

Ch. 4 - The Enemy

Page – 41 of Vistas (Dr. Sadao waiting for General's Assassins):

He refused to allow anything but reason to be the atmosphere of his mind as he went into the room where the American was in bed. But as he opened the door, to his surprise he found the young man out of bed, and preparing to go into the garden.

Reason: an idea backed by common sense

Sadao did not let any thought enter his mind as he went into the room where the American man lay asleep. He was surprised to see the man out of his bed. He was getting ready to go out into the garden.

“What is this!” he exclaimed. “Who gave you permission to leave your room?”

Sadao was shocked as he asked him that who had permitted him to stand and walk.

“I’m not used to waiting for permission,” Tom said gaily. “Gosh, I feel pretty good again! But will the muscles on this side always feel stiff?”

Tom was happy and said that he was not in a habit of taking permission before doing anything. He said that he felt good again, just the muscles on the sides of his body were stiff and rigid.

“Is it so?” Sadao inquired, surprised. He forgot all else. “Now I thought I had provided against that,” he murmured. He lifted the edge of the man’s shirt and gazed at the healing scar. “Massage may do it,” he said, “if exercise does not.”

Sadao was surprised to hear that. He forgot all work and said that he had warned the man not to stand and walk. He lifted the man’s shirt and inspected the scar. He said that massage could heal it if it would not be healed by exercise.

“It won’t bother me much,” the young man said. His young face was gaunt under the stubbly blond beard. “Say, Doctor, I’ve got something I want to say to you. If I hadn’t met a Jap like you — well, I wouldn’t be alive today. I know that.”

Sadao bowed but he could not speak.

Gaunt: gloomy, weak

Stubbly: unshaven, bearded

Blond: light – coloured, yellowish colour

The man said that the scar would not trouble him. His young, bearded face was weak. He thanked Sadao and said that if he had not reached Sadao that day, then he would have died.

“Sure, I know that,” Tom went on warmly. His big thin hands gripping a chair were white at the knuckles. “I guess if all the Japs were like you there wouldn’t have been a war.”

Gripping: holding tightly

Tom added that he was sure of that. As he held the chair tightly with his thin hands, the knuckles turned white in colour. This indicated that he was still weak and had not recovered fully. Tom added that if all the Japanese people would have been like Sadao, then the war would not have happened.

“Perhaps,” Sadao said with difficulty. “And now I think you had better go back to bed.”

Sadao said that maybe that could be true. He added that the man should go to sleep.

He helped the boy back into bed and then bowed. “Goodnight,” he said.

He helped the man lay in bed, bowed to him, said “goodnight”.

Sadao slept badly that night. Time and time again he woke, thinking he heard the rustling of footsteps, the sound of a twig broken or a stone displaced in the garden — a noise such as men might make who carried a burden.

Rustling: the sound made by footsteps

Twig: branch of tree

Burden: here, it refers to a dead body.

Sadao was restless all through the night as he felt that the hired killers were there to kill the man. He imagined hearing the sound of footsteps, branches being broken, stones moving as men walked on them and imagined that he heard such a noise which indicated that some men were carrying the American’s dead body. All this anxiety kept him awake.

The next morning, he made the excuse to go first into the guest room. If the American were gone he then could simply tell Hana that so the General had directed. But when he opened the door he saw at once that there on the pillow was the shaggy blond head. He could hear the peaceful breathing of sleep and he closed the door again quietly.

Shaggy: hairy

In the morning Sadao made an excuse to go into the American man's room first. He had planned that if the man was gone then he would tell Hana that the general had ordered for him to be removed from there. When he opened the door, he saw the man who had lots of yellowish coloured hair was asleep. He could hear the sound of his breathing. Sadao closed the door of the room.

“He is asleep,” he told Hana. “He is almost well to sleep like that.”

Sadao said to Hana that the man was asleep. He added that now he was well and did not need to sleep like that.

“What shall we do with him?” Hana whispered her old refrain.

Sadao shook his head. “I must decide in a day or two,” he promised.

Refrain: a sound that is repeated time and again

Hana again asked Sadao that what should they do with the man. Sadao shook his head and promised her that he would decide it in one or two days.

But certainly, he thought, the second night must be the night. There rose a wind that night, and he listened to the sounds of bending boughs and whistling partitions.

Boughs: branches of trees

Partitions: structures dividing a room into parts

Sadao thought that perhaps the killers would come the next night. The night was windy. He heard the sounds made by the branches as they bent due to the wind and the partitions made whistling sound as the wind passed through them.

Hana woke too. “Ought we not to go and close the sickman's partition?” she asked.

Hana woke and asked that should they close the partition door of the man's room.

“No,” Sadao said. “He is able now to do it for himself.”

Sadao refused and said that the man was capable to do that himself.

But the next morning the American was still there.

The next morning the American man was still there in the room.

Then the third night of course must be the night. The wind changed to quiet rain and the garden was full of the sound of dripping eaves and running springs. Sadao slept a little better, but he woke at the sound of a crash and leaped to his feet.

Eaves: part of the roof that meets or overhangs the wall of a building

Springs:

Sadao was hopeful that they might come on the third night. Instead of the wind, there was rain that night. The garden was full of noises as the water dripped down the roof and tiny rivulets flowed through the garden. Sadao slept a little and jumped as he heard a loud noise.

“What was that?” Hana cried. The baby woke at her voice and began to wail. “I must go and see.”

But he held her and would not let her move.

“Sadao,” she cried, “what is the matter with you?”

“Don’t go,” he muttered, “don’t go!”

His terror infected her and she stood breathless, waiting. There was only silence. Together they crept back into the bed, the baby between them.

Wail: cry loudly

Infected: affected

Crept: crawled

Hana heard the loud crash and asked what it was. The baby also woke up and started crying. Hana wanted to go and check on it but Sadao stopped her. Hana screamed at him and asked what the matter was. Sadao spoke slowly and asked her not to go. He was scared and his scare affected Hana too. She stood without breathing and waited. There was silence and both of them crawled back into the bed with the baby lying on the bed in between them.
