sir?

GARY

It's back in the States.

The sentry looks at Gary.

SENTRY

How'd you get into France without a passport?

GARY

It's a long story, but I didn't need a passport to go to Vietnam. I went with my unit.

Now the marine sentry is really confused.

MARINE

You're active duty? May I see your DOD card?

Gary holds up his laminated Department of Defense ID card, with his photograph and rank of lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps.

The sentry takes one look at the card and snaps to attention.

MARINE SENTRY

Are you being assigned to the embassy, sir?

Gary looks somberly at the sentry.

GARY

No, you see I'm supposed to be reporting back to the base hospital at Camp Pendleton, but, well, I needed to come here first.

The marine sentry is starting to see the picture.

MARINE SENTRY

You mean you're AWOL, sir?

Gary nods. The sentry tenses, all business now.

MARINE SENTRY

Name and serial number, sir.

GARY

Lieutenant Gary Shaw. 0198569

The sentry steps back into the guard post and picks up the phone.

DOWN THE STREET, a taxi pulls up and Mui gets out of the back. She starts toward Gary just as the front door of the embassy opens and two armed Marines in fatigues start toward the gate.

MUI

Sir, sir.

Startled, Gary turns toward Mui. As though seeing an apparition.

MUI

Why did you leave like that? You can't just give me Tran's letter and say he is dead, then disappear. Please tell me how it happened?

Gary glances at the young woman's face, seeing her pain. He hesitates then steps away from the entrance just as the marines reach it.

Forbidden to leave the American territorial limits of the embassy grounds, they motion for Gary to come back.

No fool, Mui sees something is wrong.

MUI

What do they want?

GARY

I came here illegally.

MUI

To give me Tran's letter?

She glances at Gary's bandaged hand.

MUI

I need to know where you got the letter.

Mui sees Gary wavering, ready to go inside the embassy gate and give himself up.

MUI

Oh please, please, don't go yet. You brought me Tran's letter. Just talk with me for a few minutes. You can come back then.

Yielding, Gary walks toward Mui.

Behind him, the senior marine steps up to the entrance.

SENIOR MARINE

Lieutenant, you walk away now you'll be considered a deserter.

Gary turns back to the marine then looks at the stricken young doctor. He continues toward her.

Mui and Gary move into the grove of trees leading toward the Seine bank.

MUI

You're certain he's dead?

Gary struggles to come up with a story.

GARY

Yes, that's what Peetie told me.

MUI

Peetie?

GARY

Ah, a marine in my unit. We were wounded together.

Mui tenses.

MUI

You were a marine?

GARY

I still am. I'm not supposed to be here, but I had to come because of Peetie. After getting hit we were evacuated to a hospital in Saigon.

Gary looks down, saddened that he has to lie.

GARY

He was in bad shape. He told me that the man who wrote the letter was dying and asked him to promise to get the letter to you.

MUI

Your friend spoke to Tran?

GARY

No, Peetie said he just repeated what your friend said in French. It sounded like promise.

MUI

But you said you were wounded together.  
Didn't you see Tran, too?

Gary turns away, staring at the busy Place de la Concorde, trying to keep the fabrication going.

GARY

No, Peetie was on point. He came back with the letter just before we were attacked. I never saw your friend. Peetie realized he'd made a promise to a dying man, but you saw the envelope, the address was smeared.

MUI

Your friend is very honorable. Why didn't he come instead?

Gary looks Mui in the eye.

GARY

He died, and he knew he was dying, too. Before he lost consciousness, he asked me to bring the letter to you...if I could find you.

Mui is deeply moved. She drops her head.

They emerge from the tress and stand in the light.

A long silence. Gary can go now. He glances back in the direction of the American embassy.

Abruptly, Mui steps forward and touches his arm. He shudders.

MUI

I don't know your name.

GARY

Gary Shaw

MUI

I am Mui Conday.

Closing his eyes, Gary nods.

GARY

I know.

MUI

How did you ever find me without my address?

GARY

With the help of an old man.

MUI

Mr. Shaw, I have no right to ask anything more of you than what you have already done. But would you do one last thing for me?

Gary tenses, not sure what she is going to ask.

MUI

Would you come have dinner with my father and me tonight? He adopted Tran when his mother was killed. It would mean so much if you could tell him what you know.

GARY

But I told you, my friend gave me the letter.

MUI

Still, just meeting the man who brought Tran's letter will mean so much to poppa. Please.

Gary doesn't want to go and Mui sees it. She touches his sleeve.

MUI

Please.

GARY

I can't, really, I'm sorry.

Gary can't look Mui in the eye.

MUI

You've come so far, Mr. Shaw. Surely a little while longer won't make a big difference.

Gary glances back at the entrance to the American embassy then at the lovely young Eurasian woman.

GARY

Why are you asking me this?

MUI

Why did you bring Tran's letter.

INT. RER COMMUTER TRAIN – TWILIGHT

With all the seats taken, Mui and Gary stand together gripping a pole. The train takes a curve, making their bodies sway closer together. Mui studies Gary. Feeling her scrutiny – he looks out at the darkened landscape.

A LITTLE AFRICAN GIRL, bored sitting with her mother, comes over between Gary and Mui, swinging around below them, all the while gazing up at Gary.

MUI

You have an admirer.

Gary can't help but grin at the child.

Across the car, her mother looks up from her book, sees her daughter has wandered off, and calls her back.

Mui hasn't stopped studying Gary.

Her scrutiny only increasing his self-consciousness. She keeps trying to break through his solitude.

MUI

Have you ever been to Paris before?

GARY

No, this is the first time.

MUI

Do you know anyone here?

Gary is about to say no then recalls something.

GARY

Just the old man who helped me to find you.

Gary shifts, staring at Mui's reflection in the glass door.

GARY

I never thought I'd find you.

She freezes – as though seeing a different Gary emerge from the one in front of her.

MUI

What will happen when you go back?

GARY

I suspect I'll have a court-martial, but I'll worry about when I get back.

They fall silent.

The train starts to slow. Several passengers get up.

MUI

We get off here.

As they start toward the exit, a large black man, his back to Gary, moves toward the door.

The passengers bunch up by the door. Gary stands inches away from the man, who turns slightly, revealing only his profile.

Gary looks stunned and grips the man's arm.

GARY

Peetie?

The man turns around and gives Gary a strange look. Realizing he is mistaken, Gary steps back in the train car.

On the quai, Mui has turned back and sees Gary ashen and dazed. As the black man steps past her, Mui goes back inside the car.

MUI

Are you all right?

GARY

Yes, I just thought it was...

The alarm sounds that the door will soon close.

Mui motions for Gary to come.

Regaining his composure, he walks toward her and they exit the train just as the doors close behind them.

EXT. ROAD TO MONSIEUR CONDAY'S HOUSE – SUNSET

Mui and Gary walk toward a country farmhouse, surrounded by trees and blooming wild flowers along the sides. A low wall circles the property.

ON A GRASSY RISE behind the house, MONSIEUR CONDAY, a robust man in his 60's, with florid complexion, sleeves rolled up, is cutting away weeds from a plot of earth overlooking a small lily pond in which carp ripple beneath the surface.

Inside a niche on the far side sits a miniature stone Buddha.

MUI

Please wait here. Let me tell Poppa about Tran.

Walking toward her father, she removes the letter from her pocket.

Self-consciously, Gary watches Mui embrace him and hold up the letter, whispering to him.

He shudders as he listens to Mui tell how she got the letter.

With a penetrating gaze, Mui's father turns to look at Gary, measuring him as though staring across a great distance. Finally, he starts forward.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Thank you.

Too moved to speak, Gary nods, dropping his gaze.

GARY

I would have wanted someone to have done the same for me.

Mr. Conday makes the trace of a smile.

MONSIEUR

There are very few men who would have done what you did. Come. Let us go in the house.

Mui hasn't taken her eyes off Gary.

Lost in thought, Monsieur Conday starts toward the house.

Mui comes up beside Gary.

MUI

Thank you for coming.

They start toward the house.

INT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S DEN – NIGHTFALL

Gary and Monsieur Conday sit talking in room filled with Indo-Chinese artefacts and numerous black and white photographs. On the wall a gun rack contains a shotgun and two old military rifles.

A single bed covered with bright pillows functions as a sofa.

A wind-up record player sits in the corner – with a stack of dusty 33 records next to it. A bottle of Pernod and two glasses are on the table.

Monsieur Conday points out a PHOTOGRAPH OF HIMSELF AS A YOUNG OFFICER IN CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORM STANDING IN A DROP ZONE WITH OTHER PARACHUTISTS.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

I was with the Deuxième Régiment Étranger de Parachutistes at Diem Bien Phu. We only surrendered to save the wounded. Fourteen months as a prisoner of the Viet Mihn.

For a moment, he looks grim – then another thought overtakes him and he smiles.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

But I would never have met Mui's mother...because I learned enough Vietnamese not to make a fool of myself when I met her later in Saigon.

Monsieur Conday savours the memory and takes a sip of his drink.

GARY

Is Mui's mother here?

MONSIEUR CONDAY

...gone, two years ago.

GARY

I'm sorry.

Uncomfortable, Gary glances around to the photographs on the wall.

Suddenly, he freezes: IN A BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH APPEARS THE DEAD NORTH VIETNAMESE MAN CLAD IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND STANDING BESIDE A LAKE.

As though hypnotized, Gary stares at the face.

Behind him, Mui comes into the living room.

MUI

Dinner is almost ready.

Seeing Gary staring at the photograph, she approaches.

MUI

That's Tran.

MUI

He was very handsome, and kind, too. He didn't have to go. He had a French passport, but he wanted to help the wounded.

GARY

Help the wounded? I don't understand.

MUI

Tran was a combat doctor.

Gary goes cold.

GARY

Not a soldier?

MUI

No. He didn't believe in violence, only in stopping it.

Gary shakes his head.

GARY

I didn't know.

MUI

How could you?

Stunned by her remark, Gary walks over to the window and stares out at the pond.

Without a word, he opens the front door, steps outside and starts across the lawn.

Concerned, she walks across the room and opens the door.

MUI

Are you all right?

Tentatively, Gary turns back to gaze at Mui.

GARY

Yes, I just need to be alone for a little while.

With a soft smile, Mui closes the door and walks back into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN – MINUTES LATER

As Mui enters the kitchen, her father is cooking at the stove.

Seeing his daughter returning, he turns to her.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

(in French)

I have to telephone him with the news.

MUI

(in French)

Do you want me to?

He shakes his head walks down the hall to the telephone.

Glancing outside, he sees Gary sitting on the lawn in the darkness.

Walking to the phone, he dials a number.

EXT. PATIO AREA – LATER NIGHT

Mui comes outside to set a platter of steaming food on the terrace table - when she sees something in the darkness, and stops.

ON HIS BACK on the grass, arms extended from his side, Gary lies motionless under the night sky.

Mui sets down the platter and stares at the young American.

Going over to where he is lying, she kneels down and gently touches his arm.

Slowly, his eyes open and he looks up.

MUI

I'm sorry to wake you, but it's time for dinner.

Gary sits up.

GARY

It's the first time I felt relaxed since leaving Vietnam.

MUI

Was it very bad over there?

Gary looks away at the lily pads in the pond.

MUI

Tran wouldn't talk about the war in his letters. Poppa said it was because of the censors, but I think he didn't want to frighten me.

Jittery, Gary gets up -- brushing off his trousers.

MUI

You would have liked him.

Gary wants to get away from the moment. He starts toward the patio table, with Mui walking beside.

Mui hasn't finished with her thought.

MUI

Tran would like you, too. I know it. I mean he would have...

GARY

I know what you mean.

EXT. PATIO TABLE – LATER NIGHT

Dinner is finished and Gary is warding off yet another attempt by Monsieur Conday to give him a cognac, which the elderly Frenchman has already poured for himself.

Mui has pulled herself back in her chair -- and mellowed by the wine, is watching Gary deftly handle her father's entreaties.

MUI

Poppa, no more. You know you have to go to  
Toulouse tomorrow morning.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

I'm fine.

Mui sits up.

MUI

Would everyone like coffee?

Gary nods. Monsieur Conday grunts.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Now that she is a doctor, Mui treats me like one  
of her patients.

MUI

I just don't want you to become one.

She grins at Gary.

MUI

I got him to stop smoking again.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

(laughing)                      Until she leaves.

Grinning at his retort, Mui excuses herself and goes into the house.

Monsieur Conday watches his daughter - and grows wistful.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Mui is so much like her mother. On the outside,  
strong, determined; but on the inside, delicate.  
That unseen part is always there.

A GATE RAPPER SOUNDS

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Would you go see who's there?

## EXT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S GARDEN – NIGHT

Gary crosses the darkened garden toward the back gate. In the moonlight, he lifts the latch and swings open the gate.

Standing in the splotched light outside is a man strongly resembling the dying North Vietnamese man who gave Gary the letter.

PHAN NGO, 30, is tall, wiry, with long black hair, and a penetrating gaze.

PHAN

L'américain!

GARY

I don't speak French.

Bristling, Phan stares at Gary.

Abruptly, Mui comes up.

MUI

(in Vietnamese) Phan, this is the  
man who brought the letter.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

(calling out in French)

Who is it?

MUI

C'est Phan, poppa.

MUI

Gary, this is Phan, Tran's brother. I had to call  
and tell him the news.

The two men stare at each other.

GARY

Tell him I'm sorry.

PHAN

I speak your language.

Stunned, Phan stares at Gary who doesn't avert his gaze.

PHAN

Why did you bring it?

MUI

Because his friend who died had promised Tran,  
and so Gary came to Paris and found me to give  
me the letter.

Monsieur Conday limps out in the shadows of the garden.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

(in French)

What are you all doing out here?

MUI

(in French)

Just talking, Poppa.

Seeing Monsieur Conday approach, Phan backs away from saying what he knows.

Monsieur Conday walks up and kisses Phan on both cheeks.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Bonsoir, Phan. Je suis désolé.

PHAN

Oui. Tran est mort.

Warily, Phan follows Monsieur Conday, Gary and Mui back to the patio.

EXT. PATIO – LATER NIGHT

The air is brimming with tension. With untouched coffee before them,  
Mui, Phan and Gary wait out a truncated truce.

Monsieur Conday doesn't sense the seething animosity directed at Gary  
from Phan.

Mui keeps trying to protect Gary from Phan's razor-sharp remarks.

She also tries to draw off, unsuccessfully, Phan's lethal gaze at Gary.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Phan is a very well-known photographer for  
*L'Express*, Gary.

PHAN

(spitting out the name) Gary?

MUI

That's his name, Phan.

Monsieur Conday takes another sip of his drink.

PHAN

You Americans murdered a doctor.

MUI

Gary didn't do it, Phan. He's not responsible.

Monsieur Conday wants to change the subject.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

My wife and I adopted Tran and Phan when  
their parents were killed in a bomb blast. We  
raised you as if you were our own children,  
didn't we, Phan?

Phan broods. Mui nudges him and he nods reluctantly.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

After medical school, Tran volunteered to go  
work last summer at...what's the name, Mui?

MUI

Bach Mai Hospital.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

He was supposed to come back in September,  
but he stayed on.

Mui lowers her head.

MUI  
(whispering) He  
didn't keep his word. He went south with the  
soldiers...when he promised me he would come  
back.

Gary sees Phan glowering at him. If looks could kill, Gary would be dead.

GARY  
I'd better get going. Just show me how to get  
back to that train station.

He stands.

MUI  
I'll go back with you.

Phan bolts up.

PHAN  
No, I'll drive you both.

Gary stares at Phan's tight expression.

GARY  
No, thank you.

Gary approaches Monsieur Conday.

GARY  
Thank you very much for the hospitality, sir.

MONSIEUR CONDAY  
Come back again. I want to talk some more  
about Saigon.

Phan steps closer to Mui.

PHAN  
(menacing whisper) You can't  
leave with him.

MUI

Why not?

PHAN

Because...because...he's the enemy.

Mui glares at Phan.

MUI

Not in this house. Without this man you would still believe Tran was alive.

PHAN

That would have been better than knowing he isn't.

Whirling around, Phan hurries through the garden.

Momentarily, an engine flares and a car races off.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

You'll have to excuse Phan, my boy. He's very upset by the news of his brother's death.

GARY

I understand.

Mui takes Gary's arm, a gesture not lost on her father.

MUI

Come, we'll catch the train.

INT. LARDY TRAIN STATION – LATER NIGHT

A cool breeze has come up – chilling Mui. Seeing she is cold, Gary steps between her and the wind, blocking it with his body.

MUI

I apologize for Phan. I've never seen him like that.

GARY

I'm sure he's dealing with a lot of pain.

MUI

The three of us were like brothers and sisters.  
We went to the same lycée, even though Phan is  
three years older than Tran and me.

Mui looks down the railroad tracks.

MUI

Everything changed when Tran and I started  
medical school. Phan was already at Beaux Arts,  
but he felt jealous, I could feel it. Then Tran and  
I, well, we started seeing each other more and  
more, and, of course, Phan could guess what  
was happening.

GARY

You were going to get married?

She shifts back a step, weighing the question while looking intently at  
Gary.

MUI

I suppose if it hadn't been for the war and Tran  
wanting to go. He said we needed time to be  
apart and see how we felt when separated.

The wind rises and she steps closer to Gary for shelter.

MUI

Absence would bring us closer or farther apart.

She looks down the tracks.

MUI

And now I'll never know, but I did feel  
something close inside me when he chose to stay  
on.

A thought surfaces inside her.

AN ENGINE APPROACHES IN THE DISTANCE. Momentarily, an old commuter train rumbles into view.

MUI

I sound selfish, don't I?

GARY

Why?

She smiles sadly.

MUI

No one can wait for someone forever.

As the train stops at the platform, Gary takes Mui's elbow and helps her up the steps onto the train.

Shaking off her mood, Mui glances into the deserted passenger car.

MUI

Our own private train back to Paris.

As he follows her into the train, HEADLIGHTS COME ON DOWN THE ROAD FROM THE STATION.

EXT. ROAD BESIDE TRAIN TRACKS – LATER NIGHT

With the commuter train rumbling through the night beyond a sense of trees, A BLACK CITROEN drives parallel to the tracks – maintaining the same speed as the train.

EXT. MUI'S APARTMENT HOUSE – QUAI – LATER NIGHT

With the Seine sparkling in the night below the riverbank, Gary and Mui approach down the sidewalk. He looks up at the entrance to Mui's five-storey, 18<sup>th</sup> century building.

GARY

You live here?

MUI

I rent here. If my mentor didn't own the apartment and move to Normandy, I couldn't afford it.

She opens the heavy wooden door and steps into the darkness. He hesitates. She turns back to him.

GARY

I'd better go.

MUI

Come up, just for a few minutes. Please.

A ripple of hesitation, then Gary follows.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT – SAME MOMENT

Mui stands in the darkness, holding her hands on the light switch.

MUI

This is the moment I like best. From here, it is as though Paris is all mine.

Awed by the view of Notre Dame, Ile de la Cité, le Vert Gallant and lighted bateau-mouche going up the river, Gary steps to the open window – with wind rustling the curtains back.

Mui flicks on the light, exposing a small, but comfortably furnished studio – with medical books stacked on tables, chairs, and beside the single bed.

GARY

Please turn it out. It's the first time I've really seen what they mean.

Turning the light off, Mui stares at Gary's silhouette in the darkness.

MUI?

Who?

GARY

The writers I read in college, who said Paris was  
the city of light

He runs his hand over his wrist.

GARY

Christ, I don't believe it. It's so fast. One minute  
I'm clamped off on a guide rope, the next I'm  
here.

He looks troubled and steps up to the edge of the window. Staring  
straight down, as though gazing into an abyss or the jungle below a  
helicopter.

His body tenses. Mui sees the change just as he turns with a look of  
determination.

GARY

Look, Doctor Conday.

She appears hurt by the formality.

MUI

Mui.

GARY

Mui, that day we got hit.

Coming forward, she puts her finger over his lips.

MUI

No more about war. I saw the pain you felt  
tonight with Phan, and I just saw it surfacing  
again. Try to forget what happened for a while,  
promise?

Nodding, he closes his eyes as though it were the only place he could  
escape.

Gently, she nestles her head against his chest.

MUI

I can feel your heart beating very fast.

He opens his eyes, gazing at her.

GARY

I don't know what say.

MUI

Say nothing.

Moonlight comes through the window – creating A SHAFT OF LIGHT THAT ISOLATES A BOOKSHELF ALONG THE WALL -- AND THE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH OF A SMILING YOUNG MAN IN BLACK CLOTHING.

Seeing the photograph over Mui's shoulder, Gary moves forward, breaking away from Mui's embrace.

Sensing something wrong, she flips the light switch.

In an instant, the apartment is illuminated.

Gary stands at the bookcase – staring at A PHOTOGRAPH OF TRAN, with the jungle behind him, his medical bag slung over his shoulder.

GARY

A friend of Tran's took that picture and sent it from Hanoi.

She picks up the photograph – then glances quizzically at Gary.

Nodding, she holds up the photograph and peers intently at the face.

Gary can't take it anymore. Turning, he starts for the door.

MUI(O.S.)

Gary, wait.

GARY

No, I gotta go.

INT. STAIRWELL – MOMENTS LATER

As Gary starts down the stairs, the light comes on and Mui's head appears hovering over the top of the banister.

MUI

Don't run away like this.

He turns – staring up at her stark face and dangling black hair.

GARY

You don't understand.

MUI

I know I don't. No one understands who hasn't been in the war. But I can try. I can listen.

He considers her words, shakes his head, and starts down a few more steps.

MUI

Please don't go. I'll feel terrible...all because of Phan.

GARY

Not Phan, me.

She sees that he is upset.

MUI

Look, I have two days of conferences starting tomorrow but only until noon. Meet me at one o'clock and let me show you my Paris. You may never be here again.

Seeing he isn't swayed, she takes two steps down and holds out her hands.

MUI

Gary. Listen. My mentor was crossing Pont Neuf one night and there was a *clochard*.

GARY

...a what?

MUI

I'm sorry, a vagrant, and was standing on the railing. And by the way he was looking down at the river, she sensed he was preparing to drown himself. Dr Blanchard said, "No, don't!" And he turned and looked at her. "Why not?" He asked.

Mui comes down the stairs.

MUI

"That's very unfair," said Dr. Blanchard If I say something stupid and you jump, I'll be left feeling guilty. Tell you what. Let me buy you a cup of coffee, and if I can't convince you why life is worth living, I'll bring you back here myself in a taxi."

Mui pauses, staring at Gary.

GARY

What happened?

Mui starts back up the stairs.

MUI

Meet me at the Medici Fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens and I'll tell you.

She hurries up the steps. The light goes out just as she closes her apartment door.

Gary doesn't reach for the *minuterie*. Instead, he makes his way down the stairs in the dark.

EXT. PARIS STREET – LATER NIGHT

With the faded sign of Mr. Jankelevitch's hotel down the block, Gary climbs out of a taxi and starts along the sidewalk as the taxi pulls away.

HEADLIGHTS OFF, THE BLACK CITROEN trailing the train -- races out of the night and swerves up on the sidewalk, blocking Gary's path.

The driver's door swings open, and Phan gets out, jabbing his finger at Gary.

PHAN

You brought my brother's letter. Now go away!

GARY

I am going, don't worry.

PHAN

Don't see Mui again.

GARY

(getting hot)

It's not your business, is it?

PHAN

Yes, she was promised to my brother. Now he is gone and I must protect her honor.

GARY

She can take care of her own honor without you.

PHAN

Don't go near Mui again or I will hurt you.

Phan gets into his car and speeds away.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY – MOMENTS LATER

As Gary enters the lobby, a large German Shepherd rises up, growling.

MADAME CLARENCE, the plump owner in her 60's, emerges from an alcove where she has been watching a small black & white television.

She glances up and sees Gary.

GARY

Monsieur Jan...Jank...

MADAME CLARENCE

Jankelevitch. Chambre trois cent un.

GARY

Huh?

She takes a pen off the counter and writes down 301. Nodding his thanks, Gary starts upstairs.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY – MINUTES LATER

Gary taps on 301.

MR. JANKELEVITCH(O.S.)

Qui est là?

GARY

Gary Shaw, Mr. Jankelevitch.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Entrez. Come in.

INT. MR. JANKELEVITCH'S ROOM – SAME TIME

Gary opens the door. Clad in an oversized gray bathrobe and frayed slippers, Mr. Jankelevitch is polishing a pair of worn black shoes.

A BLUE AND GOLD MACAW sits on a perch in a large brass cage. The bird ruffles its feathers and caws.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

That's Azur. He's not a talking parrot. He just makes a lot of noise.

Gary gazes at the meagre possessions in the room: a few faded shirts, a worn suit and an overcoat in the exposed closet. A teapot rests on an electric burner.

A chipped dresser stands beside the metal frame bed.

Realizing that Gary is mentally adding up the objects in the room, the old man smiles.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Not much to show for a lifetime.

Gary feels embarrassed caught at what he was doing.

GARY

How are you feeling?

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Better. The medicine helped. I didn't think you were coming back.

GARY

I said I would.

An uncomfortable silence.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

How did she take the news?

Gary walks to the window and glances into a drab inner courtyard.

GARY

Like anyone, very hurt. But she got me to go tell her father what happened?

MR. JANKELEVITCH

That must have been difficult.

GARY

It's all been difficult, but I couldn't tell her I was there when her friend was killed. I said one of my dying men gave it to me to bring to Paris.

The old man doesn't hide his disappointment.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

But why didn't you tell her if you didn't cause his death?

GARY

I couldn't hurt her more by saying I was there.

Mr. Jankelevitch stares sternly at Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

So you didn't tell her the whole truth.

Gary looks down. He knows Mr. Jankelevitch is right.

GARY

What difference would it make?

MR. JANKELEVITCH

All the difference in the world. If you had told her you were there, you would be free of your burden now.

GARY

I wanted to tell her since I gave her the letter, but I couldn't. Tonight I was about to tell her, but she said not to talk any more about the war, so I said nothing. She asked me to see her again tomorrow. I'll tell her then.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Young man, you must do it the moment you see her. Believe me, I know what happens if you wait too long.

He points to the dresser.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Bring me the book in the top drawer.

Gary crosses the room and opens the dresser. Inside, amid pairs of black socks IS A BLACK LEATHER BOOK WITH NO TITLE.

Gary brings the book back. Mr. Jankelevitch takes the shoes off the cloth on the table and sets them on the floor.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Set it down and see what happens.

As Gary sets the book on the table, the book opens by itself.

Gary looks quizzically at the old man.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

No mystery. Simply a book that's been opened  
so many times to the same page that it knows  
where I want to read.

HUNDREDS OF FINGERPRINTS line the margins. Faint traces swirl  
along the sides of the pages – hinting how many times the book had been  
held.

Gary leans over studying the writing.

BLACK INK COLUMNS MOVE ALONG THE FACING PAGES

NAME

ADDRESS

DATE OF DEPORTATION

SHIPMENT NUMBER

DESTINATION

Gary turns back to Mr. Jankelevitch.

GARY

I don't understand.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Who does? These are the names of all the Jews  
deported from Drancy, 75,000 of them.

Gary runs finger down the list of camps:

AUSCHWITZ

TREBLINKA

BERGEN-BELSEN

GARY(O.S.)

Is this where?

MR. JANKELEVITCH(O.S.)

Yes, where they went.

Not knowing what to say, Gary stares down at the open book.

Mr. Jankelevitch moves his right hand down the page – while staring straight at Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

(reciting from memory) Rachel  
Jankelevitch, 44, rue Vieille du Temple, January  
17, 1943. Shipment Z-03731. Ravensbruck. Dead,  
March 3, 1943. My wife.

HIS WRINKLED HAND moves farther down the page.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Lev Jankelevitch, 44, rue Vieille du Temple,  
January 17, 1943. Shipment Z-03731.  
Ravensbruck. Dead, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1943. My son.

Unable to speak, Gary touches the old man on the shoulder.

Mr. Jankelevitch shudders, as if he has felt no human touch in so long that his body can't withstand the infusion of energy from Gary.

The old man is silent for a moment – then nods as though finding his way back to what he wants to say.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

We fled Poland after the invasion. I couldn't find work in Paris. I went north to Lille. One morning I learned that the Gestapo was arresting Jews in Paris. I knew I should come right back and warn Rachel. But I was tired from working all night in the mine. I thought I could wait for a day until I was rested. But when I arrived at the apartment, the Gestapo had already taken them away.

As though depleted by telling of the experience, the old man shuffles over to the bed. He sits down, looking wearily over at Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

So you see how important it is to deliver your letter.

GARY

Believe me, Mr. Jankelevitch, I'll tell her.

He starts opening the door.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Where will you sleep tonight?

GARY

I haven't thought about it.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Take a room here. It isn't fancy, but it's clean. Tell Madame Clarence to give you one on the top floor. There is more light there in the morning.

GARY

Is there anything I can get you?

The old man turns off the light -- so that his sunken eyes, look back like those of a racoon in the dark.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Yes, bring me the past, will you?

Without bothering to remove his robe, the old man lies down in bed, pulling the cover up high on his body.

Gary steps out in the hall, closing the door behind him. He listens.

Inside the room, Mr. Jankelevitch coughs.

A moment's silence – then the rustling of wings. When the room falls silent, Gary leaves.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY – MOMENTS LATER

With Gary's money beside her, Madame Clarence watches him finish filling in the registration card.

MADAME CLARENCE

Votre passport.

Gary shrugs.

GARY

I don't have one.

MADAME CLARENCE

(in French)                      What, all  
foreigners have to have passports.

GARY

(in pidgin English)              Me, Marine,  
armed forces. No passport.

She doesn't understand him.

He makes a mock salute and pulls out his marine ID card. Charmed by the gesture, she looks at the laminated card and sees

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

With a Gallic shrug, she starts writing down his service number.

INT. GARY'S ROOM – LATER NIGHT

The modest room floats in the moonlight. In his boxer shorts, Gary sits beside the window gazing out at the zinc roof tops of Paris.

IN ONE LIGHTED APARTMENT across the street, a father tosses his grinning boy in the air.

IN AN APARTMENT ONE FLOOR BELOW, a man stands at the railing, smoking a cigarette and gazing out at the night.

Glancing up, he notices Gary watching him and goes back inside his apartment.

INT. GARY'S ROOM - MORNING

As Gary sleeps, a strange tapping rises from the otherwise quiet street. The tapping seems to echo off the walls of the building.

Waking, Gary looks around, then realizes the tapping sound woke him.

Rising, he walks to the window.

Along the shadowy sidewalk below, a small procession of blind men and women are tapping white canes toward a wall of sunlight at the corner.

A wooden door swings open from a nearby courtyard and another blind person emerges, tapping his way toward the light.

Gary glances at the engraving above the building entrance: INSTITUTE LOUIS BRAILLE. -

Seeing the blind people reach the light and step out of view, Gary goes over to the sink to wash his face.

Momentarily, he looks up at his reflection.

Suddenly, the mirror becomes a gaping black hole and Ransom plunges into the darkness below the helicopter.

GARY drops his head.

EXT. MEDICI FOUNTAIN – NEXT DAY

With a pair of lovers unabashedly making out on a chair, Gary, clutching the Guide Rouge, pauses in front of the murky pool and shadows cutting the ground into dark patches.

Coming up the path in a blazer, blouse, skirt and flats, her brief case slung next to her purse, is Mui.

MUI

Sorry I'm late. The conference ran on longer than I thought.

They both stare at each other in the shadows.

GARY

So what did she tell him?

MUI

What?

GARY

Your friend, the doctor, to the man on the bridge?

Mui pause, then realizes what he is alluding to, smiles.

MUI

(pretending to be miffed)

So that's your reason for meeting me, the answer? Well, all he needed was someone to listen to his troubles.

GARY

Sounds like a lot of us.

The clouds part and sunlight breaks through the trees.

Gary gazes at a white marble statue of an embracing couple at the far end of the shaded fountain.

She follows his gaze.

MUI

There's only one place in Paris more beautiful than this. I was going to take you there this afternoon...but something's come up.

She falls silent – then looks up at Gary.

MUI

Phan called.

Gary tenses. She touches his arm.

MUI

It has nothing to do with you. A new casualty list has been put up. Phan and I promised each other we'd go together...in case Tran's body has been found, so we would know where he was buried, and after the war ends, bring him home.

She shifts her briefcase, looking up at Gary.

MUI

Do you want to meet me when I'm done?

GARY

You don't want me to go with you?

Her expression tightens.

MUI

It's not that. You might not want to go there.

GARY

Where's there?

EXT. NORTH VIETNAMESE EMBASSY – LATER DAY

Under a menacing sky, Mui and Gary approach the entrance of the three-storey brick building on rue Le Verrier. Getting out of a black Citroën parked down the block is Phan.

Approaching, all three people see each at the same time.

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)                      Why he is here?

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)                      I asked him to  
come, Phan.

Gary looks as though he wants to say something to Phan, then notices a plaque beside the entrance

AMBASSADE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU VIETNAM

Mui sees Gary tense.

MUI  
(softly)                                      I said you might  
not want to come. You needn't come in, Gary.  
Wait for me in the café at the corner.

PHAN  
Yes, go away. You don't belong here.

With a harsh glare at Gary, Phan enters the embassy.

MUI  
Please forgive Phan. It's the war.

GARY  
Sure it's only that?

MUI  
What do you mean?

GARY  
He's in love with you.

Embarrassed, she looks away.

MUI  
He always knew I didn't feel the same way.

She glances toward the entrance.

MUI

Do you want to wait here?

GARY

I came this far. Why turn back now?

They start inside the entrance.

INT. LOBBY NORTH VIETNAMESE EMBASSY – MOMENTS LATER

Gary and Mui walk down a marble corridor. Sitting at a desk talking with Phan is a North Vietnamese bureaucrat.

At the far end of the room, standing behind a North Vietnamese flag, is a soldier in uniform, a pistol holster on his hip.

Several waiting Vietnamese people become animated when a female official crosses the lobby and tacks a long roster to a bulletin board – already containing two lists of names.

Perspiring, Gary watches as the Vietnamese close in on the latest list of war dead.

He is ready to bolt for the door when Mui sees his alarm and grips his arm.

MUI

(whispering) Relax, Gary. No one  
knows you are American.

Wiping sweat off his brow, Gary moves alongside Mui as she approaches the roster.

An elderly Vietnamese woman turns from scanning the casualty list and leaves, intoning what sounds like a Buddhist sutra.

Stepping closer as other people step away, Mui stares at the list. On the other side of her, Phan turns and stares at Gary, who looks right back at him.

Both men stand fixated behind Mui – who doesn't see the silent confrontation.

HER DELICATE HAND goes out and moves down the rows of Vietnamese names.

Phan is unable to look at the names.

MUI

(deeply disappointed)

His name's not here. They haven't found him yet.

Gary steps back to let an elderly couple come forward.

Seeing a name on the list, the couple seems to sag -- the woman starts weeping.

Seeing her break down, the bureaucrat hurries from his desk.

Gary starts backing up. Mui sees him leaving.

MUI

Gary.

GARY

I gotta get out of here. I'll be in the café.

He hurries down the corridor – as more Vietnamese arrive to scan the list, making the taller Caucasian seem incongruous amid the people going in the opposite direction.

INT. CAFÉ BACK ROOM – MINUTES LATER

With the zinc bar in front jammed with talking, smoking customers – Gary goes into the rear.

The room is lined with mirrors – repeating the image of each person to infinity. On the walls are numerous paintings. The pictures add to the mirroring effect – transforming the wall into tunnels of reflection.

Almost all the customers in back are Vietnamese – employees of the

embassy, veterans, or relatives coming to check the casualty lists.

At one table sit four North Vietnamese veterans -- one wearing a North Vietnamese army jacket. All are drinking tea.

Gary takes a table by himself. No one more than glances at the outsider. A HARRIED WAITER approaches.

GARY

A whiskey, s'il vous plait.

HARRIED WAITER

Un baby?

GARY

A baby?

The waiter holds up his thumb and index finger, indicating a shot's worth of whiskey.

GARY

Yes.

HARRIED WAITER

Avec glace, monsieur?

Gary doesn't know exactly what the waiter is asking, but guesses.

GARY

Just a whiskey, no water, no ice.

Hearing Gary's American accent, the Vietnamese customers turn -- particularly the veterans. They glare at Gary in the reflection of the mirror.

Gary makes eye-contact with them in the mirror. They break their gaze first.

Momentarily, Phan and Mui enter the back room. Phan greets the veterans and starts talking in Vietnamese with them.

Mui sees Gary sitting alone. She starts over, but Phan blocks her path -- pulling a chair out for her. Phan motions for her to join him and his friends.

Mui is trapped. She looks down at Gary then at Phan and his watching friends. She sits down. Phan gloats at Gary.

The waiter brings in Gary's whiskey. Dropping several francs on the table, Gary gulps down the drink.

Phan starts whispering to his cronies – then glancing over, only heightening Gary's sense of isolation.

Seeing how uncomfortable Gary is, Mui rises to go over to him. Phan's hand goes out and grips her.

PHAN

(whispering in Vietnamese) Don't you dare sit with that American in front of Duc and the others here.

MUI

(in Vietnamese)  
You're not my guardian,

She jerks her arm loose and gets up. Phan looks crushed.

PHAN

(in Vietnamese)  
No, but Tran would want me to protect you from him.

MUI

(in Vietnamese)  
No, he wouldn't. I know him.

PHAN

(in Vietnamese)  
He's my brother. I knew him better

MUI

(in Vietnamese)  
Stop it, Phan. How do you think Tran would feel if he could see the way you are treating the man who brought his letter.

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)  
Yes, an American killer.

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)  
He didn't kill Tran.

Phan glances at his companions. Stepping over to them, Phan makes an aside to the veterans. They bolt upright.

ACROSS THE ROOM, Gary sees trouble coming.

MUI  
(in French)  
What did you tell them?

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)  
The truth. That he just came from fighting in Vietnam.

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)  
Yes, with a letter from your brother.

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)  
But before that he was killing Vietnamese.

Mui regards Phan with great disappointment.

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)  
How can you be sure?

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)  
He's killed before, I can feel it.

Mui looks at the tense North Vietnamese veterans.

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)  
And they haven't?

Turning swiftly, Mui starts toward Gary.

Phan can't bear to watch her go to Gary's table.

MUI stops beside Gary.

MUI  
We'd better go. Phan's upset.

Gary gets up and starts following Mui out of the cafe.

Glaring at Gary, one Vietnamese veteran grips the spoon in his tea glass as though it were a knife.

Sensing that they are about to leave together, Phan rises from his chair to block their passage.

PHAN  
(in French)  
You're not leaving with this American in front of everyone.

MUI  
(in Vietnamese)  
My life is not your business, Phan.

PHAN  
(in Vietnamese)  
Yes, it is.

Gary steps between Mui and Phan.

GARY  
This has nothing to do with your brother, Phan.  
You don't want me around Mui for yourself.

Phan's body tenses. Everyone is ready to explode. Phan violently slaps Gary.

Gary recoils but doesn't strike back. Phan slaps him again.

The Vietnamese veterans stand up, their eyes on Phan and Gary.

As Phan starts to slap him again, Gary grabs his hand and squeezes it until Phan winces. With a hard shove, Gary knocks him back against the wall, then he and Mui leave the cafe under the stares of the Vietnamese men.

EXT. IN FRONT OF CAFÉ

As Gary and Mui emerge, Phan hurries out behind them -- a few paces back is a North Vietnamese veteran with the scarred neck.

PHAN

Si tu vas avec lui, tu es une pute!

Stung by the insult, Mui keeps walking.

GARY

What did he say?

MUI

That I'm a whore if I go with you.

Gary wheels around, ready to fight Phan. The North Vietnamese veteran steps in front of Phan. The four face each other on the sidewalk.

Directing traffic in the middle of the busy intersection, a gendarme sees the altercation and starts over.

The North Vietnamese veteran spots him coming and nudges Phan back to the cafe. Mui grabs Gary's arm and they start down the sidewalk.

Seeing the problem has ended, the gendarme returns to directing traffic.

EXT. PARIS STREET - AFTERNOON

Ominous gray clouds are massing over the city. Gary and Mui stand at a corner.

GARY

I'm sorry if I've caused you trouble with Phan.

MUI

It's not your fault, Gary. He was always like this, even with Tran. He never wanted me to be with anyone.

GARY

Anyone but him.

MUI

I'll never be with Phan.

Gary glances back at the cafe. Phan and the North Vietnamese soldier are gone.

GARY

I shouldn't have gone to the embassy with you.

MUI

I wanted you to.

Thunder rumbles on the outskirts of the city. Sunlight disappears behind thick gray clouds.

Mui sees a telephone cabinet down the block. She motions she needs to make a call.

MUI

I need to check for messages at my office. I'll be just a moment.

She hurries down the sidewalk and steps inside the cabinet to make a call.

A few drops of rain start to fall. Gary lifts his jacket collar and walks toward her.

While talking on the phone, Mui opens the telephone cabinet and motions for Gary to step inside with her to keep dry.

MUI  
(over the phone)  
Oui, Claire. Merci.

She hangs up, pausing momentarily to stare at Gary,

MUI  
My father called from Toulouse. He forgot to  
shutter the house and now he says there's a  
storm on the way.

With the rain splattering against the glass, they stare at each other, with their bodies pressing against each other.

Gently, Gary puts his arm around her. Momentarily, she closes her eyes, giving in to his embrace.

Breaking out of the moment, Mui makes a decision.

MUI  
Come to Lardy with me. I don't want to go out  
there alone. The house has too many memories  
of when my mother was alive.

They step out of the phone cabinet. Mui holds out her hand. Gary takes it. They hurry through the strengthening rain.

EXT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S HOUSE – SUNSET

The rain is heavier. A full summer storm has unleashed.

Drenched, Gary and Mui run up the walk. Rain cascades down on them. Thunder booms in the distance.

Spotting something, Gary points toward the darkened house.

GARY  
Look.

A strong wind is slamming shutters against the sides of the house.

GARY

I'll get them. You go inside.

MUI

No, I'll help you. It'll be faster if we do it together.

She starts to the right of the house, latching the shutters back, while Gary goes to the left.

Unused to the French shutters, it takes him longer to fasten them securely.

SEEN FROM ABOVE, Gary struggles with one hand to fasten the shutters, while along the side, Mui moves briskly along.

Coming up behind him, she holds the shutter back – while he fastens the hasp, their two hands converging.

Both seem surprised by each other's touch. Almost shyly, Mui drops her hand.

MUI

Let's get inside.

INT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHTFALL

Gary sets kindling and logs in the grate. He turns to Mui, drying her hair with a towel.

GARY

The wood's wet.

MUI

I'll get some newspapers.

She leaves the room. Gary continues arranging wood in the fireplace.

MUI(O.S.)

Gary!

INT. DEN – MOMENTS LATER

Gary enters to find Mui standing at the glass doors, staring outside.

THE POND is awash with fish flopping on the grass. The torrential rain has overflowed the pond.

MUI

They'll die.

GARY

Does your father have any buckets? We've got to hurry.

They dash out of the room.

EXT. GARDEN – MINUTES LATER

Each clutching a bucket, Mui and Gary move alongside the pond, scooping up pails of water, then picking up the flopping carp and dropping them into the buckets.

Mui skids on the wet ground and falls down.

Gary helps her up – and both continue picking up the gasping fish.

Seeing one gulping carp at the very edge of the pond, Gary hurries to save it.

He hits a slippery stretch of grass and skids straight into the pond, bucket and fish tumbling into the water.

Gary plunges under the surface.

EXT. POND (UNDERWATER) SAME TIME

GARY sinks through the murky water toward the bottom, then looks around, staring at the reeds and fish swirling around him.

The pond seems to shudder.

Everything becomes black & white -- slowing to sluggish movement.

Gary swims under a ceiling of flame stalled above him, then turns slowly toward the surface --

WHERE PEETIE'S AGONIZED FACE STARES DOWN AT HIM.

BURNING JELLY spills in an agonizingly slow movement over the top of the pond, obliterating everything.

Forced down by the heat, Gary dives slowly to the bottom, where he clutches a tangle of reeds to remain submerged.

Gary's lungs burst for air – but the surface of the pond is covered by black flames.

Kicking his feet slowly, he swims through the pond, trying to find a place to break through the burning napalm.

Everything is a blistering black.

His last bit of air gone and ready to brave the flames, Gary sees a patch of white opening behind him, like a tunnel amid the flames.

As though struggling against inertia, Gary swims for the circle of unburning water.

EXT. POND – A MOMENT LATER

Gary breaks to the surface, mud dripping from his shirt, his bandage dangling loose.

For a second, he looks around, dazed, unsure where he is.

Then he sees MUI, standing at the edge of the pond, holding her hand out to him.

Awkwardly emerging from the water, he takes her hand and wades up on the grass.

Gary grabs the overturned bucket and resumes helping Mui pick up the remaining fish.

As he bends down to pick one up, Mui leans close and ties the loose bandage back in place.

Dropping the fish into the bucket, he turns to her in the rain.

They are one impulse away from embracing.

Glancing around, both realize that there are still fish left to save.

INT. DINING ROOM – LATER THAT NIGHT

With the storm raging outside, the table has been left with dishes and crumpled napkins. An empty bottle of wine rests next to the waning candles.

Sitting on the carpet in front of the fireplace, Mui leans against Gary, sipping her wine and watching flames lick along the burning wood.

MUI

If you had stayed underwater one second more, I was coming in after you.

GARY

I didn't know where I was.

Mui studies him.

MUI

I know. I saw the way you looked when you came out of the pond.

Gary puts his head in his hand.

GARY

It was like I was back under the napalm.

MUI

Napalm? I thought only Americans used that.

GARY

The South Vietnamese dropped it on us.

Staring at the flames as though they were coming out of the grating, he shifts back.

GARY

(more to himself) I couldn't  
drag Peetie into the water in time.

She puts her arm around him.

MUI

I wish I could just push a button and all your  
bad memories would go away, every soldier's.

Gary gives her a haunting look.

GARY

That would make everything worse, I mean,  
then there would be no one to remember what  
had happened. People would be gone and we  
wouldn't know why.

She caresses his cheek, studying his face.

OUTSIDE, wind shudders through the trees and thunder rolls through the  
night.

Gary leans back, his energy fading. Mui studies his face.

MUI

You must be exhausted. I'll get you a blanket  
and pillow.

Getting up, she starts down the hallway.

INT. DEN – LATER NIGHT

In his shorts, drinking straight from Monsieur Conday's bottle of cognac,  
Gary sits on the sofa, staring out the window.

Lightning breaks nearby, revealing the pond and, beyond it, the grave on  
the knoll.

He takes another swig – trying to anesthetize himself.

Rain continues pattering on the roof.

A peel of thunder rolls by the house. Gary peers into the darkness.

LIGHTNING flashes alongside the wall – momentarily illuminating the narrow trees, making them appear like a file of soldiers.

Spooked, Gary gets up – backing away from the sofa and bumping up against the rifle rack along the wall.

He looks up and sees the rifles looming over him.

Putting the cognac on a shelf, Gary loses a grip on the bottle. It smashes to the floor.

Wind rattles against the glass doors. Gary kneels to clean up the glass – but there are too many shards.

A PEEL OF THUNDER bangs against the roof.

He glances outside and sees a shape weave past the trees.

Instinctively, he grabs a rifle off the rack.

Half-drunk, half-dazed, he clutches the weapon at port arms -- as he moves forward in a crouch, peering into the storm.

BEHIND HIM, A CRACK OF LIGHT as the door opens.

MUI(O.S.)

The electricity...

Gary whirls around.

In a white robe, Mui stands holding a flashlight.

Seeing Gary with the rifle, she drops the flashlight, which rolls across the floor.

Tossing the rifle on the sofa, he hurries to her.

Throwing his arms around her, he slides down, his head against her waist.

MUI

I was reading when the electricity went out. I heard the noise and thought you had hurt yourself. What's wrong?

Gary tries to get control of himself.

She holds up his unbandaged hand and sees one of his fingers is bleeding.

MUI

You cut yourself.

GARY

I tried picking up the glass.

When he starts to wipe the blood on his bare chest, she takes his fingers and holds them against her white robe.

He is stunned by her gesture.

Mui stares at Gary.

In the fractured light, the young American looks totally vulnerable.

MUI

Poppa was right. All soldiers play at war until it becomes too real for them, then it's too late to stop.

She embraces him.

Gary kisses her on the mouth.

Both reach out, feeling, stroking, caressing each other.

She takes him by the hand and leads him to the small bed...just as thunder rattles the window and lightning splits the darkness.

Distracted by the storm, he looks outside – then looks back at Mui.

He starts to kiss her again.

Seeing how the storm is spooking him, she gently pushes him back.

MUI

Come. I know a better place.

Taking him by the hand, she leads him out of the den.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER

MONTAGE

They enter the bedroom and Mui lies down on her back reaching up for Gary.

He lies down beside her, kissing and caressing.

She grows more excited, tugging off her bathrobe but is unable to do it completely from the way she is laying.

He takes the white robe and tosses it aside.

Pausing, he stares down at her body, which appears like alabaster in the moonlight.

Rising up in the bed, she tugs his shorts off, staring at his muscular torso.

Awkwardly, with his bandaged hand, he pushes her back on the bed and begins kissing her breasts, while beginning to run his hand between her legs.

Then he moves onto her body, gently entering her.

Moaning, she locks her legs around his waist as he rises above her, moving back and forth.

Released from whatever control had been holding him back, he pushes her hard against the bed, pinning her arms back as he licks her neck, never for an instant slowing the muscular rhythm of his body against hers.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM – LATER NIGHT

With the rain stopped and the clouds breaking up, Mui lies on her side, caressing Gary as he sleeps.

She slides her hands down of the valley of his back and over the rise of his buttocks.

Stirring, his eyes open and he sees her watching him. Without a word he moves toward her again.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM – LATER NIGHT

Under a cloudless sky, Gary and Mui sleep entwined in each other's arms.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM – MORNING

Gary's hand reaches out, feeling across the sheet.

Encountering a pillow, his hand moves around, searching for Mui.

His eyes open.

Mui is gone.

He bolts up with the dazed expression of a man returning to his senses.

He stares across the room, past filled bookcases and prints of Impressionist paintings -- at a window crammed with sunlight.

Getting out of bed, Gary pulls on his shorts and walks out of the bedroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

With the lawn outside a blinding green, Gary moves through the deserted house.

GARY

Mui?

INT. KITCHEN – MOMENTS LATER

A loaf of bread, a dish of butter, and a jar of jam sit on the counter beside a handwritten note.

Gary picks it up:

BONJOUR:

I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO WAKE YOU.  
HAD TO GO TO MY CONFERENCE. MEET ME  
AT FIVE O'CLOCK AT VERT GALLANT ON  
THE ILE DE LA CITÉ. TAKE THE TRAIN TO ST.  
MICHEL STATION. FOLLOW THE QUAI TO  
THE STATUE OF HENRI IV THEN GO DOWN  
TO THE PARK. I'LL BE THERE.

MUI.

INT. LE BOURGET POLICE STATION – SAME TIME

Inspector Marcous looks up as his assistant, Bourdet, leads in two inspectors of the INSPECTOR GENERAUX.

THE SENIOR AGENT walks directly over to Marcous while his angular partner walks over to stand beside the phone.

SENIOR AGENT

Qui est Gary Shaw?

When Marcous hesitates to answer, the senior agent nods for his partner to make the call. The angular agent picks up the phone.

ANGULAR AGENT

Mettez-moi en contact avec l'ambassade  
Américaine.

The senior agent walks behind Marcous and motions for him to get up.

SENIOR AGENT

Vous êtes en état d'arrestation.

MARCOUS

Et merde alors, pourquoi?

## SENIOR AGENT

Parce ce que vous avez laissé passer un  
déserteur Américaine qui depuis deux jours se  
balade à Paris.

## INT. KITCHEN – LATER MORNING

Dressed in his cleaned clothes, Gary sips a cup of coffee and glances  
outside.

The sky is an unbroken blue all the way to the horizon. Inside the pond,  
the water level has subsided.

Gary spots the buckets.

## EXT. GARDEN – MINUTES LATER

Gary finishes carefully emptying the last bucket of carp into the pond.

Pausing, he glances across the pond.

## FROM THE NICHE IN THE WALL,

The miniature Buddha stares at him with a timeless gaze.

## INT. HOTEL LOBBY – LATER DAY

Madame Clarence is dusting key slots behind the counter, and her  
German Shepherd is lolling on the floor, when Gary comes in the door.

MADAME CLARENCE

(excited) Monsieur,  
Monsieur Jankelevitch est à l'hôpital.

GARY

Hospital?

MADAME CLARENCE

Oui, Broussais.

Gary makes a scribbling gesture with his hand for Madame Clarence to

write down the name. She scrawls it on a scrap of paper and slides it across the counter.

MADAME CLARENCE

Et votre ami vous attend dans votre chambre.

Gary gets only a part of the sentence.

GARY

Ami?

She nods, pointing up stairs. Quizzically, Gary starts up to his room.

INT. GARY'S ROOM – MINUTES LATER

Standing by the window is MARINE MAJOR HARRY MATEUS, 47, a lean man with close-cropped grey hair; clad in blue blazer, grey slacks, white shirt, and red tie.

GARY

Who are you?

MAJOR MATEUS

Who are you, sir, Lieutenant? Major Mateus, U.S. embassy. You're under arrest for disobeying orders, absent without leave...

He makes a grimace as though the next hurts to say.

MAJOR MATEUS

...and collaborating with the enemy.

GARY

Enemy?

MAJOR MATEUS

French police photographed you entering the North Vietnamese Embassy yesterday. We got a call from their people this morning. You conned your way through Le Bourget. But the ride's over.

GARY

I went there with a friend. That's it. I left after ten minutes.

MAJOR MATEUS

Long enough to pass secrets.

The door is still open behind Gary. For a second, it looks as though he is going to make a run for it.

Reading Gary's thoughts, the major opens his blazer. A .45 automatic hangs in a shoulder holster. Handcuffs dangle on his belt.

MAJOR MATEUS

Don't make it worse than it already is.

Gary closes the door.

GARY

How'd you find me?

MAJOR MATEUS

We've been looking for you since you flew out of Saigon. We found out you were in Paris when the French police called the embassy.

GARY

But nobody knew I was staying here.

MAJOR MATEUS

Nice try. There's a French law every hotel has to turn in the names of foreigners within 24 hours. Not many Shaw's with a military ID number.

Tired of wasting time, he motions for Gary to get his overnight bag.

MAJOR MATEUS

You're flying back to the States today.

GARY

I can't...not yet.

MAJOR MATEUS

What are you talking about, Lieutenant?

GARY

I have to tell that woman I brought the letter to...

MAJOR MATEUS

Tell her what?

GARY

I was with the man who wrote it when he died.

MAJOR MATEUS

Save it for the court martial. I already heard about that bullshit story you told at the airport.

GARY

It's true, every word of it, major.

The major stares at Gary.

MAJOR MATEUS

You were willing to destroy your career and risk going to Portsmouth for an enemy soldier?

GARY

A man I gave my word to.

The major motions for Gary to get moving. Tiredly, Gary gets up. The major sees the fatigue in his face.

GARY

Let me go, major. I gotta do this. I promise to turn myself to the embassy in the morning

He stares the major in the eye.

The major reaches inside his jacket and pulling out the .45.

MAJOR MATEUS

No way, Lieutenant. You had your chance. You're gonna come with me one way or another.

Gary starts to step around him, the major cocks the pistol.

MAJOR MATEUS

You don't think I'll shoot.

Gary looks at the major with an unblinking gaze.

GARY

You do what you think is right, major, but know  
I gotta go do this thing or I'll have it on my  
conscience the rest of my life.

The major hesitates then lowers the pistol.

MAJOR MATEUS

I was never here. Got it? I never saw you.

GARY

Yes, sir.

MAJOR MATEUS

And if you're not at the embassy by eleven  
hundred, I'll...

GARY

You don't have to tell me, Major, I'll be there.

Stepping around the marine officer, he opens the door and walks down the hall.

EXT. LE VERT GALANT – SUNSET

The most enchanting spot in Paris – a lone willow tree stands at the end of the island jutting into the middle of the Seine.

Lovers embrace on a bench inside the small enclosed park. Sunlight melts on the rippling water.

Gary hurries down the steps -- clutching something in his hand.

Mui stands under the lone tree.

GARY

I'm sorry I'm late.

MUI

Don't worry. This is the place I wanted to show you yesterday.

Gary doesn't look around – but walks straight toward Mui.

GARY

There's something I wanted to tell you when I saw you at the hospital, but I couldn't. You were already too hurt by the letter.

Not understanding what he is talking about, she moves toward him, provoking Gary to shift back.

MUI

You gave me Tran's letter. What else would have hurt me?

GARY

Tran gave it to me.

Uncomprehending, Mui strains to understand.

MUI

What?

GARY

I was with Tran when he died.

As though struck by lightning – Mui wobbles, struggling to keep her balance.

MUI

Oh God, you killed Tran.

GARY

No, it's not like that. My men thought he was going to shoot me. It was all an accident. My men, they all died, too.

She steps back, shock, anger, pain, flooding her face.

MUI

And all this time you kept the truth from me.

Gary can't stand the look in her face. He stares down at the cobblestone.

GARY

I just couldn't tell you.

MUI

So you waited to destroy me now, after we....

Mui breaks down. About to cry, anger sweeps into the place of tears. Her face locks in a mask of rage.

He moves forward to comfort her.

MUI

No! Don't touch me! Leave me alone?

She flees down the cobblestones toward the steps leading up to the Pont Neuf.

Sunk in shame, Gary walks in the other direction. Reaching the willow tree, he slams his bandaged hand against the trunk.

Gasping in pain, he turns around, seeing Mui reach the top of the stairs and pass in front of the statue of Henri IV.

Realizing he can't let her leave the way she is feeling, he runs through the park.

EXT. PONT NEUF – MOMENTS LATER

Reaching the top of the steps, Gary scans both sides of the quai along the Rive Gauche – then spots Mui hurrying down the rue de Nevers.

Gary waits for the traffic to pass – then darts across the Quai de Conti and hurries up the street Mui took.

EXT. RUE MAZARINE – MINUTES LATER

Reaching an intersection of four narrow streets, Gary looks around, trying to decide which one to take. Mui is nowhere in sight.

INT. BROUSSAIS HOSPITAL WARD – NIGHTFALL

Confused, jittery, Gary walks toward a private room at the end of the ward.

A THIN NURSE IN UNIFORM blocks his path.

THIN NURSE

Vous cherchez, monsieur?

GARY

I need to see Mister Jankelevitch.

THIN NURSE

(heavy accent)

No visitors.

GARY

I must see him, just for a moment.

THIN NURSE.

No, he is too weak.

GARY

Then you must give him an important message.  
Tell him Gary told her everything, everything.

The nurse nods but beckons for Gary to leave the ward.

NURSE

I will tell him, but you must go.

Gary starts down the stairs.

The nurse is about to enter Mr. Jankelevitch's room -- when a doctor steps from an adjacent room and motions for her.

## EXT. MUI'S APARTMENT HOUSE – LATER NIGHT

Frantic to find Mui, Gary repeatedly pushes her downstairs bell. No reply. He steps back and gazes up at the windows of her apartment. No light.

Turning, he hurries down the quai.

## EXT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S – LATER NIGHT

Gary climbs from a taxi that backs up, covering Gary in a red glow of its taillights, before pulling away in the night.

As Gary starts toward the darkened house, CRACKED NOTES OF VIETNAMESE MUSIC rise eerily from the garden.

Stepping past the gate, Gary stops.

SITTING ON THE KNOLL beside the grave of his wife is Monsieur Conday. Drunk, he is winding up the old player.

As the tune ends, he puts on another piece of Vietnamese music -- that warbles and skips on the cracked record.

GARY

Monsieur Conday.

Mui's father looks up at Gary. No hatred. No anger. Only sadness.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Why didn't you tell me? I would have told Mui the right way.

GARY

I'm sorry I waited to tell her. I just didn't want to hurt her any more, or you either. I didn't think it would matter. But I was wrong.

Monsieur Conday picks up a bottle of wine resting behind the record player, and pours himself a glass, and gulps it down.

GARY

Where is she?

MONSIEUR CONDAY

With Phan. She had to tell him that Tran gave  
the letter to you.

Gary stares across the pond.

GARY

How did he take it?

MONSIEUR CONDAY

You do not want to know what he said.

GARY

I do. Please tell me.

MR. CONDAY

He said he said he knew were a killer.

GARY

I swear I didn't do it.

Monsieur Conday ponders the question.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

That's what I thought. No one is such a monster  
to be able to have killed a man and then brought  
the news of his death. But Phan thinks you did.  
And you still are willing to go there?

GARY

If that's where Mui is, yes.

Getting up, Monsieur Conday motions for Gary to follow him.

They start for the gate, leaving the Vietnamese music playing in the night.

EXT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S CAR LATER NIGHT

Gary leans in the passenger door to say good bye.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Sure you don't want me to go talk to him first?

GARY

No, it's something only I can do. Goodbye,  
Monsieur Conday.

He extends his hand into the car. Mui's father grips Gary's hand.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Young man, one thing before you go. I have  
known many men, but there is only one beside  
you who would have done what you did...that  
was Tran.

Gary nods and starts to get out.

MONSIEUR

Bon courage, mon fils.

EXT. PHAN'S STUDIO – NEAR PARC MONTSOURIS – MINUTES  
LATER

Waiting until he sees Monsieur Conday driving away, Gary walks up to  
the door and knocks.

No answer. He knocks again. The door yanks open – revealing gulping  
darkness.

Phan steps into view – dressed in an untucked white silk shirt and beige  
trousers; his eyes are glazed and he wavers on his feet.

PHAN

You!

Gary's anger is coiled, but he controls himself.

GARY

I have to see Mui.

Phan shakes his head.

PHAN

Go away. She never wants to see you again.

GARY

Look, before I go, you must know the truth.

Trying to stand up straight, Phan waits for what Gary has to say.

PHAN

I was with your brother when he died. He tried to help one of my men when he was mistakenly shot by my men. They didn't know he was a doctor. They thought he was going to kill me. It happened too fast.

Seeing that Phan doesn't want to hear, Gary steps closer to Phan.

GARY

Do you think I could have brought your brother's letter if I had killed him? Do you, Phan?

Both men stand in silence.

In the distance, is the sound of sobbing.

Gary leans forward, listening.

Realizing it is Mui sobbing, he drops his head and starts away in the darkness.

Momentarily, Phan pauses, watching the young American move into the night, then he closes the door.

INT. BROUSSAIS HOSPITAL – LATER NIGHT

Gary steps up to Mr. Jankelevitch's door and opens it. The single bed is bare.

Coming off her shift, the thin nurse enters, buttoning her coat over her uniform.

GARY

Where's Mr. Jankelevitch?

THIN NURSE

He passed away an hour ago.

Dumbstruck, Gary puts his hands over his face – then lowers them.

GARY

The message, you did tell him, didn't you?

The nurse appears perplexed.

THIN NURSE

The message?

GARY

That I...that Gary told her everything.

The nurse recalls what he is talking about and raps her forehead in a gesture of reproach.

THIN NURSE

Oh, zut, I forgot. Was it important?

Momentarily dumbstruck, Gary veers toward the exit.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – LATER NIGHT

In the darkness, Gary lies dressed on the bed. A knock at the door.

He gets up to open it. A saddened Madame Clarence stands in the hallway, holding the bird cage with the macaw inside.

MADAME CLARENCE

Monsieur Jankelevitch vous a laissé l'oiseau. Il m'a demandé de vous donner ça au cas où il lui arriverait quelque chose.

Gray guesses what she has said.

GARY

(to himself) I can't take a bird  
with me.

Reluctantly, he accepts the cage. He starts to close the door when Madame

Clarence remembers something.

MADAME CLARENCE

Attendez!

She disappears. Gary takes the cage and puts it on the table.

After a moment, Madame Clarence returns, holding out Mr. Jankelevitch's black book.

MADAME CLARENCE

Et le livre aussi.

As though the book weighed a great deal – Gary takes it in both hands.

Eager to get back to the lobby, the manager steps into the hall and closes the door.

Gary sets the book down on the table -- watching as it opens to the same page. Behind him, feathers rustle.

Gary puts his hands on both sides of the pages -- where the old man had held his hands. Gary studies the names of the victims.

Tilting his head, he stares at the dirtied bandage on his hand.

With one quick gesture, he strips it off. Holding up his palm, he stares at the healing wound and the tiny track of stitches.

EXT. PARIS QUAI – EARLY

Overnight bag in one hand and the bird cage in the other, Gary walks across a bridge over the Seine-- with Notre Dame looming behind him.

He pauses to take out a piece of paper then continues on to Boulevard Saint Michel.

INT. GILBERT JOSEPH BOOKSTORE – MINUTES LATER

Gary walks inside the massive bookstore and approaches a YOUNG SALESCLERK.

GARY

Do you speak English?

SALES CLERK

A leetle.

GARY

Where are the maps?

Being helpful, she motions over to a nearby stand.

SALES CLERK

Which country?

GARY

Vietnam.

EXT. MUI CONDAY'S APARTMENT BUILDING – LATER MORNING

Clutching a red Michelin map next to the bird cage, Gary glances up her apartment windows. No light. He looks down at the cage.

With determination, he opens the entrance door and steps inside.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY – MOMENTS LATER

With the light on, Gary climbs the winding staircase. As he reaches Mui's landing, he hears Asian flute music.

Realizing she is inside, he starts to put the cage down beside the front door, and leave. Instead, he stands listening to the haunting music.

With a decisive gesture, he pushes the doorbell.

The door opens ajar. In white blouse and black pants, Mui peers out, her pale skin seeming to glow in the darkness. Strangers for a moment, she opens the door wider.

MUI

How did you know I was here?

GARY

The music.

She sees the macaw in the cage.

MUI

Where did you get such a beautiful bird?

GARY

The old man I told you about left it to me.

MUI

Left?

GARY

Yes, he died. I can't take it with me. I was going to leave it here for you.

MUI

I could never keep anything in a cage.

She steps back.

MUI

Come in.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT – SAME TIME

Mui leads him into the living room -- where the closed shutters still mute the room in shadows.

Turning off the music, she sits down on the sofa.

Setting down the cage, Gary remains standing.

MUI

I couldn't speak to you last night...when you came to the studio.

GARY

I understand. But I wanted to give you this.

He unfolds the map as sunlight slides through in the cracks in the

shutters.

Walking over, he sits down beside Mui and lays the open map on a coffee table.

GARY

Do you have a pen?

Not sure what is happening, Mui nods and reaches over to take a pen from a drawer in a table beside the sofa. She hands it to him.

Leaning over, it only takes Gary a moment to spot what he is looking for.

Making an X on a blank area, he turns to Mui.

GARY

This is where Tran fell. Twenty-three clicks, I mean kilometers east of Dalat. I hope you can find his remains after the war.

Deeply moved, Mui leans down to study the X on the map.

Seeing the slates of light on the floor, Gary walks to the shutters and opens them.

BEYOND, a view of the rooftops of Paris, the Seine flowing by and the quai coming to life.

Gary opens the window and sets the cage on the window sill. Mui looks up.

MUI

What are you doing?

GARY

Letting it go.

He unlocks the cage door – then slowly tilts the cage.

The bird climbs out on the ledge, shifts around then flaps away.

THE MACAW drifts over the quai then weaves off inside the morning

light.

Gary watches the blue and gold plumage shrinking into the distance -- then he turns to Mui.

GARY

When I found you, all I wanted to do was give you the letter and leave. But you followed me, and the longer I was with you, the more I cared about you. I knew I had to tell you, but I kept waiting until it was too late.

She gets up -- walking to a bookcase by the window.

Leaning against it for support, she stares back at Gary.

MUI

I was only thinking about my pain, not yours. I understand now what it must have taken for you to have come here to Paris, to find me.

She approaches Gary, sitting down beside him.

GARY

Can you forgive me for not telling you everything at once?

MUI

Yes, it would have been too much at once. I would have run away.

He gets up to leave.

GARY

I'd better go.

She stares intently at him.

MUI

Gary, which hand took the letter from Tran?

Gary holds up his right hand.

Mui takes it in both of her hands and kisses the palm.

MUI

Thank you, Gary's hand, for bringing me Tran's letter.

Undone by her gesture, Gary puts his arms around Mui and kisses her softly on the mouth.

Nothing moves in the room. Even the light seems stalled.

Gary breaks the moment, getting up and walking over to the framed photograph of Tran resting on the bookcase.

He stares down at his man's face.

GARY

(whispering) Promets.

MUI(O.S.)

What?

Gary looks back to Mui.

GARY

What Tran kept saying.

Turning back to the photograph, Gary stares at the Tran's face.

GARY

(voice dropping)

I kept my promise.

He picks up his bag.

Seeing he is about to leave, Mui drops her head as though about to break down.

Gary lifts her chin.

GARY

Don't cry, Mui. I found you. That's what matters.

He leans close to her face, touching her cheek.

MUI

I'll never forget you.

She braves a smile.

With a lingering touch to her shoulder, Gary walks out of the apartment.

Mui listens to his footsteps on the stairs -- then starts crying.

INT. STAIRWELL – MOMENTS LATER

Coming down the darkened stairwell, Gary stops on a landing and opens his overnight bag.

He begins to unbutton his shirt.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT – MOMENTS LATER

In a daze, Mui puts back on the Vietnamese flute music and walks to the window.

BELOW, Gary emerges on the sidewalk in his Marine Corps tropical uniform.

He sees a white taxi coming and flags it down.

THE DRIVER pulls up then leans over in the passenger seat, warily looking up at the young man in the unfamiliar military uniform.

DRIVER

Où allez-vous, monsieur?

GARY

The American Embassy.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT – SAME TIME

Holding her hand in the air, Mui watches Gary get into the back seat of the cab.

The car pulls away down the quai -- as the Vietnamese music drifts through the apartment.

Mui stands motionless, watching the white car grow smaller and smaller in the distance.

On the shelf beside Mui rests the letter.

BESIDE IT STANDS THE PHOTOGRAPH OF TRAN IN THE JUNGLE.

WIND STIRS INSIDE THE GREEN LANDSCAPE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

TRAN SITS WRITING A LETTER ON A HIGH ROCK OVERLOOKING A POND.

A HUSH.

A PAUSE.

TRAN LOOKS UP AS A BLUE AND GOLD MACAW GLIDES BY.

**THE END**