

## Ch. 4 - The Enemy

### Page – 32 of Vistas (Surgery of the American Soldier):

“You have decided to operate!” she cried.

“Yes,” he said shortly. He turned his back to her and unfolded a sterilized towel upon the floor of the tokonoma alcove and put his instruments out upon it.

Sterilized: disinfected

Tokonoma alcove: The word 'toko' literally means "floor" or "bed"; 'ma' means "space" or "room." In English, *tokonoma* is usually called alcove. It is a part of a room where things are displayed. a niche or an alcove in a Japanese home for displaying a flower arrangement, or other piece of art.

*Hana asked Sadao that had he decided to operate the man.*

*Sadao replied that he had decided to operate him. He turned his back to Hana as he did not want her to object to his decision. Sadao started his work. He opened a sterilized towel on the floor of the tokonoma alcove and placed his surgical instruments on it.*

“Fetch towels,” he said.

She went obediently, but how anxious now, to the linen shelves and took out the towels. There ought also to be old pieces of matting so that the blood would not ruin the fine floor covering. She went out to the back veranda where the gardener kept strips of matting with which to protect delicate shrubs on cold nights and took an armful of them.

*Hana obeyed Sadao and went out to get the towels. She was curious as Sadao was operating upon the injured man. She thought that the blood from his wounds could stain the fine mats which covered the floor of the room. So, she got some rough mats from the backyard which were used by the gardener to cover the delicate shrubs from the cold weather.*

But when she went back into the room, she saw this was useless. The blood had already soaked through the packing in the man’s wound and had ruined the mat under him.

*By the time Hana reached the room she saw that blood had flowed through the bandage on the man's wound and had stained the mat beneath him. Her effort was futile.*

“Oh, the mat!” she cried.

“Yes, it is ruined,” Sadao replied, as though he did not care. “Help me to turn him,” he commanded her.

She obeyed him without a word, and he began to wash the man's back carefully.

*On seeing the stained mat, Hana cried that the mat had been spoiled. Sadao agreed that the mat had been ruined in such a manner which indicated that he was not bothered by it. Sadao ordered Hana to help him turn the man over. She obeyed him and then Sadao started washing his back.*

“Yumi would not wash him,” she said.

“Did you wash him then?” Sadao asked, not stopping for a moment his swift concise movements.

“Yes,” she said.

He did not seem to hear her. But she was used to his absorption when he was at work. She wondered for a moment if it mattered to him what was the body upon which he worked so long as it was for the work he did so excellently.

### Concise: short

*Hana told Sadao that Yumi had refused to wash the injured man. Sadao asked her that did she wash him. He did not stop cleaning him. He made fast small movements of his hands as he cleaned him carefully. Sadao was engrossed in work and did not seem to hear Hana. Hana wondered that Sadao was not bothered who the injured man was. He was only concerned in performing his work well.*

“You will have to give the anesthetic if he needs it,” he said.

“I?” she repeated blankly. “But never have I!”

“It is easy enough,” he said impatiently.

He was taking out the packing now, and the blood began to flow more quickly. He peered into the wound with the bright surgeon's light fastened on his forehead. “The bullet is still there,” he said with cool interest. “Now I wonder how deep this rock wound is. If it is not too deep it maybe that I can get the bullet. But the bleeding is not superficial. He has lost much blood.”

Anesthetic: a substance that induces insensitivity to pain

Superficial: existing or occurring at or on the surface.

*Sadao told Hana that she would have to inject the injured man with a substance that induces insensitivity to pain. Hana replied that she had never done that earlier. Sadao said in a haste that it was very easy. Sadao was removing the packing and now the blood started flowing faster. He looked at the wound with the help of the bright surgeon's light fixed on his forehead. He announced that the bullet was inside the man's body. He wondered that how deep the wound made by the rock was. He said that if the wound was not very deep, then he could get the bullet out. He added that the bleeding was not from the surface of the skin which meant that the wound was deep and the man had already lost a lot of blood.*

At this moment Hana choked. He looked up and saw her face the colour of sulphur.

her face the colour of sulphur: sulphur is a yellow coloured element. The clause means that her face became pale – yellowish in colour.

*When Hana saw Sadao inspecting the wound, she could not see the sight and so, she coughed. Sadao looked at her and saw that her face was yellowish in colour like the colour of sulphur.*

“Don't faint,” he said sharply. He did not put down his exploring instrument. “If I stop now the man will surely die.” She clapped her hands to her mouth and leaped up and ran out of the room. Outside in the garden he heard her retching. But he went on with his work.

Leaped: jumped

Retching: vomiting

*Sadao reacted and ordered Hana not to faint. He did not stop his work and continued inspecting the wound. Sadao said that if he stopped, the injured man would certainly die. Hana put both her hands on her mouth, jumped up and ran out of the room. Sadao heard her vomiting in the garden but he continued with his work.*

“It will be better for her to empty her stomach,” he thought. He had forgotten that of course she had never seen an operation. But her distress and his inability to go to her at once made him impatient and irritable with this man who lay like dead under his knife.

*As Sadao needed Hana's help to operate the man, he thought that it would be better for her to empty her stomach so that she would not feel uneasy time and again. He was reminded that Hana was seeing an operation for the first time and it was not a pleasant thing to see. Sadao*

*was irritated and impatient as his wife was under stress and he was not able to help her due to the man who lay under his knife. He was just like a dead person.*

“This man.” he thought, “there is no reason under heaven why he should live.”

*Sadao thought that there was no reason for him to make efforts to save the man because there was no reason for him to live.*

Unconsciously this thought made him ruthless and he proceeded swiftly. In his dream the man moaned but Sadao paid no heed except to mutter at him.

Ruthless: harsh, merciless

Moaned: made low, soft sounds due to pain

Paid no heed: did not pay attention to

*Sadao became merciless and started working fast. The injured man moaned in his state of unconsciousness but Sadao kept on working without paying attention to the man's pain.*

“Groan,” he muttered, “groan if you like. I am not doing this for my own pleasure. In fact, I do not know why I am doing it.”

*Sadao said to the injured man that he was free to cry in pain. Sadao was not concerned that the man was in pain. He did not want to operate him and did not have any reason for doing so.*

The door opened and there was Hana again.

“Where is the anesthetic?” she asked in a clear voice.

Sadao motioned with his chin. “It is as well that you came back,” he said. “This fellow is beginning to stir.”

She had the bottle and some cotton in her hand.

“But how shall I do it?” she asked.

“Simply saturate the cotton and hold it near his nostrils,” Sadao replied without delaying for one moment the intricate detail of his work. “When he breathes badly move it away a little.”

beginning to stir: gaining consciousness.

Saturate: wet

*Hana entered the room and asked Sadao for the anaesthetic which she had to administer to the injured man. Her voice was clear which shows that now she was prepared to help him. Sadao*

*moved his chin to guide her to the bottle of anaesthetic. He added that it was good that she came as the man had started to gain consciousness and it was important to sedate him. Hana held the bottle and some cotton in her hands. She asked what she was supposed to do. He told her to put some anaesthetic on the cotton and to place the cotton near the man's nostril. He did not stop his delicate work and added that she should remove the cotton when the man started to breathe badly.*

She crouched close to the sleeping face of the young American. It was a piteously thin face, she thought, and the lips were twisted. The man was suffering whether he knew it or not. Watching him, she wondered if the stories they heard sometimes of the sufferings of prisoners were true. They came like flickers of rumour, told by word of mouth and always contradicted. In the newspapers the reports were always that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly, with cries of joy at their liberation. But sometimes she remembered such men as General Takima, who at home beat his wife cruelly, though no one mentioned it now that he had fought so victorious a battle in Manchuria. If a man like that could be so cruel to a woman in his power, would he not be cruel to one like this for instance?

Crouched: sit in a squatting position

piteously: causing you to feel sad and sympathetic

by word of mouth: people tell it to each other rather than it being printed in written form.

Manchuria: Manchuria (Northeast China) is the homeland of the Manchu people. To the Chinese, the region is simply known as the Northeast. Manchuria is made up of China's three north-eastern most provinces: Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang.

*Hana sat in a squat and went close to the face of the sleeping American man. She felt sad and sympathetic towards him as she saw his thin face and twisted lips. She knew that he was suffering. She wondered whether the stories that she had heard about the torture meted out to the prisoners were true. The stories were like rumours which spread when people told them to others. On the other hand, in the printed media like the newspapers, it was mentioned that the Japanese army was welcomed wherever it went, and people praised it for their freedom. Hana recalled an officer of the Japanese army, General Takima who was cruel to his wife and would beat her. No one talked about it anymore as he had won the war in Manchuria. Hana thought that if a man could be cruel towards his wife then he could also be cruel to the prisoners in his captivity.*

She hoped anxiously that this young man had not been tortured. It was at this moment that she observed deep red scars on his neck, just under the ear.

Scars: marks

*Hana hoped that the man had not been tortured by the army. Just then she saw deep red coloured marks (injury marks) on his neck, under the ear.*

“Those scars,” she murmured, lifting her eyes to Sadao. But he did not answer. At this moment he felt the tip of his instrument strike against something hard, dangerously near the kidney. All thought left him. He felt only the purest pleasure. He probed with his fingers, delicately, familiar with every atom of this human body. His old American professor of anatomy had seen to that knowledge. “Ignorance of the human body is the surgeon’s cardinal sin, sirs!” he had thundered at his classes year after year. “To operate without as complete knowledge of the body as if you had made it — anything less than that is murder.”

Probed: searched

Anatomy: the branch of science concerned with the bodily structure of humans, animals, and other living organisms, especially as revealed by dissection and the separation of parts.

Cardinal: basic, first

*Hana mentioned the scars to Sadao and asked about them. Sadao did not answer. At that moment, the tip of his instrument hit something hard (the bullet). It was very close to the kidney. Sadao was not thinking of anything else. He was happy to have finally found the bullet. He moved his fingers inside the wound. Sadao was familiar with the tiniest part of the human body. His professor of anatomy in America had told them that if a surgeon ignored the knowledge of any part of the body, it was the first misdeed that he had committed. To operate upon a body without detailed knowledge of it as much as the person who makes it has would amount to committing murder of that body. Sadao’s professor would repeat these words in his class often.*

“It is not quite at the kidney, my friend,” Sadao murmured. It was his habit to murmur to the patient when he forgot himself in an operation. “My friend,” he always called his patients and so now he did, forgetting that this was his enemy.

*Sadao spoke to the injured man. He said that the bullet had just missed his kidney. When Sadao would get engrossed in the operation, he would start talking to the patient. He addressed the patient as ‘my friend’. He called the injured man also ‘my friend’. He forgot that this man was not a friend but an enemy.*

Then quickly, with the cleanest and most precise of incisions, the bullet was out. The man quivered but he was still unconscious. Nevertheless he muttered a few English words.

Precise: accurate

Incisions: surgical cuts

Quivered: shivered, trembled

Muttered: spoke

*Sadao was quick. He made a few surgical cuts on the body and removed the bullet. The man trembled in pain but remained unconscious. He spoke a few words in English which were an expression of the pain that he was experiencing.*

“Guts,” he muttered, choking. “They got...my guts...”

“Sadao!” Hana cried sharply.

“Hush,” Sadao said.

The man sank again into silence so profound that Sadao took up his wrist, hating the touch of it. Yes, there was still a pulse so faint, so feeble, but enough, if he wanted the man to live, to give hope.

Guts: informal word for bravery and determination

Profound: very great or intense

Pulse: heartbeat

Feeble: weak

*The injured man choked and said “guts,” “They got my guts”. He meant that he was brave and courageous and the Japanese army would have a tough time while punishing him. Upon hearing him Hana cried out to Sadao. Sadao hushed her to keep quiet. The man became so quiet that Sadao held his wrist to check his heartbeat. He was checking if the man was still alive. His pulse was there although it was very weak. Sadao thought that it was enough for a person who had a desire to live. There was still hope that the man would survive.*

“But certainly I do not want this man to live,” he thought.

*Sadao was sure that he did not want the man to live.*

“No more anesthetic,” he told Hana.



He turned as swiftly as though he had never paused and from his medicines he chose a small vial and from it filled a hypodermic and thrust it into the patient's left arm. Then putting down the needle, he took the man's wrist again. The pulse under his fingers fluttered once or twice and then grew stronger.

Vial: a small container, typically cylindrical and made of glass, used especially for holding liquid medicines.

Hypodermic: needle, syringe, injection

Thrust: pushed

Fluttered: trembled

*Sadao stopped Hana from administering anaesthetic. He turned quickly and chose a small bottle from the medicines. He filled a syringe with the medicine and pushed the vaccine into the man's left arm. Sadao placed the needle down and held the man's wrist. The pulse shivered once or twice and then improved.*

“This man will live in spite of all,” he said to Hana and sighed.

*Sadao took a deep breath as he told Hana that the injured man would live.*

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