

THE DIVIDED HEART

by

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The heart has its reasons reason knows nothing of.

Pascal

EST. SHOT

EXT. VIETNAM 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 SHIPLEY, 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, four 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 fourth, 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, two enemy soldiers, their AK-47's tilted against a niche in the rock, are cooking rice over a low flame -- while A THIRD MAN, rifle slung over his back, is 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 that
patrol is. 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 (CONT'D)
I ever lie to you?

A grim grin as Peetie closes his eyes in the shade cast by Gary's body.

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 tumble 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.

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

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

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

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, 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) SAME TIME

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.

Like black snow, flakes of ash drift through the air.

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

Gary turns, standing 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 wades from the water and hurries 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 North Vietnamese 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.

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.

He struggles 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.

Ranson races up.

 RANSON

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

Gary stands.

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.

The young soldier tries to lift his head. HIS BLOODY HAND grips Gary's wrist as he starts to leave.

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

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

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

 NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER

 Cô hua.

Gary stares transfixed at the bloodied letter.

 NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER (CONT'D)

 Cô hua.

GARY
(repeating the words)
Cô hua?

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

Gary takes the letter IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

With a look of acceptance, the man stares an instant longer at Gary - then dies.

RANSON(O.S.)
Fuck!

Gary looks up.

IN THE SMOLDERING BRUSH NEAR THE ROCK - STANDS THE NORTH VIETNAMESE PHOTOGRAPHER, his camera now dangling from his neck, his AK-47 at the ready.

His gaze shifts back and forth between Gary and the dead soldier - then his eyes lock on Gary.

As he raises his rifle, he seems to waver.

In an instant of hesitation, his nerves give way. Overcome by fear, he turns and bolts back into the jungle.

Ranson takes aim and fires -- splintering twigs and leaves around the enemy soldier, fleeing into the shadows.

RUIZ
Sir!

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 anxiously 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 PAST.

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. Maps, letters, toilet paper, all 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.

Gary stares down in horror as the helicopter pulls away from the chattering rifle fire and stray tracers 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 one is occupied, adding a sense of isolation to the 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 right 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, sweating profusely.

INT. OFFICER'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER

With his right hand bandaged, 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 his bearings, 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 bright red.

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, why not?

Putting down her polish, the girl comes over to sit beside Gary. She motions to the bartender.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Champagne.

She smiles broadly at Gary.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)

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 at the bar girl's mask of lipstick and eyeliner -- behind which appears fatigue and sadness.

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

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)
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. He goes with the impulse, removing the letter.

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

The woman isn't 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 try 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 reads the word again and nods.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

Yes, he say he with soldiers, but
he come back you. He say he think
you everyday.

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

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)

He say, he come back Hanoi and fly
you soon.

The bar girl looks up.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)

Hanoi number-ten.

GARY

I know. What else does he say?

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL

He say, tell hospital people he
come work with you.

She sees the writing stop in mid-sentence.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)

No more letter.

She stares at the dried splotches on the paper.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)

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.

GARY

Can you tell me her name?

The bar girl studies the name barely legible above the blood-smear address on the envelope.

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL
Mui Conday.

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

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL (CONT'D)
Him dead?

GARY
Yes, him dead.

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

GARY (CONT'D)
Oh, what does cô hua mean?

VIETNAMESE BAR GIRL
Cô hua mean 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 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 hands of a Vietnamese girl in a white *aô dai* dress, sobbing at his departure.

Abruptly, the truck lurches away, and the girl SEEMS TO FALL FORWARD IN SHOW-MOTION to the dusty street.

The girl lies momentarily motionless.

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 decided to take a taxi.

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

CORPORAL
Sir, watt about your sea bag.

Without stopping, he glances back.

GARY
Say I forgot it. Ship it to First
Force Recon at Camp Del Mar.

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 starts through the lobby.

INT. AIR FRANCE COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

A SALLOW AIR FRANCE FRENCH 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 who 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 gapes 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. It'll cost a lot.

GARY

I'm not worried about money.

TICKET AGENT

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

GARY

Eleven! 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

(sharply)

I'm no 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 tricolor.

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

Thanks, I'll be all right.

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

It's a long flight.

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 stares at the wooden box. Leaning over, he pats the lid.

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 till we get there?

CREW CHIEF

About twelve hours. We've got to pick up cargo in Cairo. You hide behind the pallets when we land.

Gary leans back, spent.

The crew chief laughs through stained teeth - then glances at the casket.

BELGIAN CREW CHIEF

Not much company, huh?

GARY

Yeah, the silent type.

Grinning at Gary's reply, 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 siren and red light 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 MARCOUX, 46, a lean, chain-smoker, in a rumpled suit, studies the Vietnamese letter then puts it on the desk beside Gary's overnight bag.

His assistant, LIONEL BOURDET, 37, better dressed and officious, finishing 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, studying Gary's military identification card.

BOURDET

Allez, on apelle l'ambassade. Les Américains vont s'occuper de lui. Soit il ment, soit il est dingue.

Marcoux hasn't made up his mind yet.

MARCOUX

And no one helped you get on that plane?

GARY

Like I said, I went on board inside the crate with the statue.

Marcoux motions for the uniform cop to bring in the crew chief.

The officer leaves and returns momentarily with the Sabena crew chief, trying to hide his fear.

MARCOUX

(in French)

Did you see this man on your plane?

The crew chief shakes his head.

MARCOUX (CONT'D)

(to Gary)

Have you ever seen this man before?

GARY

Yes, I saw him...

Everyone freezes.

GARY (CONT'D)

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

The crew chief breathes easier.

Marcoux studies Gary, then motions for the uniformed cop to let the man go.

The older French official lights another Gitane and studies Gary.

MARCOUX

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

GARY

She's somewhere in Paris.

BOURDET

(scoffing)

Somewhere in Paris. What a stupid lie.

Marcoux 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 died thinking I promised to deliver his letter.

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.

Marcoux 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.

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

Bourdet sees his boss is starting to waver.

BOURDET
 Jules, ne l'écoute pas!)

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

MARCOUX
 You are a marine.

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

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

3ÈME FUSILIERS MARINS

MARCOUX (CONT'D)
 I also fought in Indo-Chine,
 monsieur, in the French marines.

Gary stares the man in the eyes.

GARY
 Then you know what it's like.

Marcoux lights another cigarette.

MARCOUX

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

Simultaneously, Gary is relieved and the younger official furious.

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

GARY

How do I get to Paris from here?

Marcoux motions to the uniformed cop.

MARCOUX

Escortez-le jusqu'à la station de bus Air-France pour les Invalides

Turning, Marcoux holds out his hand to Gary.

MARCOUX (CONT'D)

Bon courage. I hope you find her.

In an instant, he realizes Gary can't shake hands with a bandage on.

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

As the door closes, the junior official gets up.

BOURDET

La loi française, vous vous asseyez-dessus!

MARCOUX

Vous n'avez jamais fait la guerre, Lionel? A part bien sûr avec votre femme?

BOURDET

(sputtering)

Non, mais...

Marcoux motions for his colleague to shut up.

MARCOUX

Il n'y a pas de mais, c'est oui ou c'est non. On lui a donné sa chance, à cet homme.

The senior official rubs his hand across the tatoo on his forearm.

MARCOUX

Moi, j'aimerais croire assez fort en quelque chose pour risquer tout ce que j'ai pour ça.

Crushing out his cigarette, Marcoux strides out of the office.

Bourdet grabs a pen, glances at the clock then writes something 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, 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 for 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 where AN OLDER FRENCHMAN is stacking newspapers.

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 RED GUIDEBOOK off a rack and opens it, flicking through the pages until coming to...AMBASSADES, GARE DU TRAIN...HÔPITAUX.

He holds up the book.

KIOSK OWNER

Hôpitaux.

GARY

Thanks. 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 the same 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 for 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: À BAS L'IMPÉRIALISME AMÉRICAIN, POUR LA VICTOIRE DU PEUPLE VIETNAMIEN, VIVE HO-CHI-MINH.

Several display unfurled Viet Cong and North Vietnam flags. Two brandish Communist Party banners.

Seeing the flags, Gary freezes.

A YOUNG STUDENT misreads his rapt expression for sympathy.

YOUNG STUDENT
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
Allez vous asseoir et attendez votre tour.

Vexed at not understanding her, 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 (CONT'D)
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 French)
 This young man is looking for a Dr.
 Mui Conday.

FRUMPY BUREAUCRAT
 (in French)
 Never heard of her.

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. JANEKEVITCH
 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
 persist 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, then sighing, he closes the red book.

GARY
 Her friend is dead and she doesn't
 know.

Mr. Janekevitch 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 the man's letter, too.

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 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 walk 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 at the man's ashen face.

GARY
Look, I appreciate your help...

Mr. Jankelevitch holds up his hand, motioning he will be all
right. Standing, he walks on.

With a look of 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 at his bandage.

MR. JANKELETICH
Where did you come from to find
this doctor?

GARY
A long way.

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Vietnam?

GARY
How do you know?

The old man smiles wistfully.

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Only war makes people do things
like you're doing. 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-PERES - LATER DAY

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

Mr. Jankelevitch turns to make a thumbs-up sign to Gary then walks over.

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 would never have found her without you. Thank you.

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

As Gary holds the door open, Mr. Jankelevitch steps outside into the acrid fumes of tear gas...and begins gagging.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

There must be a manifestation.

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 14th arrondissement.

MR. JANEKELEVITCH

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

GARY

If you want me to.

The old man tilts his head, studying Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Promise?

Gary looks away.

GARY

I hate making promises.

The old man nods.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

I know, because some are impossible to keep. Then don't promise. Come back and tell me what happened...if you want.

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 wait for him.

MR. JANKELEVITCH (CONT'D)

Write down my address, young man, or you won't know how to find your way back.

EXT. LA PITIÉ-SALPÊTRIÈRE - SUNSET

A lone figure crosses the vast open grounds of the 17th century hospital complex.

INT. LA PITIÉ-SALPÊTRIÈRE - 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 HOSPITAL - 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 YOUNG EURASIAN WOMAN.

MUI CONDAY, 27, has long, black hair and alabaster skin. Her eyes are large and almond-shaped.

Her delicate features 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.

The medical students applaud and rise to file out of the auditorium.

Stunned, Gary moves back toward the wall, all the while staring at the young woman coming up the aisle at the far end of the stage.

Mui heads directly toward Gary, pausing to answer questions from two students following her.

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

Mui moves into the corridor, passing him.

Gary follows her 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.

Bracing himself, Gary steps forward, holding out the blood-stained envelope.

GARY

Dr. Conday, the man who wrote this
is dead. I'm sorry.

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 exist, leaving Mui staring stunned at the envelope.

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

She hurries after him.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Gary strides down the steps.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - MOMENTS 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, 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 in line at a corner stand.

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 direction Gary's cab has gone.

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 CORPORAL IN DRESS BLUES standing at a guard post inside the metal gate.

GARY
I need to see the military liaison officer.

MARINE CORPORAL
You an American citizen, sir?

GARY
Yes.

MARINE
May I see you passport, sir?

GARY
It's back in the States.

The sentry gapes 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. It's a little complicated,
Corporal. 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 (CONT'D)
Name and serial number, sir.

GARY
Lieutenant Gary Shipley. 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 hurry toward the
gate.

MUI
Sir!

Gary turns and is startled to see Mui.

MUI (CONT'D)
Why did you leave like that? You
can't just give me Tran's letter
and say he is dead, then disappear.
Please you must tell me how what
happened to him?

Struggling with what to do, Gary abruptly moves 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.

Mui sees something is wrong.

MUI (CONT'D)
What do they want?

GARY
I came to Paris illegally.

MUI
To give me Tran's letter?

He nods.

She glances at Gary's bandaged hand then looks back at him.

MUI (CONT'D)
I need to know where he is.

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

MUI (CONT'D)
Oh please, Sir, don't go yet. You
brought me Tran's letter. Just talk
with me for a few minutes.

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.

The marines fade back inside the embassy grounds.

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

GARY
I'm really sorry.

MUI
You're certain he's dead?

Gary turns to the young doctor.

GARY
That's what Peetie told me.

MUI

Peetie?

GARY

A marine in my unit. We were wounded together.

Mui tenses.

MUI

You were a marine?

GARY

I still am. That's why they were at the gate back there. 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 (CONT'D)

He told me that man who wrote the letter was dying and got Peetie to promise to get the letter to you.

MUI

Your friend speaks Vietnamese?

GARY

No, Peetie said he just repeated what your friend kept saying. A nurse told him it meant promise.

MUI

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

Feeling himself being ensnared in a lie, Gary turns away, staring at Place de la Concorde.

GARY

No, Peetie was on point. He came back with the letter just before we were attacked. I never saw your friend.

MUI

Tran was more than a friend.

Gary doesn't know how to respond.

GARY
Peetie realized he'd made a promise
to a dying man.

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

Gary looks Mui in the eye.

GARY
Peetie died. Before he lost
consciousness, he asked me to bring
the letter to you. I really didn't
I'd really find you, but I promised
Peetie I'd try.

Mui is deeply moved. She drops her head.

MUI
I am sorry for your friend.

GARY
And to your...Tran.

They emerge from the trees and stop in the light. A long
silence.

Gary glances back in the direction of the American embassy.

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

MUI
I don't even know your name.

GARY
Gary Shipley.

MUI
I am Mui Conday.

Gary nods.

GARY
I know.

MUI
How did you ever find me? My
address is smeared on the envelope.

GARY
An old man helped me.

MUI

Mr. Shipley, would you do one last thing for me?

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

MUI (CONT'D)

Please come tell my father about your friend and what he told you about Tran?

Gary starts tensing up.

MUI (CONT'D)

My parents adopted Tran and his brother when their parents were killed in Indo-China.

GARY

I can't tell someone else. It was hard enough to tell you. I can't do it again.

MUI

Don't worry, I will tell Poppa.

GARY

But there's nothing else I can tell you about what happened.

MUI

Yes, but hearing about the letter and your friend from you is the closest thing to hearing it from him in person.

Gary doesn't want to go and Mui sees it.

MUI (CONT'D)

Please. You have come so far, a little farther won't...

Struggling to find the right words, she falls silent.

GARY

But I'm an American, an enemy of your...friend.

MUI

But you're not my enemy or my father's. He spent many years in Indo-China. It would mean so much for him to hear about Saigon...from someone just there.

GARY
I'm sorry. I just can't.

MUI
Poppa's house is less than an hour
by train.

Gary can't look Mui in the eye.

She points her hand on his arm.

MUI (CONT'D)
Please, for all that you've done
for Tran, come.

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.

AN ADORABLE ARAB 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 (CONT'D)
Have you been to Paris before?

GARY
No, first time.

MUI
Do you have friends here?

GARY
No, just the old man who helped me
find you.

She pauses.

MUI

It hurts knowing Tran is dead, but the pain is less because of your friend Petie, this old man, and you. You all helped bring Tran's letter to me.

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'll probably be given a court martial and forced to resign my commission. But I can deal with that. I've had it with fighting.

MUI

You saw a lot?

GARY

More than I ever wanted to on the last patrol.

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 crowd 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.

MUI
Are you all right?

Gary shakes his head.

MUI (CONT'D)
Stay with me.

The alarm sounds that the door will soon close.

Mui takes Gary's arm, and they exit the train 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. A low wall encircles the property.

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

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

On the crest of the knoll, A BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH OF A VIETNAMESE WOMAN is embedded in stone, with Vietnamese writing inscribed below it.

Mui points toward the rise of earth.

MUI
Mother's ashes are there. She liked to sit there in the summer and watch the fish. You wait here. I'll 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.

Mui's father turns to stare at Gary, then starts walking toward him.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Thank you, Sir, for coming.

Gary nods, dropping his gaze.

GARY
I would have wanted someone to do
the same for me.

MONSIEUR
Very few men would have done what
you did. Come. Let us go in the
house and talk.

Monsieur Conday starts toward the house.

Mui comes up beside Gary.

MUI
Thank you, Gary.

For a second, he rubs his bandaged hand.

MUI (CONT'D)
Does it hurt?

GARY
Not as much as being here.

MUI
But you know you had to come, once
I found you.

They follow Monsieur Conday 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 & white photographs. On the wall a gun rack contains a shotgun and two dated 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.

After three Pernods, Monsieur Conday seems adrift in memories.

MONSIEUR CONDAY (CONT'D)
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 (CONT'D)
But then I would never have met
Mui's mother in Saigon after I was
released.

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

Impulsively, he takes down an old rifle with a sniper scope.

MONSIEUR CONDAY (CONT'D)
I bet you don't know what this is.

GARY
Looks like a Nambu.

Monsieur Conday looks impressed.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
How do you know about Japanese
rifles?

GARY
My father fought in the Pacific,
with Edson's Raiders.

The door opens and Mui comes in - surprised to see Gary holding a rifle.

MUI
(in French)
Please, Poppa, no guns tonight.

She nods toward Gary.

Monsieur Conday gets "the look" and reaches for the rifle.

As Gary hands it to him, Monsieur Conday sets it back in the rack.

GARY
What'd you say?

MUI
I just told Poppa to come help me
with dinner.

GARY
What can I do?

MUI
Nothing. You're our guest.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Gary wanders through the living room - staring at the
photographs on the wall.

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

Mesmerized, 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 (CONT'D)
That's Tran. Handsome, isn't he?

Gary nods self-consciously.

MUI (CONT'D)
He didn't have to go to war. He had
a French passport, but he wanted to
help the wounded.

GARY
Help the wounded?

MUI
Tran was a combat doctor.

Gary goes cold.

GARY
Not a soldier?

MUI
No. He didn't believe in violence,
only in preventing it, or, in his
case, treating it.

Gary shakes his head.

GARY
I didn't know.

MUI
How could you?

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 (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Tentatively, Gary turns back to gaze at Mui.

GARY
I just need to be alone for a
minute.

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.

He turns to her.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
(in French)
I have to call and tell Phan.

MUI
I know, Poppa. It is better you
tell him.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Mr. Conday walks toward the telephone, he glances outside and sees Gary sitting on the lawn in the darkness.

Walking on to the phone, he dials a number.

EXT. PATIO AREA - LATER NIGHT

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

OUTSTRETCHED ON HIS BACK on the grass, Gary lies motionless under the night sky.

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

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

His eyes open and he looks up.

MUI

It's time for dinner.

Gary sits up.

GARY

This is the first time I felt relaxed since Saigon.

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.

GARY

He sounds like a very sensitive person.

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 (CONT'D)

Tran would like you, too. I mean...

GARY

I know what you mean.

MUI

(faltering)

...would have liked you.

EXT. PATIO TABLE - LATER NIGHT

With dinner finished, Gary is warding off an attempt by Monsieur Conday to offer him a Cognac digestive which Mui's father has already poured for himself.

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

MUI

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

MONSIEUR CONDAY

I'll be fine.

Mui gets 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 (CONT'D)

I got him to stop smoking again.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

(laughing)

Until she leaves.

Grinning, Mui excuses herself and goes into the house.

Monsieur Conday watches his daughter - and grows wistful.

MONSIEUR CONDAY (CONT'D)

Mui is like her mother. On the outside, strong, determined; but on the inside, delicate. I try never to forget the unseen part always there.

A GATE RAPPER SOUNDS

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Would you please 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.

In the splotched light stands THE NORTH VIETNAMESE SOLDIER WHO RAN AWAY AT THE POND when the dying Tran gave Gary the letter.

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

His face explodes with recognition.

PHAN
(in Vietnamese)
You!

It takes a Gary a second longer, but he recognizes Phan as well.

GARY
You!

Phan leaps forward, grabbing Gary by the throat and hurling him backward.

Caught off balance, Gary struggles to stay on his feet and to keep the man from choking him.

Phan pushes Gary nosily against the wall. A few stones topple off as they thrash back and forth.

Abruptly, Mui runs up the path, thrusting herself between the struggling men.

MUI
(in Vietnamese)
Phan, stop it!

PHAN
(in Vietnamese)
He's...he's...

MUI
(in Vietnamese?)
...American, and our guest. Let go of him.

Phan releases Gary then steps back, catching his breath.
Monsieur Conday emerges from the corner of the patio.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
(calling out in French)
Who is it?

MUI
(in French)
C'est Phan, Poppa

PHAN
(in Vietnamese)
How could you bring him here?

MUI
(in Vietnamese?)
He's not the enemy, Phan.

Phan almost loses it again.

MUI (CONT'D)
(in Vietnamese)
Phan, I mean it. No talk of the war
tonight.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
(in French)
What's going on out there?

MUI
(in French)
Nothing, Poppa. Phan's here. We're
coming.

She puts herself between the startled Gary and the agitated Phan.

PHAN
(harshly in French)
He didn't say there was a killer
here

Phan stares at Gary.

MUI
(softly in French)
He's the man who brought Tran's
letter.

Stunned, Phan stares at Gary who doesn't avert his gaze. Phan turns back to Mui.

PHAN
 (loudly, in French)
 Why would he do that?

MUI
 (in French)
 Because his friend who died had
 promised Tran he would bring the
 letter to me. He took it for him.

Monsieur Conday limps out in the shadows of the garden.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
 What's all the arguing about?

MUI
 We're just talking, Poppa.

Seeing Monsieur Conday approach, Phan steps back.

Monsieur Conday walks up and kisses Phan on both cheeks.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
 I see you've met the man who
 brought Tran's letter.

Tran glares at Gary.

PHAN
 Yes, I've met him.

Monsieur Conday motions for everyone to come back to the house. Gary and Mui start first, with Phan following.

EXT. PATIO - LATER NIGHT

The air bristles with tension. Over coffee, Mui, Phan and Gary wait out a truncated truce.

Monsieur Conday has had another drink and can't sense the seething animosity directed at Gary from Phan.

Mui keeps trying to soften Phan's razor-sharp remarks, to keep the peace.

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

PHAN
 (startled)
 Gary?

MUI
That's his name, Phan.

Monsieur Conday takes another sip of his drink.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Phan went over to do a photo
journalism article on his brother.

GARY
(numbly)
His brother?

Mui puts her hand to her mouth.

MUI
Oh, I'm sorry. I should have told
you when Phan arrived.

GARY
(numbly)
Your brother?

PHAN
Yes, a doctor you Americans
murdered.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Ça suffit, Phan.

MUI
Gary's not responsible, Phan. He
wasn't there.

Enraged by the remark, Phan is ready to blurt out everything,
then calms down realizing he has lose everything if Gary told
about running away to let his brother die.

Monsieur Conday wants to change the subject.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
My wife and I adopted Tran and Phan
when they're parents were killed in
a *plastique* explosion. No one ever
knew which side did it.

PHAN
A French bomb...but probably
American explosives.

Mui fumes, seeing Phan is not letting up on Gary.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Tran volunteered to go work last summer at...what's the name of the hospital, Mui?

MUI

Bach Mai.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

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

Mui drops her head.

MUI

(whispering)

Tran went south with the soldiers when he promised me he would come back.

Monsieur Conday puts his arm on Mui's shoulder.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

That's when Phan decided to go do an article on combat doctors.

GARY

(willing to confront Phan)

When was the last time you saw your brother?

Phan won't answer Gary.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Phan, what's gotten into you? He asked you a question.

If looks could kill, Gary would be dead.

PHAN

The last time I saw him was in the fighting.

MUI

You said were separated crossing a river, right, Phan?

Not looking at Mui, Phan nods.

Gary studies the Vietnamese man then turns to Mui.

GARY

Why didn't you go to work at the hospital in Hanoi with Tran?

MUI

I will go when the war is over, and they need doctors for the wounded. I am half-Asian, half-Caucasian, I can't take sides against myself, can I?

Phan picks up a cutting knife, lowering it below the table.

Gary sees his gesture.

GARY

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

He stands.

MUI

I'm going back to Paris with you.

Dropping the knife on the ground, Phan gets up.

PHAN

No, I'll drive you both.

Gary stares at Phan's tense face.

GARY

Thanks, the train's no trouble.

Gary approaches Monsieur Conday.

GARY (CONT'D)

Thank you very much for the hospitality, sir.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Come back again. I want to hear about Saigon after all these years.

Phan steps closer to Mui.

PHAN

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

MUI

Why not?

PHAN
Because...

Again, knowing he is trapped implicating Gary's presence at Tran's killing he will reveal his own cowardice.

Phan clutches his fists.

PHAN (CONT'D)
(in Vietnamese))
...because I hate him!

MUI
(in Vietnamese)
You can't hate someone you've never met. Stop acting childish.

Phan stalks away through garden and through the gate.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
What's the matter with him?

Momentarily, an engine flairs and a car races off.

MONSIEUR CONDAY (CONT'D)
You'll have to excuse Phan. He's very upset by the news of his Tran's death.

GARY
I understand.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
(almost pleading))
Are you sure won't want to stay and see some old photographs I have of Dalat?

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

Gary momentarily tenses then relaxes.

MUI
Save them for the next time Gary comes, Poppa. We've got to go.

INT. LARDY TRAIN STATION - LATER NIGHT

A cold wind - 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 different emotions right now.

MUI

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

Mui gazes down the railroad tracks.

MUI (CONT'D)

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

GARY

You fell in love with Tran?

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

MUI

Ah, the American distinction, in love rather than love by itself.

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

MUI (CONT'D)

Strange, how one word makes all the difference in the world. Tran and I decided to see what would happen after he left. Absence would bring us closer or...farther apart.

She looks down the tracks.

MUI (CONT'D)

But something changed when he chose not to come back.

A thought surfaces inside her.

MUI (CONT'D)

And I was hurt he wrote Phan to tell me he was staying on.

She bites her lip, staring into the night.

MUI (CONT'D)

Don't think I didn't respect Tran for choosing to stay and help, but that he didn't tell me first. Something was no longer between us, maybe the "in" in love.

Separating from Gary, she walks out to the edge of the platform and stares into the woods beyond the tracks.

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

MUI (CONT'D)

I sound selfish, don't I?

GARY

No. No matter what people say, there is a limit to waiting.

She smiles sadly.

MUI

Yes, and now there is no more waiting for Tran.

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 (CONT'D)

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 CITROËN drives parallel to the tracks - maintaining the same speed as the train.

EXT. ST. GERMAIN METRO STATION - LATER NIGHT

Gary and Mui come up the steps and start down the boulevard. Mui slides her hand into his arm.

MUI

You all right? You seem so quiet.

GARY
I'm just thinking.

MUI
Sometimes it's good to stop
thinking and just feel.

Gary glances over at her.

GARY
How do you know when it's the right
time to feel?

MUI
(warm smile)
You feel it.

GARY
I guess it sounds crazy to say it's
like I'm in a dream after coming
out of a nightmare.

MUI
What's wrong with that, if the
nightmare's over and you're in a
dream, especially if you're not
alone?

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

With the Seine gliding through the night below the riverbank,
Gary looks up at the entrance to Mui's fifth-storey building.

GARY
You live here?

MUI
I sublease here. If my mentor
didn't own the apartment and live
in 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 little while.
You're my only bridge back to Tran.
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. It is as though Paris is all mine from here.

Awed by the view of Notre Dame, Ile de la Cité, le Vert Galant 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 felt what they meant.

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 (CONT'D)

I don't believe it. One minute I'm clamped off on a guide rope, the next thing I know 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 (CONT'D)

Look, Doctor Conday.

She appears hurt by the formality.

MUI

Mui.

GARY

Mui, you know that day we got it.

Coming forward, she puts her finger over his lips.

MUI

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

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

Mui studies her pale features in the darkness and nestles
against him.

MUI (CONT'D)

I can feel your heart beating very
fast.

He opens his eyes, gazing at her.

GARY

I don't know what to say.

MUI

Say nothing.

GARY

But what should I do?

MUI

Do nothing. Just let me say what a
brave man you are and let me hold
you.

She puts her arms around him.

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 lurches
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
That's Tran, in the war.

MUI
Yes, Phan took that picture and brought it back.

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

MUI (CONT'D)
How did you know it was Tran?

GARY
His picture's your father's living room.

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

Gary starts for the door.

MUI(O.S.)
Where are you going?

GARY
I don't know, but I gotta go.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

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

MUI
Don't leave 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 to war. But I can try. I can listen.

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

MUI (CONT'D)
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.

She takes two steps down and holds out her hands.

MUI (CONT'D)
Please.

He stops on the stairs and looks back.

MUI (CONT'D)
Gary, 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 jump in and drown himself. Dr.
Blanchard said, "No, don't!" And he
turned and looked at her. "Why not?"
he asked.

Seeing she has Gary's attention, Mui comes down the stairs.

MUI (CONT'D)
"That's very unfair," said Dr.
Blanchard. "If I say something
stupid and you jump, I'll be left
feeling guilty. 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 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. Every
Parisian can tell you how to get
there.

Leaning over the railing, Mui stares at Gary with an
unblinking gaze.

MUI (CONT'D)
I'll be waiting at one, then I'll
tell you what happened.

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 cab pulls away.

HEADLIGHTS OFF, THE BLACK CITROËN 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 killed my brother.

Gary backs up, automatically on the defence.

GARY
I didn't. My men did. They thought
he killed Peetie. It was a mistake.
It happened so fast.

Phan pulls at his hair.

PHAN
How did you get here? What are you
doing with Mui?

GARY
You know, your brother asked me to
bring her his letter.

Phan looks wounded every time he sees Gary.

PHAN
How did you find Mui?

GARY
I don't know. I just did.

PHAN
But why would an American soldier
do that?

Gary shrugs.

GARY
I guess because he kept saying cô
hua.

Phan winces, hearing the word.

GARY (CONT'D)
And I said it because I thought it
would make it easier for him if he
died thinking I understood. I
didn't know it meant promise. When
I did, I had to come.

PHAN
You lie.

GARY
I swear it's the truth. You think I
could come all this way for a lie?

With warring feelings, Phan looks anguished.

PHAN
Don't go near Mui again - or I will
kill you.

With a look of resignation, Gary continues toward the hotel
as 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, a plump woman in her 60's, emerges from an alcove where she has been watching a small black & white television.

The hotel owner glances up and sees Gary.

GARY
Monsieur Jan...Jank...

MADAME CLARENCE
Jankelevitch. Chambre trente et 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 Shipley, Mr. Jankelevitch.

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Entrez. Come in.

INT. MR. JANKELEVITCH'S ROOM - SAME TIME

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

A MAGNIFICENT BLUE & GOLD MACAW sits on a perch in a brass cage, ruffling its feathers and cawing.

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 (CONT'D)
Not much to show for a life-time.

Gary feels embarrassed caught at what he was doing.

GARY
How are you feeling?

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Better. 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, she was very hurt. But she got me to go tell her father what happened?

MR. JANKELEVITCH
That must have been very difficult.

GARY
It's all been difficult, but I couldn't tell her my men shot her friend. I lied and 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 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.

GARY

What difference would it make?

MR. JANKELEVITCH

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

GARY

I wanted to tell her ever since I gave her the letter, but I just couldn't. Tonight I was going to tell her everything, but she said not to talk about the war anymore, so didn't. She asked me to see her again tomorrow. I'll tell her then.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

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 (CONT'D)

Please bring me the book in the top drawer.

Gary crosses the room and opens the dresser. Inside rests A BLACK LEATHER BOOK WITHOUT 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 (CONT'D)

Set it down and watch what it does.

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

Gary looks at the old man.

MR. JANKELEVITCH (CONT'D)

It's no mystery, simply a book that's been opened so many times to the same page that it opens there by itself.

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 staring at the BLACK INK COLUMNS MOVING 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 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.

Gary stares down at the open book.

Mr. Jankelevitch moves his right hand down the page - while looking at Gary.

MR. JANKELEVITCH (CONT'D)

(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 (CONT'D)
Lev Jankelevitch, 44, rue Vieille
du Temple, January 17, 1943.
Shipment Z-03731. Ravensbruck.
Dead, February 19th, 1943. My son.

Gary touches the old man on the shoulder.

GARY
I'm sorry.

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Everyone is sorry. The world is
sorry, but it happened no less.

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

MR. JANKELEVITCH (CONT'D)
We fled to France after Poland was
invaded. I found no work in Paris
so 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 in the mine. I thought I
could wait for a day until I was
rested. But when I arrived at her
room in the Marais, they had
already taken my wife and son 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 (CONT'D)
You see, one day made the
difference between life and death.

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

He starts opening the door.

MR. JANKELEVITCH
Where will you stay tonight?

GARY
I haven't thought about it.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Take a room here. The hotel isn't fancy, but it's clean. Ask Madame Clarence to give you one on my floor. There is more light in the morning.

GARY

Is there anything I can get you?

The old man turns off the light -- so that his sunken eyes seem to glow in the dark.

MR. JANKELEVITCH

Bring me back 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, closes the door and starts down the stairs.

Inside the room, Mr. Jankelevitch coughs.

A moment of silence - then the rustling of wings.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

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

MADAME CLARENCE

Vot' Passeport)

GARY

I don't have one.

MADAME CLARENCE

Ça, par exemple! Tous les étrangers doivent avoir un passeport.

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 spots Gary watching him and goes back inside his apartment.

INT. GARY'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Unable to sleep, Gary sits bare-chested in bed, his head tilted back against the wall.

From beyond the open window comes a TAPPING SOUND. Then another TAPPING, and another.

Suddenly hammered by fatigue, Gary listens to the strange tapping before falling asleep.

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 PEOPLE 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:

INSTITUT 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.

GARY
The blind leading the blind with me
in the lead.

EXT. MEDICI FOUNTAIN - NEXT DAY

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

Coming up the path in sports coat, 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
That's we all need, huh, a true
listener?

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 this afternoon...but something's come up.

She falls silent - then looks up at Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)

Phan called.

Gary tenses. She touches his arm.

MUI (CONT'D)

Don't worry. 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. We'd where he is buried; and after the war, we can bring him home.

She shifts her briefcase, looking up at Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)

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

GARY

Don't you want me to go with you?

Her expression tightens.

MUI

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)

You brought him here?

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 He wanted to come, Phan.

Gary notices a plaque over the entrance of the building:

AMBASSADE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE DU VIETNAM

Mui sees Gary tense.

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

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

Gary stares at Phan.

GARY
 And you do?

Confused by the remark, Mui looks at Gary then at Phan, who angrily starts up the steps.

MUI
 Why did you say that?

Not replying, Gary watches Phan enter the embassy - then turns to Mui.

GARY
 I'm tired of being the target for
 his hatred.

MUI
 It's the war.

GARY
 It's not only that, Mui. It's
 because of you, too. Come on, let's
 go in.

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.

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

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

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

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 casualty list. On the other side of her, Phan turns and stares at Gary, who looks right back at him.

Both men stand facing off 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 (CONT'D)
Tran's not here. They haven't found
him yet. I should never have
thought they would.

GARY
Why not?

MUI
He died in the south. They can't
bring their dead back to the north.

GARY
No, but they could mark where he
was buried.

Mui doesn't respond to Gary's words of hope. Gary steps back to let an elderly couple come forward.

Seeing a name on the list, the couple seems to sag, and 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 can't stay here. I'll wait for
you in the café.

He hurries down the corridor - as more Vietnamese arrive to scan the list, making the taller Caucasian appear incongruous amid the shorter 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 back 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 (CONT'D)

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 -- then all turn as 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 back 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 whispers to his cronies then glances over, only heightening Gary's sense of isolation.

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

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

MUI
(in Vietnamese)
You're not my guardian, Phan.

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

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

MUI
(in Vietnamese)
No, he wouldn't.

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

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 Stop it, Phan. Gary isn't your
 enemy.

Phan glances at his companions.

PHAN
 (in Vietnamese)
 He's their enemy

Phan makes an aside to the veterans. They bolt upright.

ACROSS THE ROOM, Gary sees trouble coming.

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 What did you tell them?

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

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 With a letter from your brother.

PHAN
 (in Vietnamese)
 While killing other Vietnamese.

Mui regards Phan with great disappointment.

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 No wonder the peace talks aren't
 work, Phan. You don't want to end
 the war.

PHAN
 (in Vietnamese)
 How can I want peace when he....

GARY sees Phan freeze - staring at him in the mirror.

MUI
 (in Vietnamese)
 He what, Phan?

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, Mui starts toward Gary.

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

Mui stops beside Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)
 We'd better go. Phan's upset.

Gary gets up and follows Mui out of the cafe.

Seeing them leaving together, Phan rises from his chair and blocks their path.

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

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

PHAN
 (harshly in French)
 Your life is my brother's business
 -- and I am here in his place.

Sensing what the argument is about, Gary steps between Mui and Phan.

GARY
 This has nothing to do with your
 brother, Phan. It's about Mui.

Phan violently slaps Gary.

GARY (CONT'D)
 That's nothing.

Again, Phan swings his hand to slap Gary. But Gary catches his hand, squeezing it until Phan winces.

GARY (CONT'D)

One is all you get. The next one's mine.

Gary throws Phan's hand back so hard the man almost loses his balances.

The Vietnamese veterans rise up, ready to attach Gary.

Seeing them shift forward, Mui takes Gary's hand and pulls him toward the door.

They hurry through the cafe under the stares of the Vietnamese men.

EXT. FRONT OF CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

As Gary and Mui emerge on the sidewalk, Phan hurries out behind them.

PHAN

Si tu vas avec lui, tu es une pute!

Stung by the insult, Mui keeps walking.

GARY

What'd he say?

MUI

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

Gary wheels around, ready to fight Phan.

DIRECTING TRAFFIC in the middle of the busy intersection, a gendarme sees the altercation and starts over.

Seeing the policeman approaching, Phan walks back into the cafe.

Mui grabs Gary's arm and they start down the sidewalk.

Seeing the altercation is over, the gendarme returns to directing traffic.

EXT. PARIS STREET - AFTERNOON

Ominous gray clouds are massing over the city as Gary and Mui stand at corner, waiting for a traffic light to change.

GARY

I'm sorry I caused you so much trouble with Phan.

MUI

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

GARY

Anyone but him.

MUI

Phan knows I'll never be with him, but he doesn't want me to be with you now that Tran's gone.

Gary glances back toward the cafe. Phan is nowhere in sight.

GARY

I shouldn't have gone to the embassy.

MUI

It's my fault. I wanted you to. Come.

As the light changes, they cross the street.

Thunder rumbles in the distance. Sunlight disappears behind thick gray clouds.

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

MUI (CONT'D)

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

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

Gary gently caresses Mui's black hair.

Looking up at him, she smiles then tucks her head against his chest.

MUI (CONT'D)
I know it's wrong, but I can't help it.

GARY
Help what?

Stepping back, Mui stares into Gary's eyes.

MUI
Come with me to Lardy. My father will be in Lyon till tomorrow. I don't like to out there alone. The house has too many memories of when my mother was alive.

She hears someone come on the line.

MUI (CONT'D)
(over the phone)
Oui, Claire. Merci.

She hangs and looks at Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)
Well?

GARY
Let's go.

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.

Mui points toward a tarpaulin battened down on a partially repaired barn roof.

MUI
Good, the workers didn't leave anything exposed.

Spotting something, Gary points toward the darkened house.

GARY
Look.

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

GARY (CONT'D)
I'll get them. You go inside.

MUI
It'll be faster 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 it 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 (CONT'D)
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 damp.

MUI
I'll get some newspapers.

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

MUI(O.S.) (CONT'D)
Gary!

INT. DEN - MOMENTS LATER

Gary enters the room to 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
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 more alongside the pond, scooping up a 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 carp gulping at the edge of the pond, Gary hurries to save it.

He hits a slippery stretch of grass and skids 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 NAPALM spreads in 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 forced to brave the flames, Gary sees a patch of white opening behind him -- like a tunnel amid the flames.

Gary swims for the circle of unburning water.

EXT. POND - A MOMENT LATER

Gary breaks to the surface, mud dripping from his shirt and pants, the bandage unraveling from his hand.

For a second, he looks around, dazed, bewildered, not knowing 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, Gary wraps the bandage around 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 strokes his cheek.

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 wine bottle rests next to waning candles.

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

Gary holds up his hand, inspecting the clean bandage.

GARY

I forgot you're a doctor.

She studies him, then smiles.

MUI

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

GARY

I didn't know where I was.

MUI

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

Gary stares at the flickering flames in the fireplace.

GARY

It was like I was back under the
napalm.

MUI'

Napalm? I didn't know the North
used it

GARY

One of our planes dropped it.

Staring at the fire, he shifts back.

GARY (CONT'D)

(more to himself)

I couldn't drag Peetie into the
water in time.

She puts her arm around him.

MUI

Gary, you can't go on carrying the
war inside you forever. It has to
end.

Gary gives her a haunting look.

GARY

Does it?

MUI

I don't mean the war itself. God
willing they'll sign a treaty this
week. I mean your war. You've got
to make peace.

She caresses his cheek, studying his face.

MUI (CONT'D)

Gary, I've worked with soldiers who fought in Indochine and Algeria. The ones who had the most trouble were the ones who couldn't let go of what happened to them.

GARY

Let go?

She draws back, thinking he is criticizing her.

MUI

I don't mean literally. I mean inside.

Gary attempts to listen but his thoughts keep being drawn away.

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

GARY

I wish it were that easy, like flipping a light switch.

MUI

No, that would make war too terrible, for it would be forgotten...too easily.

She snaps her fingers.

MUI.

But time...

GARY

(harshly)
...heals all wounds?

Mui looks hurt.

MUI

I wasn't going to say that.

Defensively, Mui gets up.

MUI (CONT'D)

We'd better get to sleep. I have to get up early.

GARY

Mui, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

MUI

...make me sound glib. But you're right. I haven't been in the war. You, Tran and Phan have. I shouldn't talk about things I haven't lived through.

Gary gets up, jittery.

GARY

Where can I sleep?

MUI

In the den. I'll get you another blanket.

She starts down the hall, leaving Gary to stare out at the storm in the night.

INT. DEN - LATER NIGHT

In his shorts, Gary sits on the sofa drinking from Monsieur Conday's cherished bottle of cognac, while staring outside.

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

He takes another swing.

Rain continues pattering on the roof.

A peel of thunder rolls over 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.

A jagged shadows juts forward in the moonlight.

PEETIE appears in the darkness, his eyes fixed on the window as he reaches out toward Gary.

Spooked, Gary backs away from the sofa, bumping against the wall under the rifle rack.

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. Gary winces, CUTTING HIS LEFT HAND AND HOLDING IT UP IN THE AIR.

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

MUI(O.S.)
The electric...

Gary whirls around, blood dripping from his fingers.

In a white terry robe, Mui stands holding a flashlight.

Seeing his bloody fingers, she hurries forward.

MUI (CONT'D)
What happened? I was coming to tell you the electricity's out.

Gary tries to get control of himself.

GARY
I broke your father's bottle of cognac.

Mui takes his hand in hers.

MUI
Good, he shouldn't be drinking anything stronger than wine.

GARY
I tried picking up the glass, but there are too many pieces.

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

He is stunned by her gesture.

Mui stares at Gary.

In the fractured light, the muscular young American looks achingly vulnerable.

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

Mui presses herself against Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)
Hold me.

He embraces her.

Stepping back, she 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 turns back to Mui, trying to focus on her.

He starts to kiss her again.

MUI (CONT'D)
Not here, come.

She gently leads him to the door.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

He stretches out beside her, gently kissing her mouth.

Abruptly, he stops, covering his face with his hands.

MUI
What's wrong?

He shakes his head.

GARY
Everything, nothing. It's impossible that I'm here with you.

She caresses his cheek.

MUI
Then accept the impossible.

He lies down, staring over at her.

GARY
I don't know what to say.

MUI
Say nothing.

GARY
But I don't know what to do.

Mui leans forward, looking into his eyes.

MUI
Do what your heart tells you.

GARY
I know, but...

She silences him by touching his lips with her finger.

MUI
There is no "but" for the heart.
There is or there isn't. I know
what my heart wants to do.

She lowers her finger and kisses Gary on the lips.

He reaches forward and embraces Mui.

She presses herself against him and closes her eyes.

Gary stares at her for a moment.

Then closing his own eyes, he releases himself and begins caressing her.

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - LATER NIGHT

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

Closing her eyes, she slides her hands down of the valleys of his back and over the rise of his bare buttocks.

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

INT. MUI'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - LATER NIGHT

Under a crescent moon in 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.

She 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.

GARY

Mui!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A baguette, a dish of butter, and a jar of jam sit on the counter beside a handwritten note:

BONJOUR:

I HAD TO GO TO MY CONFERENCE. MEET ME AT FIVE O'CLOCK AT VERT GALANT 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 MET YOU THERE. MUI

INT. LE BOURGET POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Inspector Marcoux looks up as his assistant, Bourdet, leads in TWO AGENTS OF DES RENSEIGNEMENTS GENERAUX

The bald agent walks directly over to Marcoux while his angular partner walks over to stand beside the phone.

FIRST AGENT

Qui est Gary Shipley?

When Marcoux 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 motions for Marcoux to get up.

SENIOR AGENT

Vous êtes en état d'arrestation.

MARCOUX

Et, merde alors, pourquoi?

SENIOR AGENT

Parce ce que vous avez laissé
passer un déserteur Américain qui
depuis deux jours se ballade dans
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 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 with a timeless gaze.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - LATER DAY

Madame Clarence is dusting key slots behind the counter, with her German Shepherd 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 (CONT'D)

Oh, votre ami vous attend dans
votre chambre.

Gary gets only a part of the sentence.

GARY

Ami?

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

INT. GARY'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

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

The door unlocks and Gary enters.

GARY

Who are you?

MAJOR MATIS

Who are you, sir. Major Matis,
Military Liaison Office, U.S.
embassy. You're under arrest for
disobeying orders, absent without
leave...

He grimaces as though the next charges will hurt to say.

MAJOR MATIS (CONT'D)

...and collaborating with the
enemy.

GARY

Enemy?

MAJOR MATIS

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.
Because of you, heads are gonna
roll like in the French revolution.

GARY

I went to the embassy with a
friend. That's it. I left after ten
minutes.

MAJOR MATIS
Long enough to pass classified
material.

The door is still ajar 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 and handcuffs dangle on his belt.

MAJOR MATIS (CONT'D)
Don't make it worse than it is.

Gary closes the door.

GARY
How'd you find me?

MAJOR MATIS
We've been looking for you since you flew out of Saigon. We found out you were in Paris when the French sent the film over last night.

GARY
But nobody knew I was staying here.

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

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

MAJOR MATIS (CONT'D)
You're flying back to the States.

GARY
I can't...not yet.

MAJOR MATIS
That's an order, Lieutenant.

GARY
I don't care. I still have one thing I have to tell the woman I came to find.

The major's face tightens even more than it was.

MAJOR MATIS
You're not telling anyone anything,
Lieutenant.

GARY
A dying soldier gave me a letter for
her.

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

GARY
It's true, every word of it, Major.

The major gapes at Gary.

MAJOR MATIS
You were willing to throw away your
career and risk going to Portsmouth
for an enemy soldier?

GARY
For a dying man I gave my word to?
Yes.

MAJOR MATIS
Your word matter that much?

GARY
If it doesn't, what does? You been
in the field, sir?

The major pulls himself up proudly.

MAJOR MATIS
Fifth Marines.

Gary nods respectfully.

GARY
A great regiment: Belleau Wood and
Frozen Chosen. You know how
everything happens so fast in
combat.

The major's expression yields a bit of compassion.

MAJOR MATIS
Quantico wired your service
records. It's hard losing men, I
know.

GARY

It wasn't just the men I lost,
Major. It's for everything that
happened...that I came.

MAJOR MATIS

You can tell that to the court
martial when you get back to
Pendelton.

The major motions for Gary to get moving.

Tiredly, Gary gets up.

GARY

You're gonna have shoot me to stop
me from seeing her, Major, but if
you let me go see her, I promise to
turn myself to the embassy in the
morning

He stares the major in the eye.

GARY (CONT'D)

Believe me, it's everything, Major,
everything that still matters to
me.

The major shakes his head - his hand reaching inside his
jacket and pulling out the .45.

MAJOR MATIS

No way, Lieutenant. You had your
chance.

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

Glancing down, Gary notices A CLASS RING ON THE MAJOR'S LEFT
HAND.

GARY

The Academy.

MAJOR MATIS

I know, you're Class of '68. That
doesn't cut you any slack with me.

GARY

You know what they drummed into us
day one, honor above all.

MAJOR MATIS

But not above your country.

GARY

I haven't betrayed my country, but I would have betrayed myself if I hadn't come here. Major, give me until tomorrow morning to make peace, my peace.

The major stares at Gary for a long moment - then lowers the pistol.

MAJOR MATIS

Christ, Shipley, your father got the Navy Cross at Tulagi. How the hell would he feel if he were standing here?

GARY

If he were in your place, I hope he'd let me go. If he were me, I really believe he'd ask the same thing I did.

MAJOR MATIS

I ought to have my head examined. I didn't see you, hear me?

GARY

Yes, sir.

MAJOR MATIS

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, Semper Fi.

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

Slipping the pistol into his shoulder holster, the major sits down holds up his hand - staring at his NAVAL ACADEMY RING.

EXT. LE VERT GALANT - SUNSET

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 waits under the lone tree.

GARY
I'm sorry I'm late.

MUI
This is the place I wanted to show
you yesterday. It's my favorite
spot in all of Paris.

Gary walks straight toward Mui.

GARY
There's something I wanted to tell
you when I first 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, which provokes Gary to shift back.

MUI
What are you saying? You gave me
Tran's letter. What else would have
hurt me?

GARY
There's something about the letter
I didn't tell you.

Uncomprehending, Mui strains to understand.

GARY (CONT'D)
Tran gave it to me.

MUI
What?

GARY
Yes, I was there when he died.

As though struck by lightning - Mui wobbles, struggling to
keep her balance.

MUI
Oh no, you killed Tran.

GARY
No, it's not like that. But I saw
him die. It was a mistake. My men
shot him, but they all died, too.

She steps back, shock, anger, pain, flooding her face.

MUI
All this time you kept the truth
from me.

Gary can't stand the look in her face. He looks down at the
cobblestone.

GARY
I just couldn't tell you.

MUI
So you waited to destroy me after
we...

About to cry, anger takes the place of tears.

MUI (CONT'D)
You may not have killed Tran, but
you killed everything I felt for
you.

GARY
Mui, please.

He moves forward to comfort her.

MUI
No! Don't touch me!

Mui flees down the cobblestone toward the steps leading up to
the Pont Neuf.

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 passes the statue of Henri IV.

Abruptly, 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

Gary walks toward a private room at the end of the ward.

A THIN NURSE IN UNIFORM blocks his path.

THIN NURSE
(heavy accent)
Vous cherchez, monsieur?

GARY
I need to see Mister Jankelevitch.

THIN NURSE
No visitors.

GARY
I must see him.

THIN NURSE.
It is not possible. He is very
weak.

GARY
Then please give him an important
message. Tell him Gary told her
everything, everything, understand?

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 goes to enter Mr. Jankelevitch's room -- when a doctor steps from an adjacent room and beckons to 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 lights.

Turning, he hurries down the quai.

EXT. MONSIEUR CONDAY'S - LATER NIGHT

Gary climbs from a taxi that backs up, coating 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 record player.

As the tune ends, he puts on another recording 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.

GARY (CONT'D)
You know then.

Monsieur Conday stares down at the spinning black record.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Why didn't you tell me? I would
have found a way to tell Mui.

GARY
Believe me I wanted to tell her
everything when we met. I just
didn't want to hurt her anymore, or
you either.

Monsieur Conday picks up a bottle of wine resting behind the record player, and pours himself a glass, and gulps it down.

GARY (CONT'D)
Where is she?

MONSIEUR CONDAY
With Phan. I had to tell him that
your men killed Tran.

Gary stares across the pond.

GARY
How did he take it?

MONSIEUR CONDAY
It was not like Phan. He was very
calm, almost like he knew.

Gary wants to tell Mr. Conday that Phan was there that day - but says nothing.

GARY
How do I get to his house?

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Don't go there. He'll kill you for
killing his brother.

GARY
You think I could have come here if
I had killed Tran?

Monsieur Conday ponders the question.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
That's what I thought. No one is
such a monster to have killed a man
and brought the news of his death.
But Phan thinks you did.

GARY
Mr. Conday if I tell you a secret,
you must swear that you will never
tell Phan or Mui.

MUI
What?

GARY
Swear.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
I swear not to tell them.

GARY
And you must never let Phan sense
that you know. He did what we all
feel in combat and some of us do. I
know I did once.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
What are you saying?

GARY
That Phan was there.

MONSIEUR CONDAY
Quoi?

GARY
He had a rifle but he didn't engage
us. We were three. He was one. He
would have died there, too, like
this brother.

Monsieur Conday is speechless.

GARY (CONT'D)

I tell you this not out hatred of Phan, but because he saw my men shoot Tran because they thought he was going to hurt me. It was a terrible mistake.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

And you are still willing to go there?

GARY

If Mui is with him, 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

You're sure you don't want me to go talk to him first?

GARY

Thank you, but it's something only I can do. Goodbye, Monsieur Conday.

MONSIEUR CONDAY

Young man, I must tell you one thing before you go. In the war I knew many men, but there is only one beside you who would have done what you did...that was Tran.

GARY

I've come to know that. Good-bye, Mr. Conday.

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 swings open - revealing a gaping 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.

Gary's anger is coiled, but he controls himself.

GARY
I have to see Mui.

As though forgetting whom he is talking with, Phan sadly shakes his head.

PHAN
Let her rest. I ask you as a man,
not your enemy.

GARY
All right, then I have something I
want to tell you.

Standing up straight, Phan waits for what Gary has to say.

PHAN
Is it about my brother?

GARY
(lowering his voice)
No, it's about you. You don't have
to spend the rest of your life
punishing yourself for what
happened in that clearing. I'll
tell you a secret. I ran once, in
my first fire-fight.

Tran seems moved by Gary's words.

GARY (CONT'D)
One more thing, Phan, and then I'm
gone.

In the background is the sound of what could be sobbing. Gary leans forward, listening. Realizing it is Mui sobbing, he drops his head.

PHAN
What is it?

GARY
I'm leaving Paris, and Mui will
never know you were there that day
with Tran and me.

Turning, he strides away. Watching him for a moment, Phan steps back into the darkness and swings the door shut.

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
I'm sorry. He passed away an hour ago.

Dumbstruck, steps back as though struck.

GARY
My 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.

THIN NURSE
Oh, I forgot. I'm sorry. Was it important.

Without a word, Gary veers off toward the stairs.

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. Madame Clarence stands in the hallway, holding the bird cage with the parrot inside.

MADAME CLARENCE
Il vous a laissé l'oiseau.

Gray guesses what she said.

GARY
(to himself)
I can't take a parrot back 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 (CONT'D)

Et le livre aussi.

Gary takes it in both hands.

Needing to get back to the lobby, the manager steps into the hall and closes the door.

Gary sets the book 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 bandage on his hand. With one quick gesture, he strips it off. Holding up his palm, he stares at the healing wound.

EXT. PARIS QUAI - EARLY

Overnight bag in one hand and the bird cage in the other, Gary walks across Pont Neuf 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 leettle.

GARY

Where can I buy a map?

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. With determination, he opens the entrance door and steps inside.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

With the *minuterie* 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.

Gary pushes the doorbell.

The door opens ajar. In white blouse and black trousers, Mui peers out, her pale skin seeming to glow in the darkness.

After a moment, she opens the door wider.

MUI
How did you know I was here?

GARY
I heard the music.

She sees the parrot 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 it?

GARY
He died. I can't take his bird with me. I was going to leave it here for you.

MUI

I could never keep anything in a cage.

She steps back.

MUI (CONT'D)

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

Phan told me you came to his studio last night but I couldn't speak to you then.

GARY

I understand. I only came to say good-bye and to show 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 (CONT'D)

Do you have a pen?

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 takes Gary a moment to spot what he is looking for. Making an X on a blank area, he turns to Mui.

GARY (CONT'D)

This is where it happened, where Tran fell. Twenty-three clicks, I mean kilometers, east of Dalat. In a clearing near a large rock, beside a pond. Coordinates Kilo Foxtrop 2571-2572. I hope you find his remains after the war.

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 stunning view of the rooftops of Paris, the flowing Seine and the quai stirring 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 little gate - then slowly tilts the cage.

The parrot 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 (CONT'D)

When I found you, all I wanted to do was give you the letter and leave. But the longer I was with you, the harder it was to go. I knew I had to tell you everything, but I couldn't until I finally did.

She gets up -- walking to a bookcase by the window. Leaning against it for support, she stares back at Gary.

MUI

Since that moment on the Le Vert Galant I thought about what you must have been going through. I was only thinking about my pain, not yours. I understand now what it must have taken for you to have come to Paris, to find me.

She approaches Gary and sits down beside him.

GARY

Forgive me for not telling you everything when I gave you the letter.

MUI

No, I couldn't have taken you to my father's. By not knowing, I fell in love with you.

She closes her eyes momentarily, then looks back at Gary.

MUI (CONT'D)

Then you told me what you had not revealed, what you had keep hidden, and I felt betrayed. This morning I thought to myself, how would I have reacted if I had taken your dying letter to your family in the United States? Would I have been strong enough to tell the woman waiting for you everything I knew?

She shakes her head.

MUI (CONT'D)

To tell the truth, no, I couldn't.

GARY

I love you, Mui.

She is silent, then nods.

MUI

We can never be together, Gary, because Tran would always be between us.

GARY

I know. But the night at your father's house, I'll always remember it.

MUI

So will I.

He gets up to leave.

GARY

I'd better go.

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 (CONT'D)

Thank you, Gary's hand, for bringing me Tran's letter.

Undone by her gesture, Gary puts his arms around Mui and embraces her.

Nothing moves in the room. Even the light seems to stall.

Gary breaks the moment by getting up and walking over to the framed photograph of Tran resting on the bookcase.

He stares down at his face then puts his right hand on the man's chest.

GARY
(softly)
Cô hua.

MUI(O.S.)
What?

GARY
The word Tran kept saying.

MUI
It means...

GARY
I know.

Gary stares at the man's face.

GARY (CONT'D)
Tran, I'm here with Mui. I kept my
promise.

He turns and picks up his bag.

Seeing he is about to leave, Mui drops her head as though about to cry.

Gary lifts her chin.

GARY (CONT'D)
Don't, please. I couldn't stand to
leave you sad. Mui, listen to me.
We met. Our that happened is ours,
forever.

She braves a smile.

Smiling back, 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.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

In a daze, Mui puts back on the Vietnamese flute music and walks to the window.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

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 muscular man in the unfamiliar uniform.

DRIVER

Où allez-vous, monsieur?

GARY

American Embassy.

INT. MUI'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Holding her hand in the air, Mui watches Gary climb 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 in the distance.

ON THE SHELF BESIDE HER RESTS THE LETTER.

BEHIND IT STANDS THE PHOTOGRAPH OF TRAN IN THE JUNGLE.

WIND STIRS INSIDE THE GREEN LANDSCAPE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

TRAN SITS WRITING ON A HIGH ROCK OVERLOOKING A POND.

A HUSH. A PAUSE.

TRAN LOOKS UP AS A BLUE AND GOLD PARROT drifts overhead.

THE END