

Chapter 28

I intend that we dine slowly, return to our honeymoon suite, the same room as one year ago. It is exactly as we left it. There, we shall gently talk, perhaps watch television, and at 11.30, Emily will go to the bathroom, as we did exactly one year ago, to prepare the spa.

I hope to prolong our pleasure so that our act of love spans midnight. We shall farewell our first year of marriage with an ecstasy extending into our second year. And if that same act is blessed with fruit, our cup would be full indeed.

I marvel as I gently remove her clothes. I have seen her body bloom a thousand times under my gaze, but each time is like the first time. Can her skin be a size too small? I ask, because every contour of her body is so finely revealed. Her nerves are raised expectantly on the thrumming drum of her skin, ready to tingle at my touch. Her dancer's shapely calves are sheathed in flawless skin, her thighs flow as she walks, and between – ah, there is silence, as always. Her private parts are for me alone to see, to touch, to kiss. To enter.

Again, she hides her treasured body in the bubbling spa. Visible only are her exquisitely sculptured shoulders and her aristocratic face. She smiles her love at me. We wrap ourselves in towels again, unselfconscious now, and go to the bedroom.

We time it well. Our two years of marriage are spanned with that precious arch of mutual delirium.

“We have spanned the years, darling!”

She responds with that look of hers that pierces me to the heart.

I am lying on her, in place still, my head nestled in her neck.

“*Aiyaaa!*” She jerks upright, pointing to the TV whose intrusive sound I had silenced already. Over my shoulder, I see tanks running into a crowd of people. It is only a war film. I am surprised, annoyed I must confess, that she has shattered our peace so abruptly.

Then I see Nike, the students' Statue of Peace. My God, it's Tiananmen Square!

Our bliss turns to nightmare. In the next few hours we try to piece together what has happened. Only one thing is clear. The Chinese Government ordered the PLA to murder Chinese people. Three thousand of us, that is the latest estimate.

The breakfast room next morning is hushed. Every face displays fear. So many families came to Hong Kong precisely to flee Mao's army, and like Emily's family, many were millionaires within twenty years. Hong Kong is kind to those with vision and perseverance. Many people at breakfast are weeping openly for that Hong Kong, so generous to the hardworking. We now know that the new Hong Kong, after the Handover, will not be so generous.

However, my ancestors are generous that night.

For on June 4, 1989, Wong Kit Fai, James, is conceived.

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We return by midday, to find Hong Kong in deep mourning. In Central, we join a crowd that moves in slow procession to the Happy Valley Racecourse, where it has been hastily arranged that we Hong Kongers will be able to express our feelings.

During the march, the mood changes. Grief and fear give way to anger, then to defiance. By the time we arrive at Happy Valley, hot, our clothes wet and clinging, we find Szeto Wah soaking. He is on a makeshift stage. He calls for a General Strike on Wednesday.

“All Hong Kong will close. That will show the Butchers in Beijing that we will not be intimidated. I will not leave Hong Kong in 1997, even if Li Peng is still premier!” Szeto shouts. The crowd booms agreement. He steps off the stage, and collapses from heat exhaustion.

There is speech after speech. Martin Lee tells the Chinese leaders to stop their murdering. “You cannot kill a people. Kill one Chinese, one hundred will arise in his place!”

There are many other speakers. One is Siu Ling. She looks so tiny and fragile up there on the distant stage, dressed in mourning, in white shirt and trousers. She is clearly distressed by the heat and by the occasion, but her words, magnified many times by the PA system, are powerful.

“Do not lose your faith in democracy, my friends! We in Hong Kong will be an example to the world. We will show the devious British, who sold us out so shamefully. We will show the cruel tyrants in Beijing, who use the blood of their own people to maintain their power. We will show them all that power, real power, lies with the people. With us!” She drops her voice. “With us.”

Emily squeezes my arm, tears in her eyes. “Aren’t you so *proud* that she is your friend? I am.”

We stay until half-past four, when there is an even more emotional moment. There is a call for two minutes of silence, to remember the dead. A million people are profoundly silent. Except some who, like Emily, cannot control their sobbing. Many are not only weeping for those at Tiananmen, but are, like Emily, weeping for their relatives, murdered not early this morning, but many years ago, and by these same butchers.

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Chapter 31

It is another year before we seriously discuss the matter of emigrating ourselves. Governor Wilson had earlier proposed a huge project, involving a container port, an international airport on the little, skull-shaped island, Chek Lap Kok – which we never did visit– with huge suspension bridges connecting Lantau to the mainland.

It is all to show the world that Britain has confidence in the future of Hong Kong. And as far as business for us is concerned, it works. The Hang Seng, the thermometer that tells the world the state of Hong Kong’s economic health, couldn’t be more optimistic.

Then, in July 1992, Governor Patten arrives. We are insulted that he is given the post of being our Governor only because he had lost an election in England, and he needed a job. But we are pleased that he walks the streets, seemingly without a bodyguard, and mixes and talks with people.

Emily does a complete turn-around in her opinion of this *gwailo*. It is when she and Ah Fai are walking in Queen's Road Central to do some Christmas shopping. This is his first walk in the Central streets, without a pram or his baby harness. He is so proud, and looks so cute, she tells me lovingly, as he walks along clutching her hand, laughing up at her from time to time. Then she sees Governor Patten approaching from the opposite direction, in his shirtsleeves. He smiles and waves to people as he walks. When he sees Emily and Ah Fai, his face lights up, and he stops. He bends down to Ah Fai, and lifts his chin with his finger. The little Chinese boy and the Governor of Hong Kong laugh into each other's eyes. The Governor straightens up.

"Madam, what a lovely little boy you have. And how like his mother!"

He speaks clearly and slowly, so Emily understands easily. She blushes, and can think only to say, "Thank you, Sir, thank you." Ah Fai echoes her, also in English, "Sank you, sank you. Bye bye!" and waves after him as he leaves. What Governor Patten said was of course absolutely true, but what a strange thing for a Governor to do and to say!

I think he means well. He promises, at last, that he will ensure that the spirit of the Joint Declaration is met, and that we will have more democracy in Hong Kong. However, the effect of his words is to release a typhoon of boiling fury from Beijing. Patten is breaching the Joint Declaration! The airport is a plot to divert public funds into the pockets of British construction firms! All contracts after 1997 will be cancelled! Patten is at once "a turtle's egg", "the criminal of all time", "a strutting prostitute", "the Triple Violator"! The effect on the Hang Seng was immediate: it plunged 1,000 points in one day.

If Patten had been Governor thirty years ago, things might now be different. But he was not, and it is becoming clear to many people, myself included, that his way of doing things, as that of a Western politician, is likely to make things even more difficult than if he had been as remote and as hypocritical as his predecessors. It would have been better, maybe, to continue selling out Hong Kong in the time-honoured fashion.

Martin's theory is that the Chinese are so furious at Patten because they see him violating deals that they thought had been already concluded with the British Foreign Office, particularly on the question of elections. That much seems obvious, but Martin further claims that this newcomer, fresh from local British politics, had not been told about these under-the-table "understandings". While Patten in all good faith pursued his own agenda, the Chinese could not imagine that such a senior person would be operating on his own judgment. Therefore, they saw the British Government in general, and Patten in particular, as cheats and liars.

Martin's theory makes sense to me. Patten certainly seems to be himself acting in all honesty. China's outrage seems equally genuine. So it follows that the British Foreign office has been acting true to type. If all this is so, then Hong Kong is not likely to be the sort of place after the Handover in

which I would like to live, let alone to raise Ah Fai. And as Emily said, he is the primary consideration.

So we go to the Australian Consulate in Harbour Road to obtain information about immigration. It seems that at least one of us will need two years total cumulative residence in Australia over a total of five years, one year in the last two years before applying for citizenship. Emily could even obtain her citizenship first, and I obtain mine later, on the basis of my being her spouse. We will need to work out the schedule, where to live, and where to work, very carefully.

It would be important if Bill could agree that I could take leave-without-pay for extended periods. And it would be ideal if I could work in Sydney head office during my periods in Australia. I ask him. I get a not unreasonable response – for Bill, that is.

“So you want to have your rice bowl and eat it too, eh? God, you bloody people! It’s like your pretty little classmate said. You’re doing your best to chuck the poor bloody Vietnamese boat people out, and then you expect other countries to accept you!”

Siu Ling had been in the news recently, lambasting the hypocrisy of middle class Chinese who deny the boat people the very thing they are screaming for themselves: asylum in another country.

“That is not fair!” My voice is raised. “I personally think we should do what we can for the boat people. Our emigration is an entirely different matter!” I should have known better than to mention emigration to Bill. Oh well, I shall have to resign, and do the best I can to find a job in Australia.

Bill ignores me. He stares out the window for a moment, then continues, Bill-like. “The Sydney office *might* be able to use someone who knows something about Hong Kong law, and who can speak Cantonese. There’s a lot of you Chinese over there. They’ll need to fix up wills, real estate, and stuff. Okay, I’ll see what I can do.”

So I am to become a *tai hung yan*, an “astronaut”, along with many other Hong Kong men. My space capsule will be the upper deck of a 747, Marco Polo Class. After a stint in Australia, I will work in Hong Kong, and Emily and Ah Fai will join me there, from time to time. When he is school age, they will live in Australia, and I will shuttle backwards and forwards in my space capsule, until such time as Emily qualifies as an Australian citizen. Where we shall live then is an open question, the answer to which is out of our hands. If the time ever comes when we could love Hong Kong no longer, we will settle in the country of which we would then be citizens.